

Revelation Chapter 6 – Verse by Verse

Revelation 6:1-17

- **Vs 1** – Note how this chapter also begins with “and”. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 happen sequentially with no break in chronology. We are still in the throne room scene, the 24 elders and 4 beasts have just worshipped the Lamb, who is Jesus Christ, and now in chapter 6 we see the Lamb opening the first of the 7 seals.
 - Upon opening this seal, the sound of thunder is heard, causing those that hear to pay attention. One of the beasts then beckons to John to come and see what was on the scroll
 - Recall in [Rev 5](#) that no one was worthy to open the seals, “neither to look thereon”. That didn’t mean no one could see the scroll, as John saw it in [Rev 5:1](#). It meant that they could not view the contents unless one worthy opened it for them. The beast that beckons to John invites John to see what the scroll contains under the first seal.
- **Vs 2** – This scroll may have both words and pictures on it. The language here says that John “saw” a white horse and its rider was holding a bow. The rider was handed a crown and he went forth to conquer. Whether he saw the picture of these things or just the words describing it like we read here in [vs 2](#) isn’t of much importance. The point is that the scroll indicated that this was the first judgment of the Tribulation period.
 - There is much speculation on what this means. What we do know from studying this book, as well as [Dan 9-12](#), [Matt 24-25](#), [Mark 13](#), and [Luke 21](#), is that there is one who will rise to power under the influence of Satan, called simply “the beast” ([Rev 11:7](#), [14:9](#) et al). He is the “prince that shall come” in [Dan 9:26](#) which “shall confirm the covenant with many for one week” ([Dan 9:27](#)). That “one week” is the final of the 70 weeks in Daniel’s prophecy, which is this Tribulation period, also called the “time of Jacob’s Trouble” ([Jer 30:7](#)). In the midst of this “week”, or the Tribulation period, this “beast” will “cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate” ([Dan 9:27](#)). Three and one-half years after the Tribulation period begins, the “beast” will cause the abomination that maketh desolate” ([Dan 12:11](#)). At that time, Jesus told the “Little Flock” ([Luke 12:32](#)-true believing Israel) to get out of Jerusalem ([Matt 24:15-22](#)) This abomination is the image/idol of the “beast” set up for the world to worship him in Jerusalem’s temple ([Rev 13:1-18](#), [2 Thess 2:1-11](#)).
 - In short, this beast is the leader of the world power to come, which we will dive deeper into the details in the later chapters of Revelation. It would seem safe to assign this rider on the white horse to this “beast” as he will conquer the majority of the world and appear to be doing good to the world’s eyes ([Rev 13:4](#)).
 - This rider is noted to have a bow, but no arrows. Why not a sword? It would seem this picture of the rider indicates that his conquering will either be done from afar, without violence, or both.
 - Note that this rider is *given* a crown. Important to note that the Greek for this crown is “stephanos”, which has the meaning of a prize. The word depicts the garland given to the winner of an athletic event, signifying victory. This is different than the Greek word “diadema”, which is the regal crown of authority. This victory or ability to conquer is not achieved by his power alone. God is allowing it to happen at that time. This should remind us of [Rom 13:1](#). If we think about it, the children of disobedience are asking for

this conqueror to lead them (2 Thess 2:10-12). Jesus also speaks of false Christs in Matt 24:4-5.

- Lastly, let's touch on the "white" horse. There is so much that people say about the significance of a white horse, how they are typically the color of a leader (George Washington, Napoleon, etc), but how does the bible define the color white and its significance?
 - White is used in many places, usually describing purity or righteousness (Rev 2:17, manna was white – Ex 16:31, Rev 3:5, 18, 4:3, etc), but white can describe a plague, namely leprosy (Lev 13-14). What are we to make of this? Well, I think that the application lies with Rev 19:11-16. Jesus Christ is going to return on a white horse, so I think that it further emphasizes the rider of this white horse in Rev 6:2 is the "beast", as Satan will use such deception to get Israel to make a covenant with this man for a 7-year period. The beast will mimic everything of the real Jesus Christ in order to deceive with strong delusion (2 Thess 2:8-12)
- Vs 3 – Two times we see the word "second" in this verse. The Lamb opens the *second* seal, revealing a further portion of the scroll, and the *second* beast beckons to John to observe. We aren't told which beast beckons John at which time, but we will observe that each one takes a turn for the first four seals.
- Vs 4 – Now we observe another horse which is red, and this rider does wield a sword. We would note that the Greek doesn't include the word "power" here, as it is rightly italicized in the KJV. I would lean toward keeping it out, though it doesn't do a disservice to what is being said. There are two things given to the rider of the red horse
 - First it was **given** to the rider to take peace from the earth. The result is that men will slay each other. Note that the text says that "they will kill one another". Man against man. Woman against woman. This should remind us of what our Lord said in Matt 24:6-7
 - Second it was **given** to the rider a great sword. Violence follows after this rider, clearly understood by what was written in this verse. There will be fighting on earth like the world has never known, and this sword may imply that this rider leads the charge.
 - How does the color red fit in with the bible? "Scarlet" typically refers to the linen materials used in the tabernacle (Ex 25:4, 26:1, 31, 36, etc), though the baby Zarah was also marked with a scarlet thread (Gen 38:28, 30). "Crimson" is only found 3 times and refers also to the materials in the temple (2 Chron 2:7, 14, 3:14). The Hebrew Chakilah or Chakiluth describes the redness of the eyes, like a drunkard (Gen 49:12, Prov 23:29). "Red" is used for the lentil soup Jacob made (Gen 25:30), and the color of the heifer used to purify from sin, as in touching the dead (Num 19:1-22).
 - I think the significance is that red is described as the color of blood that Christ presses out of the children of disobedience in judgment and war (Isa 63:1-6, Zech 1:7-17, Rev 19:13). It is the color of sin that ought to be changed by the power and work of God through Christ (Isa 1:18-20). Both of these help us with the idea of this rider, which most likely is a demonic being, bringing the judgement of removing peace from the earth and causing war and chaos. God does use fallen angels to bring judgment (Psalm 78:41-52, Rev 7:1, 9:1-3)
 - I will also leave the possibility that the color of this and subsequent horses are just to differentiate between the judgements as there isn't just one biblical use on each of these colors
- Vs 5 – Note again the link to the 3rd seal and the 3rd beast. Next of the judgments comes a rider on a black horse. Once more the biblical use of "black" doesn't really point to anything

pertaining to the meaning here, other than this horse is different than the first two. Black is used in a good sense ([Song 1:5-6](#), [5:11](#)), or could describe times of difficulty ([Job 30:30](#), [Lam 5:10](#)). It is mostly associated with time of difficulty however.

- The meaning of this judgement is made clear by the phrase that comes after the description of the rider and his horse. He was holding a pair of balances in his hand.
 - Balances indicate a financial transaction. God mentions that He approves only of a fair or just balance ([Lev 19:35-36](#), [Deut 25:13-16](#), [Prov 16:11](#), [Eze 45:10](#))
- **Vs 6** – A voice in the midst of the beasts, presumably not one of the beasts, possibly even the one on the throne, lets us know what this means. At this time of the 3rd seal being opened, prices of grain are going to skyrocket. A measure of wheat will sell for a “penny”, meaning the allotment of food for the average man would cost a day’s wages ([Matt 20:1-16](#)). Three measures of barley would cost the same, being a less valuable grain. This would indicate scarcity of grain and potentially other food grown from the ground, but with the ensuing phrase of “see thou hurt not the oil and the wine”, it could also mean severe taxation
 - Interesting to note that the necessities of daily life seem to be scarce, and the luxuries are left alone. Isn’t that just what the carnal heart lusts after?
 - All the merchants of these and those that partake in the luxuries will be in for a rude awakening in [Rev 18](#)
 - The Beast will also control the economy by the time of the midpoint of the Tribulation period. IF anyone wishes to buy or sell at that point, they are required to take a mark ([Rev 13:16-17](#)). Food and drink will be available, but at the cost of one’s soul. There is no salvation to anyone who takes this mark; their soul is eternally damned ([Rev 14:9-11](#)).
 - As the mark is not an option for the believer, God will step in to supernaturally care for the remnant of Israel, as He did in time past in the wilderness prior to their entry into the Promised Land ([Matt 6:9-13](#), [Rev 12:14](#))
- **Vs 7-8** – Once more note the connection of the 4th seal to the 4th beast. This also ends up being the last of the “horsemen”. It is this passage that the common phrase or idea “the four horsemen of the apocalypse” comes from. The 4th horse is a “pale” horse, but that pales in comparison to who is on it...pun intended
 - Death rides on this horse. This isn’t the event where soul and spirit separate from the body. This is the **person** of Death. Note the pronoun “him” associated with Death in [vs 8](#). Note the pronoun “them” when referring to Death and Hell. Death is the angel with the name of Death and Hell (Greek Hades) is the angel with the name of Hades
 - These two will be mentioned again as the persons they are in [Rev 20:13-14](#) where they are cast into the lake of fire, also referenced as Gehenna in the Greek (translated Hell in English)
 - Typically death is referred to as the time the soul and spirit separate from the body and Hell is the place of the dead. The context of these verses reveals that these are the angels and bears pointing out
 - The color of the horse is speculated once more amongst commentators. Pale is translated from the Greek Chloe or cloros. These words have the idea of fresh foliage, pale green or pale in color. It is only used 4 times in the New Testament: [Mark 6:39](#) (green), [Rev 6:8](#) (pale), [Rev 8:7](#) (green), [Rev 9:4](#) (green thing). Not much we can determine from the biblical use of the word in the meaning of why the horse is that color.
 - Of course, we associate paleness with death, so there is that connection. Additionally, we associate black with destitution (those were dark days), and red

with anger, rage, war or blood. So there is some significance to the horse color, but not so much that we need get caught up in that detail

- It is of far more importance to understand what is going on here at the beginning of the Tribulation period. Death and Hades are **given** power over a fourth part of the earth. Note that God is giving this authority (Greek *exousia*) to Death and Hades to kill a fourth part. By today's count, that's about 2 billion people. Hard to imagine that much death, but it will happen in this 7-year period.
 - What's more is the way in which Death and Hades will operate. The sword, hunger or famine (potentially from that price of grain from the 3rd seal judgment), with death (potentially implying disease or old age), and beasts of the earth. In today's world, we don't worry too much about the beasts of the earth killing that many, but there will be a significant change after the Body of Christ is snatched away in the air and this Tribulation period begins
 - Death will go about applying death to millions by different means, and Hades will follow (**vs 8**) to put them where they belong, in the place of the dead in the center of the earth to await the resurrection unto damnation (**Luke 16:19-31, Acts 24:15, Rev 20:11-15**). I do hope that this alone causes us that believe in God's redemptive work to share the gospel at **every** opportunity.
- **Vs 9** – This is the first time the “altar” is mentioned here in Revelation. In the context, we know that this altar is in the throne room as John sees the Lamb opening the fifth seal, as he had the first four seals. The scenery hasn't yet changed. The altar is next mentioned in **Rev 8:3**, where we learn it is located before the throne and golden. In **Rev 8:3**, it is clearly the altar of incense. How can I say that? We can go back to the altar made in the tabernacle in **Ex 30:1-7**. In that passage we see a golden altar where the high priest offers incense, and that altar is before the mercy seat, which is where God talked with Moses (**Ex 25:17-22**). In the heavenly holy place, we see the altar before God's throne. God was adamant that Moses made the earthly after the pattern of the heavenly, so there is significance here (**Ex 25:8-9, 40, Heb 8:4-5**).
 - Next, John saw the **souls** – let that sink in. These were souls slain for the word of God and their testimony, meaning they were people who preached God's word and were killed. Which people? Bear in mind the context. John is writing to fellow Israelites, or the Circumcision. The church, the Body of Christ, has been snatched away up to Heaven to be with Christ forever, and **we have our resurrected bodies already** (**1 Thess 4:13-18**). The Circumcision has a future resurrection, which takes place after this 7-year period (**Rev 20:1-6**), and is the reason they were exhorted to “endure to the end” (**Matt 24:13, Mark 13:13**)
 - These souls John saw are some manifestation of the souls of Circumcision saints. They are yet awaiting their future resurrection, where they will return with Christ Himself (**Rev 19:11-14**). I would think it is at that point of the first resurrection, that Christ's words in **John 5:27-29** will be fulfilled as the Circumcision will be judged and the righteous will inherit their new bodies in the “first resurrection”
- **Vs 10** – The souls under the altar speak. Once more, the idea of annihilation is proven false by scripture. The dead are speaking here, so there is existence after the “earthly tabernacle” is put off (**2 Pet 13-14**). The question is, which side will you be on? In paradise with God, or in the lake of fire? Today, in the dispensation of grace, all that anyone needs to do to ensure they will be in paradise, is trust that God paid our sin debt through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (**1 Cor 15:1-4, Eph 1:13-14, 2:8-9**). After the Body of Christ is snatched away to Heaven with their resurrected by bodies (**1 Thess 4:13-18**), God will finish his work with Israel. Salvation

is determined by faith that Jesus is the Christ and is the propitiation of sin (John 1:29, 36, 1 John 2:1-2, 4:10) and that they keep the good works of the Law (Acts 2:38, 10:34-35, Matt 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16, John 14:12, 15-24, 15:1-11, Rev 2:2, 9, 13, 19, 3:1, 8, 15)

- These souls ask an interesting question, and one that is repeated in the bible, as in the Psalms (Psalm 4:1-8, 13:1-6, 94:1-3, etc): How long? I daresay we also ask this question in a slightly different way today: How long before the fulness of the Gentiles be come in and the age of grace is over (Rom 11:25)? How long until God pours out His full vengeance on the children of disobedience, which is what this Tribulation period is for (Eph 2:1-3, 5:5-6, Col 3:5-6, Psalm 69:19-28)?
- Note that they will be avenged. God speaks of the Avenger of Blood in Num 35:9-21, Deut 19:4-7, Josh 20:1-6, with an example in 2 Sam 3:27. Christ Himself will be their Avenger (Isa 63:2-4, Rev 19:11-21)
- **Vs 11** – These souls receive white robes. Why? That was answered in vs 9: for the word of God and for *the testimony which they held*. These are Circumcision saints who were “faithful unto death” like in Rev 2:10. They endured to the end and didn’t waver in faith. What are these white robes? The clothing of the saint (Rev 3:4-5, 17-19, 7:9-17, 19:7-8, 11-16). It also happens to be the clothing of the spirit angels that stayed true to God (John 20:12, Acts 1:10, Rev 4:4, 15:6). It is the clothing of the righteous.
 - These souls, which will be resurrected into the kingdom (Rev 20:1-6), are told that they must wait “a little season”. That term in the Greek is mikros chronos, meaning micro time in English. God tells us that He will perform a “short work” upon the earth, because if He didn’t make it “short” then no flesh would survive (Matt 24:21-22, Mark 13:19-20, Rom 9:27-29, cf Isa 1:9, 10:20-23)
 - Sadly, as God endures with the “vessels of wrath fitted for destruction” (Rom 9:22), believers during the Tribulation period will be slain for the word of God and the testimony which they hold. These souls must wait just a little longer until God’s short work is done on the earth (Rev 12:11).
- **Vs 12-14** – John now sees the Lamb open the 6th seal. Upon opening, the earth quakes, the sun becomes very black, and the moon becomes like blood. What does this mean?
 - It means that the earth does in fact quake. When we get to vs 14, we read that the earth quaked so much that it is completely rearranged. This will be an earthquake of unprecedented power
 - The sun will become black and the moon to blood is something foretold twice already in scripture in Acts 2:19-21 and Joel 2:28-32. John now confirms for us the time of when this takes place at the beginning of the Tribulation period and the opening of the 6th seal.
 - What are these stars falling from heaven with the analogy of the fig tree losing untimely or unripe figs? Commentators are all over the place. I think we could take this literally. Each consequence of this judgment had to do with the physical creation, so stars could actually be falling unto the earth. Note it says “unto” and not “upon” the earth. They were falling in that direction. We know that by the word of God, all things consist (Col 1:16-17), so He can cause stars to fall unto the earth. There is also Isaiah 34 which seems to speak of the remodeling of the earth to form the lake of fire that will be the final habitation of the unsaved.
 - Some say the stars could be referring to the angels that are disobedient, the current powers of wickedness in high places, being cast down to the earth (Eph 2:2, 6:12, Rev 12:1-4). This has some merit as spiritual angels are sometimes

referred to as stars ([Job 38:7](#), [Rev 8:10-11](#), [9:1](#)). Let the reader be convinced in his own mind. One day, we will know the truth.

- We can speculate as to how these things will happen, but it should suffice to know the outcome. The sun could be black because of all the dust/smoke in the air from the great earthquake that moved mountains and islands. Volcanic activity could produce a similar effect if this earthquake is on a global scale. The moon turning to blood, or to a deep red, happens during lunar eclipses. Perhaps the earth is moved into the right position to make this happen by that earthquake. No matter how it happens, we should trust God that it will happen
- Jesus says something similar will occur right before He comes back in [Matt 24:29-31](#), [Mark 13:24-27](#), [Luke 21:25-28](#), but that is referring to the end of the Tribulation period, to be fulfilled in [Rev 16:15-21](#) and [Rev 19:11-21](#) with the pouring of the 7th vial. It isn't the same as we read here in Revelation 6. More on that when we get to those later verses, but as always, bear in mind the context of those passages and search the scriptures for the truth
- Don't underestimate the words in this passage. Earth as we know it will be remodeled in these 7 years and ultimately made brand new by the time God is done destroying His last enemy ([1 Cor 15:26](#)). This is the wrath of God, and supernatural events occur regularly and immediately
- [Vs 15](#) – What is the response of those left on the earth after the Body of Christ is snatched away, the Beast is coming to power, and God reshapes the earth with unprecedented violence? They hide among the rocks. This verse is quite thorough with who is hiding: kings, great ones, commanders, rich, powerful, then every slave and free. All that are **of the earth** are accounted for here. The remnant of Israel, the believing Circumcision, are no longer **of the earth**, however ([John 15:18-21](#), [17:6-17](#)). I would think they are not among those that are hiding, nor can I imagine why they would say what is said in the last two verses of this chapter.
 - A good passage to consider with these “great” ones of the earth is [1 Cor 1:23-29](#). When we are encouraged to take a look around the Body of Christ and who is in it (those that we know of, anyway, as salvation from sin and death is not at all determined by works under the current dispensation committed to the apostle Paul). We note that not many wise after the flesh, mighty, or noble people are true Christians, meaning those that trust in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the finished work needed to pay for their sins. There are some, but not many. These types are typically stuck in the carnal and don't see a need for the spiritual, and we see this same kind of group calling out to the rocks to fall on them
- [Vs 16-17](#) – Pay careful attention to what those of the earth say here. They ask the mountains and rocks to fall on them. Why? So they can die? No, so that they are hidden from the face of him that sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. This is not unlike Adam and Eve's behavior in the Garden of Eden when they hid from face of Jesus Christ as well ([Gen 3:8](#)). They knew full well they disobeyed God and that the consequence of death awaited them but hid anyway. Nothing is hidden from God. All secrets will be judged ([Rom 2:16](#))
 - Note how none of these seek God's salvation. They ignore the gospel of the kingdom and simply continue to push away God and His Lamb, despite the obvious recognition of the times as they themselves say it is the wrath of the Lamb. They ask the question of “who shall be able to stand?” but will not ask God for the answer
 - We should recall what God says about the majority of people on the earth at this time in [2 Thess 2:8-12](#). God is giving them what they ask for and justly pouring out His wrath on the children of disobedience. God Himself is going to send this strong delusion, allowing

those that reject God to believe a lie and reject God's truth that they may be damned. Sad reality! We've only just begun to unveil the wrath of God, and already it is a very dreadful time! Please make the effort to share God's grace before this great day of His wrath! Redeem the time, for the days are evil ([Eph 5:16](#))!