

The Seven Seals: The Four Horsemen

Revelation 6:1-8

I. The Tribulation.

- A. The Day of the Lord.
- B. The Time of Jacob's Trouble.
- C. Daniel's 70th Week
- E. The Tribulation.
 - 1. The tribulation is a future seven-year period when God will finish His discipline of Israel and finalize His judgment of the unbelieving world.
 - 2. The church will not go through the Tribulation— 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

II. The Seventy Weeks of Daniel—Daniel 9:24-27

- A. Daniel 9:24 speaks of a defined period of time in which God's purpose is "to finish transgression."
 - 1. The recipients: Israel, the Jews.
- B. God declares that "seventy sevens" will fulfill all these things: The "sevens" are groups of years, so 70 sevens is 490 years.
- C. From "the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra, Nehemiah) to the crucifixion is 483 years of the 490—seven years has not yet happened.
 - 1. These seven years are the Tribulation years.
- A. "A ruler" (the Antichrist) will make a covenant with Israel in the seven-year period.
 - 1. 3 ½ years into the 7 years, he breaks his covenant.
 - 2. The Antichrist will set up an abomination that causes desolation in the holy place (Matthew 24:15).
 - 3. Revelation 13 confirms the beast will place an image of himself in the temple and require the world to worship him.
 - 4. This is confirmed in Daniel 7:25 ("for a time, times, and a half"= 3 ½ years.

III. Why should Christians read Revelation 6-19 if they are not there?

- A. To be reminded that God is a righteous God and He will judge evil.

- B. The urgency to reach the lost.
 - C. For our own preparedness.
- IV. The launch of the Tribulation.
- A. Jesus opens the seals; the angel calls out the judgement—“Come!” (6:1).
 - B. Three sets of judgements.
 - 1. The seal judgements—chapters 6 and 7, which play through all fourteen chapters.
 - 2. The trumpet judgements—chapters 8 and 9
 - 3. The bowl judgements—chapters 15-16
 - C. The first four seals—the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation.
 - 1. “The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse”
 - D. The identity of the first horseman—the White horse.
 - 1. Jesus Christ?
 - a. Jesus initiates the horseman by breaking the seal.
 - b. The crown is a “*stephanos*” not a “*diadem*”.
 - c. Angels never tell Jesus what to do.
 - 2. An evil impersonal force? Deception?
 - a. The deception—World peace (taken away by the red horseman).
 - b. The lack of peace is a spiritual problem not physical.
 - c. Today’s lack of peach is evidence of “pre-tribulation” reality.
 - 3. The Antichrist plays the major role in world deception during the Tribulation.
 - a. 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 9-12; 2 Corinthians 11:14; Revelation 13; 1 Thessalonians 5:3.

The shadows of all the four horsemen can already be seen galloping throughout the world at this moment... Billy Graham

The Seven Seals: The Four Horsemen

Revelation 6:1-8

Someone asked me this week, “*why I decided to preach through Revelation*”...It’s because I wasn’t getting enough emails--- I was getting lonely.

Those days are past!... I greatly appreciate all the emails, especially last week... a record week!... It’s wonderful to see so many of you diving into God’s Word... desiring to know the truth... a book like Revelation, steeped in mystery and difficult to understand will pull you deep into the depths of God’s revealed truth....it’s exciting!

We’ve come to the beginning of a major section in Revelation...from chapter six all the way to chapter 19 we are in what is known as the Tribulation...This period of time has different names given to it throughout the Bible...

1. It is known as “**The Day of the Lord**: Isaiah 13:6 **Wail, for the day of the Lord is near as destruction from the Almighty it will come!**
2. It is known as **The Time of Jacobs Trouble**...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.**
3. **Daniel’s 70th week**.... Which we will be looking at...
4. And of course... **the Tribulation**...found in the book of Revelation especially in 7:14 describing the “Great Tribulation”

I hold to a “Pre-Millennial” view (which I discussed in more detail last week if you missed it and would like to know more you can listen online at our website...and then *you* can start sending me emails!).

The tribulation is a future seven-year period when God will finish His discipline of Israel and finalize His judgment of the unbelieving world. The church, comprised of all who have trusted in the person and work of the Lord Jesus, will not be present during the tribulation...

According to such passages as 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the

Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Caught up... “raptured”...this Tribulation period of seven years is comprised of two 3 ½ year time periods...we get this mostly from the Old Testament book of Daniel chapter 9... by the way... the Old Testament prophesies in books like Daniel...Zechariah, Ezekiel, Isaiah...on and on are essential in understanding Revelation...

So...we get this time schedule of two 3 ½ periods of time from Old Testament prophesy in the book of Daniel... specifically Daniel 9.... And later right here in Revelation chapter 13....What is known as the 70 weeks of Daniel is such an important prophesy... but I’ve hesitated to share it on a Sunday morning.

Some of you have enough trouble staying awake through sermons... it’s a bit complex... but it is so important...and this week I’ve fluctuated *I should go through it... I shouldn’t....I should...* what do you say?... should I go through it?

Alright if you insist...

Please turn then to Daniel 9:24–27 **which reveals the purpose and time of the tribulation**....**this is addressed to Israel Jews**...

“Seventy weeks have been determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression (Israel, God’s chosen people... the Jews had made transgressing God’s law an art form...breaking God’s laws...apostasy) to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, this is amazing... God is telling the Jews through Daniel that He’s going to reconcile their sins against Him... to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, no more need for revelation...All that God wanted to say will have been said and to anoint the Holy of Holies. All that is a picture of the message of the Bible all the way through rest of the book of Revelation...

25 So you are to know and have insight that from the going out of a word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince that’s a big span of time as you will see... there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be restored and rebuilt, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. The rebuilding of Jerusalem... the temple... the wall... Ezra and Nehemiah...

26 Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are decreed.

27 And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will make sacrifice and grain offering cease; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

Still want me to go on?

This passage speaks of 70 weeks that have been declared against **“your people.”**... Daniel’s people are the Jews, the nation of Israel...not the church... and Daniel 9:24 speaks of a defined period of time in which God’s purpose is **“to finish transgression...**

To put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.” God has been moving to this since the fall of man in the garden in Genesis..... God declares that “seventy sevens” will fulfill all these things.... The “sevens” are groups of years... **so 70 sevens is 490 years.** My translation refers to 70 “weeks” of years.)

In verses 25 and 26, the Messiah will be cut off after **“seven sevens and sixty-two sevens”** (69 total sevens)...so... beginning with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem....(We know from history that the command to “restore and rebuild Jerusalem” was given by King Artaxerxes of Persia c. 444 B.C. (see Nehemiah 2:1-8).

The Messiah will be cut off after **“seven sevens and sixty-two sevens”** (69 total sevens)...so In other words, 69 sevens (483 years) after the decree to rebuild is issued... the Messiah will die....which He did... the crucifixion.

Biblical historians confirm that 483 years passed from the time of the decree (444B.C.) to rebuild Jerusalem to the time when Jesus was crucified. **Most Christian scholars, regardless of their view of eschatology,** (Premil...Amil...Postmil...*run-of-the mill*...) have that understanding of Daniel’s 70 sevens.

God said that 70 weeks had been determined (490 years), but, with the death of the Messiah, we only have 69 weeks accounted for (483 years).... This leaves one seven-year period to be fulfilled **“to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place”** (D. 9:24).

This final seven-year period is what we call the tribulation—the time when God **finishes judging Israel** and brings them back to Himself....you see... **it was Israel that God destined and purposed the Tribulation period... not the church.**

We’re not done...

Daniel 9:27 gives a few highlights of the final week... the seven-year tribulation period: “[A ruler...the Antichrist...] **And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will make sacrifice and grain offering cease; and on the wing**

of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

He **will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’**...the Antichrist makes a covenant with Israel...the Jews...for seven years... In the middle of the ‘seven’ after 3 ½ years...**he will put an end to sacrifice and offering.** (the Jews will have started up again the sacrificial system.... The Antichrist will stop it after 3 1/3 years.

And on a wing of the temple he will set up an **abomination that causes desolation**... An *abomination* is “something that causes disgust or hatred”; and *desolation* is “a state of complete emptiness or destruction.”

they will violate Israel...by destroying or ruining what the Jews value as being sacred... **until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”**... Jesus refers to this passage in Matthew 24:15. (Collin read)... The ruler who confirms the covenant and then sets up the abomination is called “**the beast**” in Revelation 13.

According to Daniel 9:27, the beast’s covenant with Israel will be for seven years, but in the middle of this week (3 ½ years into the tribulation), the beast will break the covenant, putting a stop to the Jewish sacrifices...all hell breaks loose....

Revelation 13 explains that the beast **will place an image of himself in the temple and require the world to worship him**.... Revelation 13:5 says that this will go on for 42 months, which is 3 ½ years (the second half of the tribulation)....the most horrible...unimaginable of the seven.

So, we see a covenant lasting to the middle of the “week” (Daniel 9:27) and the beast who made the covenant demanding worship for 42 months (Revelation 13:5). Therefore, the total length of time is 84 months or seven years.

We also have a reference to the last half of the tribulation in Daniel 7:25... There, **the ruler will oppress God’s people for “a time, times, and half a time”** (time=1 year; times=2 years; half a time=½ year; total of 3 ½ years).

This time of oppression against the Jews is also described in Revelation 13:5–7 and is part of the “great tribulation,” the latter half of the seven-year tribulation when the beast, or the Antichrist, will be in power....horrible, horrible time!

Before I go any further... one of my emails asked...*Why do we who will not be here need to read Revelation 6-19?*...Good question!... Why, if we are raptured before the Tribulation do we need to know what happens in the Tribulation... let me give you a few reasons:

1. **To be reminded that God is a righteous God and He will judge evil...** He is sovereign and judgement on all evil is coming.... It's a real thing.... We sometimes forget that God judges evil...very seldom do we feel judged by God when we do evil acts... Lightening doesn't strike us dead normally... so many sins we think we got away with... this reminds us of God's holy righteousness and His promise to judge evil...

Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. And who will be arriving as the judge?... Jesus Christ!...The world has painted Jesus as only a gentle lamb...*Jesus lowly meek and mild..*

few think of His other description as a lion...

Revelation 5:5

And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered,...that's not Jesus speak! so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." When Jesus opens the seals He's a lion!

Revelation 19:11-16

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sits on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; having a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself, 13 and being clothed with a garment dipped in blood, His name is also called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. 15 And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the wrath of the rage of God, the Almighty.

16 And He has on His garment and on His thigh a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Jesus Christ is righteous and just...you want to be on His side!...I don't know how you could read Revelation 6-19 and not evaluate your own life... your own walk with the Lord... how you could possibly not see what is truly important in this life...

We go through life thinking we're in control...Isaiah 46:10

Speaking of God... **Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My counsel will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'** It's all going to happen just as He wants... is desires!

2. **The urgency to reach the lost.**

The clock is ticking... Jesus is coming back... reading these chapters in Revelation shows us the urgency of sharing the gospel....

3. **For our own preparedness:**

The Tribulation period doesn't happen in a vacuum...it's not like everything is dandy and then all of a sudden all hell breaks loose for seven years... there are events that lead up to it that will be/are evident prior to its coming...

I firmly believe we are in a period of pre-tribulation...we observe the goings on in the world and see that they are similar to what we read about the tribulation...and we see that at any time the rapture could come, launching the tribulation.

So how does the tribulation launch?

Read Revelation 6:1-2

Chapters 4 and 5 we saw into the throne room of heaven... God was seated on His throne and was holding a scroll with seven seals...we called this scroll the "**Title Deed of the Earth**"... inside the seals were not land descriptions but rather seven righteous judgements that would take place culminating into Jesus Christ claiming and taking back ownership of the earth.

God held the scroll...but nobody else in heaven was qualified to open it...except Jesus Christ... Jesus takes the scroll from the hand of His Father and when we begin chapter six... he begins to open the seals... one at a time.

There is a pattern that plays out with the opening of the first four seals... Jesus opens the seal... then one of the **four living creatures**...we met them in chapter four in the throne room of God...worshippers of God... they were the winged cherubim angels...

Jesus opens a seal... then one of these cherubim announces **with a loud thunderous voice** the judgement...by saying **Come!**... I emphasized last week that it is important to note that Jesus opens the seals, launching the judgements... **these are God's judgements being released.... His wrath.**

These are not Satan directed.... They are Jesus directed... But Jesus uses the work of Satan to administer the judgements.

Upon opening the first of the seven seals... Jesus has launched the first of three series of judgements which make up these next 14 chapters...

- The seal judgements...chapters 6 and 7...which play through all fourteen chapters.
- The trumpet judgements...chapters 8 and 9
- The bowl judgements...chapters 15-16

Each series of judgements appears to come out of the former... at the end of the seven seal judgments...from the last seventh seal come the seven trumpet judgements..... from the seventh trumpet comes the final set of judgements... the seven bowl judgements...

Each session of judgements intensify as they progress... the first four seals reveal what we know as the “*Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*” ...each horse and horseman bring with them some bad news for those alive during these seven years...

1. The first horse is a *white horse* and his rider which brings with him **Deception**...
2. The second horse is a *red horse* and his rider... they bring with them **Devastation**...wars, conflict...
3. The Third horse is a *black horse* and his rider bring with them **Deprivation**...food, massive inflation.
4. The final, fourth horse is a pale horse, and his rider bring with them **Death**...

The first 3 ½ years of tribulation will be horrible... full of deception...devastation...deprivation and death... The four horsemen make up the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation...the first four seals... then the fifth through the seventh seal makes up the Great Tribulation... the next 3 ½ years.

Back to verse one... Jesus opens the first seal... the angels announce the first horse and horseman... **Come! Then I looked and behold, a white horse and he who sits on it had a bow and a crown given to him, and he went out overcoming and to overcome.**

Through the ages, Bible students have argued who is riding the white horse... infamously Charles Manson identified the four horsemen being the four Beatles!... Some think the white horse rider is Jesus Christ...

After all he's riding on a white horse... white is seen as “purity” in the Bible... but mainly because later in Revelation 19:11-16 Jesus is on a white horse... I read it earlier... **Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sits on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.**

So it must be Jesus on a white horse in chapter 6... a few problems... How can it be Jesus when it was Jesus who opened the seal?... **Jesus opens the seal then runs and jumps on the horse?**... the crown is another problem...the crown this rider is wearing was a *stephanos* crown.

A stephanos crown was a crown awarded after a victory... an athlete, a warrior... after victory... In Revelation 19 Jesus wears a “*diadem*” crown...which signifies “sovereignty”... interesting but Jesus did wear a stephanos *once*... the crown of thorns He wore on the cross was a stephanos...

Matthew 27:29

And after twisting together a **crown** of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they knelt down before Him **and mocked Him**, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”

They put a stephanos on His head as a joke... they didn't realize He would be the victor... paying the full price for our sins.... And three days later victorious over death itself!... never did Jesus wear a stephanos again.... All His crowns were diadems!...

So this chapter 6 rider of the white horse is not wearing diadems... something else...the angels command the riders to “come”... no angel ever commanded Jesus in anything...last thing... the other three horses that follow are all trouble....it makes sense that all four are trouble...

Some say the white horse and rider:

- Is evidence of the gospel...It is white...pure... and good.
- The rider is Apollo – represents false religion...
- The spirit of conquest
- Government persecuting Christians
- Satan's servants

Who is it?...Many if not most say it is referring to the antichrist... I don't think it is specifically talking about a *who* but an “*impersonal force*”...the other three horses have unidentified riders as well... I think these are devastating forces that take over the world leading to destruction... the force is deception...this horse will bring with it deception...the world will never be as deceived as during the tribulation.... **in this case the deception of world peace...**

The first thing to happen in the Tribulation is a false sense of world peace...when we get to the second horse... the red horse... we are told peace is **taken away from the world...**

One of the deepest longings in mankind is the longing for peace...

It is a God planted longing... ever since man's failure in the garden...when peace was lost... there has been no lasting peace... no completely satisfying peace... we look at the world today and see all the violence... all the wars... all the hate... what is it that we all long for?... peace!

What the world doesn't realize is that **the lack of peace is a spiritual problem**... not a physical problem... yet man continually tries to establish world peace through physical means...*If we just have a peace treaty.... The problem is equity... if we just have equity there will be peace...get rid of differences...individuality...* so we tear down God's standards for marriage.... For gender...the family... for equality...

We redefine marriage to be anything anyone wants.... We get rid of distinctions...male and female... rich and poor... talented and untalented...we remove borders... so we will all be equal... as if being “equal” is the secret to peace... only to find anarchy and hopelessness... and an increasing suicide rate...

Erase borders... redistribute wealth... erase all distinctions... connect our brains to a micro-chip...get rid of prisons and jails... get rid of nations and the concept of nationalities...control the environment...have a one world government... then there will be world peace....

We already have been deceived...deception is rampant more than ever!... this is what I mean about us being in the pre-tribulation...it's all being set up...it is so close that what the Bible describes as the tribulation is not all that different from what we are seeing in the world today!...just on steroids!

I think the horse and horseman represents a world force... but I do think the main player is the Antichrist... and of course his master... Satan himself...

Daniel 9:26 tells of a “**prince to come who will destroy...**”he will destroy through deception...
... 2 Thessalonians 2:3...the Thessalonians were panicking because they thought the Day of the Lord had come and they may have missed the rapture...

Let no one in any way deceive you, for it has not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the sanctuary of God, exhibiting himself as being God.

Exhibiting himself as being God... an imposter... a great deceiver...

9 The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, 10 and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, 12 in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Deception.... Strong delusion... 2nd Corinthians 11:14 says ...**Satan disguises himself as an angel of light....**so he rides in on a white horse just like Jesus will do....

This rider is crowned not by God but by Satan himself... Revelation **13 And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion....**this is the Antichrist... (Jesus was the true lion) **And the dragon Satan gave him his power and his throne and great authority.**

1 Thessalonians 5:3 **While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction will come upon them like labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.**

The White Horseman and rider bring in a false peace...a mirage...it looks like world peace...He held a bow but no arrows... and look under the curtain you see this horseman constantly in

conflict...constantly in battles...to maintain this deception... **(2) he went out overcoming and to overcome... he went out conquering and to conquer...**

Billy Graham wrote *The shadows of all the four horsemen can already be seen galloping throughout the world at this moment...*

All this can come to a head at any time...