

Sunday, October 9, Revelation 6:1-8 The Seals are Opened

Revelation 6:1 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!"

Now that the One who is Worthy has appeared to open the scroll, the events will now begin to unfold. Observation: the scroll cannot be opened until all of the seals are broken. Therefore, Revelation 6:1-8:1 is a series of preliminary judgments to usher in final events.

The collection of sevens (seals, trumpets, bowls) follows a pattern of 4-3. The first 4 are earthly judgments against sinners followed by 3 of persecution of the saints by sinners and divine response.

Revelation 6:2 I looked, and behold, a white horse, and the one who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

Revelation 6:3-4 When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come!" 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 people would kill one another; and a large sword was given to him.

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 the one who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. 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."

Revelation 6:7-8 When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come!" I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and the one 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 famine, and plague, and by the wild animals of the earth.

I. First Four Seals: The Four horsemen (6:1-8)

- A. White horse (6:1-2)
- B. Red horse (6:3-4)
- C. Black horse (6:5-6)
- D. Pale horse (6:7-8)

"These four horsemen flow together, as the action proceeds from the lust for conquest to civil war to famine to pestilence and death. In this sense God is not so much pouring down judgment on the earth as allowing their depravity to come full circle. This is a common theme in this book, as sin turns upon itself and self-destructs."

Parallel texts in Zechariah 1:7-11, 6:1-8

Zechariah 1:7-8 On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, that is, the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, as follows: I saw at night, and behold, a man was riding on a red horse, and he was standing among the myrtle trees which were in the ravine, with red, sorrel, and white horses behind him.

Zechariah 1:9-11 Then I said, "What are these, my lord?" And the angel who was speaking with me said to me, "I will show you what these are." And the man who was standing among the myrtle trees responded and said, "These are the ones whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth." So they responded to the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees and said, "We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth is still and quiet."

Zechariah 6:1-3 Now I raised my eyes again and looked, and behold, four chariots were going out from between the two mountains; and the mountains were bronze mountains. With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses, with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot strong spotted horses.

Zechariah 6:4-6 So I responded and said to the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these, my lord?" The angel replied to me, "These are the four spirits of heaven, going out after taking their stand before the Lord of all the earth, with one of which the black horses are going out to the north country; and the white ones are to go out after them, while the spotted ones are to go out to the south country."—

Zechariah 6:7-8 When the strong ones went out, they were eager to go to patrol the earth. And He said, "Go, patrol the earth." So they patrolled the earth. Then He called out to me and spoke to me, saying, "See, those who are going to the land of the north have appeased My wrath in the land of the north."

Revelation 6:9-11 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been killed because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 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 live on the earth?" And a white robe was given to each of them; and they were told that they were to rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers and sisters who were to be killed even as they had been, was completed also.

II. Fifth Seal: Martyred Saints (6:9-11)

Revelation 6:12-14 And I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became as black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

Revelation 6:15-17 Then the kings of the earth and the eminent people, and the commanders and the wealthy and the strong, and every slave and free person hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they *said to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the sight of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of Their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

III. Sixth Seal: Shaking of the Heavens (6:12-17)

A. Cosmic signs (6:12-14)

B. Terror on earth (6:15-17)