

Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 3:41 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Revelation 6

"For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever will be! And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. For the sake of the elect those days will be cut short!" (Matthew 24:21-22)

Last week we completed Revelation 4-5 which, taken together, provides the introduction and background for what John Walvoord describes as the "tremendous sweeping of prophetic events that are predicted in the rest of the book of Revelation"! John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, while in exile on the Isle of Patmos, receives a heavenly vision, and is "in the Spirit" when, suddenly, he sees an open door into heaven and God the Father sitting on His throne, in all His glory, holding a scroll in His right hand a scroll sealed up with seven seals, which no one in heaven or on earth, or under the earth (they thought), was worthy to open! But then, "beholding the Lamb, as if slain...standing with the four living creatures and twenty-four elders before the throne"! He is worthy to open the scroll, one of the elders tells John, because He (the Lamb of God, in His first advent) is now working as the Lion of Judah, the Root of David who has "overcome" and therefore worthy to open the scroll! And when He takes the scroll, the four living creatures (the Seraphim) and the twenty-four elders, representing the saints who have been raptured, "fall down in worship before Him and sing a new song:

"Worthy are You to take the scroll and to break the seals; for You were slain and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth!"

This was followed by myriads and myriads of angels and the living creatures and the elders around the throne singing with voices of praise to the Lamb and picturing a time when "every living thing which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them" will be singing, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever"!

Chapter 5 ends with the four living creatures worshipping, and saying continually, "Amen!" Amen, Amen, Amen! Let it be!

And so, the scene is set for Revelation 6 and John seeing, in a vision, the opening of the seven seals and a preview of the things to come! With each seal unleashing a new demonstration of God's judgment on the earth in the future "tribulation period"! MacArthur calls it "a trip into the future"!

The opening of the seven seals was not only made visible, in a vision, to John but is now made known to us, in the Scriptures because God told him to write it down for that very reason! And there's a remarkable parallel between the order and description of the events unveiled in Revelation 6 and a description given by Jesus to His disciples during His first advent on earth, in answer to their questions, in Matthew 24, about the "signs of His coming (back) to the earth and the end of the age."

John writes in Revelation 6:1-2, "Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying, as with a voice of thunder, 'Come!' And I looked, and behold, a white horse, and who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer!"

Horses in Scripture are normally associated with triumph and conquest and majesty! And, in fact, Revelation 19:11 says that Jesus will one day be coming back to the earth (triumphantly) "sitting on a white horse"! But this is not Jesus in Revelation 6! But a "deceiver" and, if not the "Antichrist" himself, certainly representing the Antichrist, who will promise peace and prosperity to a longing world totally ready to be lured into a trap by his deception!

Jesus said, in Matthew 24:4-5, "See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ, and will mislead many!'"

2 Thessalonians 2:9-11 says, "That is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved! For this reason, God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth but took pleasure in wickedness!"

Jeremiah prophesies (in Jeremiah 8:11 and elsewhere) how the people will be talking about, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace!"

And that's what the world will discover as the second seal is released, in Revelation 6:3-4, "When he broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, 'Come!' And another, a red horse went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay on another; and a great sword was given to him!"

And so, the longed-for peace is taken away and war breaks out!

Jesus said, in Matthew 24:6-7, "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes!"

All of which leads to the third seal (and the third of the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse")!

Revelation 6:5-6, "When he broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, 'Come!' And I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures, saying, 'A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine!'"

In the aftermath of war, a great famine is revealed, and "rationing" will take place because of the scarcity of food. Bare staples will become luxuries, and there will not be enough food for the

family! And the hope for peace and prosperity is doomed! Resulting in death! And the fourth seal!

Revelation 6:7-8, When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, 'Come!' I looked and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them (apparently all four "horsemen") to kill with the sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth" (maybe including rats, spreading deadly diseases?)!

But the end is not yet! In fact, this is only the first three and a half years of the seven-year tribulation! And it's going to get increasingly worse!

In Matthew 24:8, Jesus says, "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs" Merely?

Seal five, we believe, marks the middle of the tribulation, bridging the time between the wrath of God exhibited in the first half of the tribulation and His full fury exhibited in the second! And persecution of believers also begins big time!

Revelation 6:9-11 says, "When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar (the altar of incense, Dan Crenshaw suggested last night) the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth? And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also."

Jesus said, in Matthew 24:9-13, "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name! At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold! But the one who endures to the end will be saved. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come!" Wow!

So, who are "the souls who were slain" in Revelation 6:9? Obviously, believers whose souls were in heaven, but who had not yet received their resurrected bodies! But wasn't the church and all believers "raptured" before the tribulation?

Yes, but there apparently will be many who will be saved during the tribulation period! And this is not surprising, in retrospect, when we see all the evangelism that will be taking place during the tribulation period, which we'll be seeing as we progress through our study of Revelation! For example, there will be 144,000 "redeemed" Jews (12,000 from each of the twelve tribes) who will serve as a kind of missionary corps, and protected by God while they perform their mission (as we'll see in Revelation 7), and "two witnesses" who will be granted special power and authority by God to preach a message of judgment and salvation for "twelve hundred and sixty

days, clothed in sackcloth" (in Revelation 11). And, most surprising (to me), an angel (in Revelation 14:6-7) "flying in mid-heaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people..." Wow!

And so, apparently, there will be great revival on the earth during the tribulation! Along with even greater persecution and lots of martyrdom! All of which gives greater understanding (at least for me!) of Jesus' words in Matthew 24:14) that "the gospel shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come"!

Meanwhile the Antichrist will take his seat in the temple (we will learn), displaying himself as "god"! And those who oppose him, ironically, will be considered "heretics" and "blasphemers," would you believe?

2 Thessalonians 2:2-4 says, "Let no one deceive you, for it (speaking of the "Day of the Lord") will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as God!" Wow!

All of which sets up the sixth seal which, we believe, takes us into the second three-and-a-half-year period of the tribulation, known as the "Great Tribulation"! Where things get worse!

Revelation 6:12-17 says, "I looked when he broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth...and the whole moon became like blood; and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. The sky was split apart like a scroll (wow, another scroll) when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of their places. Then the kings of the earth and the great men hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountain; and they said to the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Wow! With this seal comes the first time apparently where the leaders and the "great men" of the world recognize that it is God who is orchestrating all these things! But instead of appealing to Him, they pray to "mother nature," or whatever! Wow! Who is able to stand but those who put their trust in God and avail themselves of the grace of God, through faith in Jesus Christ (the Lamb)! The message hasn't changed!

Jesus calls it all this way, in Matthew 24:15-25, "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house! Whoever is in the field must not turn his back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on the Sabbath. For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will! Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for sake of the elect those days will be cut short! Then if anyone says to you,

'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance!" Wow! (Lengthy, but better His words than mine!)

Dan Crenshaw closed out his remarks last night on Revelation 6 by saying that it should cause us, as believers, to "rejoice and tremble"! Rejoice that we won't be around for the tribulation, but tremble for those who will!

Well, on to Revelation 7!

Makes me think of the words to that Bill Gaither song, "In that great get'n up morning, fare thee well, fare thee well!"

Lowell