

The Return of the King Revelation 6-19

Coming Soon: Global Peace, Safety & Prosperity

Revelation 6:2

As we open to Rev. 6:2, I wonder if most of us remember what directly precedes the launch of the Tribulation? The way that Jesus, Paul, John & Daniel all describe the start of the Tribulation is not with disasters, wars, famines, and pestilences. The Tribulation begins, according to the Bible, with global peace, safety, and prosperity.

For decade after decade we in Christ's church have been well taught about the inexorable slide our world is in, heading towards the final war.

Armageddon and the apocalyptic events associated with it are even part of secular media reports. We hear regularly of the dangers of nuclear war, bio-terrorism, pollution, and global warming.

It seems like every day we are seeing more and more of what the Bible talks about, with our world plunging deeper into chaos, ethnic conflicts, horrific acts of terrorism and aggression, and what seems like more and more natural disasters. God's Word warns of all these plagues, quakes, and famines. Do all those conditions mean that the Tribulation is close? The real question we need to find the answer to, from God's Word is:

Which Comes First: Global Peace or Global Holocaust?

Is Earth sliding straight down the slope into the fiery destruction, demon hordes, solar scorching, and global holocaust as described in Revelation? In other words, will things get darker and darker, and disasters amplify until the Tribulation scene bursts into view? The answer God's Word gives may surprise you.

Ultimately all those disasters will hit, but temporarily, God says a time of unprecedented prosperity and peace is coming our way.

Although all those prophesied disasters are coming, God explains that just prior to the Tribulation, the world experiences the peace and safety, and the prosperity and harmony, that mankind has always been dreamed of.

Just before the worst time in history, the world may well see the best times humans have ever enjoyed this side of the Garden of Eden.

Revelation 6:2 reminds us this morning, that the peace and safety, that humans have cried out for over the past six thousands years, since the fall of humanity into sin, is finally going to come. But it is a:

Temporary Global Peace & Safety

There is coming a day in the not too distant future when a superman is going to rise. This man amazingly, to everyone's grateful surprise, at last brings to Earth the peace and safety that has always been longed for. Listen to God's introduction to the first element of the Tribulation's seals unleashed in Revelation 6:2

Rev. 6:1-2 (NKJV) 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.

One of the surest signs of the end of days is when the entire earth arrives at a time of peace, safety, and prosperity. Did you know that?

Did you know that Jesus describes the time leading up to the End of Days as a time of peace, safety, and prosperity? Paul says the same thing? And, right here in Rev. 6:2 we see that also. Some sort of Global Peace is the very first picture God gives of the opening of the Tribulation. Did you notice that?

What Christ shows John here in Rev. 6, and then has John write down for us, is a lesson in Divine Inspiration. The doctrine we all need to understand and hold to tightly, is the truth that God's Word is a direct revelation, given by God, sent to us, that tells us exactly what God wants us to know.

God's Word is inspired. God's Word is truth. God's Word is flawless, perfect, inerrant, and trustworthy.

God sent us Revelation to show us as His servants, the things that were going to happen in this world, according to our Almighty God's perfect plans. We can trust God to alone know the future, and this is what He says.

Four Truths From Revelation 6:2

1. God Unleashes Powerful, Rapid, & Global Forces

First, we note that this is the first of **Four Horsemen** (or symbols of power) that launch the Apocalypse. *“And I looked, and behold” (Rev. 6:2a).*

John looks and sees a scene unfold that involves what most Bible teachers describe as “the four horsemen of the Apocalypse”. As each seal is broken a horse is unleashed onto the earth. Each horse is a different color. Each horse has a different rider. Each horse symbolizes a powerful, global impact. As John sees the first, second, third, and fourth of the seven seals broken, he relates to us that each seal launches into the earth, a horseman: the fastest known means of travel in the First Century.

Horses for us today are beautiful creatures that have become somewhat of a hobby animal, or a form of sports. They are expensive to maintain and not really vital for life in modern times. How unlike are our times, to those of the Bible.

In Biblical times horse were vital for travel, vital for communications, and vital for warfare. Horses are always associated in the Scriptures with power (Job 39:19-25). They were the fastest known means of transportation. They also were the most powerful means of warfare when they pulled chariots, and carried swordsmen and archers. A charging cavalry was always seen as a symbol of power and conquest.

Each of these horsemen are not revealing an individual person as the rider, but a powerful force that God unleashes to rapidly (fastest known travel of the day) sweep through the Earth. Each of the horsemen symbolizes, and communicates a powerful force, rapidly unleashed by God, into the Tribulation:

- In v.2 white is for the rapid global spread of false, temporary, and deceptive peace;
- In v.4 red is for a rapid global spread of warfare and bloodshed;
- In v.5 black is for a rapid global spread of famine and scarcity;
- And in v. 8 pale green is for the gangrenous color of death through a rapid global spread of pestilence and death.

So first, the Tribulation starts with God unleashing some powerful, rapid, global forces. Next note that:

2. God Says that Global Deception Comes First.

Next notice that the first horse is **White**. “*a white horse*” (Rev. 6:2b).

Just as 2 Corinthians 11:14 reminds us, Satan can transform himself to appear as an angel of light, rather than the angel of darkness that he really is. So white is not always a sign of God or of purity, it can also be a symbol for deception (the angel of light that Satan masquerades as), or here of a false and temporary peace.

Most conservative Bible teachers take this first horseman as a symbol of the rapid spread of global peace. It is a temporary peace, but it is unleashed, and called forth by God to launch the Tribulation. Global peace is what mankind has always wanted, so God gives them what they want, through a series of deceivers, the chiefest of whom becomes the Antichrist.

For just a moment turn back to Matthew 24:36, for Christ's personal description of the Tribulation. The Judge Himself tells us exactly what the earth will be like just before He starts this cataclysmic, global holocaust. Christ's description always amazes me when I think of the powder keg that surrounds us each day we live.

Right now the earth is one big ticking bomb of nuclear arsenals, biological and chemical warfare agents; of trained terrorists, of special forces, and soldiers; of nations bristling with unbelievable amounts of weaponry; and on top of all those external dangers we all face as humans the depletion of breathable clean air, of drinkable water supplies, of available food producing land, and of energy sources. That is daily life as we know it: dangerous and depleting.

But in Matthew 24:36, as Jesus describes the Tribulation, He says that just before the global holocaust hits, the whole earth is going to be like one big party: A global time of peace, prosperity, safety, and enjoyment. Life will seem wonderful on earth.

Listen to how unaware people will be of the impending doom:

Matthew 24:36-39 (NKJV) “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. ³⁷ But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ **and did not know until the flood came and took them all away**, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

The NIV says in v. 39: “they knew nothing about what would happen”.
The NAS says in v. 39: “they did not understand”.
The ESV says in v. 39: “They were unaware”.

Today everyone is afraid Iran may start World War III, and if not Iran, maybe North Korea will, and if not them maybe a Global Jihad, or an asteroid, or a global pandemic of bird flu will terrorize us. If not that type of disaster then the European Debt crisis, or the global water crisis, or the skyrocketing price of food.

But suddenly all that fear melts away, the feelings of danger evaporates, and a deceptive peace, safety, security suddenly surrounds the planet. That is when the Tribulation starts. Next note back in Rev. 6 that:

3. **God Unleashes Judgment, Not the Judge Himself.**

Note that this is **Not Christ**. *“He who sat on it had a bow;” (Rev. 6:2c).*

Some have mistakenly connected the white horse with Christ in Rev. 19:11-15. The problem is that Christ does not ride in to start the Tribulation, but to end it. He also carries a sword, not a bow; and He has many crowns, not just one. This is not a symbol of Christ, but rather, of the ones who comes falsely as Christs, these are all the deceivers, and ultimately the Antichrist.

Note the words “had a bow”. What we see is one with a bow but no arrows. He has the power (a bow), but doesn’t have to use his power to fight for his way (shooting arrows).

This is a powerful, deceptive, false peace that spreads almost without any resistance throughout the earth. Unlike Christ's way of peace, truth, and life: which is hard, and an agonizing struggle, this false Christ wins the hearts and allegiance of humans easily and quickly. Finally, note from Rev. 6:2 that:

4. **God Allows People to Have What they Really Want**

Note the wording, *“and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.” (Rev. 6:2d).*

Each element of the Tribulation that is launched here in Rev. 6 is planned by God, and unleashed according to His purposes. God always gives to each of us what we

really, deeply, from the center of our being really want. Be careful what you REALLY want, God knows, and will let you get what you really want.

Note how John writes that “a crown was given”. This means God allowed and sent this event. Mankind has always wanted peace but have also always been unwilling to bow to the Prince of Peace to obtain real peace.

So God offers them a false peace, from a false Christ, and they bow before the false peacemaker and worship him. That is the First Horseman of the Apocalypse.

How Does Revelation 6 Fit with the Rest of God's Word?

Since God inspired all of the Scriptures, is this section of the Bible consistent with the rest of the Bible?

What is so amazing is that these first four elements of Revelation 6’s four seals follow exactly the same script for the Tribulation period, as Jesus gave in the Gospels.

So, to get the big perspective on the Tribulation Period, look at Christ's simple outline in Matthew 24. Jesus basically tells us that there are seven facets, or characteristics of the Tribulation that brings humanity to the end of days.

In brief these are: 1). v. 4-5: deception; 2). v. 6-7: warfare; 3). v. 7a: famine; 4). v. 7b: deadly pestilences & quakes; 5). v. 9: deadly persecution of believers; 6). v. 29: cosmic darkness; and finally 7). v. 39: globally destructive cataclysms. You may even want to note by marking these right there in your Bibles as I walk you through

Christ's Words	Seven Seals	Description
Matthew 24:4-5 (NKJV) And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you . ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many .	Seal # 1 Revelation 6:1-2 (NKJV) 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. [Note v. 3 “take peace from the earth”]	Deceptive, Temporary, False, Global Peace

Christ's Words	Seven Seals	Description
Matthew 24:6-7a (NKJV) And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all <i>these things</i> must	Seal # 2 Revelation 6:3-4 (NKJV) 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	Global Warfare

come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.	to take peace from the earth, and that <i>people</i> should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.	
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Christ's Words	Seven Seals	Description
Matthew 24:7b (NKJV) And there will be famines,	Seal # 3 Revelation 6:5-6 (NKJV) 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."	Global Famine and Scarcity

Christ's Words	Seven Seals	Description
Matthew 24:7c (NKJV) pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.	Seal # 4 Revelation 6:7-8 (NKJV) 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.	Global Quakes, Pestilences & Death

Christ's Words	Seven Seals	Description
Matthew 24:9 (NKJV) "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you , and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.	Seal # 5 Revelation 6:9 (NKJV) 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.	Global Persecution & Cries for Justice

Christ's Words	Seven Seals	Description
Matthew 24:29 (NKJV) "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.	Seal # 6 Revelation 6:12-14 (NKJV) 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.	Global Cosmic Darkness

Christ's Words	Seven Seals	Description
Matthew 24:39 (NKJV) and did not know until the flood came and took them all away , so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.	Seal # 7 Revelation 8:1-2 (NKJV) When He opened the seventh seal , there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.	Global Cataclysms that brings in the End

So Revelation 6 follows the exact same plan or script for what God has decided is going to happen in the future. That means that:

Eschatology is a Vital Doctrine

We started our study this morning with the doctrine of Inspiration: that God actually breathed out for us His Word, the Bible, that is flawless, and eternal. A second doctrine to remember today is that Biblical Prophecy is also a doctrine. Eschatology is very important to God, and should be to us.

Do you remember that Matthew 24 was Christ's longest answer to any question every asked of Him in the Four Gospels? In fact, Jesus answers that question across the pages of all of the three Synoptic Gospels, because Christ's longest answer to any question every asked Him in His three plus years of ministry fill the four chapters of Matthew 24, 25, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

Four entire chapters, packed with Inspired, Divine Truth to answer the question about the End of Days, or the Doctrine of Eschatology. That is an amazing way to emphasize this topic as something very important for us to know, sent from God Himself!

Obviously if Jesus was trying to communicate these truths so late in the hours of His final week, this topic must be very important to God.

The last days event flow of these 4 chapters shows up across nearly all of Paul's epistles, they fill the final book of God's Word, and were the single most preached about topic in the early church.

How Does Jesus Want us to Apply Revelation 6?

Jesus applied the coming of the Tribulation by telling five quick stories in Matthew 24-25. The theme of each was a strong application of the end times scenario to everyday living. Jesus said, to apply these truths about the future:

- Know my plan (Matthew 24:32-35).
- Keep Watching, I am coming quickly (Matthew 24:36-44).
- Avoid Distractions (Matthew 24:45-51).
- Remember, there is No Second Chance so Live for what counts (Mat. 25:1-13).
- Don't waste your life (Matthew 25:14-30).