

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 5-19-13 PM
"THE BEGINNING OF THE END"
REVELATION 6:1-17
#13 in Series, "Verse-by-Verse Through Revelation"

Revelation 1:19 (NKJV) "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this."

One of the evidences that the Bible is inspired by God is that there is _____ between each of the individual books of the Bible even though they were written over a span of about _____ years.

Daniel 9:24 (NKJV) "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."

The word **heptad** means _____ years.

The Hebrew word translated "weeks" is literally "seventy _____ of _____. Seventy years would literally be _____ years.

Daniel 9:25 (NKJV) "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 [69 weeks of years = 483 years]; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times."

Daniel 9:25b (NIV) "...until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes..."

Daniel 9:24b (NKJV) "...to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness..."

There is a _____ between the 69 weeks of years and the 70th week of years. That gap of indeterminable length is the _____ age where God calls unto Himself people who are Jews and Gentiles that make up the church—the called out ones. At the end of the church age (the age in which we live), the church will be _____ to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). The catching up of the church begins that 70th week of years—7 years that has been called "The Tribulation Period."

Revelation 5:1 (NKJV) "And I saw in the right *hand* of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals."

Genesis 1:28 (NKJV) "Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"

I. Seal One—The White Horse (vv. 1-2)

Each of the four horses in the first four seals represents God's _____ on the earth.

"Crown" —a _____ crown (*stephanos*)

Revelation 6:2 (NIV) "...as a conqueror bent on conquest."

Revelation 19:11-12 (NKJV) "¹¹ 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. ¹² 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."

"Crown" —the crown of a _____ (*diadema*)

Revelation 19:15a (NKJV) “Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword...”

II. Seal Two—The Red Horse (vv. 3-4)

Matthew 24:6-7a (NKJV) “⁶ 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. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.”

“We know more about war than about peace. We know more about killing than about living. This is our 20th Centuries claim to progress. Knowledge of science outstrips our capacity for control. We have too many men of science and too few men of God. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom; power without conscience. We are a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants.”

—General Omar Bradley

III. Seal Three—The Black Horse (vv. 5-6)

Matthew 24:7b (NKJV) “And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.”

IV. Seal Four—The Pale Horse (vv. 7-8)

V. Seal Five—The Coming Judgment Against Persecutors (vv. 9-11)

Many, if not most of those saved during the tribulation will be _____.

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.”

VI. Seal Six—Massive Cataclysms (vv. 12-17)

Colossians 1:16b-17 (NKJV) “¹⁶ All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”

“consist” means to hold _____.

Luke 21:11b (NKJV) “...there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.”

What should our response be to the imminence of Christ's return?

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“THE BEGINNING OF THE END”
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#13 in Series, “Verse by Verse through Revelation”

Since we have taken a three week break from Revelation, let's take a moment to review. The outline of the book of Revelation is found in **Revelation 1:19 (NKJV)** “Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.” Chapter one gives us the things John has seen – the resurrected Christ, now glorified. Chapters 2-3 are the things which are – the church age that began at Pentecost and continues until the church is caught up to be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). We looked at seven churches that were both historical and representative. They were literal churches with literal members, led by literal Pastors, but they also represent all churches throughout Christian history. The bulk of the book of Revelation is that third part – “the things that will take place

after this.” Chapters four and five detail a vision of Heaven that God has given John that sets up what is going to happen in chapters 6-19. We will be looking at “the things that will take place after this” portion for the remainder of our series on Revelation. Most of this last section (chapters 6-18) will not be real pleasant; it will not be smooth sailing. You had better make sure that your pew belt is on and pulled tight.

One of the many evidences that the Bible is inspired by God is that there is perfect unity between each of the individual books of the Bible, even though those books were written over a span of about 1,500 years. In chapters 6-18, we are going to see how the truths in Revelation perfectly mesh with the New Testament books of Matthew and Luke, and the Old Testament book of Daniel. To maximize our understanding of the book of Revelation, we must understand some things revealed in the book of Daniel. Although Daniel was written about 500 years before Revelation, the two books are linked to such an extent that we must conclude that they were ultimately produced by the same hand. In Daniel 9, the prophet Daniel describes events that will happen in the future – going even beyond this current day. Daniel presents a calendar that has marked off 70 “weeks”. **Daniel 9:24 (NKJV)** "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." The Hebrew word that is translated “weeks” is literally “seventy weeks of years”. The NIV translates it “seventy sevens”. In our language we use “decade” to mean 10 years; this Hebrew word could be translated “heptad” (seven years). In other words, seventy weeks of years would 490 years. Daniel is saying that from the authorization of the building of the wall around Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah until the end of the age would be 490 years. It gets a little more complicated. **Daniel 9:25 (NKJV)** "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 [69 weeks of years – 483 years]; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times." Those 483 years culminate with the day of the Messiah. The NIV says **Daniel 9:25 (NIV)** “...until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes...” The word “Messiah” means “anointed one”. In the early 20th century, Sir Robert Anderson who was the head of Britain’s Scotland Yard’s criminal investigation section worked out this timetable. The 483 years works out to be the very day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey where He was presented to Israel as their king. That was the first “Palm Sunday”. Just a few days later, Jesus was rejected as King and was crucified which fulfilled **Daniel 9:24b (NKJV)** "To finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness..." There is a gap between the 69 weeks of years and the 70th week of years. That gap of indeterminable length is the church age where God calls unto Himself people who are Jews and Gentiles that make up the church – the called out ones. At the end of the church age (the age in which we live), the church will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). The catching up of the church begins that 70th week of years – 7 years that has been called the Tribulation Period. It is that 70th week that Revelation 6-19 describes. Throughout this study of that 70th week, I will be referring to Daniel, Matthew and Luke for details of the events we will see in Revelation 6-18.

Let’s go back to Revelation 6. The chapter begins by referring to some seals. Since it has been several weeks since we looked at these seals, let me refresh your memory as to what they refer to. **Revelation 5:1 (NKJV)** “And I saw in the right *hand* of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.” This sealed scroll is, in a sense, the title deed to the earth that God gave to Adam. **Genesis 1:28 (NKJV)** says “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” When sin came into the world, Adam forfeited his dominion to Satan. Satan is now called, “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4). From the time sin came into the world, all creation including man has been under bondage to sin, Satan, and death. It is not just man; the whole earth is fallen and under God’s curse. God did not create man to die, but because of sin we all die. God did not create a world where there are disasters such as floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes, but because of sin there are disasters like these that make the inhabitants of earth suffer and

die. This scroll in God's hand is a part of a divine drama. While the scroll is a scroll of doom and judgment, it is also a scroll of redemption. It tells how Christ will redeem the world from the usurper, Satan and those demons and men who have collaborated with him. Jesus is the only one who is worthy to take the scroll, break the seals and bring about the redemption of this fallen world. Each of the scroll's seven seals represents a specific divine judgment that will be poured out sequentially on the earth. Here is where we are headed in the coming weeks: we will see a series of judgments that are pronounced like the extending of a telescope. All of the judgments are in the seals and the seventh seal contains seven trumpet judgments (8:1-11:19). The seventh trumpet contains seven bowl judgments (16:1-21). So you can see that the seven seals contain the judgments leading up to the literal bodily return of Christ to the earth. Let's start with the first seal on the scroll that Jesus the Lamb of God has taken from the Father to redeem God's creation.

I. Seal One – The White Horse (V1-2)

Each of the four horses in the first four seals represents God's activity on the earth. Horses were associated with triumph, conquest, and power. These four horses are often called "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse". The phrase, "Come and see" in Revelation 6:1 is translated "come" in most translations. This command is uttered by one of the four living creatures – probably a high ranking order of angels called Cherubim. We know three things about this rider of the white horse. First, he holds a bow, but there is no mention of any arrows. Second, he has been given a victor's crown (Greek *stephanos*). Third, he rides out on a white horse with the intention to conquer. **Revelation 6:2b (NIV)** "...as a conqueror bent on conquest." Who is this rider on the white horse? Immediately many will answer, "This is Christ". If you think that, you are making the same mistake that the multitudes make as this period of tribulation begins. There are several reasons that this cannot be the Lord Jesus Christ. The first reason this cannot be Christ is because he is summonsed by an angel to go and the angels do not command the Lord Jesus who created them. Christ does come later on a white horse to bring this tribulation to a close and to set up His earthly millennial kingdom. **Revelation 19:11-12 (NKJV)** says, "¹¹ 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. ¹² 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." When the true Christ comes, He will have on His head many crowns. Also, there is a different word used for crowns. The crowns upon the Lord Jesus in Revelation 19:12 are *diadema* which means the crowns of a king. The crown upon this rider in Revelation 6:2 are *stephanos*, the crown won as a prize. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes in Revelation 19, He fights with a sword – the sword of His mouth. **Revelation 19:15a (NKJV)** "Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations." The rider on the white horse in Revelation 6:2 has a bow but no arrows which suggests that he conquers without literal battle. His method will be to conquer by cunning and deceit. His success will come by deceitful treaties and alliances. This rider in Revelation 6:2 is not the Lord Jesus Christ. He has different purposes, crowns, and weapons. Jesus Christ does not return until the end of Daniel's 70th week of years and this rider returns at the beginning of this seven year period. What does this white horse and its rider picture in our text? Generally, it speaks of the deception that is coming upon the earth during this seventieth week. The primary instrument of this deception is the one called in Revelation, the "beast" and "the antichrist". "Anti" means "against" and "instead of". He comes (as we will later see) to deceive the nations – especially the Jews during the first part of this seven years of tribulation. It should come as no surprise that large numbers of people will be deceived by this antichrist. It has happened before in history (in recent history, Hitler and Osama Bin Laden). He will personify the greatest of the Roman Caesars, the Napoleons, the Hitlers, and Stalins. In weeks to come, we will see how this master of deception works.

II. Seal Two – The Red Horse (V3-4)

Let me remind you of something that we see with all four of the horsemen of the apocalypse. It is an angel of the Lord that summonses them to go to the earth to do their work. This is a reminder to us that no

matter how chaotic it gets here it is all operating under the umbrella of His sovereignty. Nothing happens that He does not cause or allow. What does this red horse represent? It symbolizes war and bloodshed. The false peace of the antichrist will be short lived. There will be global conflict. Learn this: there will never be peace on this planet until the One called “the Prince of Peace” rules and reigns in His Kingdom. The next time you see one of those bumper stickers that say, “Visualize World Peace”, set your mind on Christ’s return in glory and His wiping out His enemies by the word of His mouth and establishing His righteous rule on earth. That is not what the person displaying the bumper sticker has in mind, but it is the only time that we will have world peace.

Jesus was speaking of this time in **Matthew 24:6-7a (NKJV)** “⁶ 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. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.” John speaks of the rider’s great sword in verse 4. This speaks of the extent of the wars and conflict. The antichrist’s false peace will dissolve into massive arenas of war. The earth will be engulfed in conflict with bloodshed being the norm. Among the antichrist’s victims will be multitudes of Christians who have come to Christ during this period of tribulation. This spirit of war will not just be between nations. There will be civil wars and anarchy within the countries.

World War II hero, General Omar Bradley said in a Armistice Day speech in 1948, “We know more about war than about peace. We know more about killing than about living. This is our 20th Centuries claim to progress. Knowledge of science outstrips our capacity for control. We have too many men of science and too few men of God. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom; power without conscience. We are a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants.”

III. Seal Three – The Black Horse (V5-6)

This third horseman speaks of famine. Famine is the logical consequence of worldwide warfare. Jesus spoke of this coming famine in **Matthew 24:7b (NKJV)** which says “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.” The scales picture the rationing of food which results in high prices. When you see the pictures on TV of the starving children, many times it is famine because of wars and conflicts. A denarius is a working man’s wage for a day. A quart of wheat could barely sustain one person for a day. Barley was cheaper, but it was less nutritious. What about the families of the one who works all day and only makes enough to buy food for one person? These are the conditions during this time of tribulation. Perhaps this rampant scarcity and inflation will be the open door for the antichrist to impose rigid restrictions on buying and selling in chapter 13. The admonition at the end of verse 6 to not harm the oil and the wine probably means to not waste them since oil and wine were used to cook the bread and purify the water.

We have seen that in the first part of the tribulation, Daniel’s 70th week of years a deceptive peace is followed by worldwide wars that result in massive famine. There is more.

IV. Seal Four – The Pale Horse (V7-8)

The word “pale” is the Greek word *chloros*. We get the word “chlorine” from it. A *chloros* horse is pale green. This color is the color of death. It is the color of a decomposing corpse. The rider on this horse is death. Death on a massive scale is the natural result of widespread war and famine. Hades in this context refers to the grave – the realm of the dead. Death claims the body and Hades claims the soul. There are four forms of death referred to in verse 8. First, there is the sword. That speaks of the lawless chaos where life is treated cheaply and people are killed for food and anything else of value. Second is widespread starvation which we looked at in the last point. Third is death but the word is better translated pestilence or plague. The fourth messenger of death is “the beasts of the earth”. What beasts most commonly bring death? Perhaps what comes to your mind are lions, wolves, poisonous snakes, bears, or some other large animal. Do you know the beast that has been responsible for the most deaths? It is rats! Rats were responsible for the bubonic plague that killed on third of the population of Europe in the 14th century [David Jeremiah, *Escape the Coming Night*. Page 105].

Notice the devastation of this fourth horseman of the Apocalypse. A fourth of the population of the earth will lose their life. With today's population that would be about 1,750,000,000 people. Do you see the magnitude of this tribulation that will take place here on earth as the judgment of God is unleashed and before Jesus Christ returns to rule and to reign?

V. Seal Five – The Coming Judgment Against Persecutors (V9-11)

As I stated earlier, many people will be saved during this seven year period called the tribulation. We will see next week how that will happen. Many, if not most of those who are saved during the tribulation will be martyred. That is who John sees under the altar. They have been killed because they could not keep quiet about the amazing grace of God that they had experienced. Jesus spoke of these martyrs in **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.” These tribulation believers will proclaim the Word of God boldly and give testimony of God's saving power in their lives. The antichrist and his followers will lash out against anyone – Jew or Gentile – who testifies of the true Christ. We will see more details of these persecutions as we continue in Revelation. What is meant by them being under the altar? The altar is a place of sacrifice and this speaks of their lives being poured out in sacrifice to the Lord.

The seals have to do with the judgment of God against those on the earth. The judgment against the persecutors is coming when the appointed numbers of tribulation believers have been martyred. These martyrs are assured that their martyrdom was not an accident but an appointment and others would be joining them. Even in the death of His people, God is in control and so there is nothing to fear. God's judgment will certainly come upon those who persecute His children.

Let me point out a side note here. From this passage we have some indication about the dead in Heaven. They have a body. We see that white robes are given to them and disembodied spirits don't wear robes. We also see that they are somewhat aware of what is happening on the earth. The martyrs cry out to God for His justice to reign against these who have persecuted His children. I think it would be wrong to take this to mean that loved ones in Heaven are following the details of our lives, but there is some awareness.

VI. Seal Six – Massive Cataclysms (V12-17)

In these verses it is as though all creation is in chaos. The Bible says of the Lord Jesus in **Colossians 1:16b-17 (NKJV)** ¹⁶ “All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.” That word, “consist” means to hold together. When the sixth seal is broken, He begins to loosen His grip on creation and the world starts coming apart. Jesus gives this same description in Matthew 24:29-30. We read also of this time in Luke 21:11, 25-26. The Old Testament prophets write about frightening disasters in creation (Joel 2:1-2, 10). John records six massive cataclysms in nature. First there is a great earthquake. It will make all other earthquakes look small. Second will be the sun becoming black. Sackcloth was the rough cloth worn by mourners that was made from the hair of black goats. This second cataclysm could be connected to the massive earthquake that might unleash huge volcanoes and millions of tons of ash. The third disaster is that the moon becomes as blood. This also could be connected to the earthquake. The fourth disaster is that the stars fall to the earth. The word “stars” refer to any heavenly body other than the sun and the moon. It is likely meteor showers bombarding the earth. The fifth disaster is the skies roll up like a scroll. There is a lot of speculation as to what this describes, but we don't really know. We simply know that it will bring horror upon the earth dwellers. Luke describes this in **Luke 21:11b (NKJV)** as “...there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.” The sixth cataclysm is the mountains and islands being moved out of their places. This is likely tied in to the massive earthquake as the whole crust of the earth begins to move and shift.

What will be the response of those living on earth – most all having rejected Christ? They will hide themselves and pray... but their prayer will not be to God! They will pray to “mother earth”, to the rocks and mountains to put them out of their misery. They will recognize that the source of this wrath is God on His throne and the Son of God, the Lamb, and yet their hearts are so hardened and their eyes so blinded that they will not repent. They reject the Rock of Ages and pray to the rocks.

CONCLUSION

Here is what I want to leave you with. Because of the immanence of Christ's return for His church, this whole process of tribulation could begin today. This ought to give us a sense of urgency! We should have an urgency to make sure that we are in the faith, and second, an urgency to take the Gospel to the lost. Jesus Christ could return tonight. Are you ready?