

# THE BOOK OF REVELATION

## WEEK 7: CHAPTER 6

### INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 6

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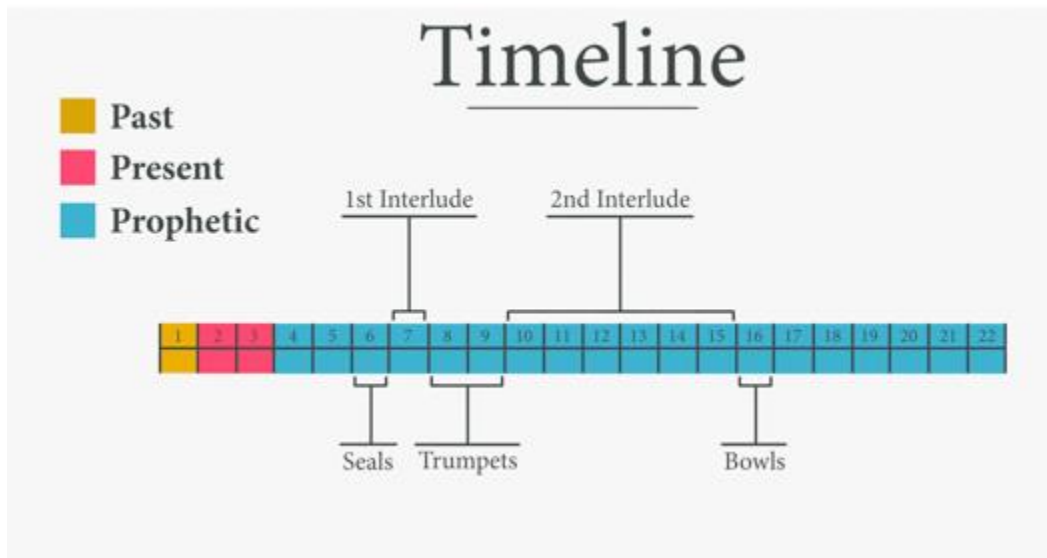
- This chapter kicks off the 3 waves of judgment which come in the book of Revelation. Chapter 6 is the 7 seal judgments, then there will be 7 trumpet judgments, and finally the 7 bowl judgments.
- These three waves of judgment are moving the end times forward. They are sequential in nature, one going after the next. They are future, none of these have happened yet.
- Chapter 6 is the start of the tribulation; which will continue until Jesus comes back in **19:11**.



\*chart and following from <https://e360bible.org/blog/revelation-overview-introduction-and-what-revelation-is-about/>

- **Seal Judgments:** the beginning of birth pains as worldwide war, famine, and disease kill 25% of the earth's population.
- **Trumpet Judgments:** the labor pains intensify as 33% of the earth's remaining population is killed by demonic activity.
- **Bowl Judgments:** the worst suffering of all as God's full wrath is vented upon unrepentant humanity.
- As we will see, just as a woman in birth, the pangs get worse and worse before the end.

- Since Jesus was the One who was found worthy to break the seals and fully open the scroll (**8:1**), "...As He breaks the 7 seals that secure the scroll, each seal unleashes a new demonstration of God's judgment on the earth in the future tribulation period."<sup>1</sup>
- There is a pattern to the 3 sets of judgments.
- "You have the first six seals, and then you have an interlude between the sixth and the seventh. And then you have the seventh seal, but that contains then the seven trumpets. And then you have the first six trumpets; you have another interlude; and then you have the seventh trumpet (over in chapter 11); and then they have this long interlude there; and then you have the seventh trumpet containing the seven bowls. One of the things that we see here is then that the other chapters give fill-in material that's vital to the overall picture."<sup>2</sup>



## WHY THE TRIBULATION?

- Jesus said in **John 16:33** "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."
- The tribulation that Jesus speaks of in **John 16:33** is not the same tribulation in **Revelation**.
- These 7 years will be the most extreme and harsh tribulation that the world has ever seen. I believe this is far more than we can even imagine in our own minds.
- Since we really don't fully understand God's holiness, justice, and wrath or our own sinfulness and complete rejection of God, it is impossible to understand the depth of judgment which awaits the earth.

<sup>1</sup> *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Re 6:1.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.credocourses.com/2015/05/11/the-first-6-seal-judgments-of-revelation/>

- **Daniel 12:1** “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.”
- **Matthew 24:21** “For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.”

### **These events happen for three main reasons:**

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- **The preparation and restoration of Israel.**
- As has been stated, the time of tribulation is called *Daniel's 70th Week*.
- Daniel 9:24-27, the 70th week begins with the signing of a peace treaty with Israel and other nations.
- This final week (7 years) is divided into 2 halves; it is at the 3 ½ year mark that the treaty is broken.
- This is where the “Great Tribulation” is usually said to start; with the Abomination of Desolation.
- God is going to open the eyes of the Jewish people, remove their blinders, and they will be ready to receive their Messiah.
- Once it is all done, Israel will become a believing nation and God’s promises to them will be fulfilled.
- **Jeremiah 30:7** “Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved from it.”
  - Not all of Israel will be destroyed, but a remnant will be saved.
- **Zechariah 12:10** “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.
- **Zechariah 13:8-9** “It will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD, "That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; But the third will be left in it. {9} "And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'”
- **Divine Judgment Upon the Whole Unbelieving World**
- The rest of the unbelieving world is going to suffer under the righteous judgment of God.
- While God’s focus will be upon His people Israel, the judgment which comes is for the inhabitants of the whole earth who have sinned against God and have not repented.
- **Isaiah 24:1, 5** “Behold, the LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants. ... {5} The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant.”

- **A Final Outpouring of the Gospel for Salvation**

- Even throughout this horrific time of judgment and justice, the gospel message is still going forth throughout the world.
- **Revelation 7:14** “I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”
- “These people didn’t go with the raptured church, since they were not yet saved. During the 7 year period they will be saved, martyred, and enter heaven. Though it is a time of unparalleled judgment, it is also a time of unparalleled grace in salvation.”<sup>3</sup>
- “The first 5 seals cover the period Jesus called “the beginning of birth pangs” (Matt 24:8)..the 6th seal likely occurs at the midpoint of the Tribulation, marking the beginning of the Great Tribulation.”<sup>4</sup>

## **CHAPTER 6:1-2 ~ THE 1<sup>ST</sup> SEAL**

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**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." {2} I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.”

- This is not Jesus...while there is mention of a white horse, that is where the similarities stop.
- This rider symbolizes peace, a false peace which will happen after the Rapture of the church and will be established at the beginning of the Tribulation.
- “...there will come a period of world peace. But it will be a deceptive peace, as the world is lulled into a false sense of security followed by war, famine, and death. The world’s desperate desire for international peace will serve as the bait for the satanic trap. That longing for security and safety will play into the hands of the Antichrist, Satan’s ruler, who will convince the world that he can provide them.”<sup>5</sup>
- While not putting a stake in the ground, there are some textual clues here. There are no arrows mentioned, this may mean that there was no war, but this rider conquered in peace.
- A crown was given to him, it does not say that he won it in battle.
- This leads some to believe that this false peace was through treaties; not actually battles.
- Speaking of the Day of the Lord, Paul writes in **1 Thessalonians 5:3** “While they are saying, ‘Peace and safety!’ then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.”

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<sup>3</sup> *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Re 7:14.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.mbcmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Revelation-6.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> John MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11*, 178.

## CHAPTER 6:3-4 ~ THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SEAL

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**Revelation 6:3-4** “When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come." {4} 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 one another; and a great sword was given to him.”

- “...when the second seal is broken, military warfare breaks out and peace is taken from the world. The constant tension among nations and the ambitions of men have their climax in this period before Christ comes.” (Walvoord)
- Men are going to murder one another on a scale never before seen.
- “As the head of a Western confederacy, Antichrist...will initially portray himself as a champion of peace. He will even appear to do what no one has been able to do, bring peace to the troubled Middle East...But all too soon his true colors will show, and his desire for dominance will provoke rebellion. Antichrist’s attempts to crush his enemies and rule them with an iron hand will touch off wars that will last throughout the remainder of the Tribulation.”<sup>6</sup>
- “Though ‘wars and rumours of wars’ (Matt. 24:6) are characteristic of the age, it is evident that warfare occupies a large place in the consummation of the age with a resultant great loss of life. There apparently is a series of wars, the greatest of which is under way at the time of the second coming. The hope of permanent peace by means of the United Nations and other human efforts is doomed to failure.” (Walvoord)

## CHAPTER 6:5-6 ~ THE 3<sup>RD</sup> SEAL

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**Revelation 6:5-6** “When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come." 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 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 verses 5 and 6 the aftermath of war is seen and a great famine is revealed.” (Walvoord)
- Things like hyper-inflation will take over and people will only be able to live from what is absolutely essential to life. Most will live from food that is normally given to animals.
- “To put it in ordinary language, the situation would be such that one would have to spend a day’s wages for a loaf of bread with no money left to buy anything else. The symbolism therefore indicates a time of famine when life will be reduced to the barest necessities; for famine is almost always the aftermath of war.” (Walvoord)

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<sup>6</sup> John MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11*, 181-182

- This can be studied from the nation of Zimbabwe from about 2007. Their hyperinflation crises is characterized as the worst in history.
- In November of 2008, their **monthly** inflation rate was **79.6 billion percent**.
- Here is an example, in Feb. of 2008, a loaf of bread was less than \$200,000 Zim dollars.
- Teachers made about \$729,000 a month...or about .72 American cents. (at that time)
- This means that a loaf of bread during this time was about 1/3 of a teacher's salary.
- From Feb. 2008 – June 2008 it was \$1.6 **Trillion** Zim dollars for the loaf of bread...with no wage increase.
- In 2009, Zim government printed \$100 trillion dollar note.
- Their economy crumbled and was set back on track when they stopped printing money and relied on other, more stable countries for help.
- **The point:** This does not even reach the depth of what the world will encounter when the Tribulation starts.

## **CHAPTER 6:7-8 ~ THE 4<sup>TH</sup> SEAL**

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**Revelation 6:7-8** “When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come.” {8} 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 over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.”

- “The rider is pictured as Death and the aftermath of his ride, or that which follows, as Hades, the abode of the dead. In keeping with this startling picture, it is revealed to John that this rider has power over one-fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, hunger, and the beasts of the earth.” (Walvoord)
- “By any standard of comparison this is an awesome judgment. If one-fourth of the world population is destroyed in the fourth seal, it would represent the greatest destruction of human life ever recorded in history.” (Walvoord)
- It is important to remember that the church (Rapture) has already happened. While not known, there are a number of people who are already gone.
- Right now, the world's population is about 8.28 billion people. A quarter of that would be 2,070,000,000.
- Most Populous Countries (Estimated July 1, 2026):
- India ~ 1.43 billion
- China ~ 1.41 billion
- United States ~ 342.6 million
- Indonesia ~ 285.6 million
- Pakistan ~ 261.7 million
- Almost all of India and China would be gone.

- **Revelation 9:18** tells us that there are another 1/3 of mankind that is going to be killed by plagues.
- We must remember that God is the initiator of these things and He is also in full control.
  - **6:4** “...it was granted to take peace from earth...”
- “From this introduction to the judgments portrayed in the book of Revelation, it should be evident that the world is facing a time of trouble such as man has never known before. The dream of the optimist for a world becoming increasingly better scientifically, intellectually, morally, and religiously does not fit the pattern of God’s prophetic Word. The ultimate triumph of God is assured; and as the book of Revelation makes plain, Christ will reign over the earth and bring in a kingdom of peace and righteousness after the time of trouble has run its course. First, however, there must be the awful time of the great tribulation.” (Walvoord)

## CHAPTER 6:9-11 ~ THE 5<sup>TH</sup> SEAL

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**Revelation 6:9-11** “When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain **because of the word of God**, and **because of the testimony which they had maintained**; {10} 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?" {11} 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.**”

- Our scene shifts from the events of earth to what is taking place in heaven.
- “...John sees a vision of those who will be martyred for their faith in Christ. They are described as being under the altar, in keeping with the fact that the blood of the sacrifices of the Old Testament was poured out under the altar (Exodus 29:12; Lev. 4:7). In this case it is the “souls of them that were slain for the Word of God” which are seen under the altar. John hears them crying with a loud voice asking why God has not judged their persecutors.” (Walvoord)
- Who are these souls underneath the altar?
- They are the believers who did not get raptured with the church but were saved during this first 3 ½ years of the tribulation.
- They were not killed in the seal judgments of God...John specifically says they were slain *because of the word of God and because of the testimony which they had maintained*.
- While many were obviously pressing them to follow the antichrist and turn away from God, they did not. They maintained their testimony and were murdered because of it.
- This judgment from God is two-fold:
  - Those who murder God’s people are heaping more judgment upon themselves.
  - Once God’s people are gone, there is less of a godly influence for unbelievers to repent.

- These martyred saints are given white robes to signify their complete righteousness in Christ.
- To have a robe means they must have a body...does this mean that they have a temporary body **before** the final resurrection? You cannot put a robe on a spirit.
- “The revelation of the fifth seal makes clear that in the future time of tribulation it will be most difficult to declare one’s faith in the Lord Jesus. It may very well be that the majority of those who trust Christ as Saviour in that day will be put to death.” (Walvoord)
- Do you remember how many times in **chapters 4-5** God was shown to be in control? Did you hear the language of, while those martyred wanted justice, it was told to them that they had to wait, “until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.”
- This means that God has even the **exact number** of martyred saints under His sovereign control.

## CHAPTER 6:12-17 ~ THE 6<sup>TH</sup> SEAL

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**Revelation 6:12-17** “I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; {13} and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. {14} The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. {15} Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; {16} and they said to the mountains and to 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; {17} for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’”

- John’s gaze is back on the earth after the 6th seal is broken. What he sees is disturbing.
- “All the elements of a great catastrophic judgment of God are here present, namely, a great earthquake, the sun becoming black, the moon becoming as blood, the stars of heaven falling like ripe figs, the heaven departing as a scroll, and every mountain and island moving.” (Walvoord)
- It is important to take these as literal, not a picture of something to come.
- “The judgments of war, famine, and death, and the martyrdom of the saints have largely originated in human decision and in the evil heart of man. The judgment described here, however, originates in God as a divine punishment inflicted upon a blasphemous world.”
- The results of this judgment coming from God is quite different than what happened before.
- It is now brought into the world’s focus that this is the God of heaven who is bringing this down upon them.
- This causes the greatest rulers of the earth to hide themselves...they know they cannot stand before the One who sits on the throne.

- It is very interesting that mankind will do all they can to hide and they even know they can't actually stand before God...but they won't repent. They won't bow their knee before God and submit to His rule.
- "It is questionable whether changes in government and in human affairs would have brought such a striking transformation in the hearts of these wicked people. As is often the case with desperate men, instead of availing themselves of the grace of God, they attempt to hide from the wrath of the Lamb by seeking escape in death. However their hope is futile, for death is not an escape but merely a change from one state to another. Those who escape through death from the immediate judgment of God are destined for eternal judgment at the judgment of the great white throne." (Walvoord)

## MATTHEW 24 AND REVELATION 6

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Olivet Discourse		The First 6 Seals	
24:4-5	False Christs	6:1-2	White Horse
24:6-7	War	6:3-4	Red Horse
24:7	Famine	6:5-6	Black Horse
24:9	Death	6:7-8	Pale Horse
24:9-13	Martyrdom	6:9-11	5th Seal
Luke 21:11	Signs	6:12-17	6th Seal

- 6th Seal...there is Luke 21:11; but Matthew 24:29 is keeping in Matthew 24.

### Practical Application for Our Own Hearts

- Do you know where you are going to be when this is all taking place?
- We can rejoice because we are made righteous by the blood of the Lamb.
- We can also take heart knowing that no matter how bad this life is, we are never going to experience God's wrath as believers.
- It may seem out of control, but we know that God is in full control.
- We should also read this and be motivated in two ways:
  - To share the gospel with people who don't know Christ. We know what is going to come. We know that righteous judgment awaits the unbelieving world.
  - To persevere until the end. We know that all our present sufferings are nothing compared to what awaits us in heaven.