

Rev. 6-19 describes the events which will take place on the earth during the 7-year Tribulation period, after the Church is removed physically (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 5:9; Rev. 3:10; etc.). This 7-yr. countdown (cf. Dan. 9:25-27) begins with the removal of the Church (1 Thess. 4:17f) and ends with the physical return of the Lord Jesus Christ with His saints to the earth (Rev. 19). So, between Rev. 6 and 19 we have a detailed account of the horrors, destruction, and desolation coming to planet earth: the time of the outpouring of the “wrath [Greek, ὀργή, mentioned 10 x’s in Rev. only between chs. 6-19] of God.”

<u>Seals</u>	<u>Trumpets</u>	<u>Bowls</u>
0000000	>->->->->->	U-U-U-U-U-U-U < Kingdom
1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1..2..3..4..5..6..7	1..2..3..4..5..6..7

- the 7 “seal” judgments here (ch. 6),
- the 7 “trumpet” judgments follow (chs. 8-9) and the most horrific of all,
- the dreaded “bowl” (KJV “*vial*”) judgments (ch. 16). The time corresponds to Daniel's 70th week (Dan. 9:27) as the last world empire arises with the antichrist as it's head.

v. 1 "Lamb" = Jesus Christ

- John 1:29 *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*
- 1 Cor. 5:7 *"For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."*
- 1 Pet. 1:18f *"It was not with perishable things such as silver and gold that you were redeemed...but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."*
- Rev.5:5f, 9 *"Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.'*

6 Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.”

9 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."

Who/what are the "4 living beings"? "Living creatures" -- *dzo'-on*; neut. of *zoa*; a living thing; lit., "a being possessing *zoa* [spiritual life]." Refers to seraphim again (Isa. 6:1-2 they have 6 wings; cherubim have "*wheels*" cf. Ezek. 1,10).

"Come!" -- Present middle imperative; it's a COMMAND! The command is not addressed to the Lamb nor to John, but to one of the four horsemen each time. In Zec. 6:5 the horsemen are interpreted as being "*the 4 spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the Presence of the LORD of the whole earth.*" Are they demons or angels? Inasmuch as the first horseman appears to be the Antichrist, they seem demonic in origin, but commanded not by Satan, but God!

v. 2 The imagery of the 4 horsemen of the Apocalypse comes from Zec. 1:8-17; 6:1-8. In the OT the **“horse”** is often the emblem of war (cf. Job 39:25; Ps 76:6; Pr 21:31; Eze 26:10). The colors of the horses in Rev. correspond to the character of the rider; **“white”** in this context symbolizes conquest.

This first horseman is none other than the Antichrist. The moment Jesus Christ takes His Church out of the world, the hindering force of the Holy Spirit will be removed -- and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition (2 Thess. 2:3, 7-8).

It cannot be Jesus Christ for at least SIX different reasons:

1. Nothing but death, disease, war, famine, etc. follows. The coming of Jesus Christ will usher in the glorious era of peace -- God's millennial age upon the earth.
2. An angel commands this figure; no angel would dare command Christ!
3. He is GIVEN a crown; the rider is given his weapons and authority; Jesus already had it (Mt. 28:18-20)!
4. This rider appears at the very beginning of the Tribulation; Rev. 19 describes Jesus' coming at the end. This rider mimics Christ, who also rides a white horse (Rev. 19:11). More about the Antichrist in ch. 13.
5. Jesus is the One opening the seals!!!
6. "*Stephanos*," not "*diadem*" used for the crown; delegated power and authority.

2 Th. 2:3, 7-8 "Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion [he apostasia] occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. . . . For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming".

The power of God's Spirit working in the Church is hindering the Antichrist from taking over the world today. Once the Church is raptured, there'll be no hindering force whatsoever and the Antichrist will move in. "**Anti-**" can mean opposed to, or, another Christ; an alternative; opposite, i.e. instead of. Often used in composition to denote contrast, substitution, etc. He mimics the real Christ by also riding a white charger (like Christ, Rev. 19:11).

The progression is conquest, leading to war, which leads to famine/inflation, which leads to starvation, plague, DEATH . . . for ¼ of the earth's population (today, at 7.3 billion people; America is 320 million, 3rd most populous nation behind China and India, 1.3 and 1.2 billion, respectively. Russia is 9th with 142 million).

- v. 4 The second seal -- the red horse, symbolizing bloodshed and war (Zec. 1:8; 6:2) on a global scale ("earth").
- A. Had the power given to him to take peace from the earth. We are warned to beware when they say "*peace and safety*," for sudden destruction is coming (1 Th. 5:3).
 - B. We think of the terrible weapons of mass destruction in the world today; 100 MT hydrogen bombs were developed in 1961!!! What in the world do they have NOW?

Alfred Nobel, of the Peace Prize fame, made his fortune manufacturing explosives. When his father, also named Alfred, died, an obituary mistaking father for son stated that "he was a rich industrialist who made his fortune in war." "This is my legacy?" asked a horrified Nobel. And from that day on, he set apart a substantial sum of money to fund prizes for peace and science, medicine and literature.

- v. 5 The third seal -- the black horse of famine (Zec. 6:2,6) -- The balances representing the commerce in food.

v. 6 The declaration a quart/liter (Greek: *choenix*) of wheat for a day's wage (*denarius*) and three measures of barley for a *denarius*. This speaks of a great shortage of basic food supplies; famine inflates prices to at least 10 x's normal! In giving the signs of His coming to His disciples, Jesus spoke of famines, pestilences, and earthquakes being upon the earth (cf. Matt. 24:7). We have famines already to a certain degree; TODAY, hunger and starvation kill more people annually than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined! 33% of the world's population is considered to be starving. 8 million people will die of starvation this year alone (20,864 every single day). What will the global picture look like after WW III breaks out?

Should we have a nuclear war, the whole balance of food supply would be in a precarious position. Half of the world today is living under starvation conditions. Imagine what would happen if a global thermonuclear war were fought and all the food supplies became contaminated and inedible. We can easily see the possibility of a terrible famine coming upon the earth.

There is great concern about famine in the world today. It is estimated that 20 million people die of starvation in the world each year. With the population continuing to expand so rapidly in the third world countries, the question is how long until the demand exceeds the supply.

"See that you hurt not the oil and the wine." God sets the limits. The roots of the olive and vine go deep and would not be affected by a limited drought. Wheat and barley, oil and the vine, were the staple foods in Palestine and Asia Minor; so we see God's mercy even in judgment. Some see this as a ref. to the luxuries being available... but I don't think so as these were basic necessities in the 1st c. AD.

vv. 7-8 "The pale horse" describes the ashen appearance of the dead; it symbolizes death... Homer used |chlōros| of the ashen color of a face blanched by fear (pallid) and so the pale horse is a symbol of death and of terror. **"Death and Hades"** ride it: cf. Rev. 20:14 where *"death and hades were thrown into the Lake of Fire . . . the 2nd death. If anyone's name is not found in the Book of Life, they are thrown in there."* Leads one to believe that the riders are demonic in origin.

In these plagues 1/4 of the earth's population will be decimated. Let's assume that when the Church is taken out – perhaps 250 million -- that it leaves maybe 6 bill. people upon the earth, which means 1.5 bill. people will die.

1. Men will be killed by the war, and famine and the beasts which will become wild killers.
2. If there were a nuclear war it could upset the food chain immensely.
 - a. The strontium 90 entering the food chain could make the food products fatal for human consumption.
 - b. Quite conceivably 1/4 of the world could be destroyed by nuclear war and the by-products of such a holocaust.

v. 8 "Sword" (romphaiâi) – the large, double-edged Thracian long sword; similar to the great English two-handed broadsword. The preterist view that most of the book of Revelation has already been fulfilled seems out of touch with reality here: never before has 1/4 of the earth's population been decimated!

vv. 9-11 These must be the Tribulation saints: those who come to faith after the Tribulation starts and the Church is gone. Those who refuse to take the mark of the beast during the Tribulation will be martyred and will ask God to avenge their deaths. Rev. 13 declares the Antichrist will put to death any not worshipping his image or not receiving his mark. When the antichrist comes he will make war against the saints and prevail against them the Scripture tells us (Dan. 7:21). They could not be the Church because the gates of hell can't prevail against the church (Matthew 16:18).

His day of wrath precludes the possibility of the Church being here:

- a. Cf. 1Thess 5:9 *"For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation."*
- b. Cf. Rom 5:9 *"Much more then, being now justified by His blood we shall be saved from wrath through Him."*
- c. Rev. 3:10 *"Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from [lit., out of, ἔκ] the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth."*

v. 10 "Inhabitants of the earth" is a term used throughout Revelation to describe those in hostility to God (Rev. 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8,14; 17:2,8).

vv. 12-14: The 5th seal is loosed – “**A GREAT earthquake**” – poss. secondary to multiple volcanic eruptions (note sun is dimmed; moon blood red). “**Stars**” falling was to be one of the signs immediately preceding the coming of the Son of Man (Mk. 13:25-26).

- Isa. 13:13; 24:20 *"Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger. . . the earth will stagger like a drunken man and be moved out of its place."*
- Cf. also Joel 2:30f *"I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD."*

v. 14 “Sky receded like a scroll” -- Isa. 34:1-4 *"Come near, you nations, and listen; pay attention, you peoples! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world, and all that comes out of it! The LORD is angry with all nations; his wrath is upon all their armies. He will totally destroy them, he will give them over to slaughter. Their slain will be thrown out, their dead bodies will send up a stench; the mountains will be soaked with their blood. All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree."*

Matthew 24:21,29 *"For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again . . . Immediately after the distress of those days "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."*

- VIDEO: “Tsar Bomba” – 57MT (equiv. explosive force of 57 million TONS of TNT!!!), Oct. 30, 1961.
- VIDEO: Dominic Sunset (1MT) Christmas Isl. 1961, w-59 warhead, cloud rose 11 miles in the air! Dropped by a B-52 bomber, detonated at 5000’. A series of **36** nuclear detonations! Some as high as 350 miles in space!

Albert Einstein, perhaps the greatest physicist ever to have lived, whose IQ was said to be about 200 (1879-1955), best known for his special and general theories of relativity ($E=mc^2$), wrote:

- “The release of atom power has changes everything except our way of thinking . . . the solution to this problem lies in the heart of Mankind. If only I had known, I should have become a watchmaker.”
- “If WWII is to be fought with nuclear weapons, WWIV will be fought with sticks and stones.”
- “The hardest thing in the world to understand is the income tax!”

The effects of an asteroid impact (think Barringer Crater, near Winslow, AZ), nuclear detonation or a major volcanic eruption (e.g. Yellowstone) are all about the same: complete extermination within the blast radius, millions of tons of ejecta thrust into the atmosphere, and catastrophic devastation for tens, hundred or even thousands of miles around!

v. 15 “Generals” (Greek, *chiliarchos*) were Roman officers commanding a cohort of about 1,000 men.

v. 16 More proof the rider on the white horse can't be Christ: Jesus is in Heaven; the rider has been sent to the earth and is busy "conquering."

III. SUMMARY / APPLICATION / RESPONSE

- 1st seal - Antichrist
- 2nd seal - Unrest, war, violence
- 3rd seal - Inflation, worldwide recession, food shortages
- 4th seal – 1.5 billion people killed by armed conflict, famine, plague, beasts
- 5th seal - Tribulation saints cry out for justice; told to wait, given white robes
- 6th seal - Great earthquake, sun and moon anomalies, meteor impacts; Chp. 7 parenthetical interlude
- 7th seal - Found in 8:1 and contains the seven trumpet judgements which increase in intensity.

2 Peter 3:9-13 “ *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.*”