

## **The Book of Revelation**

By

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### **CHAPTER SIX**

#### **BREAKING THE SEALS**

**"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see" (6:1).**

Let us remember that we are dealing with the day of redemption. CHRIST redeemed the world at His first coming, but will not take possession until His second coming. There will be great opposition from Satan, so CHRIST must first deal with him.

Since the real issue is to win the loyalty of the human heart, and since some people can be led to fear and serve the Lord only through trouble, therefore He will bring great judgments upon the earth and compel earth dwellers to admit, like the magicians in Egypt, that this is the finger of GOD. Thus some will turn to fear and serve the Lord. Since He "**delighteth in mercy**" He will bring the lesser troubles first and the harder ones later, upon those who refuse the first offers of mercy.

The Lamb breaks the first seal and one of the mighty living creatures thunders, "**Come and see.**" In response to that command John "**saw, and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow**" (vs. 2).

Some tell us there are no horses in Heaven. But whatever kind of creatures they are, the best name the HOLY SPIRIT can find for them is the word "**horse.**" In Elisha's time, horses and chariots of fire surrounded Dothan. When Elijah went to Heaven, there were horses and chariots, and so here we see a white horse and its rider.

But let us also remember that this book is written in sign or picture language. Power is abstract and invisible; therefore these horses are the personification of power, as it goes out from the throne of GOD against a world gone mad against its Creator.

#### **Who Can Free the Slaves?**

There was a time when every Negro babe was born to a life of toil and slavery. Many northern people desired their freedom but who could set the Negroes free? John Brown tried it; the Underground Railroad tried it; others tried it, but alas, no one in Pennsylvania, nor in Virginia, nor in any part of the United States could set the Negroes free.

But one time a man stepped forward with pen in hand. Abraham Lincoln, not as a man, but with all the power and authority invested in him as president of the United States, he signed his name to the proclamation of Emancipation. That night the Negroes could feast on sweet potatoes and watermelon and dance until dawn of day - had not their freedom been assured? But next day they must pick cotton and serve the old masters.

And so here. Earth is under the blight and bondage of sin. The title deed to a redeemed earth is in the Father's hand. Who can take the book and break the seals? No man in Heaven, nor in earth, nor under the earth can even look upon that book. But CHRIST, not as mere man, but in all the power and authority of His blood bought merits, takes the book.

Instantly creation thrills with joy, and the courts of Heaven vibrate and revibrate as myriads and myriads ascribe glory and honor to the Lamb that was slain. But alas, the worst is yet to come and creation will yet burn and wither under the terrible judgments that are just ahead.

### **Enforced Decrees**

Abraham Lincoln had signed for freedom but it must be enforced. In Washington, orders went out - in the south, armies marched. In Washington, orders went out - in the south, battles were fought. In Washington, orders went out - in the south, cities fell. Until one day, peace was declared; the Negroes went free and order was restored.

And so, although all creation rejoices when the Lamb takes the book; although all creation is soon to be "**delivered from the bondage of corruption,**" yet the seals must be broken; orders must be enforced and Satan must be driven out.

Up in Heaven, a seal is broken - on earth a judgment falls. Up in Heaven, another seal is broken - on earth, another judgment falls. Up in Heaven, orders go out - down on earth, things happen, until one day Satan is chained; the curse is removed and even the desert will blossom as the rose.

### **The White Horse**

When the first seal was broken, John saw a white horse and his rider come forth upon the scene. GOD's order is perfect. Satan's great desire is to be "**like the most high.**" If he will seek to do the best, he will counterfeit GOD's order. This is just what he proceeded to do.

In Chapter nineteen, a white horse and its rider came out of an open Heaven and He who sits astride that charger is "**King of Kings and Lord of Lords.**" So when Satan presents his man, he brings him forth on a white horse. The mystery of iniquity was at work in Paul's day - but there was One to hinder.

The HOLY SPIRIT who indwells the church, is today holding back the full manifestation of Satan and his evil designs. He will continue to thus restrain "**Until he be taken out of the way. And THEN shall that wicked be revealed**" (II Thessalonians 2:8).

Here it tells us that as soon as the church is removed from earthly scenes, the antichrist will be

revealed, and in Revelation, the first thing to happen is the riding forth of the man of sin, to play his brief part in the closing history of mankind.

### **The Red Horse**

**"And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth" (vs. 3, 4).**

At first, the antichrist seems to have a period of peace and prosperity. He causes "**craft to prosper.**" That is, he will find manufacturing at a standstill but he will set the wheels of industry to moving. Also, he will find the world full of "**wars and rumours of wars,**" but a time will come when they will be saying, "**Peace and safety.**"

But when that red horse and its rider come into view, peace is taken from the earth. There will be mobs and strikes, civil commotions, revolution rebellions, horrors, bloodshed and murders. No peace to him that goes out and no peace to him that comes in.

### **The Black Horse**

**"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" (vs. 5, 6).**

Under the period of the red horse, men were so busy with hate and strife that they neglected the fields and their crops. Fulfillment of this judgment may have been difficult when I was a lad, but in our time, a strike in the oil industry would leave much of our finest farm land unturned.

The price of wheat and barley is set in Heaven. Less than one quart of wheat for a whole day's wages. What will a man do for his own food, let alone the needs of a family. Hunger is a terrible thing. In the siege of Samaria, woman even killed and ate their own children.

But there is mercy here. "**see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.**" Oil from the olive tree and wine from the vine, do not depend on the direct efforts of men as do the grain crops. There seems to be a hint that if it were not for the fruit trees and the vines, men could not live upon the earth. This strikes at one of the chief characteristics of the time, for CHRIST said they would be "**eating and drinking**" (Matthew 24).

### **The Pale Horse**

**"And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death; and Hell followed with him" (vs. 7, 8).**

We might think the first three seals would exhaust all terrors. But as the fourth seal snaps, a thunderous voice calls a pale horse into action, and astride that terrible creature is a still more

terrible rider - Death. Death is impersonal like gravitation, but here it is personified.

Just what form this death will take we do not know. Some of us remember those early days of the flu when that terrible death came into our midst and took the strong and robust. As death sweeps his fearful sickle throughout the earth, another terrible monster, Hell, stalks close behind, swallowing up the victims of his dreadful stroke.

**"And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth" (vs. 8).**

What fearful realities here. It is very possible that both the writer and reader of these pages may have friends who will sometime fall a victim to these dread terrors.

Just how much time these seals consume we are not told. Probably several months, for they are no doubt all in the first part of Daniel's seventieth week.

### **The Fifth Seal**

**"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God" (vs. 9).**

Let us remember that as CHRIST sends these judgments forth into the enemies territory, Satan will fight back, and since he cannot get at GOD, he will strike at GOD's people.

This seal reveals the result of Satan's fighting back.

Some are saved by the judgments of the first four seals. Like Rahab, they interpret the disasters as from the GOD of Heaven and turn to serve Him. For three and one-half years it had not rained.

When Ahab finally met Elijah, he said, "**Art thou he that troubleth Israel?**" Yet it was the king's own wickedness that had brought the drought upon the country.

**"God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day,"** cried the king, as the famine raged in Samaria. And so it goes, the wicked blame the godly for their troubles.

As these seal judgments fall upon the world, it will be easy to blame GOD and strike back at Him through His people. But safe under the altar are the souls of everyone that was slain.

**"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (vs. 10)**

This cry for vengeance does not sound like Stephen who, when the stones fell thick and fast, "**kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.**"

Neither does this verse give comfort to those who would teach "soul sleep," for the souls of these

saints are in conscious comfort, anxiously awaiting their resurrection body and still interested in earth, knowing their tormentors and murderers are still alive. Just how much the departed souls of those who once sojourned on earth may know of world events is not revealed, but sure we are that they still possess their intelligence and are in conscious comfort or torment.

### **Why the Sun Shines**

**"And white robes were given unto everyone of them; and 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" (vs. 11).**

And this, in fact, is why the wind blows in our day; it is why the sun shines, the rain falls and the rivers flow: GOD is calling out a people for His name and the end of the age must await the fulfillment of His purpose. So here, after the church has been removed from the earth, another company is to be redeemed and the final scenes cannot be enacted until it is complete.

### **Why the Godly Suffer**

This may raise a question. If GOD knows that death awaits His own, why does He stand so idly by and permit the powers of evil to work out their wrath upon them? But is not this an act of mercy on GOD's part? Is it not an honor and a privilege to win a martyr's crown?

Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,  
Were still in heart and conscience free:  
How sweet would be their children's fate,  
If they like them, could die for thee.

GOD is getting Kings to rule for Him and a martyrs death will instill a quality into their being that nothing else can do. GOD wants the best, so He permits these sorrows to work for their eternal joy.

As a little boy, I wished I had never been born, for I feared the issues of life and knew that I could not cope with them. But on that glad day when I learned that another had taken my place in death and that He now offered me security for time and eternity - what a privilege to serve such a One.

And so with those souls "**under the altar**" and their fellowservants who are likewise to win a martyrs crown. Their light afflictions, which will be but for a moment, will work for them a far more eternal and exceeding weight of glory. A casting is brittle and easily broken. But when put through the heat and the process of tempering, it becomes strong and valuable. So when GOD's people go through the "**furnace of affliction**," it puts temper into their life and fiber into every tissue. It is tribulation that worketh steadfastness.

### **No Salvation**

But let us take warning here. There are those who would comfort their hearts by a false hope of salvation after the rapture of the church. Let such an one remember that there is no salvation

offered to those who have definitely rejected CHRIST in the church age. In fact, **"God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness"** (II Thessalonians 2:11).

**"Believed not"** is in the past tense. Let a man spurn mercy now and his doom is sealed when the church leaves. However, there are untold millions, even in our own land, who have never known the true way of salvation. Out of these, countless thousands will turn to GOD under the judgments of Revelation and be saved.

### **The Sixth Seal**

**"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places"** (vs. 12-14).

The town of Flora, Indiana, was named after my great grandfather. He belonged to a plain order of Christians. About one hundred years ago, when there was a great shower of meteors, my great grandmother told the hired girl, who was not a Christian, to watch, for CHRIST would soon be there. Then putting her white veil upon her head and going over to the fireplace, she sat and waited in a state of expectancy, her face beaming with joy. But not so with that hired girl - she was scared nearly to death.

And so a time is just ahead when GOD's people will be presented **"before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy"** (Jude 24); while the **"kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondsman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb"** (vs. 15, 16).

There are those who would change the order of our day, but here, at the close of the age, there are still kings and capitalists; military men and men with social influence, while some are free and some are slaves.

When the sun was shining and the stars were twinkling, it was the order of the day to persecute and kill GOD's children, but let the clouds roll up as a scroll and the heavenly bodies cut capers and men cry out in fear. But bad as that is, it is the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne that strikes daggers into their hearts.

There is no repentance here; just a call for shelter. It is the reckoning day for them, not a day of salvation.

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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