

Seal Number 1: When the World Believes the Lie God Launches the Tribulation with Satan's Global Deception: False Peace, False Security, False Prosperity

Revelation 6:2

Please open your personal copy of the written down words that came directly from the Throne Room of the Universe, from the Almighty God that inhabits eternity. Those words for us this morning start in Revelation 7:9.

At the end of days, Satan empowers one man to win the world. He offers to satisfy all of mankind's desires for peace & safety. He becomes Satan's substitute for Jesus Christ, in the person of the antichrist. Today we are looking at how God describes the launch of this event. But why are we doing so? Because:

Revelation Shows Us: God is in Charge

Before we dive into God directing the ending, of human history, as we know it, you may be asking about whether or not a study of eschatology has any real, personal applicability.

Revelation lessons are great, you may think, but I just lost my job; or my kids are getting bullied at school; or my parents just got so ill we have to care for them; or my daughter is dating a fellow that isn't even saved and she seems to be turning away from us and the Lord; or any of thousands more personal struggles we collectively face.

As you listen today you will note that God knows everything in advance.

That means not just the seals of chapter 6, but also the job you lost this week, the health of your baby about to be born, and the outcome of next week's surgery or job interview.

A study of Revelation confirms the Doctrine of God:

Nothing misses His sight. He knows ALL of history in advance.

God is not passive. Almighty God is at work guiding every event, every disaster, every gain or loss, and does so perfectly.

A study of Revelation also reminds us of the Doctrine of Redemption:

God redeemed us with Christ's blood. God just wants our undivided devotion. Almighty God wants us to listen to Him, follow Him, and love Him so much that we trust Him.

The lesson He gives us today is that we should trust Him because He is preparing to send a:

Global Deception

Revelation 6 has already told us that God is launching a white horseman to rapidly fill the earth with a false and deceptive peace. In a very short time ***almost all of the earth*** will follow this emissary of Satan in human flesh called the Antichrist. The saddest commentary on the fallen heart of humanity there could ever be, is that in following the Antichrist and rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ, humanity is always making the wrong choices.

The antichrist like Satan—comes to kill, steal, and destroy. As the end of the physical world approaches, earth's darkest spiritual hour also arrives. But God has a surprise planned in this dark hour. Look down with me at the words of Rev. 7:9. Since it is already written down, and he can read, Satan knows that God has plans to save:

“a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands...” (Revelation 7:9).

God Plans to Save Many People During the Tribulation

Satan has seen God's Word. Satan knows God's plan, so, trying to thwart God's harvest of precious souls and to prevent the world from coming to Christ, Satan has deployed legions of liars. False sign posts—all pointing people away from Christ. This is not new to our generation. False teachers have been a part of the landscape from the start.

Christ, on the other hand came to offer an abundant life. If you have never trusted Christ as your Savior, I would urge you to receive him today. God says that whoever calls upon the Name of the Lord, He will save.

When you call upon Christ to save you from your sins, God delivers you from the power of darkness and their eternally damnable lies, and brings you into the wonderful kingdom of His Son.

Turn with me to Rev. 6:2. This white horseman is a reminder from God, who us that the coming Antichrist initially conquers, not by military warfare but by lies and deceit energized by Satan. God deploys this force for deception, this first seal, and this global pervasive delusion.

Today, just as during the Tribulation years, there will be only two types of people on the planet: truth lovers and truth haters. This morning, Revelation 6:2 should spur each of us onward to more and more be:

Lovers of the Truth

To help us understand what God is doing in Revelation 6, we need to turn the spotlight of the rest of God's Word upon this verse.

Amazingly, this first seal, and its white horseman of deception is an event on God's timetable, much described in the Scriptures. Turn back with me to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2.

As you turn there, remember that these twin epistles to the church in the city of Thessalonica, were Paul's first epistles. Paul taught them more about Christ's end time plans, than anyone except John in Revelation.

In Acts 17 we read of how Paul went to start the Gospel work in Thessalonica after Philippi's terrible beating, and imprisonment. So as we are opened now to 2 Thessalonians 2, and stand, listen with me to God explaining that dark hour of Revelation 6:2 through the words He sent Paul to write.

*2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 **Let no one deceive you** by any means; for that Day will not come unless **the falling away** comes first, and **the man of sin** is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His*

*coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, **with all power, signs, and lying wonders**, 10 and with **all unrighteous deception** among those who perish, **because they did not receive the love of the truth**, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them **strong delusion**, that **they should believe the lie**, 12 that they all may be condemned who **did not believe the truth** but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

Look at v. 11 in this letter to the Thessalonians for a moment. There is an amazing tie to the first seal that launches the Tribulation that we are studying in Rev. 6:2.

Paul tells us that a time is coming when God sends strong delusion. God unleashes the first horseman. He is representing a white, deceptive, deluding lie that fills the earth. God sends a:

Global Delusion Upon the Unrighteous Ones

Now for our second application take away from this time in the Word.

The first was that **God is in charge of the past, present, and future**. Nothing happens that He is not guiding for His good. Now for a second take away truth, notice the application that Paul gives them. Even though they were never going to experience this event in AD 51 when Paul wrote them, he tells them that: **God wants lovers of the truth**.

Are you a lover of truth this morning? Do you treasure the Word, study the Word, and know the Word?

The events of Revelation should impact our lives now, it was not just written for people then, but also for us God's servants now. That is what the first few verses of the Book of Revelation say.

It was written for God's servants now, to know how to live as we move towards the end of days. The characteristic first introduced to us by God is, that when He launches the Tribulation it is into a time of:

A Global Falling Away from Truth, or Apostasy

Rev. 6:2 reveals what I consider one of the saddest doctrines in the Bible:

The loving, sacrificial Lamb sent from God, Jesus Christ, is rejected and replaced by a man energized by Satan, the Antichrist.

This global leader, who speaks eternally damnable lies, is backed by the most believable signs and wonders ever witnessed on planet earth.

That is God's plan. Listen again to Christ's sermon back in Matthew 24. We already saw the warnings of v. 4-5 about deception. But now look at the rest of His warnings.

Matthew 24:5, 11-13 ***For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12*** And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

There is a timeless lesson: the best way to combat false doctrine is to be in love with Jesus Christ and fleeing sin.

Matthew 24:24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

Things were so bad in Christendom, the visible church of followers of Christ, about one hundred years ago, that the greatest Bible teachers of that generation banded together to put up the flag of truth.

This group of conservative, Bible believing and teaching pastors and professors sat down and declared what were the "non-negotiables" of the faith. They published their confession in a set of books called **The Fundamentals**.

At the end of days, truth is under attack and lies will abound. That is why we each need to know and hold tightly to:

The Fundamentals of The Faith

Jesus said watch out for false teachers and counterfeit religion. So, when faced with a situation of false teaching that began to infiltrate and permeate the church, at the turn of the century, orthodox evangelicals produced the articles that were collected into the FUNDAMENTALS between 1909-1915.

The writers who contributed to this series read like a “Who’s Who of Christianity” of the day. They were:

- R.A. Torrey [D.L. Moody’s assistant and then the founder of Biola, the Bible Institute of LA],
- B.B. Warfield [of Westminster Seminary],
- J.C. Ryle [a well known pastor and devotional writer],
- G. Campbell Morgan [an expositor, theologian pastor],
- C.I. Scofield [of the study Bible],
- James M. Gray [of Moody Bible Institute],
- A.T. Pierson [of renown as a devotional writer], and so on.

These men distilled down the fundamental beliefs that distinguish a true believer from a false or counterfeit one. They boiled down all theology into seven essentials. They then presented and explained these seven doctrines in a multi-volume set of books called “*The Fundamentals*”.

Seven Essential Doctrines

Here is their list of the seven essentials, and the guide to use to uncover when someone is a false-teacher and on a course of “falling away”.

1. **INSPIRATION:** All we know and believe about God is based on His Word, so they affirmed the Inspiration and Reliable Historicity of the Bible.
2. **CREATION:** God is revealed from cover-to-cover in His Word as the Creator of the Universe just as described in the Bible, so they exposed the grave errors of Evolutionism and Darwinism.
3. **DOCTRINE:** God’s Word teaches clear doctrines about the deity of Jesus Christ and His Church, so they specifically named the cults who presented false gospels in their day such as the errors of the Jehovah Witnesses, Mormonism, Christian Science, Spiritism, and so on.
4. **DEPRAVITY:** God’s Word declares the reality of sin, so they affirmed that man is not basically good, but born a sinner.
5. **SUBSTITUTION:** God’s Word only presents Biblical salvation as received only by faith in the God-incarnate Christ Jesus who became sin for sinners to save them.
6. **IMPUTATION:** God’s Word teaches that salvation can not be earned at any level, and is dispensed by God not by any church and cleric, thus they clearing exposed the errors of Roman Catholicism, and every other religion of human achievement and works righteousness.

7. **CHRISTOLOGY:** Finally, they most fervently declared that all error starts in some way with an incorrect view of Christ, so they strongly affirmed the Deity, the work, and the personal visible Return of Christ.

The godly Bible teachers of a century ago were making a way for believers to spot the enemies were of the truth. They said know doctrine, that is is how we spot these false teachers. False teachers, pointing people in the wrong direction do not believe and teach these doctrines. So, lesson two for us to take away into our lives today is that: ***God wants lovers of the truth.***

Hold the truth no matter what is coming down, or going up in your life today: God is in control, trust Him is what God's Word is communicating to us. We are to be:

Are You Taking Away what God is Offering?

As we turn our hearts and minds upward to commune with God remember the truths we have seen this morning:

1. God See all the events of our lives;
2. God Knows all our challenges, struggles, and fears;
3. God Controls the entire Universe, He controls history past, He controls each event of today, and He alone has planned the future.
4. God Actively Shapes every event in your life today as much as He is shaping all these future prophetic events.

Nothing that has ever surprised you, surprised Almighty God.

- He knew what your child was going to do.
- He knew what your boss was going to say.
- He knew you were going to get sick, have a car wreck, or get locked out of your car or house.
- He just wants you to start being aware of that.

He wants us right now to:

- Trust Him
- Love the Truth
- Follow Him.

That is the call our Redeemer makes to us as we come to His table this morning!