

sermon study summary

Revelation Part 11 – The Seal Judgements

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Our world seems to be imploding. The scroll in chapter 5 contains God's plan to set this world right again. The Lamb that was slain is Jesus, and He is worthy to open the seals.

Chapters 6 to 19 contain 3 sets of 7 judgments (seals, trumpets and bowls).

PRETERISTS believe that the judgments beginning in chapter 6 have already happened, either before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70, or prior to the fall of Rome in 410 AD.

FUTURISTS believe the judgments are 21 separate future events which will happen consecutively in the order described in the Book of Revelation. The seal judgments are just round one; there are more judgments to come. IDEALISTS believe the three sets of judgments are not linear but cyclical. IDEALISTS believe the Tribulation includes the persecution the church is going through right now around the world and will continue until Christ comes again.

SEAL JUDGMENTS. The first four seals depict "the four horsemen of the apocalypse."

First seal, white horse (v. 1-2). The rider is the false Christ, the anti-Christ. His bow has no arrows meaning he is going to conquer peacefully. He will be seen as the hope of the world.

FUTURISTS believe the anti-Christ is an actual person riding into the world at the beginning of the tribulation period falsely promising peace to the world. IDEALISTS sees the first horsemen as symbolic of the many false christs down through history who promise peace but then deceive in order to conquer and control.

Second seal, red horse (v. 3-4). FUTURISTS: This rider personifies war and the devastation of war. IDEALISTS: These wars are not limited to the future.

Third seal, black horse (v. 5-6). Black is the color of famine. FUTURISTS believe that the coming wars will result in global famine and rapid inflation. The economy will be out of control and nothing will matter except food. Money will be almost worthless. IDEALISTS do not disagree with the FUTURISTS, but they say this has happened down through history and is happening now.

Fourth seal, pale horse (v. 7-8). War and famine will continue along with plagues and beasts. FUTURISTS believe one quarter of the earth's population will die through wars, famines, plagues and wild beasts sometime in the future close to Christ's return. Today, that would be two billion people. IDEALISTS believe "the fourth of the earth" represents the many millions who have died in wars and plagues down through history.

Fifth seal (v. 9-10). Martyrs cry out, "How long, sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?"

FUTURISTS believe the rapture has occurred at this point and these are Tribulation saints. Futurists believe many will get saved following the rapture. These new converts will suffer severe persecution, even death. IDEALISTS believe this refers to the millions who have died a martyr's death since Christ's death on the cross.

Sixth seal (v. 12-14). Enormous convulsions of nature devastate the entire earth. The sixth seal will be God's answer to the prayer of the martyrs for justice.

God doesn't cause evil, but he uses evil to judge evil. The wrath of God will not touch those who have put their faith and trust in the Lamb. God's wrath directed at our sin was poured out on Jesus at the cross.

Why does God want us to read these horrific judgments in Revelation?

1. He is challenging us to examine where we stand with God.
2. To instill in us a passion to introduce others to Jesus.
3. To remind us that this world is not our home.
4. To remind believers that we have no reason to fear God's wrath.

THE WORD (NIV)

Revelation 6: 1-17

I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!"² I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

³ When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!"⁴ Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword.

⁵ When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand.⁶ Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages, and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

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sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. When you hear, “I’ve got good news and bad news,” which do you like to hear first? Why?
2. How receptive are you of receiving a biblical caution or warning? Explain.

UP – PURSUE GOD

Read Revelation 6:1-17.

3. Name each judgment and give a description of what it looks like.
4. Under whose authority do these judgments occur? Where does it say that and what are the implications? How do you see John 16:33 in light of these judgments?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. This world is not our home. Is this a statement you agree with? How does your lifestyle agree or disagree with your answer? How are you preparing now for tribulation on any scale?
6. Smaller ‘seals’ occur in our world today in the form of war, scarcity, disaster, persecution, and deception. How can you encourage a believer and an unbeliever you know who is anxious about these things?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

The tribulation is merely an opening act for an eternity apart from God, a hell on earth. Who do you know whom you would not want to go through the tribulation much less an eternity in hell? Commit to praying for them and introducing them to Jesus.

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⁷ When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” ⁸ I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” ¹¹ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.

¹² I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, ¹³ and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. ¹⁴ The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶ They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?”

This week’s writers: Elsa Henderson, David McMillin, Gene Gibbs, and Jorel Quemuel