

## 32. The Book of Revelation—6:5-8

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A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier  
(2-24-21)

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As we come to Revelation Chapters 6-19, we come to a period of time that the Bible has more to say about than any other period in human history.

It is often referred to as the “70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel” (check out our [Daniel Study](#), Chapter 9:24-27 to understand why)—but the term that most evangelical Christians use when referring to this period of time is—“*The Tribulation Period*.”

In the Bible it goes by other names, but they all speak of the last 7 years of human history as we know it culminating with the return of Jesus Christ to the earth to establish His Kingdom.

The Tribulation Period officially begins when the Antichrist makes a 7-year covenant with the nation of Israel (Daniel 9:27).

Many scholars believe this covenant will include a provision allowing the Jewish people to rebuild their Temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. We know the Temple *will* be rebuilt because, at the midpoint of the Tribulation Period, the Antichrist will go into the rebuilt Temple, stop the sacrifices and daily offerings to the True and Living God, put an idol of himself in the Holy of Holies and demand to be worshipped as God. (Matthew 24:15; Revelation 11:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

Now remember—as we study Revelation, Chapters 6-19, we are going to be looking at the judgment of God being poured out upon this Christ rejecting world.

This judgment is broken down into a series of 3 successive judgments in the form of:

- the Seal
- the Trumpet; and
- the Bowl Judgments.

These judgments together will purge the earth of the usurpers and earth-dwellers preparing it for Jesus return and the establishment His Kingdom—also known as the Kingdom Age.

In Chapter 6:1 Jesus begins to break the seals on the scroll (7 in total) and when He does—various judgments are unleashed upon the inhabitants of the earth.

As I have already pointed out—the seventh seal contains the seven trumpet judgments (8:1–11:19) and the seventh trumpet (11:15) contains the seven bowl judgments (16:1–21). In other words, the 7 seals contain *all* the judgments of God poured out upon the earth—from the coming of the Antichrist all the way to the end with the return of Jesus Christ.

It seems best to understand the first **four seals** as taking place during the first half of the Tribulation; the judgments of the **fifth seal** stretching from the first half into the second half of the Tribulation Period; and the

**sixth** and **seventh seals** taking place during the last 3 ½ years called the “great tribulation” portion of this 7-year period (Revelation 7:14).

Some have argued that because the Greek word ‘thlipsis’ (‘tribulation’) isn’t used for the first half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel—that it is therefore wrong to refer to those first 3 ½ years as part of the Tribulation Period (i.e.—part of God’s judgment).

They say we should instead call it by what Jesus called it in Matt.24:8—“*the beginning of sorrows* (birth pangs)”. But just because a particular word isn’t used specifically in the Bible to denote something—doesn’t mean it’s wrong to use that word if the concept *is* clearly taught in the Scriptures.

For example, the words: *Trinity* and *Incarnation* don’t appear in the Bible (not to mention the word “Bible” doesn’t appear in the Bible). But listen, if a concept is taught in the Bible (like the ‘Trinity’)—even if the word ‘Trinity’ is not found in the Bible—it is legitimate and accurate to use that word to describes that concept.

The Bible contains the concept that a woman’s birth pangs involve *tribulation*.

In the Old Testament one of the major words for *tribulation* is “*tsarah*.”

That Hebrew word is used in Jeremiah 6:24 and 50:43—

**Jeremiah 6:24 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> We have heard the report of it; Our hands grow feeble. Anguish (*tsarah*) has taken hold of us, Pain as of a woman in labor.

**Jeremiah 50:43 (NKJV)**

<sup>43</sup> "The king of Babylon has heard the report about them, and his hands grow feeble; Anguish (*tsarah*) has taken hold of him, Pangs as of a woman in childbirth.

In the Septuagint (the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek in 270 BC)—the Greek word that is used to translate ‘tsarah’ is ‘thlipsis’ (‘tribulation’)—

**Jeremiah 6:24 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> ...*tribulation* has taken hold of us, Pain as of a woman in labor.

**Jeremiah 50:43 (NKJV)**

<sup>43</sup> "...*tribulation* has taken hold of him, Pangs as of a woman in childbirth.

Also, in the Greek New Testament in John 16:21 Jesus said—

**John 16:21 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup> A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish (thlipsis—‘tribulation’), for joy that a human being has been born into the world.

So, in Matt. 24:4-8 when Jesus is describing the first half of the Tribulation Period referring to it as, the “*beginning of sorrows* (i.e., “*the beginning of birth pangs*” Matt.24:8)—I think it is biblically accurate and acceptable to call these first 3 ½ years—“*the beginning of tribulation*.”

This then will be followed by a greater period of tribulation (as when a woman in labor gets closer to the birth of the child) which will lead the world to the return of Jesus Christ to the earth and the *birth* of the Messianic Kingdom Age.

Scholar and New Testament Professor Renald Showers—

*“Once a woman’s birth pangs begin, those pangs cause her the stress of being hemmed into a trying, painful, and unavoidable circumstance of life. She has no alternative but to pass through all of the pangs involved in giving birth to a child.*

*In light of this fact, Christ’s teaching to the effect that the beginning of birth pangs will be experienced during the first half of the seventieth week (of Daniel) indicated the following truths.*

*Once the birth pangs start at the beginning of the seventieth week, those pangs will cause the world the stress of being hemmed into a trying, painful, and unavoidable seven-year circumstance of life.*

*The world will have no alternative but to pass through all of the birth pangs involved in giving birth to the Messianic Age. Because tribulation will be experienced during the first half of the seventieth week—to apply the word tribulation to that 3 ½ year period of time is not wrong.”*

I point this out because some will challenge you when you call the entire 7-years the “Tribulation Period” telling you that the first 3 ½ years are not called that in Scripture—now you can show them from Scripture why that isn’t true.

### THE FIRST SEAL

#### **Revelation 6:1-2 (NKJV)**

**<sup>1</sup> Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.” <sup>2</sup> And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.**

As we have already stated, we believe this first rider is none other than the Antichrist who will initially rise to power as a man of peace (he’ll probably receive the ‘Nobel Peace Prize’) earning that title by doing what no human being has ever been able to do—bring about world peace (for a little while at least—Thess. 5:3).

### SECOND SEAL

#### **Revelation 6:3-4 (NKJV)**

**<sup>3</sup> When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come and see.” <sup>4</sup> Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.**

Red is the color of *blood* suggesting that this ‘fiery red horse’ speaks of *bloodshed* indicative of *war* that comes upon the earth as the Tribulation progresses.

Author Ray Stedman writes,

*“Understandably, many Bible scholars today view this ‘great sword’ as a symbol of the awesome power of the nuclear bomb...we have to admit that it is only in our century, with its efficient, high-tech approach to killing, that the fulfillment of these terrible predictions could even come about.”*

What predications? —as Jesus said, “Unless those days were shortened, no life would remain upon the earth.” (Matthew 24:22)

Some have suggested that, if the *Antichrist* is the first rider who brings a temporary time of peace to the earth—the second rider could be the *False Prophet* who takes peace from the earth. (Revelation 13:15) I think it's possible that the first and second riders—are one in the same person (speaking of the Antichrist before and after he is possessed by the devil).

We know that the Antichrist initially comes on the world scene as a man of peace, who brings about global peace by uniting the world into a one-world government consisting of ten nations or regions ruled by 10 kings or rulers. At first, he won't be "*king of the world*" but more like the leader of the United Nations— Secretary General (he might even be the leader of the United Nations).

However, the idea of him being a '*man of peace*' doesn't necessarily mean he won't use the power invested in him by the leaders of world to force people to acquiesce to him as he brings about his global government—

**"He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer." (verse 2)**

This is 'backward'—a man conquered then he received the crown (for his conquest), but here the Antichrist is given a crown and *then* goes out to conquer!

I believe this speaks to the fact that he is given 'up front'—power, authority and a mandate from the leaders of the world to bring about this global government (to go and conquer)—because world peace and global 'unity' is worth whatever cost is necessary to bring it about.

I think it best not to conflate the idea of the Antichrist being a "*man of peace*" with him being a 'peaceful man.' The idea behind him being a man of peace is that he has been given the power to bring about peace by enacting a one-world government.

We know that around the mid-point of the last 7 years, he will become a blood-thirsty military mad-man bent on world conquest thru war—but initially, he will exert 'diplomatic' coercion over the people of the world.

This however doesn't mean he won't use the power of the state to *force* people to give up their national sovereignty and federate under his new global government—even if it means eliminating any opposition to his mandate of bringing about a world of unity and peace. And folks, it's all going to be perfectly legal and socially acceptable—which I believe we see implied in the statement—

**"...and there was given to him a great sword." (verse 4)**

The world will give him (Antichrist) his authority and not just "*a sword*"—but "**a great sword.**"

In other words, the leaders of the world's nations (most of them and no doubt the powerful globalists in business and big tech) will be so enamored with him as a leader and so convinced in his ability to bring about peace and utopia upon the earth—that they invest in him the power of universal, worldwide capital punishment to use on anyone who tries to resist him.

His followers will be helping him as they kill those who oppose him—

**"And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that *people* should kill [the Greek is 'slaughter'] one another..." (verse 4)**

I believe that those doing the slaughtering will be the Antichrist's followers—apparently the world's philosophy at that time will be—'if you want to make an omelet you've got to break a few eggs.' In other words, if the world is going to have peace and prosperity—all opposition to this new global government will have to be eliminated—including and especially Jew and Gentile Christians. (Revelation 7:9, 14).

Ultimately any authority he gets will be given to him by God who is giving the world the kind of leader they desire and deserve—to judge them for their rejection of *His* authority.

Just like Israel rejected God's authority over their lives in Samuel's day and so God gave them Saul (a leader they wanted and deserved) who started out good but soon became a tyrant—the same thing will be true of the Antichrist.

### **THIRD SEAL**

#### **Revelation 6:5-6 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.

<sup>6</sup> And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

In Scripture, the color 'black' is associated with *famine*—

#### **Lamentations 4:8-9 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> Now their appearance is blacker than soot; They go unrecognized in the streets; Their skin clings to their bones, it has become as dry as wood. <sup>9</sup> Those slain by the sword are better off than those who die of hunger; For these pine away, Stricken for lack of the fruits of the field.

The coming of this "black horse" is associated with the coming of global famine—famine due to hyper-inflation! (Famine also follows warfare—v.4).

A **denarius** was the equivalent of a day's wage for a common working man or soldier.

Normally a day's wage would have purchased 8 measures of wheat and 24 measures of barley—but during this period of time it will take an entire day's wage to buy enough food to feed one person for a day.

If a person makes \$50,000 a year working a 6-day week in today's economy—that means he or she makes roughly \$160 a day. That would mean a small loaf of wheat bread (only enough to feed one person for a day), would cost \$160 (not that wages are necessarily going to be then what they are now).

In other words, whatever a day's wage will be under this hyper-inflation—a day's wage will only buy enough food for one person per day. This could also imply that controlled rationing will be in place where every person will work for the state and each day the government will give them their ration of food for the day (worldwide Communism).

**"...and do not harm the oil and the wine." (verse 6)**

The "oil and wine" are a way of saying 'luxuries' (toiletries, beauty aids, liquor etc.). In other words, the common people are suffering a shortage of necessities (the basics)—while the rich have no lack even of luxuries.

During this period of time there will only be 2 classes of people upon the earth—the rich and the poor (no middle class).

**“...he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.” (verse 5)**—these scales speak of commerce.

The Antichrist will control the world’s economy by issuing a number to everyone so that nobody will be able to buy or sell or work without that number (Rev.13)—and thru it he will control the world’s economy by controlling the world’s commerce.

We are not living in an agrarian culture—we are living in an industrial culture and as such we are dependent on others to grow our food and provide us with clean, safe drinking water—without which there would be death—and death breeds disease.

#### **FOURTH SEAL**

##### **Revelation 6:7-8 (NKJV)**

**<sup>7</sup>When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." <sup>8</sup>So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.**

The fourth seal represents death by warfare and natural disasters—including earthquakes, plagues and the beasts of the earth.

**“Pale”** is “cloris’ in the Greek and speaks of a ‘*pale green*’ color—or in other words the color of a corpse (death).

**“Death, and Hades followed with him”**—*Death* claims the physical body—*Hades* claims the soul (Explain).

As civilization begins to break down and crumble—so will the world’s defenses against disease crumble as well. There will be no sanitation, no clean drinking water which will lead to cholera, dysentery and other hyper-deadly diseases like Ebola and Bubonic Plague (biological warfare could also be in view).

After WWI more people died of influenza and typhoid than had died as casualties of the war.

During the judgment of the 4<sup>th</sup> Seal—because there will be a shortage of food and clean drinking water—death will be everywhere, and disease will spread like wildfire.

(No doubt the wealthy will have plenty to eat and access to medicines and medical care while the rest of the world will be left to suffer and die)

And again, we read that the rider of this horse was given power **“over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth” (verse 8).**

One author said,

*“Rats have been responsible for uncounted millions of deaths throughout history, both by eating food supplies, and especially by spreading disease. The most infamous and devastating occurrence of rat-borne disease was the Black Death, a fourteenth-century outbreak of bubonic plague that wiped out one-fourth to one-third of Europe’s population. In a world ravaged by war, famine, and disease, the rat population may run wild.”*

The word **'beast' (verse 8)** is a Greek word that is used in Acts 28:4-5 of deadly poisonous snakes—which means that during this time there might be a dramatic increase in deadly snakes across the earth that bite and kill many.

In the Old Testament God used animals and even insects to judge people.

During the 10 plagues that He brought against Egypt (a type of the world) the Lord used: frogs, lice, flies, and locusts to judge people.

In Exodus 23:28, He talks about using hornets to drive out the Canaanites from their land. There are some nasty hornets that God has created—the scariest of the bunch is the Asian Giant Hornet—(Explain).

In other words, God is going to use nature (the creature) to judge man—**Why?**— Because man refuses to worship the Creator and chooses to worship the creation instead—

#### **Romans 1:18-25 (NKJV)**

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them.

For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

These 4 judgments coming upon the whole earth parallel the judgments God poured out on Jerusalem mentioned in Ez.5:17 and 14:21—

#### **Ezekiel 5:17 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> So I will send against you famine and wild beasts, and they will bereave you. Pestilence and blood shall pass through you, and I will bring the sword against you. I, the Lord, have spoken.' "

#### **Ezekiel 14:21 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup> For thus says the Lord God: "How much more it shall be when I send **My four severe judgments on Jerusalem**--the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence--to cut off man and beast from it?"

So, God has used these kinds of judgments in the past—as a precursor to a future world-wide judgment that is coming. The context of Ezekiel 5:17 (verses 12-16) indicates that the famine, beasts, pestilence, and sword of that passage are expressions of God's wrath.

In verses 13 and 15 of Ezekiel 5 there appears two of the six most common Hebrew words used for the anger and wrath of God.

The words *'hema'* which refers to *"a burning and consuming wrath"*, and *'ap'* which refers to *"anger."*

So, don't let anyone tell you that the first 3 ½ years (first 4 seals) are **not** part of God's wrath being poured out upon rebellious mankind.

There are those who say these 4 seals (first 3 ½ years) are not part of the Tribulation Period, they're just the "*beginning of sorrows*"—in other words, they're simply referring to what man does to his fellow man and not part of God's judgments upon the earth.

I beg to differ—the first 4 seals are definitely a part of the wrath of God poured out upon the earth—which He has used in the past even pouring them out upon Jerusalem for its wickedness.

In Ezekiel 14:21 He refers to them as—"*My four severe judgments...*"

Verse 8 tells us that thru these judgments one-quarter of the earth's population will be destroyed.

If the population of the earth is 6 billion people that means that the deaths from these first 4 seal judgments equal 1.5 billion people—which is equivalent to the combined populations of:

- ❖ South America,
- ❖ Central America,
- ❖ Mexico,
- ❖ the United States,
- ❖ Canada, and...
- ❖ all of Europe!

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