



# The Seals Unveiled: Part 2

*Revelation 6:5-11*

## BIBLE PASSAGE

[Rev 6:5-17 NKJV] 5 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. 6 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." 7 When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." 8 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. 9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed. 12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. 13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. 15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

**QUOTE**

**“A man says to me, 'Can you explain the seven trumpets of the Revelation?' No, but I can blow one in your ear and warn you to escape from the wrath to come.”**

Charles Spurgeon

**INTRO**

As we move from the scene of all heaven resounding in worship and praise to the worthy Lamb, this same lamb who was found worthy will now begin to break the seals, unveiling the scroll and the details of what must take place "after this." The events of the next 13 or so chapters unveil the final seven-year period of time in human history. Before we look at the seals themselves, let's unpack this idea prophetically.

**APPLICATION**

One of the angelic living creatures thunders for John to come and see the cascade of calamities the seals were about to unleash upon the earth. John is about to enter into a nightmarish horror as he observes four horsemen chomping at the bit to be released from the gate and race toward the earth. These four horsemen are represented by four words you need to write down, for these are the words that will describe the characteristics of the final period of human history.

- 1. Deception**
- 2. War**
- 3. Famine**
- 4. Death**

**You might say, "Josh, those aren't anything new!" Wait until you see the scale and rapidity of how these thing compound in the final days of humanity.**

## FIRST RIDER - DECEPTION

**[Rev 6:2-8 NKJV] 2 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.**

Last week we observed the Lamb proceed to break the seals one by one. As he broke the first seal, one of the living creatures shouted with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." And a rider on a white horse, representing Satanic deception in the form of the antichrist, rode out into the earth.

- This white horse represents the deceptive ruler who will come upon the earth in the name of peace and diplomacy, but will, in actuality, be Satan's pawn, performing deceptive lying wonders (2 Thess 2:9).
- According to Daniel 9, This ruler will broker some form of peace agreement with many nations for seven years. In the middle of that time, we are told he will break his treaty, stand in the temple, and declare himself to be God in the flesh.
  - **[2Th 2:4 NKJV] 4 (The man of sin... the son of perdition...) who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.**
  - **[Dan 7:25 NKJV] 25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.**

Truly the antichrist is the embodiment of everything that we already see at work in the world. Today, the entire world is under the sway of the wicked one and his ideas, but one day, all those ideas will be in one person... and everyone left will love it because it's the deception that they had already been buying into.

- I mentioned last time that the globalist agenda is antichrist because it envisions a man-centered global community rather than a Christ-ruled Kingdom. I ran an interesting experiment with AI. You know, AI is simply the collective human knowledge database programmed a certain way by people. So we should expect that AI will be naturally bent to the majority worldview. **So I asked AI** to write me ten commandments that it thinks would be best for the future of humanity.

1. Respect the dignity of all human beings, and do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or socioeconomic status.

2. Act with compassion and kindness towards others, and do not harm anyone through your actions or words.
3. Practice empathy and seek to understand the perspectives of others, even if you disagree with them.
4. Work towards creating a more just and equitable society, where everyone has access to the resources they need to thrive.
5. Respect the natural environment and protect it for future generations, minimizing the harm done to it through human activities.
6. Take responsibility for your actions and the impact they have on others and the environment.
7. Work collaboratively with others towards common goals, recognizing that we are stronger together than alone.
8. Foster innovation and creativity, seeking new solutions to the challenges facing humanity.
9. Embrace diversity and celebrate the unique contributions that each individual can make to society.
10. Continuously seek knowledge and wisdom, and use it to improve yourself and the world around you.

These are the secular humanist ten commandments. Some of it sounds ok, "compassion, kindness and empathy..." But what do those words mean by godless definitions? The 10 commandments God gave us all stem from the very first one, "[Exo 20:3 NKJV] 3 "You shall have no other gods before Me."

## THE SECOND RIDER - WAR

**3 When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." 4 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 THIRD RIDER - FAMINE

**[Rev 6:5-6 NKJV] 5 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. 6 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."**

## APPLICATION

Black horse – things are not getting better.

Denarius/Penny – a days wage. Normally you could purchase 8 quarts of wheat. Now, one measure is enough to make one loaf of bread.

- \$7,439 year (world average) = \$33 day = \$33 a day.
- A denarius in John's day = a day's wage, which was about \$35/day at that time.
- One measure of wheat = just less than a dry quart.
- Today, 1 bushel of wheat = 32 dry quarts. The last price I saw, wheat was at about \$7.60 per bushel or \$.23 per dry quart. Compare that to \$35 per dry quart, and you see wheat prices during the tribulation period are up about 15,200% from what they are currently.

What could throw food production into such a global tailspin? Well, the top 3 producers and exporters of wheat are Russia, China, and India. The US is number 4. Russia is the top exporter of wheat and produces nearly 19% of the global supply, which is why we've seen prices already increase and food shortages occur due to Russia's conflict with Ukraine.

- Now, listen carefully. Ezekiel 38 & 39 prophecies a battle that has not yet taken place. We see this historically. It's conflicted, but most people believe this battle will be the precursor to the antichrist's rise to power; others believe it is among the first events of the tribulation period. The fascinating thing is that it deals with the peoples of Gog, Meshech, Tubal, and Rosh. We don't know for sure, but a study of these ancient peoples and where they scattered seems to indicate that there will be a pact with

several northern nations under the control of one major world power (Gog of Magog) within the region of Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, and Turkey.

- They will attack an unsuspecting Israel but will be utterly ruined and laid to waste through the divine intervention of God to protect His people.
- Let me ask you, what happens when the number one exporter of grain (19%) is all of a sudden utterly devastated? Are you guys seeing how these things are coming together?

I literally saw this article on Thursday. It was written May 4th, 2023. **"Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and UN to discuss grain deal on Friday"**

### **Another: Turkey, Russia, Iran, Syria hold 'constructive talks'**

Now don't be mistaken... all these nations aren't best friends, but there will come a time when the one thing that unites them all is to get rid of Israel as a hindrance to their trade and any westernized agenda in the region.

### **...do not harm the oil and the wine.**

- In other words, "People might be starving, but at least they can get drunk!"
- Who are the top producers of food oils and wine?
  - Italy, Spain, France, Greece... the Western European nations.
  - So, the world powers of the East are highly diminished, and America is highly diminished. All of the Sudden, Europe rises back to a great united power which could possibly be a revised version of the Roman empire from which a major world leader could arise.

## **FOURTH RIDER - DEATH AND HELL**

**[Rev 6:7-8 NKJV] 7 When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." 8 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.**

## **CUSTOM**

Pale: yellowish green horse, or sickly

- Death and hell are the names of the riders. They are bringing death through war, through famine, and disease and even cause the animals to revolt against humanity.
- Beasts – thereon – the tyrants of the earth, or possibly animals go crazy and wild without restraint. Before all the animals sing, they go crazy.

1/4 of the earth's population = 1.9 Billion people! I asked AI to calculate the annual death rate of 1/4 of the earth's population dying over a 7-year period of time. **Here's the response. The current annual death rate in the world is about 7.7%. The death rate during the tribulation period will be upwards of 50%.**

**[Mat 24:21 NKJV] 21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be."**

- Everyone in South America – Dead
- Everyone in Central America – Dead
- Everyone in Mexico – Dead
- Everyone in The USA - Dead
- Everyone in Canada – Dead
- Everyone in Europe – Dead

## DEATH & HELL

Death – takes the human body

Hell – He takes the human souls

- We have no idea of the carnage we are looking at when we view these first four seals. The world has never seen or even imagined the devastation that is coming.

We need to be watchful of the times we live in. We need to be aware of the world scenes.

**[Luk 21:28 NKJV] 28 "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."**

- This is not the time to run into the hills with your shotgun. That won't be enough to escape God's judgment. We see so many players in place for these things to become

a reality.

- This is why our being with Christ is called “our blessed hope.” In light of this scene, there should be great rejoicing on our part that God will rescue us from what is coming on the earth. The Bible tells us that for Christians, God has not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation. That doesn’t make us immune to persecution and difficulty associated with these last days, but it does mean that God will rescue us from the unrestrained period of time. I hope that you know Jesus today and have that hope and assurance. Even if Christ does not return in our lifetime, and all this is still far off, you still need Jesus in order to be right with God, to be forgiven, and to receive eternal life.

## APPLICATION

PONDER: Now, we ask the question, “Why is it that God would allow all this to take place on the earth?”

- Well, I honestly can’t claim to know the mind of God in all that He does or allows. But Jesus said: **[Luk 17:26 NKJV] 26 "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man..."**

How was it in the days of Noah? **[Gen 6:5 NKJV] 5 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.**

God’s judgment is always right and in response to man’s rebellion and evil heart. At some point, man’s abhorrent behavior and rejection of Christ will bring about the righteous judgment of God. Now is the time that He is patiently offering grace and mercy to all who would believe, but there will come a time when the opportunity is up.

APPLICATION: At some point, the world will be saying, “God we want to have nothing to do with you!” And God will finally say, “OK!” you can have the alternative. And He is perfectly justified in doing so! Let us not be angry with God because He is a just God that righteously judges. Let us rather rejoice that even though all judgment is all we deserve, God dove into our mess and came to experience our pain and bear our sin and shame. Let us rejoice that there is now an advocate who will stand in our place and take our judgment for us!

Let us rejoice that we have experienced undeserved grace and mercy, which rescues us from the coming judgment. Let us rejoice that God makes this way available to all people everywhere!!



*As we approach the 5th and 6th seals we will notice three more aspects of this final period in earth's history:*

- 1. The cry of the martyrs*
- 2. The cry of creation*
- 3. The cry of the world*

## 1 The Cry of the Martyrs

### BIBLE PASSAGE

[Rev 6:9-11 NKJV] **9** When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. **10** And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" **11** Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

### APPLICATION

In these verses, we get to see and hear the cry and the prayer of all those who have suffered death for the sake of Christ.

- These might be those who died specifically in the tribulation period from the persecution of the antichrist (these saints are revealed to us in chapter 7), but it is more likely representing all the saints who died as martyrs for Christ's sake up to this point in time.

- Do you know it's estimated that in the 20th century alone, there have been approximately 45 million Christian martyrs? I think it's important to recognize that historically and in the majority of the world, Christianity hasn't been shown favor and protection but has been met with a sword. We live in a very unique context.

We could say that as the unrestrained reign of the antichrist comes forth, in the midst of it there will be many that come to faith in Christ. There will be Bibles; there will be the witness of past loved ones now raptured. There will be 144,000 sealed and selected Jewish believers; there will be two witnesses that preach the gospel with signs and wonders for 3 1/2 years.

- Revelation 12 tells us that in this time, Satan comes with even "greater wrath" because he knows His time is short. He will war against God's people, and many who refuse to bow to the antichrist will lose their lives.
  - We see the tribulation saints not loving their lives unto death, overcoming by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony, unwilling to bow or become subservient to the actual antichrist... yet today, we see so-called Christians in droves bowing down and placating to the spirit of antichrist that is now in the world!

**[1Jo 2:18, 20-21 NKJV] 18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. ... 20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. 21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.**

The Spirit of antichrist traffics in lies: lies about sexuality, lies about identity, lies about the purpose of life, lies about eternity, lies about the realities of sin, lies about God, etc. Many have been bowing to the spirit of antichrist in the political realm. Bowing to the spirit of antichrist in the religious realm. Bowing to the spirit of antichrist in the social justice realm. WHY? Because we are afraid we might offend someone with the truth?

- I would like to call your attention to 4 details regarding these martyrs:
  - **Their Position**
  - **Their Proof**
  - **Their Prayer**
  - **Their Promise**

## THEIR POSITION

We are told that they are seen under the altar.

- In Leviticus 4:7 we are introduced to the brazen altar before the tabernacle **[image]**.
- When someone would bring a sacrifice to the tabernacle they would place their hand or head on the animal, symbolically transferring their sin onto it. The animal would then be sacrificed and the blood of the animal would be poured underneath the brazen altar.
- Symbolically, we see that the brazen altar represents the cross of Christ where the Lamb of God was sacrificed, and His blood poured out for the forgiveness of our sins.
- But now we see that there are others, who for the sake of the cross sacrificed their lives. The sacrifice of all these saints is there before God's throne.
- God keeps them there before His presence and under His authority as a constant reminder that He will judge those who took the lives of His servants and His children.
- I don't believe that this is a physical location where thousands of martyrs are kept, but rather it is a symbol that the cry of these martyrs is continually in God's presence.
- Under the altar is a good place to be because you are always at the feet of God:

### 1. Your life and witness are precious to God.

1. **EXAMPLE:** If anyone ever took the life of either of my children, my wrath would kindle against them with fierce anger. If I saw anyone harm my children I would harm them with every ounce of strength I have. I'm not a fighter, but I will become one really fast if anyone lays a finger on my kids. With the death of every martyr, God's wrath is kindled more and more. When the time is fulfilled, he will unleash his righteous anger on all those who killed his servants.

## THEIR PROOF

Verse 9 tells us they, **“were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.”**

- These were believers that were asked to prove the genuineness of their faith with the ultimate sacrifice. When they were put to the test, the proof was there.

- They found something, someone worth living for and worth dying for. They didn't see Jesus as a Sunday morning activity or a religious affiliation. They saw Jesus as life itself.

They were slain for two things:

- **The Word of God**
- **The testimony that they held**
  - In other words, they did not compromise the truth, and they suffered for it. They were true to God's word in the face of diversity.
- Secondly, they "held" a testimony. The word means that they would not let go of the truth of the gospel no matter what. No one was going to talk them out of it, torture them out of it, burn them out of it, or kill them out of it. They held fast to their faith.

**APPLICATION:** How about you? In Christ, have you found someone worth living for and dying for? I'm going to tell you the truth.

If you think this morning that Christianity is about your happiness, your wealth, your health, your comfort, or your safety, you have been duped by your American culture.

- You might say, "Well then, what is it about?" It's about finding true life... IN JESUS CHRIST! Not in riches, houses, money, and the passing pleasures of the world... in Jesus.
- "Josh, you make it sound like following Jesus is just a horrible and miserable experience!" On the contrary! It's a concept that makes no earthly sense! Jesus said, **[Mat 10:38-39 NKJV] 38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.**

You could say that in this life,

***"Following Jesus is about bearing a cross before wearing a crown."***

It has been said that Jesus promised his followers three things:

- That they would be extremely happy (blessed is the man...)
- That they would be extremely courageous
- That they would be in constant trouble

I'm going to tell you the truth... we are blessed to have the Christian experience that we have because we live in a nation that is full of people who love Jesus Christ.

Many of our leaders and our neighbors love Jesus. But as that declines more and more, it won't always be like this.

- It very well, very shortly, could be at the point of persecution.
- Are you ready to face potential imprisonment or worse for staying true to God's word and holding onto your Christian beliefs? Unfortunately, there will be countless individuals in churches throughout America who won't be prepared for this scenario and will choose to deny Christ in order to hold onto their own personal pleasures. I feel obligated as a pastor to prepare this church so that you are not one of those people...

WHAT I'M NOT SAYING: I'm not saying we will all die for Jesus. I hope we never have to! I'm not saying that we will live in pain and suffering all our days. I'm simply asking you,

***"Is Jesus your life, or just a part of your life when it's convenient?"***

### 3. THEIR PRAYER

**Verse 10 - And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"**

- Notice the title they give to God: Holy and True. He is holy – there is none like Him; he stands alone as God; he is completely other. He is true – He cannot lie. Everything He does is true and right.
- APPLICATION: What is the application? It is ok to question God, as long as you always come back to the fact that He is holy and He is true. That He is God and you are not.

### APPLICATION

It's okay to question God about things that we don't understand - even David asked God "how long" 18 times in the book of Psalms. However, we stray off course when we start to believe that we know more than God Himself and assume we understand things better than He does. Let's stay humble and trust that as the Creator of the universe, He knows best.

***If we don't keep in mind that Jesus is Holy and true, our questions about our circumstances can easily become assumptions about God's***

## *character.*

Why would God allow this? Because he...

- God, why don't you... because you must...
- The martyr's blood cries out, "How long"! When will you take vengeance for all the evil done against your church? Yet, you, Lord are Holy. You are true. We trust your timing. Your judgment is perfect.

## **APPLICATION**

One of the worst things a person can do is run further from God when they don't agree with him or have hard questions. God wants to be engaged.

- If Jesus really isn't anything more than an idea, philosophy, or religious system, then, by all means, do whatever you want with him. Throw him out, live by your own dictates, follow your heart, and all the rest.
- But if God is real, the one outside of time, eternal, creator, and at the same time relational, then you have to move toward him with your questions, not away from him.
- I've raised three children, and it would be an understatement to say that there have been countless times they didn't understand or agree with my line of reasoning. How much more should we expect that there would be a disparity between God's thoughts and ours and His ways and ours?
  - As high as the heavens are above the earth, so are His thoughts higher than our thoughts and His ways higher than ours.
- You might find yourselves questioning God's timing, God's decisions, or your perception of something He did or didn't do. But we can barely manage our own lives and the small number of people and responsibilities contained in them, much less manage the universe! The word of God holds everything together. He manages every atom and molecule.
- Perhaps instead of running from him in our arrogance and "we know better" attitude, we should run toward God, who is real, who is all wise and all-knowing and all-powerful, and find that the more we press in by faith, the more the voids in us become filled.

#### 4. THEIR PROMISE

**[Rev 6:11 NKJV] 11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.**

God promises vengeance, but not until an appointed time. There appears to be a quota of the number of martyrs that must die before God moves to bring about His perfect vengeance for His people.

**[Psa 116:15 NKJV] 15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.**

Initially, that might sound cruel of God. Why would God allow more to suffer and die? Let's try to think about it from a non-human perspective for a moment. If a Christian suffers and dies, what happens to them? They go to heaven; they are in a place of complete comfort and protection. When someone believes in Christ, what happens to them? They receive the white robe of Jesus' righteousness. If someone dies as a martyr, what does that do for other Christians? It strengthens and encourages their faith. God's timeline has a purpose. God will judge righteously, but he has things to work out before that time comes.