

15. The First Four Seal Judgments

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why Christ is worthy to open the seven seals on the scroll. We also saw what the eternal results will be of His redemption. In this topic, we are going to learn about the judgments that will come on the earth from the first four seals.

We see that there are seven seals. The seventh seal will have seven trumpet judgments in it. The seventh trumpet judgment will have seven bowl judgments in it, so these seven seals will have all of the judgments through the end of chapter 19. Revelation 6:1-2 says, “Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, ‘Come and see.’ And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.” Here, we see that the Lamb opened the first seal. Then, one of the living creatures spoke to John and told him to come and see what was revealed when this first seal was opened.

When the first seal was opened John saw a white horse and a rider. This rider has a bow but no arrows. We see a crown was given to the rider. We also see that the horse and rider went out to conquer. Since Christ is the One who opened the seals, we see that this cannot be Christ. We will see that the rider on this white horse is actually the antichrist. Before the time of the coming of the antichrist Mark 13:5-8 says, “And Jesus, answering them, began to say: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am *He*,’ and will deceive many. But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These *are* the beginnings of sorrows.’” From the time that Christ returned to heaven, there have been many that have claimed to be the Christ, and have deceived many people. There have also been wars and rumors of wars. Christ said that these things must happen before the coming of the antichrist.

A white flag has always been a sign of surrender or a sign of peace. The white horse points out the fact that the antichrist will gain power by promising peace. This is further shown by the fact that he will have a bow but no arrows. The word translated “crown” is not the crown of a king. Instead, it is a crown of reward (for Christians) or a crown of victory for the world. 1 Corinthians 9:25 says, “And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown*.” The crown of the antichrist will be a very perishable crown because he will conquer by making false promises of world peace. After the rapture of the church in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, we read, in 1 Thessalonians 5:3, “For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.” The antichrist will deceive the world by promising peace but it will only be temporary.

The rider on the first horse is the same rider on the following three horses. Revelation 6:3-4 says, “When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, ‘Come and see.’ Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from

the earth, and that *people* should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.” The red horse speaks of war and bloodshed. Here, we see that once the antichrist has gained world control by promising peace that the temporary peace comes to a sudden end. We see that there will be conflict throughout the earth because these verses say that he will take peace from the earth. This is shown by the fact that instead of a bow and no arrows, this time he is given a great sword.

We see that people will kill one another. Genesis 6:5 and 6:11 tell us, “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually... The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.” Then, Luke 17:26 adds, “And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man.” The antichrist will gain world power by promising peace but that peace will soon be replaced with violence throughout the world. This verse, in Luke, shows us that the violence is compared to the violence that was present in the time of Noah. We see that in his time, the earth was filled with violence. There are several things that go along with violence that will also be present throughout the world during the time of the antichrist.

Revelation 6:5-6 says, “When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come and see.” So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.” One of the consequences of war and violence is the destruction of much food. That is the result that we see in these verses. We see that famine is pictured by a black horse. In the Old Testament, the city of Samaria experienced great famine when it was under siege by the army of Syria. 1 Kings 6:24-25 says, “Then the king said to her, ‘What is troubling you?’ And she answered, ‘This woman said to me, Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.’ So we boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, ‘Give your son, that we may eat him’; but she has hidden her son.” In Samaria, this famine became so bad that these women were eating their own children.

Here, in Revelation, we see that the rider on the black horse has a scale in his hands. During the time of New Testament, a denarius was the wage for a full day of work. A quart of wheat will provide enough bread or other food for one person for a day. In that day, barley was normally food for the animals because it was cheaper than wheat. As a result, a person will be able to buy three quarts of barley for a full day’s wage. Here, we see one of the results of violence and war. In order to feed a small family, a person will need to buy barley, instead of wheat, in order to have enough food for that small family for a day. This third seal points out the fact that there will be a lack of food for most of the people. As a result, there will be hunger throughout the earth.

At the same time, this hunger will not affect all of the people because the last phrase of these verses says “and do not harm the oil and the wine.” Oil and wine were part of the basics for the poor because oil was used to make bread and wine was used to purify water. However, in the time this book was written, the rich would use expensive oils to make perfume and lotions. They would use the wine to make expensive liquors. As a result, during the early part of the tribulation, the small percentage of rich will still be able to live in luxury, even though the great majority of the people

will experience need due to a lack of food. This would indicate that the rich will have no concern for the poor.

Revelation 6:7-8 brings us to the opening of the fourth seal, where we read: “When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, ‘Come and see.’ So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.” The word translated “pale” speaks of something that is green or yellow. Here, we see that the opening of this seal brings Death and Hades to the earth.

We see that Death comes first and it is followed by Hades. The word translated “Hades” was used to speak of “*a dark dismal place in the depths of the earth*”. Christ used this word when He told about the rich man and Lazarus. Luke 16:22-24 says “So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’” Here, we see that Hades is the place where unbelievers go and are there until the final judgment. Revelation 20:13-15 says, “The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

We see that although the antichrist will promise peace that he will actually come with the goal of destruction of as many people as possible. Through these first four seals we see that one-fourth of the population of the world will be destroyed. Instead, we see death will come to people in a variety of different ways. Many will be killed by other people. In the time of Noah, the earth was filled with violence and the people were unprepared for the judgment that God brought on the earth. Luke 17:26 says, “And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man.” Many will die as a result of hunger and starvation. Some will be killed by the wild animals. These verses make it clear that most will not die from sickness, disease or other natural causes of death. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain that the antichrist will try to deceive the world by promising to bring world peace. However, instead of peace, this passage makes it clear that death and judgment will come on those who believe his lies. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to warn others about this future judgment.