

Read Revelation!

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.” (Revelation 1:3)

Chapter 6 and 7: The Great Tribulation!

I. The Four Horsemen

(6:1-8)

In John’s vision of the throne of God, the Lamb took the redemption-book from the hand of the Lord (5:7) and was declared to be worthy to open the seals (5:9). As the apostle saw the Lamb open each of the seven seals (5:1), a new vision was given to him about events that will happen after the Rapture of the Church. The period between the Rapture (Christ’s coming in the air for His saints) and the Return (Christ’s coming back to earth with His saints) will apparently be the period of seven years designated in the book of Daniel as the final “*week*” of years of the “*seventy weeks . . . determined upon thy people [the Jews] and upon the city [Jerusalem], to finish the transgression . . . to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness . . .*” (Look up Daniel 9:24-27). Antichrist will rise to power at the beginning of these seven years (right after the Rapture according to II Thessalonians 2) and will “*confirm the covenant*” with Jews that have returned to Palestine so that they can resume Temple worship at Jerusalem. “*In the midst of the week [after 3½ years] he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease*” and commit the act called by Daniel and by the Lord Jesus, “*the abomination of desolation*” (See Matthew 24:15). Perhaps this will be when he “*as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*” (II Thessalonians 2:3-4). He will break his covenant with the Jews in Palestine and start the final 3½ years of divine judgment that will culminate in the Battle of Armageddon and the Return of Christ to earth. This last half of the last week of years is mentioned several times in the Book of Revelation (“*forty and two months*” in 11:2, 13:5; “*a thousand two hundred and threescore days*” in 11:3, 12:6—counting 360 in each year as used to be done; and “*a time, and times, and half a time*” in 12:14—or 3½ years). Some scholars call the whole seven-year time “the Tribulation period” and the last 3½ years “the Great Tribulation.” No matter how we use these labels, this time just before the Return of

Christ to earth will be a period of great evil and great disaster as God pours out His wrath on the wicked world system. The visions of the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials indicate the kinds of troubles that will occur at that time, and probably the order of their occurrence. Notice as you read that six of the seven seals speak of specific tribulations, and that the seventh opens up to the trumpets (Revelation 8:1-6). The first six trumpets speak of tribulations that will happen within the seventh seal, and the seventh trumpet prepares for the seven vials (Revelation 11:15-19 and 15:1-8). The idea seems to be that the judgments of the Tribulation will accelerate. It seems also that the seals give an overview of the period. The first four seals reveal the famous “Four

Horsemen of the Apocalypse.”

A. The White Horse: The Conqueror.

This ruler who imitates Christ (compare 6:2 with 19:11) is of course the Antichrist whose prominence defines the Tribulation period.

B. The Red Horse: War.

The prophets said that God uses “*the sword . . . the pestilence and the famine*” (Ezekiel 7:15) to punish nations (Compare this verse with Jeremiah 14:12). The earth will see this on a grand scale during the Tribulation.

C. The Black Horse: Famine.

Notice the shortages, the high prices, and the conservation requirements.

D. The Pale Horse: Death.

Compare verse 8 with Ezekiel 14:21.

II. Heaven and Earth

(6:9-17)

The next two seals (fifth and sixth) show us what will go on in Heaven and on earth during the Tribulation.

A. Martyrs crying, “How long?”

People will be killed “*for the Word of God*” during this awful period, and their “*souls*” will cry to God to “*avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth.*” The Lord will reply that many more must die before He will end the Tribulation with the Return of Christ. See in Revelation 20 how Christ will reward the Tribulation martyrs (verse 4).

B. Sinners crying, “Hide us!”

Revelation 6:12-17 calls the Great Tribulation “*the great day of His wrath*” and pictures for us the terror of that time.

III. The Servants of God

(Chapter 7)

As we have noted, believers in Christ will be caught up to Heaven before the Tribulation period begins. Now Chapter 7 explains to us that God will have servants serving Him on earth at that time, and it tells us who they will be.

A. 144,000 Israelites.

“*The servants of our God*” will be sealed before the fury of the day of wrath will come. These people, as we see in verses 3 through 8, are 144,000 “*of all the tribes of the children of Israel.*” They will certainly not be all of the Jews alive at that time. There are now over 14 million Jews in the world. These will be “*the first fruits unto God and unto the Lamb*” (Jesus Christ) in a great harvest of souls that will be saved in those days! They

will be Jews who, perhaps through reading their own prophets and New Testament books such as Matthew and Revelation, will realize that Jesus of Nazareth is Christ, and they will turn to Him for salvation.

B. “A Great Multitude”

The rest of the chapter shows us the huge multitude “*of all nations*” that will be saved during the “*great tribulation*.” Apparently the Jewish converts to Christianity will evangelize the world in those days, and will see millions born again. Even in the worst of times, men may be won to Christ.