

Judgement Comes – The Six Seals

Revelation 6

Pastor Bill Farrow

Introduction

- Revelation chapter 6 is a very important Scripture and one which will speak to us profoundly and even shockingly as we go through it.
 - This morning we take **another trip back to the future** as we look **back to the ancient book of Revelation** and in so doing look **forward to the unfolding of God's wrath** to come in the future.
- As you come into **chapter 6**, as you know if you've been with us,
 - the music of praise that occupied *chapters 4 and 5 has ended and*
 - 4:8b, 11

*“Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come, O Lord,
You are worthy O Lord
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist and were created*

- 5:9b-13

*You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth.”*

*Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels
around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders;
and the number of them was ten thousand times ten*

*thousand, and thousands of thousands,
saying with a loud voice:*

*“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
To receive power and riches and wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”*

*And every creature which is in heaven
and on the earth and
under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that
are in them, I heard saying:*

*“Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!”*

- the stirrings of judgment that **began at the throne as far back as chapter 4 verse 5** where you see some flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder.

*And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings,
and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the
throne, which are the seven Spirits of God*

- **The Bible teaches** that the world is **headed inexorably not** toward peace and unity, **but** toward **a final, cataclysmic war, the battle of Armageddon** (16:14–16).

*For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which
go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world,
to gather them to the battle of that great day of God
Almighty.*

*“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who
watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked
and they see his shame.”*

*And they gathered them together to the place called in
Hebrew, Armageddon.*

- **Until that climactic holocaust, things will continue to deteriorate as the world falls deeper and deeper into chaos, confusion, and sin.**

- **Contrary to what the opinion and want** of much of the world seems to be and CAN be:
 - As **the end approaches**,
 - wars **will increase**,
 - crime **will escalate**,
 - there **will be economic upheavals**, and
 - unprecedented **natural disasters**, such as **earthquakes, floods, famines, and diseases** (cf. Matt. 24:6–8).

And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows

- All those calamities **will mark the outpouring of God's wrath on the fallen, rebellious world.**
- Well that anticipated judgment **breaks into action in chapter 6.**
 - Here you **have the Lamb of God**,
 - the **worthy Lamb**,
 - the **Lion of the tribe of Judah**,
 - **none other than our Lord Jesus Christ**,
 - **beginning to break the seals** in the little scroll
 - which records the **putting into effect the wrath of God**
 - **as Christ takes back** the universe which is His own
 - **from the usurper, namely Satan, and all of his minions or demons.**
- Now the **visions** of this text in chapter 6 **take us to the beginning of God's final wrath.**
 - As we have noted for you, **it's our conviction that the church is raptured before this happens** and
 - we see, in fact, **the church is now in heaven**, represented by the **twenty-four elders** who are **praising** God and
 - **glorifying** God and **glorifying** the Lamb

- as the Lamb **steps onto the stage of history to enact** these judgments.
- And so the **church is caught up** to be with the Lord and **are there in the glory with the Lord as this period of time,**
 - this seven-year period known as the Tribulation begins
 - **and as the seven seals, the seven trumpets and the seven bowls** all are enacted,
 - all **emblems of final judgment.**
- **Man's world faces an inevitable death.**
 - Sin is taking a fearsome toll that **ultimately ends up in the judgment of God.**
 - **Every dimension** of our culture, even the **dimensions of our society**
 - is escalating **on the down slide,**
 - being **devastated by depravity,**
 - more and more given over to lust and pride and self-indulgence,
 - **immorality and rejection of God and Christ and the truth of Scripture.**
- And so **man is sentenced,** his whole **world is sentenced to divine wrath.**
 - Man will **drink the cup of wrath to the fullest .**
- As one writer **said some years ago,**

"The dust of death is on us."

- We have had **our little moment in the sun** and we have **botched it .**
 - **Doom may be very near .**
 - **We may be very close to the final frantic antics** of dying man.
- **Jeremiah** the prophet, you'll remember,
 - looked at **the coming period of God's judgment in reference to Israel** and **what they would have to face** when he wrote,

"Alas, for that day is great, there is none like it, and it is the time of Jacob's trouble," Jeremiah 30:7.

- The **Jews are going to face the inevitability of God's wrath, those who have rejected their Messiah.**
- **Isaiah**, on the other hand, **also looked at the final wrath and saw it not so much** from the perspective of the Jews,
 - but in **chapter 34 of Isaiah** he looked at it **with reference to the Gentiles.**
 - In verse 1,

*"Draw near, O nations, to **hear and listen**, O peoples, **let the earth and all it contains hear** and the world and all that springs from it,"*

- he's **engulfing all of humanity,**

"For the Lord's indignation is against all the nations and His wrath against all their armies. He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to slaughter so their slain will be thrown out, their corpses will give off their stench, the mountains will be drenched with their blood and all the host of heaven will wear away and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll. All their hosts will also wither away as a leaf withers from the vine, or as one withers from a fig tree, for my sword is satiated in heaven. Behold it shall descend for judgment upon Edom and upon the people whom I have devoted to destruction, the sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is sated with fat with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams for the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom." (2-6)

- **Moving from what will happen in Edom to the wider world of final judgment, the prophet Isaiah looks at the ultimate doom and destruction of humanity.**
 - And so we hear from the prophets of old and not just in those passages, they're merely emblematic, that there will **come a final day of judgment.**
 - For the Jews **it will be the time of Jacob's trouble**, and
 - for the Gentiles it will be **the slaughter of the world.**

- And so, when we look at our world, we have to realize that **it's headed for doomsday.**
 - In fact, we feel like we can hear sometimes the **choking of a dying world, the final gasps**, as it were.
- **In this chapter** to which we give our attention this morning, Revelation chapter 6, we are **literally transported to the future.**
 - The **experience of opening** the seven-sealed scroll was **not only visible to John in his vision, but is now made known to us because God wanted him to write it down.**
 - **Remember now, there's a little scroll in this scenario here, it is mentioned back in chapter 5 as being in the hand of God.**
 - And then, of course, it is **taken out of the hand of God by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself**, and here in chapter 6 verse 1 says,

"He begins to break the seals."

- It was **rolled a little bit and sealed** on the edges, rolled a little bit and sealed, and all of those were **to keep it from ever being known or read or revealed until the appropriate time which here is revealed to us and ultimately will be in actuality unrolled.**
 - As it unrolls, the events of God's wrath unfold.
- Now there are **seven seals on this scroll and we'll go through those seven seals, and they encompass the whole period until the final coming of Christ.**
 - Also **within the same time frame** of seven seals,
 - there **will be seven trumpet judgments**
 - and then **seven very rapid-fire bowl judgments.**
 - They **all encompass the same period of time.**
- The interlude of chaps. 4 and 5 **now gives way to the middle portion of the book of Revelation,**
 - which concentrates **almost entirely on the events referenced as the great tribulation in Rev. 7:14 –**
 - Speaking of the **Multitude of martyrs** that comes out of the time, **an Elder asks John who they are** and John replies to him:

*And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me,
"These are the ones who come out of **the great tribulation**, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

- Jesus had referred to this while here in his earthly ministry:

*For **then there will be great tribulation**, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. (Matt. 24:21)*

- In the OT it was referred to as **the time of Jacob's trouble** (
 - Jer 30:7

*Alas! For that day is great,
So that none is like it;
And it is **the time of Jacob's trouble**,
But he shall be saved out of it.*

- Zeph 1:15

*That day is a day of wrath,
A day of trouble and distress,
A day of devastation and desolation,
A day of darkness and gloominess*

- Dan 12:1

*"At that time Michael shall stand up,
The great prince who stands watch over the sons of
your people;
And there shall be a time of trouble,
Such as never was since there was a nation,
Even to that time.
And at that time your people shall be delivered,
Every one who is found written in the book.*

- **Both Old Testament anticipation and New Testament explanation** feature this as **a time of indescribable judgment on a rebellious earth**.
- Specifically, in the book of Revelation, there are **four symbols under which these judgments evolve**:

- 1) the **opening of a seven-sealed book**,
 - 2) the **sounding of seven angelic trumpets**,
 - 3) the **reverberations of seven thunders**, and
 - 4) the **outpouring of seven bowls** of divine wrath.
- **Serious questions as to whether these judgments should be understood as sequential,**
 - **overlapping to some degree,**
 - **or synonymous**
 - **but employing diverse means of expression have occupied commentators who interpret the book.**
 - **It seems most reasonable to me that some overlapping is apparent** (see 8:1–2, where the **opening** of the seventh seal **ushers in** the judgments of the seven trumpets).

When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets

- Nevertheless, **essentially two things may be clearly observed** from the text.
- **First, strictly speaking**, the judgments are **not synonymous**; and, not surprisingly, the descriptions of the effects of such judgments are **widely diversified**.
- **Second**, one may also fairly observe that **however devastating and general** the seal judgments may be,
 - the **apparent intent** of the author is to **depict a worsening of the judgments in the progression from chap. 6** and
 - the seals to chaps. 15 and 16,
 - where **the bowls of God’s wrath reach the ultimate crescendo** of the outpouring of God’s wrath.
- In fact, it might even be observed that **while the seal judgments are less specifically associated** with God,
 - the **trumpet judgments bear more of the actual mark** of heaven since these are **trumpets sounded by seven angels**.
 - The **seven thunders** seem to be **even more associated** with God,
 - **even though** their **message remains hidden**,

- and the seven bowls of **God's wrath are specifically** associated with "*the wrath of God.*"
 - **Each of the scroll's seven seals** (cf. 5:1) represent a **specific divine judgment** that will be **poured out sequentially** on the earth.
 - The seals **encompass the entire period of the Tribulation** (3:10 – Philadelphia – the faithful Church),

Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.
-

- **culminating with the return of Christ.**
 - **It seems best to understand the first four seals as taking place during the first half of the Tribulation,**
 - the **fifth stretching from the first into the second half**, (2nd half called the "**great tribulation**" in 7:14 and lasting three and one-half years;
 - 7:14 – speaking of the many in white in heaven:

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"

And I said to him, "Sir, you know."

So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
-

- 11:2;

*But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot **for forty-two months.***
-

- 12:6;

*Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there **one thousand two hundred and sixty days.***

- 13:5

*Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there **one thousand two hundred and sixty days.***

- and the **sixth and seventh seal taking place during** that “great tribulation.”
- Just to comment, it **seems clear** that 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).
 - **The 7th bowl also looks to actually be “signal”** for the final return of Christ.
- The seven seals **thus contain all the judgments to the end when Jesus Christ returns.**
 - The **first four seals out of the seven take up the first half** of the **period known as the Tribulation.**
 - The fifth seal is **kind of the bridge in the middle,**
 - the event in the middle, **stretching into the second half,**
 - the **sixth and seventh seal are the final judgments** are the second half of this seven-year period.
- **BTW - We know it's seven years long because it is identified as a seven-year period back in Daniel chapter 9:24-27.**

*“Seventy weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,*

*To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.*

*“Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem
Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.*

*“And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it shall be with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.*

*Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one
week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who
makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate.”*

- It is **also identified as** to half of it as **42 months, three and a half years and 1260** days in the book of Revelation .also in Daniel **some of those same numbers are used.**
- Now the **first four seals depict horsemen.**
 - That's where we get the term "***the four horsemen of the apocalypse,***" which I've told you is not an old Notre Dame backfield, **but a picture of future judgment.**
 - They moved through the vision **to show the opening four sequences in judgment.**
- The imagery is **vivid**, the imagery is **potent**, the imagery is **shocking**, the imagery is **overwhelming** and it is frankly **frightening.**

- These are **unforgettable scenes that are pulled across our startled minds** as we, along with the Apostle John, see the first acts **by which the Lamb, the Lion, the Lord Jesus Christ restores the universe,**
- ...He **takes it back,** transferring it from **Satan the usurper to the Lord,** the heir, the rightful King.

• **Contrary to What Some Think...**

- **Now contrary to what some people have thought** in looking at prophecy, the first of these “horsemen” brings **a time period of peace and prosperity,**
 - I think I’ve **mentioned that before.**
 - Unlike what many, many think, **it is NOT speaking primarily of a single individual,** but of a **period of time that is characterized by peace and prosperity**
 - So **MANY think that THIS a single, reigning individual...but I disagree...**
 - **O He’s in there,** that’s clear as we look at it and think it over – that is clear!
- However, it is **also clear to understand that the following three seals are not individuals but speak of deadly forces.**
- The **first one,** as we have said, **speaks of peace.**
 - **Peace effected largely and featuring the “work” and efforts,** it turns out, and **attributed to a single person!**
- What **is to follow,** that first seal, is **anything but that.**
- Now **just to remind** you, also, these four horsemen are what Jesus calls in Matthew 24 *“the beginning of birth pains.”*
 - In the **anticipation of a birth there are birth pains.**
 - Those birth pains **come somewhat infrequently** and then they get **more frequent and more frequent and more frequent until** the final birth takes place.
- The **same is true** of the events that are going to **occur during this time period.**
 - There is a **coming a final event, the coming of Christ to establish His Kingdom, that is the “birth” in mind.**
 - These **birth pains are those events that are preliminary** to that and

- ...they begin to move more rapidly and more rapidly and more rapidly as they get to the final event.
- It's a **very vivid analogy**.
- There will be **pain** and then **more pain** and then **more pain** and **more pain**, **faster and faster, until** the **final and ultimate pain of Christ's coming** and **destroying all the wicked on the face of the earth**.
- The figure of the “*beginning of the birth pains*” is used in Matthew 24:8,
 - After speaking of a number of events coming...He says:...

All these are the beginning of sorrows.

- **that phrase**, then **describes the first half** of the final period and is **really parallel to the first four horsemen that John sees in his vision**.
- Just to comment, the **fifth seal is severe and widespread persecution** and that persecution is **depicted here in the fifth seal as you see in verse 9**,

"Underneath the altar are the souls of those who had been slain because of the Word of God and because of the testimony which they have maintained."

- Obviously **by the midpoint in this seven-year period**,
 - people have been **saved**,
 - people have been **converted**
 - in **that first three and a half year period**.
- Now, just be sure to **keep in mind that**:
- **All the church is gone before the period started, in the Rapture**,
 - but **in the first half** there will be **people redeemed and they will then be slaughtered**.
- They **will be crying out in verse 10**,

"How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

- And these indicate also in verse 11 that they have been glorified because they have white robes and
- ...they are in their rest and the number of the their fellow servants and
- ...their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been should be completed also.
- So more are to be slaughtered.
- So at the midpoint, the fifth seal here is really the persecution.
 - It also has a very unique event within that persecution **called the abomination of desolations.**
- That is **that which was spoken of in Daniel 11 and 12**

And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation. (11:31)

And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. (12:11)

- That is **when**
 - **the Antichrist desecrates the temple** in Jerusalem,
 - **starts the persecution of Christians,**
 - **the persecution of Jews and**
 - **sets himself up as God.**
- And **then** there is worldwide persecution.
- **After that, in the second half,** what Jesus called in Matthew 24 "*the Great Tribulation,*"
 - that was **the name of the second half,**
 - the **first half, the beginning** of the birth pains,
- the **second half the Great Tribulation,** and **in that second half**
 - the **persecution continues,**
 - then comes **the sixth seal** and

- then the **final seal/trumpet/bowl**, **namely** the **coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the slaughter of the ungodly**.
- The abomination then effected by the Antichrist in Jerusalem, according to **Daniel 9:27**, is at the midpoint of the seventy-year period.

*Then he shall confirm a covenant with many
for one week;*

*But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations
shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation,
which is determined,*

-
- Is poured out on the desolate.”
 - Daniel says it happens in the very middle of the week.
 - At least sometime around the middle.
 - **That triggers** the Great Tribulation.
 - **That's the switch that throws** humanity into the Great Tribulation,
 - **the final three and a half years, 42 months, 1260 days before** the coming of Christ,
 - **the final two seals, the final trumpets and the final bowl judgments.**
 - So the **events described** in the scroll then **when full unrolled will encompass the full seven years of God's wrath.**
 - And the last part of it we could call **"the day of the Lord."**
 - The **final fury when God Himself comes in the form of Christ and enacts His own judgment**
 - **but that final day of the Lord is preceded by divine judgments that we're seeing unfold in these first five seals.**
 - We'll **look at them in depth** as we move through the Book a **chapter/verse at a time...**

- Now **as each seal is opened**, the sequence of judgment **unfolds vividly**.
- Let's remind ourselves of the first seal, verses 1 and 2.
- **"He heard one of the four living creatures,"**
 - you remember **the four cherubim** who **surrounded** the throne of God,
 - we discussed them a bit earlier,
 - these four living creatures each have a role to play,

"the first one says with a voice that is like that of thunder,"

- which, of course, **fits the idea of judgment**,
- **"he says, 'Come,'"** and he is **calling to a rider**.
- In verse 2 a white horse comes and there is a man **sitting upon it and he has a bow and a crown** is given to him and **he comes to conquer, conquering and to conquer**.
 - This, as we **noted in some detail**, **symbolizes the deceptive short-lived world peace**.
 - The rider and the horse is **not a particular individual**, but **a force, the force of peace**.
- We're told that it **will feature many false deliverers**, many **false messiahs** led by **the ultimate false Messiah**,
 - **the Antichrist, the ultimate false Christ, the supreme human tool of Satan**.
- Now they will be **orchestrated by false christs and false messiahs** and
 - **Jesus said in Matthew 24** many of them **will come**.
 - And **they will continue to come through the whole period**,
 - but **initially they come and they offer world peace**,
- The **Antichrist** is **certainly a key player**,
 - **prosperity sets in** around the world, the white horse depicts that.
 - The fact that he is **white indicates majestic conquering and bringing an ultimate peace**

- He will be **grasped as a hero and as a hugely welcome person who is bringing what NO ONE else had been able to bring!**
 - BTW, it is **NOT** a reference to race or color
 - In places Scripture speaks of national origin, but is **NOT** meant to speak disparagingly
- The **white appearance** indicates perhaps even a kind of **purity and righteousness**,
 - But **in this context, a false purity and a false righteousness.**
 - You'll notice he has a **bow but no arrows** which means he has a **certain amount of authority, even military based/threatened authority**
- But, interestingly, **he conquers without ever shooting anything.**
 - It is a **conquering without bloodshed.**
 - A crown was **“given” to him**, he **didn't sieze it**,
 - it was **given** to him, which means **the world crowns peace as king.**
 - All over the world **peace becomes the issue.**
 - And we told you that that is **certainly the mood of the day**, isn't it?
 - World peace, global peace, and peace **will be crowned king.**
 - And peace **will be conquering and come to conquer even more,**
 - a **series of triumphs leading to a golden age of prosperity with the promise** that **more prosperity and more peace is to come.**
- All of this, of course, is **deceptive and it's a false security.**
 - As we saw even in Matthew 24:4 and 5, Jesus said,

And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.

 - Why?

- The prophets have always said **there is no peace for the wicked.**
- False teachers say “peace, peace”, **but there is no peace.**

Intro

6 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.” ² 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.**

³ When He opened **the second seal**, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come and see.” ⁴ 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.**

⁵ 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. ⁶ 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.**”

⁷ When He opened **the fourth seal**, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come and see.” ⁸ 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.**

⁹ 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 testimony which they held.** ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who

“dwell on the earth?”¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

*¹² I looked when He opened **the sixth seal**, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and **the sun** became black as sackcloth of hair, and **the moon** became like blood.¹³ And **the stars of heaven** fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.¹⁴ Then **the sky** **receded** as a scroll when it is rolled up, and **every mountain and island was moved** out of its place.¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,¹⁶ and said to the mountains and 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 His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”***

- **The 7th Seal** will be found over in 8:1 – Silence over the earth!! – Followed by the Trumpet Judgments!!
- As we survey the picture revealed by the opening of the seals we may be a little surprised.
 - The picture is a **grim one**, but it is not particularly new.
 - **War, bloody conquest, famine and pestilence** are found in **many apocalypses**.
 - We **begin to wonder why John wept at the prospect of such well-known contents remaining undisclosed** (5:4).
- But there is **something new here, the church**.
- The **martyrs are singled out in 6:9–11**, and
 - chapter 7 is **given over to the great multitude of the redeemed**.
- **God is in control of the whole process** and God is **concerned for his people**.
- So, though the apocalyptic judgments be loosed against all mankind, believers included, **God’s people need never be dismayed**.

- They will be preserved no matter what the tribulation.

A Modern Example:

- Some years ago, a young man **named Vernon Howell, a.k.a. David Koresh**, together with over a hundred followers, held police and federal agents at bay outside a heavily armed compound near Waco, Texas.
 - The story had a tragic ending.
 - **Koresh literally believed he was Christ**, the Lamb of God and **the only one able to open the seven seals and bring about the end of the world.**
- Clearly, the ancient images of Revelation command people's attention today.
 - There have been others, through the past several centuries, who have seen as and/or cast themselves as **a/the promised Messiah, as the coming Christ!**
- Yet the idea of such a coming one has been disturbingly subject to the uses and abuses of the human imagination.
 - Today the would-be interpreter, whether scholarly, pastoral or prophetic, **these images should carry a warning label: **Danger!!****

There have been no less than 35 people over the last 3 centuries who have either been named as the Christ by others or who have called themselves the long awaited Christ (or some combo of the two)

- This horrible blasphemy has a terrifying capability to yield **incredible results!!**
 - And this – Biblically, **one-day WILL INDEED cause those results!**
 - **Handle with care!!**
- One thing for us to remember and keep in mind...
 - This is **all done by the hand of God**
 - God is a **God of order** and is **never One to allow things to just happen as they might, Willy-nilly!**

- Even when we are speaking of something as **horrible as these first 4 seals and judgments** – they **still occur in accord with God's nature**...
- And so we have to see that **even these...**

The first four seals form a unity.

- One of the things they definitely show us is:
 - **the self-defeating character of sin.**
- When **the spirit of self-aggrandizement and conquest is abroad,**
 - all God really needs to do is to let events take their **course** and sinners will inevitably be punished.
- We'll note that in the wake of conquest come war and famine and pestilence.
- This is **not the whole story** and **other aspects are brought out later**
 - (as in the first four trumpets, which show that God is **not inactive**:
 - he sends his **judgments on sinful people**).
- But **this is the aspect with which John is concerned here.**
- **After** the first four seals comes groups of two dealing with things in heaven rather than directly on earth.
 - This two (#5 & #6) are more dealing with how those matters affect the earth in a more abstract fashion...
- **The final seal, the 7th, stands apart from all the rest.**
- It is kept back until 8:1 and **ushers in the next series of visions.**
- We shall find this pattern of four, two and one repeated with the trumpets and the bowls.
- THIS CHAPTER STARTS the action of judgment upon the earth **for its wickedness.**
 - The previous two chapters were introductory,
 - **setting the stage,**
 - **showing Who was in control,** and
 - **preparing** the reader **for the coming descriptions of judgments.**

- The judgments can be divided into three main series of sevens—
 - seven seals, seven trumpets and seven vials or bowls.
- The trumpets and vials are part of the seventh seal **so all the judgments actually come from the seals.**
 - The seventh seal, seventh trumpet and seventh vial are all elongated in their report compared to the previous six judgments of each symbol.
 - Several Explanatory parenthesis are interjected periodically in the judgments within the last few chapters of Revelation consummating the prophecy of judgment showing the winners and losers and their respective destinies.
 - Revelation 6 is all about the first six seal judgments and can be divided **into six major divisions as follows:**
 1. *The First Seal—Propaganda (Revelation 6:1, 2)*
 2. *The Second Seal—Provocations (Revelation 6:3, 4)*
 3. *The Third Seal—Poverty (Revelation 6:5, 6)*
 4. *The Fourth Seal—Peril (Revelation 6:7, 8)*
 5. *The Fifth Seal—Persecution (Revelation 6:9–11)*
 6. *The Sixth Seal—Phenomena (Revelation 6:12–17)*

I. *The First Seal – Power Called Forth (1-2)*

6 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.” ² 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.

- Each seal **discloses a stage of Divine judgment.**
 - **The Seals together** speak of God’s Judgement, at least to a point as a whole!
 - Each Seal – individually – **portrays that judgment partially...**
- The first seal judgment is mild compared to the others.

- It involves the **conquering of the people by means of what we will call “propaganda”**.
- It is the “**story**” or front, testimony given to the people at large **about what would really be the best for them!**
- They **take it in** because of the sweetness of “his” speak and the **persuasiveness of his personality**.
- It **seems very clear** that it is **untrue** in its’ entirety...but nevertheless

A. The Power’s Precursor (6:1)

*“The Lamb opened **one [first one] of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder”***

- Thunder is **the precursor of a storm about to hit**.
 - **Before** a rain storm comes (and **sometimes during**), we **hear thunder**.
 - That thunder is **virtually ALWAYS intended to warn of a negative, ominous thing coming!!**
- When the **first seal was opened**, the sound of thunder **forecast a storm of judgment on the earth**.
 - This thunder speaks of a **very, very negative storm coming** that will have, as we will see, **catastrophic effects on the earth and its’ people!**
- Verse two gives an **eloquent and picturesque portrayal** of this coming power!

B. Portraying the Power (6:2)

*2 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.*

- Another white horse is **seen in Revelation 19:11–16**.
 - There (Rev. 19), the **rider is actually, the real Jesus Christ**.

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

- Thus it seems clear that the “white horse” used here is quite possibly **an attempt to deceive the world about the rider’s person or character.**
 - It would almost seem certain that the rider, as well as the riders that appears later, clearly, is **One that shows the watching world** an event that is just what he wants them to think **TRUE PEACE** and the **One bringing it TRULY IS!!**
 - The **deception works** for, as we will note more about later, it **beguiles many and helps make possible the conquering by the rider** of this horse.
 - **Not seeking to make conclusions or alarm** any one, but it surely seems like **the basis for this widespread power is beginning to form today!!**
- Verse 2 tells us about **just HOW that Power is put forth** and portrayed to those on the earth...

C. Putting Forth of the Power (6:2)

*² 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.***

- Note that **there is no arrow mentioned** as being with the bow.
- **This is the key to the character** of this evil.
 - **At least suggests** that the **conquering will be bloodless.**
 - **It will be done through propaganda**. or thru something akin to it...
 - Whatever it specifically refers to it **changes or alters the minds of those who are around when “he”** (or it) shows up.
- In the end times **people will be conditioned to believing a lie.**
 - We have to believe and understand that, **ultimately, this is because the majority at least of those people around then are in the class that the Scripture in terms of “...they have refused the truth”,**
 - Remember **back in 2 Thess.** that...

“God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thessalonians 2:11).

- **Zephaniah** said that
- The **great day of the Lord is...**

*...near and hastens quickly.
 The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter;
 There the mighty men shall cry out.
 That day is a day of wrath,
 A day of trouble and distress,
 A day of devastation and desolation,
 A day of darkness and gloominess,
 A day of clouds and thick darkness, (1:14-15)*

- The NT declares, in multiple places, that world is (and has been) **in a spiritual darkness!**
 - Christ was **a light that shined forth in a dark world!**
 - The **Gospel is as a light to those who are in such darkness as they cannot see.**
 - It tells us that **this darkness is a reason why the unredeemed cannot understand the obvious truth** of the Gospel.

- In fact, it **contributes to the way that the unsaved reject and mock the Gospel and the truth** of the Lord Jesus, the Scripture and the various truths and evidences of God’s work over the ages.
- And so!
 - It is very easy for us to see **there is already a fertile field for this white robed and gold crowned one** to come and to lead the world into what is actually **a terrible and dramatic group rebellion against God.**
- **We are seeing that end-time condition foreshadowed** in our day by the lying manipulations of political leaders and news media and the gullibility of the populace to believe the obvious lies.
- **When you witness the belief of many Americans of the lies of politicians and news media,**
 - **And likewise, of the lies, deceptions and outright misguidance of various “religious” leaders**
 - one has **no difficulty believing the end-time condition of gullibility** when evil leaders **will deceive multitudes through their propaganda.**
- In fact, v2 speaks eloquently to **the great prospering of this coming power...**

D. The Power’s Prospering (6:2)

- The **prospering or success** of the white horse and its rider is seen in two different ways in our text.

1. It is Seen in Its’ conquering. (6:2)

*² 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.***

- Scripture **attests to his success.**
 - The word translated **“conquering”** and **“conquer”** is the **same word translated “overcomer”** in the letters to the seven churches, and the **same word translated “prevailed”** in **Revelation 5:5.**

⁵ *But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has **prevailed** to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”*

2. It is Seen in his crown. (2)

“And a crown was given unto him”

- The crown was **obtained through his successful conquering**.
 - The rule or dominion is **seen in the crown and who has it**.
 - We **might be more clear** in saying that it **speaks of what it is that the “the people” will follow after and treat as true and reliable!!**
- Note the **clear pattern** here...

E. The Pattern of the Power (1, 2)

6 *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.”* ² *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.***

- This seal judgment **depicts the work of the Antichrist who will at first conquer through lies**.
 - As we have **already noted**, the gullibility of our day
 - (seen in **the ready acceptance of the talk of liberal politicians and of news media**)
 - ...this says the **end-time conditions** are certainly **tuned for one to come and conquer through propaganda**.

*“Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness ... God shall send them **strong delusion, that they should believe a lie**” (2 Thessalonians 2:9–11).*

- **Like Antiochus Epiphanes, who foreshadowed him,** the Antichrist

“shall come in peaceably [bow without the arrow], and obtain the kingdom by flatteries” (Daniel 11:21).

- Just to note, **the presence of the bow w/out the arrow implies a sort of “I could, but I won’t, so appreciate me!”**
 - “All the **other, prior bozos may have forced themselves on you, BUT I can do it in a nice and desirable way!!**”
 - It implies that this “**choosing**” to be peaceful will be **perhaps the main “selling point” for this guy!**
 - It could be that the current “*Why can’t we all get along*” and **worldly appreciation of men/women who seek to join us all in “peace” is a prelude or ‘floor layer’ this great coming seal judgement...**
- This **brings us to the breaking of the second seal judgement...the actions of this coming one to actually take peace away and to bring war!!**

II. The Second Seal—Provocations (3-4)

³ When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come and see.” ⁴ 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.

- **The peace that the rider of the first horse brought to earth without bloodshed will apparently be short-lived,**
 - ...and soon that’s peace will be **shattered by the provocations of bloody wars.**
 - The **end-time is not characterized by peace and tranquility.**
 - No matter what **the society that enters into that time thinks** – that time of peace **cannot and will not come for any real length of time!!**
- John tells us of what we can call a “**precursor**” to this second seal judgment...

A. The Precursor of the Provocations (6:3-4)

³ *When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come and see.”*

- Another call **from the living creatures around the throne**
 - This one again calls for John to “**Come and see**” (actually **only the one word – an emphatic “come!”**)
- Scarlet is **the color of blood**, and, therefore,
 - ...the color of the horse is really **a precursor of the bloody ordeal of this judgment.**
 - We note that the **key idea here is the LACK of the peace or calm that the first seal had installed.**
 - Whereas “**He**” had established **a world-wide peace & quiet**, this judgment **treads that away and institutes war** instead!

B. The “Peacelessness” That Results From the Provocations (6:4)

⁴ *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.*

- Just by way of observation, we want to note that it **isn’t a matter of peace simply fading away or being lost or not achieved...**
 - This one has the **power to “**TAKE**” peace from the earth...**
 - **And it is from the entire earth, not just a small part of it...**
 - It is a **world-wide effect on the entire area that the Antichrist gave a false/human peace to earlier...**
 - **That peace fails and degenerates into war with, what we’ll see are**

- **...what have been the historic effects and physical results of wars fought among men...**

- All rulers, **including the Antichrist**, will learn that you cannot have peace without the Prince of Peace, namely, Jesus Christ.
 - But the choice will have already been made to cast Him (the Lord) aside!!
 - Any peace falsely obtained will be superficial, for underneath is human hostility just waiting to break out.
- The implication is that there was knowledge of the necessity of the coming of war and **that the peace given before was only to entice men into submission to the Antichrist's web.**
 - **War will be needful to complete the Antichrist's agenda**
 - It will require a bow with an arrow to put down the hostilities which will be bloody and terrible, awful as this seal describes.
- War has always been a present horror of human society, even in the oldest Bible records:
- In **Genesis 14:2** we read off the **first hint of war in the OT:**

...that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).

- We're also told that **war also essentially originates in our man-centered desires: James 4:1** tells us this pretty clearly:

Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that battle (war) in your members?

- **King Solomon said that, given the nature of men as they strive to live together on the earth has demonstrated that really, there was a "time for war" meaning that it was inevitable (because of the nature of man) and that it would be seen from time to time!**

- In Eccl 3:8 in a famous and familiar verse he said that **there is, as a part of living:**

A time to love, And a time to hate; A time of war, And a time of peace.

- **Until sin is removed**, there will always be at least a degree of a lack of peace.

- **True and genuine Peace is only available through Jesus Christ.**

- The greatest need of peace is with God and that comes through Christ (Romans 5:1).

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

- If we do not have peace with God, we will not have any lasting peace with man.
- No matter WHAT the self-perception of man is – a lack of peace with God undermines true peace with other men!!

- We do **want to note that** this bringing of war is **not meant to be understood as coming in a mere moment...**

- This terrible, destructive and harmful effect on the world and mankind, comes in a fairly gradual or subtle way.

C. The Perniciousness in the Provocations (Revelation 6:4)

⁴ 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.

- This is **not meant** to speak of some immediate and uproarious running to war by all people everywhere...
 - Rather, we **ought to see** that...
- Lack of peace in the world **means war and war means killing.**

- Bloody hostilities **break out in various places over some bit of time all over the globe** in the end time.
- This seems to be **what Jesus had in mind back in Matt. 24:6-7** when he warned:

*And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, **but the end is not yet.** For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.*

- **The “end” He speaks of** is His return at the end of the Tribulation...
 - **Her does seem to be talking about the prelude and first time of the Tribulation though...**
- **It does seem clear though that He had this 2nd seal and its’ opening in mind, at least to some degree...**
 - That brings us to consider **just what this seal produces as it is **opened and takes its’ effect...****

D. The Product of the Provocations (6:4)

*⁴ 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.***

- The “*great sword*” **says the killing will be extensive.**
 - There will be **much slaughter in the killing.**
 - It **emphasizes the devastating product** of these provocations.
 - **War can be devastating** in taking human lives.
- **In our lifetime we have seen wars take the lives of hundreds of thousands of people all over the globe.**
 - **War leaves a bloody trail** of death.
 - It is a “*great sword*” of destruction.
 - It is **not merely war** – it is **BIG TIME WAR!!**
- This leads us to the **opening of the 3rd seal -**

III. **The Third Seal – Terrible Poverty (5-6)**

⁵ 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. ⁶ 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.**”

- **Famine is the theme of the third seal and where there is famine there is great poverty of food but also a great poverty of money.**
 - People starve because of **no food** and **no money** to buy food.

A. The Portrait of the Poverty (6:5)

⁵ 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.

- “I beheld, and lo a black horse” (Revelation 6:5).
 - Black is a color **traditionally thought of as speaking of famine in the Scripture.**

“Our skin was black like an oven because of the terrible famine” (Lamentations 5:10).

- The judgment of a poverty of food is the next trouble that befalls the wicked world.
- Famine or the “Poverty of food” is something that the Bible has a lot to speak of:
 - The Law said that is something that is sent by God, often because of their sin:

Lev 26:21 ‘Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins.’

Lev 26:26 When I have cut off your supply of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall bring back your bread by weight, and you shall eat and not be satisfied.

- Solomon reinforced this over in Lam 4:4–6

4 The tongue of the infant clings To the roof of its mouth for thirst; The young children ask for bread, But no one breaks it for them. 5 Those who ate delicacies Are desolate in the streets; Those who were brought up in scarlet Embrace ash heaps. 6 The punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people Is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, Which was overthrown in a moment, With no hand to help her!

- Ezekiel said that this would be one of God’s four severe judgments on Jerusalem.

Ezek 14:21 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?”

- As an extension of the current idea here in Rev. 6 the OT Prophets Hosea and Haggai said that a famine is specifically caused when God’s blessing that which throughout time has brought forth the lands good provision, is withheld!

Hos 2:8–9 For she did not know That I gave her grain, new wine, and oil, And multiplied her silver and gold— Which they prepared for Baal. 9 “Therefore I will return and take away My grain in its time And My new wine in its season, And will take back My wool and My linen, Given to cover her nakedness.

Hag 1:6 “You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes.”

- THIS is a fairly good description of just what is happening here in the 3rd seal!!
 - It is God's judgment brought into force as He withholds what has been His historic way of making provision for His creation!
 -
- We should, in addition, understand that the 3rd seal has effect on more than just the food area!
 - Often severe.
 - Gen 12:10 Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land.
 - 1 Kin 18:2 So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and there was a severe famine in Samaria.
 - Jer 52:6 By the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.
 - Expressed by

B. The Progression in the Poverty (6:5)

⁵ 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.

- A famine is a sequence of war.
 - Where war has occurred, the afflicted nations will experience famine.
 - The raw products used to make farm machinery have been used to make war implements,
 - and the men who did the farming have all gone to war.
- The ravages of war leaves nations without the ability to produce food.
 - Famine then stalks these nations as history books attest.
- The second seal horse represented bloody conflict/war so it is not surprising that this next horse speaks of famine.

- The emphasis of the scales or balances is upon selling.
- And the context emphasizes the selling in a famine.

C. The Prices Seen in the Poverty (6)

.⁶ 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.”

- For those in America where a penny is the cheapest coin, the translation here can be very misleading.
 - Actually the word translated “penny” speaks of a coin that at that time was a day’s wage for the typical worker.
 - The amount of food was very small—some say it was what was given a slave.
- At any rate inflation soared and poverty soared because of the extremely high prices that always come during a famine.
 - Not only does the lack of food ravage the body but the inflated prices ravage the economy of the society until like Egypt in Joseph’s day “money failed” (Genesis 47:15),

***15 So when the money failed** in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, “Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence? For the money has failed.”*

- and eventually the people had to resort to extreme actions (selling themselves) in order to get food to live.

D. The Profiteering During the Poverty (6:6)

⁶ 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.”

- When poverty is rampant, there are those who profit big time from the hard times.
 - The oil and wine represent the property of the wealthy, and
 - these products are protected during the difficult times of the famine,

- so the rich become richer and the poor become poorer.
- When I was younger...in my small town,
 - I knew of unscrupulous profiteering men, who during the depression (real depression, not a synthetic depression talked up by politicians for their political advantages) of the twenties and thirties profited greatly.
- They brought up a lot of real estate during the depression, then made big money renting and selling it later.
 - So this time of famine and poverty that ravages the world will not be without the wicked profiteering people who only make the judgments of God worse by their cruel actions.

IV. The Fourth Seal – Great Peril (7-8)

⁷ When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come and see.” ⁸ 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.

- Things do not get better with the fourth seal.
 - It is like pouring salt in the wound.
 - But judgment does not result in repentance so more judgment comes.

A. The Proclaimer of the Peril (7)

*⁷ When He opened the fourth seal, I heard **the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come and see.”***

- In the first four seals one of the four beasts around the throne says to John, “Come and see.”
 - However, the next three seals will not have any proclaimer of “Come and see” but simply occur as the seal is opened.
 - That produces a Septenary division of the seals into four and three.

- This 7-oriented division of four and three is also true in the seven trumpets judgments and the seven vials judgments.

B. The Precursor of the Peril (6:8)

⁸ 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 corpse-like color of the horse is in keeping with the name and character of the rider” (Scott).
 - As with the other horses, the color is a precursor of the judgment to come.
 - Death is the name of the rider of this horse
 - (the only rider named of the four horses),
 - and the color of the horse matches the judgment especially represented by the rider.

C. The Pair Bringing the Peril (Revelation 6:8)

⁸ 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.

- It is interesting that Death and hell seem to be an inseparable pair.
 - “Hell” is a misleading translation. “Hell” is the final destiny of the soul. The Greek word translated “Hell” here is “hades” which is the temporary abode of the soul of the deceased sinner. It is no picnic as Luke 16 says and eternal Hell (the final abode of the wicked) will only be worse.

D. The Particulars of the Peril (8)

“To kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth”

- Four great perils are inflicted upon the earth to bring much death.

1. *The Peril of The Sword.*

“To kill with the sword.”

- There will be much killing, murder, war, crime in the judgments. Men will help bring judgment upon themselves by their evil conduct. Preparation for that killing is going on today in all the millions of abortions.

2. *The Peril of Starvation.*

“To kill ... with hunger.”

- The previous seal judgment emphasized the problem of food scarcity as part of Divine judgment. To die of starvation is a terrible death. So much so that Scripture says, *“They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger”* (Lamentations 4:9). Being slain by the sword here means quick death. Starvation is a slow agonizing death.

3. *The Peril of Sickness.*

“To kill ... with death.”

- Some translate the word *“death”* here as disease or pestilence. This corresponds with the order Christ gave when He spoke of the end-times in what is known as the Olivet discourse—*“Ye shall hear of wars ... There shall be famines, and pestilences”* (Matthew 24:6, 7). After wars (the second seal), famine comes (third seal) and also many diseases plague war-torn nations (fourth seal).

4. *The Peril of Savagery.*

“To kill ... with the beasts of the earth.”

- The world will become a hunting ground for wild savage beasts. Today they seem to be curtailed in most countries, but Divine judgment will result in the beasts becoming dominate and deadly.

E. The People in the Peril (8)

*⁸ 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.***

- These are staggering statistics. One fourth of the world's population will die in this fourth seal judgment. The sword, starvation, sickness and savage beasts will take so many lives that only 75% of the world's population will survive. Funeral homes will be swamped with business.

V. The Fifth Seal - Persecution (9-11)

- The fifth seal is different from the other seals in that it does not portray judgment but shows what provokes judgment. It is unique among the seals in this characteristic.
 - Fifth Seal: The Cry of the Martyrs

⁹ 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 testimony which they held. ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

A. The Scene Shown from Persecution (9)

*"I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held"
(6:9).*

- John saw a very provocative (to righteousness) scene. It was a scene which showed the souls of martyrs.

1. The Cost in the Scene.

“I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held.”

- These were martyrs who paid the ultimate price, namely, death, in standing for the Lord. It costs to live for God. There is sacrifice involved. That sacrifice may be your life.

2. The Cause of the Scene.

“For the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.”

- The cause for the martyrdom is plainly stated here. When they were martyred, the cause proclaimed by men would be different. Christians are often accused of being the problem in society and of being bigots and full of hate and other false charges. But in heaven the true charge will be revealed. People do not like the Bible and they do not like anyone standing for God or Christ. That is why they kill them. They will trump up false charges to make the killing look acceptable but heaven will give the true cause of the killing.

3. The Consecration in the Scene.

“For the testimony which they held.”

- They would not give up their faith. They “held” on to it faithfully, even if it cost them their life. God’s people are often tested as to the extent of their consecration.

B. The Plea Made by the Persecuted (6:10)

“How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (6:10).

- The supplication of the martyrs was a prayer for Divine judgment on the persecutors.

1. The Passion in the Supplication.

“Cried with a loud voice.”

- This was an earnest prayer, the kind that gets God’s attention.

2. *The Pain in the Supplication.*

“How long.”

- It is difficult for the wronged to see injustice continue on and on unchecked.

3. *The Piety in the Supplication.*

“O Lord, holy and true.”

- The piety or reverence is threefold.

a. *First, the Humility in the Piety.*

“Lord.”

- Piety is humble. It takes the inferior position to God and calls Him “*Lord.*”

b. *Second, the Holiness in the Piety.*

“Holy.”

- Piety recognizes God as without sin.

c. *Third, the honesty in the piety.*

“True.”

- Piety acknowledges God as genuine, a God of integrity, of faithfulness, of justice.

4. *The Punishment in the Supplication.*

“Judge and avenge.”

- The supplication is for justice. So it speaks first of examination (“*judge*”) and then condemnation (“*avenge*”). It is a fair court. Examination comes before condemnation. Investigation comes before indictment; probing before punishment.

5. *The Persecutors of the Supplication.*

“On them that dwell on the earth.”

- The persecutors, in spite of their evil, are doing well on the earth. They seem to be getting away with their cruel murderous

ways. But sooner or later the heavenly whistle will blow and judgment will be eternal for these persecutors.

C. The Sanctification of the Persecuted (6:11)

“White robes were given every one of them” (Revelation 6:11).

- The white color of the robe speaks of approval. It is a robe of honor. The persecuted saints will be honored in heaven. On earth they were despised, persecuted and martyred, but in heaven it will be different. They will be honored in heaven. Those despised on earth are often those honored in heaven.

D. The Season of Persecution (Revelation 6:11)

“It was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled” (Revelation 6:11).

- Persecution on earth was not over yet; there was still more to come, and the martyred saints were to wait until all of this had been completed. God is giving the persecutors time to repent, but instead of repenting, they only add to their ledger of evil by doing more persecuting.

E. The Slaying During the Persecution (6:11)

“That should be killed as they were” (6:11).

- The persecution to come was as bad as the persecution of the past. It would shed blood. Persecution aims at killing those who would stand for Christ. They killed Christ and they will kill as many of His followers as possible. This knowledge provokes judgment for the wicked in the world.

VI. *The Sixth Seal – Various (Mostly) Cosmic Phenomena and Their Effects (6:12–17)*

¹² I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as

sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. ¹³ And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. ¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and 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 His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

- The sixth and final seal of this chapter brought much trauma to the world. Great phenomena occurred to show God’s holiness and His wrath on sin.

A. The Extent of the Phenomena (6:12–14)

- Tremendous phenomena occurred.
 - Whereas the first four seals were judgments brought upon man by man, this seal depicts judgment only heaven could produce.

1. The earthly phenomena. (12, 14)

*¹² I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great **earthquake**; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.*

*¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and **every mountain and island was moved out of its place.***

- “Earthquake ... every mountain and island were moved out of their places” (6:12, 14).
- Great earthquakes accompany significant Divine action. There are three great earthquakes in (Revelation 6:12; 11:13; and 16:18, 19). There was an earthquake at the giving of the law (Exodus 19:18), during Elijah’s day (1 Kings 19:11) and an earthquake in Philippi that freed Paul and Silas from prison (Acts 16:26). The Bible also reports an earthquake during King Uzziah’s reign (Zechariah 14:5), an earthquake at the crucifixion (Matthew 27:51–54) and resurrection of Christ

(Matthew 28:2). Christ predicted earthquakes for the end times (Matthew 24:7).

2. *The Heavenly Phenomena. (12-14)*

Sixth Seal: Cosmic Disturbances

*¹² I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and **the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.** ¹³ And **the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.** ¹⁴ **Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.***

- Phenomena in the sun, the satellite (“moon”), the stars and the sky (“heaven”) were great and alarming. They could only be caused by Divine intervention. He Who created the universe would have no trouble changing the universe.

B. The Effect of the Phenomena (15–17)

¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and 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 His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

- The phenomena had a great effect upon the inhabitants of the world.

1. The Scare From the effect.

- Not surprisingly, the phenomena caused great trepidation amongst the people of the earth.

a. First, the people who were scared. (15)

*¹⁵ And the **kings** of the earth, the **great men**, the **rich men**, the **commanders**, the **mighty men**, every slave and every **free man**, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains*

- The list includes everyone on the earth and notably the big shots as well who could not bluster their way through the phenomena.

b. Second, the performance in the scare. (16)

¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!”

- The significant thing about the performance here is that the people did not repent. Asking for the mountains and rocks to fall on them was not repentance.

2. The Foolishness in the effect.

- The people reflected their stupidity in what they did and said.

a. First, their stupidity in their desire.

“Said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne” (Revelation 6:16).

- What a dumb desire. If the mountains and rocks fell on them, they would be crushed to death, not protected. Their protection from Divine judgment was not in physical things of the earth but in repenting of their sins so the Lord could protect them.

b. Second, their stupidity in their declaration.

“The great day of his wrath is come” (Revelation 6:17).

- Wrong. It was just beginning. If they think this was bad, wait till God lets loose all His judgments on the earth.

c. Third, their stupidity in their deduction.

“Who shall be able to stand?”

- These people knew the answers to many questions, but they did not know the answer to the most important question of all, namely, how to stand in judgment. They did not know how to be saved. Many folk are like that today, they may be experts in their fields but they do not know how to escape eternal damnation, they are ignorant of the answer to the most

important question of life, namely, “*Who shall be able to stand [in the day of Divine wrath]?*”

3. The Wisdom in the effect. (16)

*¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from **the wrath of the Lamb!**”*

- There was some wisdom in what they said. While they were ignorant of the fact that it was not the “*great day of his wrath,*” they at least recognized that the traumatic and fearful phenomena was Divine retribution. Today if you mention Divine retribution as the cause of earthquakes or hurricanes or tornadoes or other disasters, you are ridiculed and scorned greatly. How dare you think that the earth is being judged by God? is the foolish attitude of the world. Thus they will not repent when God sends catastrophes because of sin.