

SECTION 15

Text: 6:1-2

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I Heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, Come. 2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon has a bow; and there was given unto him a crown: and he came forth conquering, and to conquer.

Initial Questions 6:1-2

1. After the Lamb opened one of the seals John was commanded to "come" and then he saw what - vs 2?
2. What does the "crown" symbolize?
3. Who is the "he came forth conquering, and to conquer" - vs. 2?

The Opening of The First Six Seals

Chp. 6:1-17

First Part of the Vision Chp. 6:1-2

All that has gone before was preparatory for this moment of the breaking of the seven seals. We should note the outline that John follows through the next six chapters. The first four seals will be broken at once, and will together form one picture. Then the 5th and 6th seals will be broken, together structuring one complete picture. Then there will be some intermediate material leading finally into the breaking of the 7th Seal. The 7th Seal, in turn, is the introduction to the 7 trumpets that follow. The same general outline is followed concerning the seven trumpets. This structure is the product of the Semitic mind, which runs through the same picture again and again. Therefore, we must not apply the logical canons of Western thought of this book.

After the seal had been opened, John heard one of the four living creatures saying - Come (*erchon* - present imperative - a command to come). The symbolism of the horse is related to the first four seals (see Zechariah 1:8ff; 6:1ff) as the symbol of the horse is used in the scripture, it is always connected war, conquest, strength, etc. (See also Rev. 9:7; 14:20; 18:13; 19:11.)

Though we would not be dogmatic about the identification of "the rider on the white horse," we do not concur with Lenski (*Interpretation of St. John's Revelation*, Wartburg Press, Columbus, Ohio, 1935; an excellent commentary by late conservative Lutheran), and W. Hendriksen (*More Than Conquerors*,

Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan, 1952 - a fine popular statement by excellent conservative Presbyterian Scholars), that the rider on the white horse is Christ. Oscar Cullmann is also mistaken in this identification (see his *Christ and Time*, pp. 169ff). It is improbable that the rider on the white horse in chp. 6:2 is the same person as the rider on a white horse in chp. 19:11ff. From a mere consideration of the symbol one could draw the conclusion that the two riders are the same, but in view of the context the identification of the two riders with the Christ seems to this author to be highly unlikely. (See Swete, *op cit.*, p. 86.)

A. T. Robertson (See N.T. World Studies) is probably right in identifying the rider on the white horse with the white horses of Persian Kings and Roman conquerors in their processions of victory. This particular identification would certainly be understood by John's readers, and in the light what follows it can stand as an undogmatic interpretation. The rider is prepared for conflict. This rider carried a heavy war bow. And the one sitting on it having a bow and was given to him a crown, (*stephanos* - victors crown see 4:10) and he went forth overcoming (*nikon* - present participle - constantly overcoming) and in order that (*hina* - clause or purpose clause) or for the purpose that he might overcome (*nikēsē* - 1 aor. subjunctive).

In view of this one conquering we can do no better than to remind ourselves of Paul's words to the Church at Rome. "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us." (Romans 8:37)

SECTION 16

Text: 6:3-4

3 And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come. 4 And another horse came forth, a red horse: and to him that sat thereon it was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

Initial Questions 6:3-4

1. The opening of the second seal revealed what - vs. 4?
2. Who gave the rider permission "to take peace from the earth - vs. 4?
3. What does the great sword symbolize?

Verse 3

The second seal was opened and the second living creature commanded that John "come" in order to see the content of the second seal.

Verse 4

War is the content of this seal. "And another horse went forth, a red horse (horse implied but not in text - the horse was flame colored - *purros* from *pur* - fire) and to the one sitting on it was given (*edothē* - 1 aor. ind. pass. the pass. voice - means that someone else give or permitted him to take peace from the earth, and the aor. tense means that this power was given in a single act) to him to take peace out of (*ek*) the earth and in order that, (or for the purpose that--another *hina* clause) they shall slay one another - (reciprocal killing--each other), and a great sword was given (passive voice) to him. The word translated sword (*machaira*) is used in the Septuagint for the sacrificial knife used by Abraham (see Genesis 22:6,10).

This condition of war is probably a precursor to Harmagedon (chp. 16). Jesus' great discourse on the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world in Matthew 24:1-51 will provide much insight for this section of *The Revelation*. James speaks of the ultimate source of war (chp. 5:1ff). Ours is an age when war has become normal. What does this say of the spiritual foundations of western civilization? Who is involved in this war mentioned in this verse - Church against world, or nation against nation?

Note: War and Peace are two dominate themes in 20th century thought. The prophet of Israel taunted "You cry Peace - Peace, when there is no Peace." Men still cry peace, and we are participating in a most precarious peace. Shall evil or righteousness prevail? The Revelation was written to give the answer that righteousness shall prevail over persecution, pain, and war, because God in Christ won the victory over darkness. This is one of the central reasons for the resurgent relevance of *The Revelation* in our day. It is a book for times of crisis. (See Pedersen's monumental work on *Israel*, Oxford University Press for an excellent analysis of the concept of *peace* in the O.T.)

Christ is the righteousness of God! The root of the Hebrew term for righteousness means three things: (1) righteous one; (2) innocent one; (3) victorious one. Christ's victory stands in marked contrast to the grotesque, barbaric Greek understanding of victory. There shall be no *Peace* upon the face of the earth

until the *Prince of Peace* reigns in every mortal heart. Peace cannot be brought about by a "One World Government"! If men want ultimate Peace, it is to be found in the *wholeness* of the holiness of God in Christ.

SECTION 17

Text 6:5-6

5 And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, Come. And I saw, and behold, a black horse: and he that sat thereon had a balance in his hand. 6 And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A measure of wheat for a shilling, and three measures of barley for a shilling; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not.

Initial Questions 6:5-6

1. What does "the balance" symbolize - vs. 5?
2. Wheat and Barley is very scarce and expensive - vs. 6. What does this imply?
3. Where in the Old Testament does this symbolism of the scarcity and expensiveness of basic food stuffs originate? (See Ezekiel Chp. 4:16; 5:16f.)
4. Why the command not to hurt the oil and wine?

Verse 5

The third seal revealed "a black horse, and the one sitting on it having a balance in his hand." Black signifies famine and weeping (see Jeremiah 4:28; 8:21; Malachi 3:14 - where mourning is literally "in black.") The rider on the black horse carried a pair of scales (*zugon*). What was the purpose of this scale or balance? John hurries to inform us!

Verse 6

John heard one of "the four living creatures saying: a choenix (a measure of some kind) of wheat for a denarius (about a penny), and three measures of barley for a denarius; and the oil and the wine do not harm." Famine is the key to this imagery. Food was scarce, and what was available had an exorbitant price tag on it. Though our present day inflation would make the prices vary considerably, we can see the picture from

I. T. Beckwith's, (*The Apocalypse of John*, MacMillan, N. Y. 1919, p. 520 - excellent, a must for advanced study.) statement that grain sold at twelve times its regular cost. We can see the picture better when we know that a denarius was a day's wages. Here we clearly see the results of war. Wheat, barley, oil, and wine were the staple foods in Asia Minor and Palestine in the first century. Luxuries were unavailable, and even the staples were not abundantly available. Only those who survived with enough money could purchase the scarce food items. What does this imply for those who could not afford the high cost of famine and suffering? Scarcity is the ultimate cost of human conflicts (See Leviticus 26:26 and Ezekial 4:16.)

SECTION 18

Text 6:7-8

7 And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, Come. 8 And I saw, and behold, a pale horse: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with death, and by the wild beasts the earth.

Initial Questions 6:7-8

1. Who was the rider of the "pale horse" - vs. 8?
2. Who followed behind this rider?
3. How extensive were his powers and how great his authority - vs. 8?
4. How is the devastation spoken of in vs. 8 - related to the will and purpose of God?

Verse 7

John was again commanded to "come" and see the content of the seal.

Verse 8

He saw - "A pale green horse, and the one sitting upon it, his name (was) Death, and hades (transcribed from the Greek term *hadēs* - this is not a translation of the term) followed with him," The name of this rider, following the Semitic pattern was called by his chief characteristic. Semitic names were always descriptive of a major attribute of the bearer. What follows war and famine? Plagues and pestilence are always hard on the heels of war and scarcity. This rider is described as pale, livid, corpse-like. The imagery is ghastly! "And was given (pass. voice someone else gave them this authority - it was not an intrinsic characteristic,) to them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with famine and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth." (*hupo* instead of *en* indicating actual agents) See Ezekiel 14:21 and the judgments discussed there). John reveals this terrible situation which comes upon the Christian and unChristian alike. Does faith in Jesus Christ make any difference when intense evil is inflicted upon the earth? Our Faith must be the victory! The third verse of that grand old hymn is very much to the point.

Faith Is the Victory!

To him that overcomes the foe - white raiment shall be
giv'n;
Before the angels he shall know His name confessed in
heav'n;
Then onward from the hills of light, Our hearts with
love aflame;
We'll vanquish all the hosts of night, In Jesus' con-
qu'ring name.
Faith is the Victory----Faith is the Victory----
Faith is the Victory that overcomes the world.

SECTION 16

Text 6:9-11

9 And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 and they cried with a

great voice, saying, How long, O master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And there was given them to each one a white robe; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who should be killed even as they were, should have fulfilled their course.

Initial Questions 6:9-11

1. Where were the souls of the slain found - vs. 9?
2. Why were they slain - vs. 9?
3. Does vs. 10 relate the cry of those impatient for justice? (Note Habakkuk's cry in the Old Testament.)
4. What does the "white robes" of vs. 11 signify? Who received them?

Verse 9

The fifth and sixth seals go together. When the fifth seal is opened, the martyrs are standing under God's altar, crying for vengeance. They are told that they must wait for God's appointed time. The altar imagery is taken directly from the tabernacle (Exodus 39:39; 40:29). This is the altar of sacrifice (*thusiastēriou*). This is the term used in Acts 17:23 (an altar to an unknown god). We must not lose sight of the imagery that the souls were underneath or covered over by the place where the sacrifice for sin was made. John saw "the souls of the ones having been slain (*esphagmenōn* - passive perfect participle - the term has a sacrificial significance, and implies violence) because of (or on account of - *dia* with the accusative has causal force) the Word of God, and because of (same structure as previous phrase) the witness which they had. The reasons for their being slain were the same for John being banded to Patmos.

Verse 10

The martyrs cried for vengeance! The O.T. prophet Habakkuk asked God the same thing regarding the apparent victory and prosperity of the wicked—"How long?" Abraham asked the Lord of Heaven - "will not the judge of the whole earth be righteous (or do righteously?) Why do the martyred saints cry for vengeance? How does this passage fit in with the contemporary resurgence of the heresy of universalism (that everyone is going to be saved ultimately)? With great volume "they cried saying: until when (how long), master, the holy and true, judgest

thou not and avengest blood on them dwelling on the earth?" The word translated master here is *despotēs*. The word *despotēs* is used in Jude 4; and II Peter 2:11 referring to Christ. In our language the word despot carries a bad connotation. Why did the Spirit choose this term? A despot is one who controls everything (note this term in Acts 4:24 - in times of persecution). There is not much hope left, unless God is all powerful, and that His will and purpose will ultimately prevail.

Verse 11

(Note how often the passive voice - "was given" is used in this section of scripture. This means that God allows certain things to occur but He is still in command of the reigns of the universe. The martyrs received a white robe. A *stolē* (robe) was a long festive dress. It was for special occasions only. "And it was said to them in order that (*hina* clause - for the purpose that) they should rest (stop drying and also rest in spiritual peace) yet a little season until should be fulfilled also the fellow slaves of them and the brothers of them the ones being about (mellontes - about to occur) to be killed as also they." God told the saints to rest, because others would also be martyred for their faith in Christ. Things will grow worse on the earth, not better and better in every way.

SECTION 20

Text: 6:12-17

12 And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; 13 and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. 14 And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?

Initial Questions 6:12-17

1. What is the O.T. source of the imagery of the sixth seal - vs. 12? (See Joel chp. 2:1ff)
2. The devastation was so terrible that the habitants of the earth did what - vs. 15?
3. Is there a hiding place from God?
4. Is it paradoxical to speak of the "wrath of the Lamb" - vs. 16?
5. Who will be able to stand in the day of God's wrath - vs. 17?

Verse 12

The sixth seal is the revelation of God's day of wrath (6:12-17). The imagery in this section of scripture is taken almost verbally from the biblical sources. The earthquake comes from Matthew 24:, the sun black and the moon turned to blood (Joel 2:31 - note Joel chap 2:28f was quoted by Peter on the Day of Pentecost), the star fallen from heaven like figs from a fig tree (Isaiah 34:4), the sky rolled up like a scroll (Isaiah 34:4), the rulers of the earth hiding (Isaiah 2:10), calling for the rocks and mountains to fall upon them (Hosea 10:8), are all familiar images to signify the end of the present world order.

The relationship of the structure of *The Revelation* to the great eschatological discourse of our Lord (Matthew 24:4; 25:1ff; Mark 13:5-37; Luke 21:8-36 - see also Luke 17:20-37) is acknowledged by every competent scholar.

Note: We now have a paradigm of conservative, scholarly research in the work of Herman Ridderbos, a brilliant Dutch Calvinist. *The Coming of the Kingdom*, Presbyterian Reformed Pub. Co., 1962, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - this is a must for all concerned with the eschatology of The Synoptic Gospels and specifically with the passages mentioned above on our Lord's discourse on "the last things." Dr. Ridderbos is acutely aware of all top level critical scholarship as he enters the arena with C. H. Dodd's "realized eschatology" (no ultimate wrath, judgment, nor hell), Oscar Cullmann, a mediating Lutheran scholar of the first rank, R. Bultmann, the father of contemporary theology which utilizes the categories of Existential anthropology to reinterpret the scriptures, and K. Barth, the architect of the greatest systematic presentation of a theology since Calvin. Thank God for a man that is committed to the Word, and is also alert to every scholarly work in the field!

Then these things begin to occur - "they say to the mountains and to the rocks: Fall ye (*pesete* - 2 aor. imper. - the rocks were commanded to fall - do it now) on us and hide (*krupsate* - 1st aor. imper. they also commanded that the rocks

hide them - tense of urgency) us from the face (the presence of - a Semitic manner of speaking) of the one sitting on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb." The judgments of God are so severe that the rich and poor, the strong and the weak, strive to "hide," but there is no hiding place. Why?

Verse 17

"because the great day of their wrath came (*elthen* - 2 aor. ind. - it came in a moment - there was no time to prepare for it - now!) and who is able (can) stand - (*stathenai* - 1st. aor. inf. passive voice) who will be permitted to stand?) For the great day (*hē hemera hē megalē*) see Joel 2:11; Zephaniah 1:14; Jude 6). This powerful vision was presented to us with the paradoxical elements of "the wrath of a lamb." Lambs are not full of wrath, but "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world" is full of wrath for those who deny His vicarious atonement for sin.

Swete answers the concluding question "who is able to stand?" with the words of Christ found in Luke 21:36. "But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." (1901 - R.V.)

This scene speaks eloquently against the hideous heresy of universalism, which is rearing its ugly head again - in high and low places. (See the brief discussion in appendix after this chapter.)

Note: Sermon Suggestion - *No Place to Hide!*

Introduction: David Bradley reported his experiences in the bomber which dropped the first nuclear weapon on Japan. He wrote a book entitled - *No Place to Hide*. This is even more true of "the one sitting on the throne and wrath of the Lamb." No one will be able to stand!

I. Men seek *Security* today as never before, but will not find human forms of security adequate for that hour.

II. Men are *alienated* today as never before. They try to hide in the escape mechanisms of this world, but even the sea and the graves cannot hide us from "the wrath of the Lamb."

III. Men are seeking *prestige* by attaining the *status symbols* of our day. We try to hide from our real selves. Before we can respond to the Gospel we must know who we are before God, in order to become what we ought to as followers of Christ. Rollo May says, in his *The Meaning of Anxiety*, that man's ultimate concern today is to know the answer to the question - "Who am I and what is the meaning of my existence?"

Conclusion: What is *Your* answer to the question "Who Can Stand?" While those outside of Christ cry for the mountains and rocks

to fall on them and hide them, those of us in Christ have a rock that is cleft for our hiding place.

Rock of Ages

Rock of Ages, cleft for me; Let me hide myself in
thee;

Not the labor of my hands can fulfill the law's
demands;

Nothing in my hand I bring: Simply to thy cross I
cling:

Note: We are under obligation to Leon Morris for his excellent survey study of *The Biblical Doctrine of Judgment*. Tyndale Press, London, 1960. Now in hard back and handled by Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Many people deny the objective wrath of God, ultimate judgment, an ultimate Hell, but there are many different reasons given for rejecting these doctrines. The unitarian-Universalist coalition deny the validity of Hell, because the nature of God (they say) necessitates that everyone be ultimately saved. The Jehovahs Witnesses deny the reality of *Hell*, but for a different reason; they say that Hell is not a biblical doctrine. The vast majority of contemporary theologians deny the existence of Hell, because of their new views of revelation.

Dr. Morris' book is divided into four chapters:

1. Judgment in the O.T. Shaphat.
2. Judgment in the O.T.; other words than Shaphat.
3. Judgment in the N.T.; A Present Reality.
4. Judgment in the N.T.; A future Certainty.

Dr. Morris deals sagaciously with the best critical literature which strives, but vainly, to show that the Bible does not speak of an eschatological wrath, and ultimate judgment. Morris brilliantly, but simply, shows the fallacious reasoning of those who would empty the biblical declarations of their ultimate truth.

Review Questions for the Entire Chapter 6

1. What is a possible identification of "the rider on the white horse - vs. 1?
2. What does the symbol of "the red horse" mean - vs. 4?
3. Discuss some of the spiritual factors involved in War - vs. 4.
- 4.

4. In our World does it look like evil or righteousness shall prevail - see vs. 4?
5. What is the purpose of the third seal - vs. 5?
6. Discuss the inter-relationship of war and scarcity as it is a present reality in our world.
7. How meaningful is our Christian Faith in times of crisis - vs. 8?
8. What were the reasons given for the saints being slain - vs. 9?
9. Discuss the problem of evil with respect to God's justice, righteousness, and power - vs. 10.
10. Why were the saints told to rest - vs. 11?
11. Discuss the inter-relationship of Matthew 24:1ff, and this section of The Revelation - vs. 12/
12. Who does "their wrath" refer to in vs. 17?

Special Study

The Gospel, The Gulf of Guilt, and
Resurgent Universalism!

Scripture: Luke 13:22-30

22. And he went on his way through cities and villages, teaching, and journeying on unto Jerusalem. 23. And one said unto him, Lord, are they few that are saved?

Text: Romans 3:26

I say of his righteousness at this present season that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.

On April 11, 1961, another trial began in the city of Jerusalem, Palestine, which, like another trial in that city 1,929 years ago, was concerned with Justice, Righteousness, Guilt, and Forgiveness. The Jewish Court today, as during the trial of Jesus, sought only justice. What *is* Justice?

Adolf Eichmann, chief of the Gestapo of Jewish Affairs, was responsible for the liquidation of six million Jews! There is no punishment fit for the crime; a crime primarily committed on a little farm in Eastern Poland - Auschwitz! He was set out for all to see, as was Jesus. The world waited for the day when