

Hurstbourne Baptist Church, January 10, 2021
Sermon Notes and Quotes: Revelation 6:1-17

Introduction and Review

- In John's vision, Jesus takes hold of a scroll with seven seals on it. The eternal purposes of God are contained in this scroll, including His perfect judgments of all of creation and also the inheritance rights of the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the executor of God's will, and both our inheritance rights and our redemption as the people of God are inscribed upon that scroll.
- In chapter 6, Jesus (i.e., "the Lamb") starts breaking open the seals of the scroll one by one. Each of the seals possesses a symbolic meaning.
- **Note 1:** Many wonderful and devoted Christians disagree on the precise meaning of these seals.
- **Note 2:** I believe that Matthew 24 (i.e., Jesus' "Discourse on the End Times") is the key to interpreting the meaning of the seals in Revelation 6.
- **Note 3:** Six of the seven seals are described in Revelation 6. The seventh seal is described in Revelation 8.

The Six Seals of Revelation 6

- **The First Seal: The White Horse = Jesus who Conquers with the Gospel**
 - **Revelation 6:1-2**, "Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" ²And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer."
 - One of the most disputed questions in this passage is, "Who is this one riding on a white horse, with a crown, who is conquering?" All kinds of ideas have been given. I believe it is Jesus who conquers with the Gospel. This interpretation matches the teaching of Jesus in **Matthew 24**: "This Gospel of the Kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, and then the end will come" (24:14). This This interpretation also agrees with the white horse imagery of **Revelation 19:11-16**, "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹²His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords."
 - **Application Point:** Have you lost your sense of expectation that the Gospel will triumph in people's lives?
 - **Quote:** "Possibly one of the most devastating things that can happen to us as Christians is that we cease to expect anything to happen. I am not sure but that this is not one of our greatest troubles today. We come to our services and they are orderly, they are nice – we come, we go – and sometimes the services are timed almost to the minute. "But," Lloyd Jones says, "that is not Christianity, my friend. Where is the Lord of glory? Where is the one sitting by the well? Are we expecting him? Do we anticipate Him? Are we open to it? Are we aware that we are ever facing this glorious possibility of having the greatest surprise of our life? [...] This is Christianity: the Lord appears! Suddenly, in the midst of the drudgery

and the routine and the sameness and the dullness and the drabness, unexpectedly, surprisingly, he meets with you and he says something to you that changes the whole of your life and your outlook and lifts you to a level that you had never conceived could be possible for you” (Lloyd Jones, *Living Water: Studies in John 4—56 previously unpublished sermons by Martyn Lloyd-Jones*, 13-14).

- **The Second Seal: The Red Horse = War**

- **Revelation 6:3-4**, “When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” ⁴ And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.”
- **Compare with Matthew 24:6**, “You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.”
- In 2000 years of human history, war has been the norm. Just think of the last 100 to 115 years.

- **The Third Seal: The Black Horse = Famines and Scarcities**

- **Revelation 6:5-6**, “When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ And I heard what seemed to be 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 wine!”
- **Compare with Matthew 24:7**, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.”
- World Vision’s website on 010921: “The world has made huge strides in overcoming global poverty. Since 1990, more than 1.2 billion people have risen out of extreme poverty. Now, 9.2% of the world survives on \$1.90 a day or less, compared to nearly 36% in 1990.” [...] “The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to reverse decades of progress in the fight against global poverty and income inequalities, and it jeopardizes the future of a generation of children. While the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is unknown, the World Bank estimates that an additional 88 million to 115 million people will fall into extreme poverty in 2020, with the total rising to as many as 150 million by 2021.”
- **Note:** this is not merely about poverty and general life empowerment. This is extreme poverty, where bread is scarce, meanwhile the oil and the wine are not harmed.

- **The Fourth Seal: The Pale Horse = Death and Disease**

- **Revelation 6:7-8**, “When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” ⁸ And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.”
- Death and Disease will strike down a major portion of the human race. It’s easy for the mind to think immediately about Coronavirus in 2020. But think more broadly than that: Bubonic Plaque, Smallpox, the ravages of cancer.

- **The Fifth Seal: Martyrdom**

- Revelation 6:9-11, “When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. ¹⁰ They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” ¹¹ Then they were each given a

white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.”

- Compare with Matthew 24:9, “They will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.”
- Martyrdom is happening right now. More believers were put to death in the 20th century than in all the other centuries of Church history combined. According to the Gordon Conwell, there have been over 70 million Christians martyred in history. Over half of these were in the 20th century under fascist and communist regimes.
- **Note:** We pray for the salvation of all people. We pray for our enemies. We never take matters into our own hands. The Scripture is so clear that God will rise up in judgment. “Vengeance is mine,” says the Lord. This means that, for Christians, vengeance does not belong to us. We entrust all our injustices to the Lord. God is rich in mercy and grace, patient beyond comprehension, but remember also the severity of God: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).
- **The Sixth Seal: The Great Day of the Lord**
 - **Revelation 6:12-17**, “When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood,¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale.¹⁴ The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave^[sl] and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains,¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”
 - **Compare with Matthew 24:29-35**, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.³¹ And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.³² “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near.³³ So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates.³⁴ Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”
 - **The sixth seal represents the end of history.** This sixth seal points us to the end of history, and God uses this jarring imagery to describe “the great day” of the wrath of the Lamb.

Closing Application

- There is one place – and only one safe place – to hide from the wrath of God. You cannot hide behind a rock; you cannot hide in a mountain; you cannot hide behind your good works; you cannot hide behind your parents; you cannot hide behind a pastor; you cannot hide behind your church.
- Our safety is found only in Christ, who has paid the penalty of our sins and put us in right relationship to God. This is why we sing, “Rock of ages, cleft for me. Let me hide myself in Thee.” We are people of faith. We place our faith in Jesus Christ.
- “The world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:17).