

Revelation Chapter Six

Opening of the First Six Seals

(vv. 1-17)

Imagery of the Four Horses (vv. 1-8)

The First Seal (vv. 1-2)

VERSE 1 Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals (Καὶ εἶδον ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὸ ἀρνίον μίαν ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ σφραγίδων [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. eidon see + temporal conj hote when + aor.act.ind.3s. anoigo open + art.w/noun nom.nt.s. arnion lamb + adj.acc.f.s. mia one + prep ek + adj.gen.f.p. hepta seven + noun abl.f.p. sphragis seal*], **and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come** [*καὶ ἤκουσα ἑνὸς ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων λέγοντος ὡς φωνὴ βροντῆς, Ἔρχου [conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. akouo hear + adj.gen.nt. hen one + prep ek from + art.w/adj.abl.nt.p. tessares four + noun abl.nt.p. zoon living being + pres.act.part.abl.nt.s. lego say + compare.conj hos as + noun nom.f.s. phone voice + noun gen.f.s. bronte thunder + pres.dep.imper.2s. erchomai come]*)."

VERSE 2 I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow (καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος λευκός, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἔχων τόξον [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. eidon see + conj kai + exclamatory part idou behold + noun nom.m.s. hippos horse + adj.nom.m.s. leukos white + conj kai + art.w/pres.dep.part.nom.m.s. kathemai sit + prep epi upon + pro.acc.m.s. autos it + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. echo have + noun acc.nt.s. tozon bow*]; **and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer** [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. didomi give + pro.dat.m.s. autos him + noun nom.m.s. stephanos wreath, crown + conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. exerchomai go out + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. nikao conquer + conj kai + aor.act.subj.3s. nikao conquer*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 1-2

1. The seven-sealed scroll has been described the scene is now set to begin the opening the seals, one by one.
2. The uniquely qualified agent of the Father breaks the first seal beginning the calamities of the tribulation.
3. John observes the reenactment of the prophecy in his visionary state.
4. The opening words of this chapter mark the commencement of the wrath of God against humanity proper, the first five chapters being introductory.

5. Revelation chapter one was John's preparation to receive the information.
6. Revelation chapters 2-3 depict the trends the church age culminating in the rapture generation typified by the circumstances at Laodicea.
7. Revelation chapters 4-5 describe the drama of celebration and ceremony around the throne room in the 3rd heaven following the Rapture and Bema Seat.
8. Only now in chapter 6 does the revelation of the righteous punishments begin.
9. The information revealed to John constitutes an "advance showing" fo the Lamb's implementation of those punishments against a lawless and rebellious cosmos.
10. After five chapters of rather elaborate preparation, does the narrative move to focus on the unprecedented events on the earth.
11. Each time, with the opening of a seal, nothing is read from the scroll, but actions occur that unquestionably match the corresponding part of the scroll exposed through each consecutive seal.
12. The first four openings have features in common: each is preceded by an utterance from one of the four living beings and followed y the appearance of a colored horse and his rider who has been granted power over the earth.
13. This puts the first four seals into a group that in some ways are distinct from the last three.
14. The Lamb (i.e., Christ) is the opener of each of the seven seals, as He is the only one worthy to set in motion the events contained in the scroll.
15. Without any delay following the ceremonies in chapter 5, Christ the Lamb of God, will open the first seal of an actual scroll in the presence of the audience gathered in the throne room of God the Father.
16. As noted in the previous discussion of Rev. 5:1, the seals are not arranged on the edge of the scroll.
17. They are at the end of the scroll where they are visible at various points within the rolled-up scroll.
18. In other words, the seals are visible at one end of the scroll rather that along the leading edge of the length of the scroll.
19. Immediately after the opening of the seal, John heard one of the four living beings issue a summons: "Come."
20. The comparison of the voice of the living being to thunder suggests a judgmental tone as in a coming storm (cf. Rev. 4:2; 19:6).
21. This is the only seal accompanied by such a voice of thunder.
22. The noun "thunder" (*bronte*) occurs 10x in Revelation in nine verses (Rev. 4;5; 6:1; 8:5; 10:4 [2x]; 11:19; 14:2; 16:18; 19:6).
23. This term is also used in Mk. 3:17 where John and his brother James have the title "sons of thunder," to describe their inclination toward a stormy temperament.
24. The only other use of the word is in John's gospel and accompanies a heavenly response to Jesus' prayer (Jn. 12:28-29)
25. This usage is indicative of a theophany, i.e. a manifestation of God independent of natural causes.
26. Thunder accompanied the theophany at Mt. Sinai at the giving of the Law (Ex. 20:18).
27. In a thunderous voice the angel says "Come."
28. "Come' is a present imperative.
29. Here the command is in association with God's wrath.
30. Three object of the summons have been proposed: John, Christ, and first horseman.

31. John as a possibility rests upon a textual variant that adds “and see” to the summons and upon “I looked” that begins verse 2.
32. Besides relying upon a weak textual variant, this view does not say where John was to come.
33. He was already in heaven (in the spirit, that is).
34. The second view says Christ is the object because He is addressed by the same summons in 22:17-20.
35. In Revelation the word always refers to Christ’s coming, it is argued.
36. This view disregards the immediate context.
37. Most supporters of this view base their conclusion on the erroneous assumption that the living beings represent nature and are calling for the redemption of creation through the coming of Christ (cf. Rom. 8:22-23).
38. These present scenes are unrelated to the final renewal, however.
39. The clear meaning is a summons to the first horseman.
40. The response to the command of v. 1 is the immediate appearance of a white horse in v. 2.
41. The same is true with the other three commands in vv. 4, 5, and 8.
42. The context demands that all four of the summonses be addressed to the horsemen and their horses.

Rider on the White Horse (v.2)

VERSE 2 I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow

(καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος λευκός, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ἔχων τόξον [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. eidon see + conj kai + part idou behold + noun nom.m.s. hippos horse + adj.nom.m.s. leukos white + conj kai + art.w/pres.dep.part.nom.m.s. kathemai sit + prep epi + pro.acc.m.s. autos it + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. echo have + noun acc.nt.s. tozon bow*]; **and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer** [καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στέφανος καὶ ἐξῆλθεν νικῶν καὶ ἵνα νικήσῃ [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. didomi give + pro.dat.m.s. autos him + noun nom.m.s. stephanos crown, wreath + conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. exerchomai come, go out + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. nikao conquer + conj kai + conj hina so that + aor.act.subj.3s. nikao*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 2

1. The statement the John “looked”/“saw” after seeing the seal broken suggests a scenic representation or dramatic production in which a succession of horses appeared in heaven.
2. Rather than reading from the scroll, the seer witnesses a prophetic event enacted in heaven.
3. This dramatic exhibition powerfully reinforces the prophecy given.
4. If this connection between scroll and visual demonstration did not exist, the whole imagery of the scroll on the hand of God (5:1) and the process of breaking the seals would have no significance.
5. It would only confuse the ongoing revelation.
6. As the Lamb breaks the seals, one by one, He reveals the contents and symbolism to John in a vivid and dramatic fashion.

7. The startling character of this new development in the vision is reflected in the addition of “and behold” (cf. also 6:5, 8).
8. The imagery of the four horses in 6:1-8 is similar to Zech. 1:7-11, and the afflictions resemble those predicted in Jer. 14:12; 24:10; 42:17.
9. In Zechariah, special meanings attached to the colors of the horses are not as apparent as they are here.
10. In Zechariah the horses are sent to patrol the earth, but in Revelation, their release brings disaster to the earth.
11. In Zech. 6:2-3 the horses are red, black, white and “dappled” in color.
12. Here the first horse is white.
13. The first horse is associated with victory, as evident in the words “he went out conquering and to conquer.”
14. White as a color carries the primary symbolism of righteousness.
15. This is certainly consistent with usage of the color throughout the Apocalypse where it is constantly associated with Christ’s righteousness (cf. 1:14; 2:17; 3:4-5,18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13-14; 14:14; 19:11; 20:11).
16. The obvious objection to the identification of white as being +R here is that the horse’s rider represents the forces of evil, as will be shown below.
17. If, however, this is only pseudo-righteousness, a counterfeit of the true, the objection is overruled.
18. The white horse, then, emerges as an emblem of righteousness, though there is no guarantee that the righteousness is more than apparent.
19. The identity of “he who sat on it” must be established.
20. Suggestions are plentiful.
21. We can dispense with those views that see the rider as some person or entity from pre-tribulational times (ancient or modern).
22. The view that sees the rider as the Word of God, which is to judge the world is farfetched and out of touch with the context.
23. The interpretation that the rider is a personification of judgment, sent upon the world is little better.
24. This fits the imagery of Zech. 1:8 and 6:1-8 where horsemen and chariots are divine instruments of judgment on the enemies of God’s people and where the rider is also a member of a closely knit group of four.
25. The difficulty with this view is its generality.
26. It does not specify which judgment or judgments are in view.
27. The judgments of the other three in Revelation chapters six and seven are rather specific, so this one should be too.
28. Another approach to identifying the rider has him representing the victorious course of the gospel (Alford; Ladd).
29. This view comes up short in its failure to account for the bow and the crown.
30. Yet another view identifies the rider with the Parthian invasion of the Roman Empire early in the Christian era.
31. This view fails with respect to the end-time nature of the four horsemen.
32. Some identify the rider with the Jewish Messiah.
33. This view has wide support, based on the similarity to the rider of Rev. 19:11-16 whose identity is unquestionable.

34. The color white is associated with Christ throughout the book.
35. The major weakness of this view is that it puts the Messiah on the same plane as the three riders to follow.
36. The Messiah is out of place in this company.
37. Furthermore the rider in Rev. 19:11-16 is called “faithful and true,” but the one here is not so characterized.
38. The rider in 19:11-6 is none other than the Lamb who opens the first seal, negating the possibility of His also being the rider revealed by that seal.
39. In 19:11-16, the rider is present in triumph, followed by the host of heaven, but here the rider works in bodily absence, being a symbol rather than the embodiment of His victorious kingdom.
40. This rider wears a victor’s wreath and carries a bow, but the one in chapter 19 is crowned with many diadems and has a sharp sword issuing from his mouth.
41. Finally, it is out of keeping with the dramatic plan of the book for the triumph of Christ to transpire until a long series of judgments have run their course.
42. If the first rider is not the Messiah, then, he must be someone resembling the Messiah.
43. He has been closely identified with the world ruler pictured as the first beast of Revelation 13.
44. He will come as a counterfeit Christ.
45. Yet to identify him as the world ruler (a.k.a. the Antichrist) is not accurate.
46. This rider, like the other three, is not an individual, but a personification of a growing movement or force that will be at work during this future period.
47. The words “had a bow” draw attention to the character of the rider.
48. His bow traditionally has been associated with one who is a warrior.
49. The absence of any reference to arrows accompanying the bow has been taken as significant by some, but not others.
50. It is better to take the absence of arrows from the symbol of bloodless victory.
51. The bow indicates that war is threatened, but never actually occurs because conquest is accomplished through diplomatic means.
52. An international peace movement is the condition at the end of the first-seal period, because the upshot of this peace program is active warfare as seen in the second seal which takes peace from the earth (cf. 6:4).
53. Without arrows, the bow is not a deadly weapon as the sword under the second seal is.
54. Whenever active warfare is described, specific mention is usually made of arrows also (cf. Ps. 45:5; Jer. 50:9, 14; 51:11).
55. The bow without the arrows is significant as it personifies a diplomatic movement.
56. The mother of all weapons of mass destruction is the nuclear tipped “arrows” of nations like the US and Russia.
57. A further detail about the first rider: “and a crown was given to him, is an achievement that came to this rider by a higher authority.
58. The first rider appears to be the tribulational leader of the USA who is elected to office (hence the crown given to him) and his quest overcome a nuclear threat (from Russia).
59. His victories will come through peaceful means and are purely temporal.
60. The form “conquering” portrays the rider’s career as marked by a long series of victories, with a goal to final victory, employing this tactic, only to face colossal failure when the rider on the second horse asserts himself.

61. The breaking of the first seal signals the final attempt to offset a threat to economic Babylon (the USA) on the part of the king or president of economic Babylon (a.k.a. USA; cf. Rev. 18).
62. The breaking of the first and second seals will fulfill 1Thess. 5:3: “While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.”
63. The rider on the white horse comes after Americans get the angelic announcement to exit the United States (Rev. 14:6; 18:1-4).
64. This is a reference to the citizens of the US who will come to believe that the Russian threat has been overcome through some sort of diplomatic achievement.
65. A word about the color white.
66. Throughout the book of Revelation white carries the primary symbolism of righteousness.
67. White is constantly associated with Christ’s righteousness (cf. 1:14; 2:17; 3:4-5, 18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13-14; 14:14; 19:11, 14; 20:11).
68. With regard to the rider on the white horse the color white symbolizes feigned (fake) righteousness, a counterfeit of the true.
69. The righteousness is only apparent but not real, which certainly fits the perception that many have regarding the USA.
70. In conclusion, the releasing of the rider on the white horse represents America’s final attempt to overcome the Russian threat only to be foiled by the releasing of the rider on the red horse.
71. No arrow in the bow signifies that America’s nuclear arsenal will be neutralized.

The Rider on the Red Horse (vv. 3-4)

VERSE 3 When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature

saying, "Come (Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν δευτέραν, ἤκουσα τοῦ δευτέρου ζώου λέγοντος, Ἔρχου [*conj kai + adv hote when + aor.act.ind.3s. anoigo open + art.w/noun acc.f.s. sphragis seal + art.w/adj.acc.f.s. deuterus second + aor.act.ind.1s. akouo hear + art.w/adj.gen.nt.s. deuterus second + noun gen.nt.s. zoon + pres.act.part.gen.nt.s. lego say + pres.dep.imper.2s. erchomai come*])."

VERSE 4 And another, a red horse, went out (καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἄλλος ἵππος πυρρός [*conj kai*

+ *aor.act.ind.3s. exerchomai go out + adj.nom.m.s. allos another (same kind) + noun nom.m.s. hippos horse + adj.nom.m.s. ruppos (flame red)* ; **and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth** [*καὶ τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ἐδόθη αὐτῷ λαβεῖν τὴν εἰρήνην ἐκ τῆς γῆς* [*conj kai + art.w/pres.dep.part.dat.m.s. kathemai sit + prep epi + pro.acc.m.s. autos it + aor.pass.ind.3s. didomi give; “granted” + pro.dat.m.s. autos him (not translated in NAS) + aor.act.infin. lambano take + art.w/noun acc.f.s. eirene peace + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.f.s. ge earth*], **and [even] that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him** [*καὶ ἵνα ἀλλήλους σφάξουσιν καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ μάχαιρα μεγάλη* [*conj kai*

ascensive “even” + conj hina that (result) + pro.acc.m.p. allelon one another + fut.act.ind.3p. sphazo slay, slaughter; murder + conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. didomi give + pro.dat.m.s. autos him + noun.f.s. machaira two-edged sword + adj.f.s. megas great]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 3-4

1. The angelic announcement of the opening of the 2nd seal is specifically identified as coming from the 2nd living being (cf. Rev. 4:7b calf-like), unlike the first announcement which is non-specific.
2. But based on the identities in Rev. 6:5 & 7 as being the 3rd and 4th living beings, respectively, it is clear the first announcement was made by the lion-like living being or the first of the living beings mentioned in chapter four verse seven.
3. John heard this summons by the 2nd living being signifying the visual and audio drama that will take place in the 3rd heaven shortly after the Rapture.
4. The summons is directed at the rider on the red horse upon the breaking of the 2nd seal.
5. All this demonstrates the participation of angels in the activities of the angelic conflict.
6. Nothing happens apart from the permissive will of God.
7. Those who have spurned the directive will of God are allowed for a time to operate under the permissive will of God only to face the consequences of their actions under the overruling will of God.
8. The peace horse is clearly an example of what God permits as the means to achieve international peace.
9. The judgment is warfare against and destruction upon the evil architects of peace without honor.
10. Many in the cosmos will put their faith in this peace only to be dismayed when world war breaks out.
11. There is little disagreement over the nature of the rider on the red horse.
12. He brings international war and strife to the world.
13. The correct analysis of the second seal assigns it to some point within the period called the tribulation.
14. Christ predicted wars and rumors of war throughout the course of the church age and beyond to the 2nd Advent.
15. Within that period which encompasses the church age and the seven year tribulation comes warfare of the most unprecedented kind.
16. It begins sometime in the first half of the tribulation shattering all hopes of peace for mankind.
17. Here we see a new development within the period of “wars and rumors of war.”
18. Actually it begins well toward the end of that period in what is referred to as the tribulation.
19. No doubt there will be armed strife here and there in the world even during the period of false peace as there has ever been since Christ prophesied on the Mount of Olives.
20. As with the rider on the white horse, so with the rider on the red horse, we are talking about a fresh inauguration of hostilities of an unprecedented nature.
21. This act of war no doubt will result in the destruction of the US by Russia “in one hour of one day” as specified in Revelation 18 (cp. Jer. 50-51).
22. The adjective “another” indicates that this rider is another of the same kind as the one mentioned above.

23. It not only shows a connection between the two (both represent entities motivated by evil intent), it also implies a separation in time.
24. It is obvious that the peace horse and the war horse cannot exist simultaneously.
25. The horse's color, *pyrros* ("fiery red"), intimates the nature of the afflictions associated with the 2nd seal.
26. This horse is "red as fire" (Ford).
27. This is warfare in its most feared form.
28. Attempts to identify the rider has produced a variety of suggestions.
29. To call him the devil (Lenski) is fanciful and unsupported.
30. To identify him with some Roman emperor reduces the book to history rather than prophecy.
31. To call him the Antichrist, as some would the first rider too, would require the 3rd and 4th riders as the same person.
32. The Antichrist view sees all four horses as being ridden by the same individual.
33. The problem with the Antichrist identification is based on what we know about the identity and career of this man relative to the tribulation.
34. He is not at the pinnacle of international politics at the outset of the tribulation.
35. It takes a good portion of the first half of the tribulation before he is "in the saddle" so to speak.
36. Due to the nature of his arrival on the scene (up from hell; cf. Rev. 17:11ff.), he must bide his time before he is able to conduct political and military operations.
37. Another view depersonalizes this second rider and makes him representative of all forces of war and bloodshed with their consequent horrors.
38. The words "it was given to him" indicates that this rider is an agent of God appointed for a specific purpose.
39. The purpose is stated in this verse as being "to take peace from the earth."
40. This phrase supports our interpretation of the rider on the white horse.
41. A kind of peace will exist upon the earth prior to the appearance of the red horse.
42. The restraints heretofore placed upon this rider are removed and he precipitates warfare on a scale never before seen among the nations.
43. Again, we place this in the first half of the tribulation, somewhere close to the midpoint.
44. The nuclear annihilation of the US (a.k.a. Babylon) will fulfill the prophecy of the rider on the red horse.
45. "Peace" refers here to the normal state of affairs.
46. This outward phisod of peace this rider (Russia) removes.
47. The presence of the definite article with the noun "peace" refers more specifically to the peace process associated with the rider on the white horse.
48. Such peace is merely an imitation or counterfeit of the peace to come under messianic rule.
49. The relationship of the 1st and 2nd second seals is a consequential relationship.
50. The sequential nature of the seals is of great importance.
51. One situation leads to another.
52. It is very easy to imagine how an all-out nuclear attack, like the one described in Jeremiah chapters 50 and 51 (cf. Rev. 18) would fulfill the statement "to take peace from the earth."
53. God is ultimately the One who brings this to pass, and not His agent of wrath, Russia.
54. The primary target of his wrath is the citizens of the US.
55. The secondary targets are the nations at large and the various forms of misery that will visit their souls and bodies.

56. The clarification of the divine agent's purpose is seen in the words "even that they might slaughter one another" (corrected translation).
57. Death by warfare will be the fate of all who live in America.
58. So God's agent Russia will accomplish two things that are in the divine interest: remove peace from the earth and using a sacrificial term (verb *sphazo* versus *apokteino*), wipe out all the citizens of Babylon the great in one hour of one day (see Rev.18).
59. The impact of these seals is worldwide.
60. Certainly it is not hard to imagine the secondary effects of such a surprise attack upon America.
61. The 3rd and 4th seals will provide examples of the secondary effects of removing peace from the earth in this fashion.
62. The sacrificial verb translated "will slay" (*sphazo*) is used with the noun "sword" (*machaira*) in connection with Abraham's offering of Isaac as a sacrifice in the LXX of Gen. 22:6 and 10.
63. The victims of Russia attack are viewed as animals for the slaughter (cf. Isa. 34:6,7 where the language of sacrifice is used in connection with warfare).
64. Here the noun is used in the violent taking of life through warfare.
65. A further identifying feature "granted" this rider by authority from heaven is noted in the words "and a great sword was given to him."
66. The sword in view here is specific and therefore does not refer to all instruments of warfare.
67. The identity of this sword as intercontinental nuclear warfare fits the present context.
68. The noun is used repeatedly of nuclear warfare in Jeremiah 50 (Jer. 50:16, 27, 25, 35-37; 51:50).
69. Russia will feel threatened by the international pressure upon her and her neighbors and will respond with a nuclear attack against the US in fulfillment of Dan. 7:5: "And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!'"
70. So far the riders have been quite specific, and so far one consequence has led to the next.

Rider on the Black Horse (vv. 5-6)

VERSE 5 **When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come."** [*conj kai + adv hote when + aor.act.ind.3s. anoigo open + art.w/noun acc.f.s. sphragis seal + art.w/adj.acc.f.s. tritos third + aor.act.ind.1s. akouo hear + art.w/adj.gen.nt.s. tritos third + noun gen.nt.s. zoon living being + pres.act.part.gen.nt.s. lego say + pres..dep.imper.2s. erchomai come*] **I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand** [*καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος μέλας, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἔχων ζυγὸν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ*] [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. eidon (horao) see + conj kai + part idou behold (horao) + noun nom.m.s. hippos horse + adj.nom.m.s. melas black, dark + conj kai + art.w/pres.dep.part.nom.m.s. kathemai sit + prep epi upon + pro.acc.m.s. autos it + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. echo have + noun acc.m.s. zugos crossbeam; lever of a balance; by synecdoche a pair of scales + prep en + art.w/noun loc.f.s. cheir hand + pro.gen.m.s. autos his*].

VERSE 6 **And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying** (*καὶ ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων λέγουσαν* [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. akouo hear + adv hos as + noun acc.f.s. phone voice + prep en in + adj.loc.nt.s. mesos middle + art.w/adj.gen.nt.p. tessares four + noun gen.nt.p. zoon living being + pres.act.part.acc.f.s. lego say*], **"A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine** [*Χοῖνιξ σίτου δηναρίου καὶ τρεῖς χοῖνικες κριθῶν δηναρίου*] [*noun nom.f.s. choinix a dry measure almost equal to a quart; considered a daily grain ration for one person + noun gen.m.s. sitos wheat + noun gen.nt.s. denarion a Roman silver coin equiv. to a workman's daily wage + conj kai + adj.nom.f.p. treis three + noun nom.f.p. choinix quart + noun gen.f.p. krite barley + noun gen.nt.s. denarion + conj kai + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. elaion olive oil + conj kai + art.w/noun acc.m.s. oinos wine + neg me + aor.act.imper.2s. adikeo do wrong/harm*]."

ANALYSIS: VERSES 5-6

1. The opening of the third seal followed by the summons of the third living creature (man-like) brings into the experience of men a new development.
2. A development that was not active until the warfare associated with the appearing of the red horse takes place.
3. The indirect effect of this war is famine.
4. Famine is one of the signs of the end-time.
5. Famine is always going on somewhere on the planet.

6. This is not famine in general but famine that hits those most immediately affected by the collapse of world economy as a result of the fall of the US.
7. What we have here is famine in previously affluent countries.
8. The black horse portrays scarcity and the way of portraying scarcity is the *zygon* or “pair of scales” the rider holds in his hand.
9. Careful weighing of food shows it to be in short supply (Ezek. 4:16-17).
10. John next hears an announcement coming from “the midst of the four living beings.”
11. This announcement does not come from the four living creatures as the previous summonses have.
12. The statement as to the source of the words is intentionally vague as seen in the words “I heard *something* like a voice.”
13. There is a degree of uncertainty in John’s description.
14. The voice comes from the heavenly presence.
15. The general location of the voice is where the throne proper is.
16. Since God the Father is the ultimate source of these judgments it seems best to assign the voice to Him.
17. It takes a days wage just to purchase a survival diet.
18. In other words what we have in the first part of the divine decree (or judgment) is exorbitant prices, presumably due to scarcity.
19. In former times God sent famines (e.g., 2Kgs. 8:1; Jer. 16:4; Hag. 1:11; 2:16-17).
20. It is fitting that He announces this future economic distress that is one of the upshots of war.
21. Wheat was the staple of the ancient world, a better grain worth more than barley.
22. The amount of wheat was only enough to sustain a person for one day.
23. A denarius was the average wage for a day laborer.
24. Wheat and barely were the basic food for those at the bottom of the economic ladder.
25. By buying the cheaper commodity a laborer could obtain enough food for a whole family, but each person received less nutritional value.
26. Again, the purchasing power of the basic unit of exchange drops far below what is normal and results in widespread hunger.
27. The famine will *not* be universal, however.
28. Protection of an element of the population from what is reflected in the decree “and do not harm the oil and the wine.”
29. A prohibition not to hurt the oil or the wine (illustrative of luxury items) means a limitation as to scarcity.
30. In other words the 3rd seal will entail hardship, but the famine will only affect certain classes of people.
31. The well-to-do (e.g., wealthy) are unhurt by this famine.
32. There are limitations attached to the rider on the black horse.
33. He could have charged more for than one denarius for a days worth of food, making the famine even more severe.
34. But because God controls history, He determines the degree of prosperity or adversity.
35. The lesson is a disparity between the rich and the average person.
36. This famine will be serious enough to make it unprecedented up to this time.
37. The world has seen many limited famines but never one like this.
38. People cannot live on oil and wine so they must be seen as extras.
39. The major feature of this limitation indicates the inequity that will prevail.

40. The average person will have it extremely hard while the wealthy will experience no interruption to their luxurious life style.
41. Some argue that God would not favor the rich while aggravating the circumstances of the poor.
42. This objection is mitigated by the fact that the rich will suffer under the judgments to follow.
43. A question about the relation of this famine (depression) to the one under the next seal is in order.
44. The 4th seal famine will be even more severe.
45. This is verified by the widespread death toll under the next seal.
46. The prohibition “do not hurt,” addressed presumably to the 3rd rider, is phrased so as to forbid even the beginning of damage to the oil and wine.
47. The privileged lifestyle of the rich remains intact.
48. Again, the balance indicates a time of scarcity when the basic commodities of life are rationed at inflated prices based on the first part of the decree of v.6.
49. For an OT parallel see Ezek. 4:16; cf. Lev. 26:26).
50. And again, there are limitations imposed on the rider of the black horse.
51. The rider on the black horse is probably the Antichrist the affected area is Western Europe.
52. The burden of the economic collapse is put on the shoulders of the average working man.
53. Prices are set and goods are rationed.
54. The rich in the surviving western democracies escape the effects of this seal.
55. The man in the street however struggles with scarcity and hyperinflation.
56. The draconian economic policies of the European confederation headed by the Antichrist are in response to the pulling of the economic plug in the wake of the destruction of American as per the 2nd seal judgment.

Rider on the Pale Horse (vv. 6-7)

VERSE 7 **When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come** (*conj kai + adv hote when + aor.pass.ind.3s. anoigo open; “broke” + art.w/noun acc.f.s. sphragis seal + art.w/adj.acc.f.s. tetartos fourth + aor.act.ind.1s. akouo hear + noun acc.f.s. phone voice + art.w/adj.gen.nt.s. tetartos fourth + noun gen.nt.s. zoon living being + pres.act.part.gen.nt.s. lego say + pres.dep.imper. 2s. erchomai come*)."

VERSE 8 **I looked, and behold, an ashen horse** (*καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος χλωρός [conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. eidon see + conj kai + interj. idou behold + noun nom.m.s. hippos horse + adj.nom.m.s. chloros pale green; fig. as the color of a sick person]*); **and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him** [*καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ ὄνομα αὐτῷ [ὁ] Θάνατος, καὶ ὁ ἄδης ἠκολούθει μετ’ αὐτοῦ [conj kai + pres.dep.part.nom.m.s. kathemai sit + prep epano above, over; here “on” as in Matt. 21:7; 23:18; but Rev. 20:3 = “over” + pro.nom.m.s. autos it + noun nom.nt.s. onoma name + pro.dat.m.s. autos “of him” + noun nom.m.s. thanatos death; pestilence + conj kai + art.w/noun*

nom.m.s. hades + impf.act.ind.3s. akoloutheo follow after + prep meta + pro.gen.m.s. autos him]).

Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth (καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἐξουσία ἐπὶ τὸ τέταρτον τῆς γῆς [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. didomi give + pro.dat.m.p. autos “them” + noun nom.f.s. exousia authority; power + prep epi upon, over + art.w/adj.acc.nt.s. tetartos fourth + art.w/noun gen.f.s. ge earth*]), **to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth** [ἀποκτείνειν ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ καὶ ἐν λιμῷ καὶ ἐν θανάτῳ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν θηρίων τῆς γῆς [*aor.act.inf. apoketino kill + prep en in; “with” + noun instr.f.s. hromphaia sword + conj kai + prep en in; “with” + noun instr.f.s. limos hunger; “famine” + conj kai + prep hupo by means of + art.w/noun gen.nt.p. therion wild animal, beast + art.w/noun gen.f.s. ge earth*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 7-8

1. A conspicuous increase in severity confronts us with the opening of the 4th seal.
2. The 4th living being (eagle-like) summons the rider on the ashen/pale horse.
3. The increased intensity raises the question of the time of this visitation.
4. One view has it in the latter half of Daniel’s 70th week of years, following the rationale that the 1st half of the tribulation is a time of relative tranquility and the 4th seal reflects the awful conditions more characteristic of the last three and one half years.
5. While it is true that the 2nd half of the tribulation is far worse than the first half, it does not follow that the first half is relatively quiet.
6. After all, the US is nuked some three years into the period.
7. Never has there been a time when the four afflictions of the fourth seal have operated simultaneously over a fourth of the earth.
8. The best solution is to assign the 4th seal to sometime close to the midpoint of the tribulation.
9. The adjective to describe the color of the 4th horse is pale green.
10. It is the word used to describe the color of grass and other vegetation (Mk. 6:39 and Rev. 8:7; 9:4), but in the present connection, designates the yellowish green of decay, the pallor of death.
11. It recalls a corpse in an advanced state of corruption.
12. As to the identity of the rider a variety of views exist.
13. One view has it the rider is represents the release of the devil and his forces but this is based on allegorization of the words.
14. Further there is no evidence that the devil is allowed to directly take human life, though he is quite capable of doing so.
15. Satan is limited to influencing people with respect to evil and even on rare occasion to possess a person.
16. This view does not connect with the sequential cause and effect relationship between the first four seals with the imagery of four horsemen.
17. False peace (white horse) is a trap that results in unprecedented warfare (red horse) against a foe (white horse) resulting in world-wide depression (black horse) and finally, the rider on the pale horse, named Death.

18. The question is: ‘What is the relationship of this deadly ride to what precedes?’
19. This is the only horse that has a rider that has a name.
20. The basic meaning of the term is death, but as we have seen elsewhere, sometimes this word means pestilence, as in Rev. 2:23.
21. Immediately after the fall of the US, the economy of the western democracies (e.g. Europe) will crash, and hyperinflation and scarcity will come upon these peoples (rider on black horse).
22. The fourth rider (pale horse) will follow in rapid succession.
23. The pestilence (death) that will follow is the incredible amount of radioactive fallout that will quickly spread around the globe being caught up in the jet stream.
24. The rider of this horse is different from the others in that he sits “above” the actual horse itself and noted by the change of preposition (e.g., *enapo*).
25. While this preposition can mean “on,” it can also mean “above.”
26. Here the change of preposition from the usual *epi* as noted in riders one through three must have some significance.
27. Otherwise the change is inexplicable.
28. Also this rider has a trailer (“and followed after him”) called “Hades” or Sheol referring to the realm of the departed unbeliever in the underworld.
29. Hades is a kind of hearse that follows Death on his destruction of one-fourth of humanity!
30. Death has Hades as its inseparable companion.
31. If Hades is not mounted, he is on foot and acts as death’s hearse, standing ready to engulf the souls of all who are Death’s victims.
32. Hades is able to maintain the horse’s pace so as to keep up with Death’s movements.
33. Because they are granted power to do their work together (cf. αὐτοῖς “to them”), they must remain together in the portrayal before John’s eyes.
34. The natural antecedent for *autois* is Death and Hades.
35. In binding them together, the pronoun observes the constancy of their companionship.
36. The ravages of the fourth rider are staggering, but limited in comparison to what comes later in the tribulation.
37. If today’s world population of six billion (and growing) is used, “over a fourth of the earth,” means Death and Hades have authority, to take the lives of 1.5 billion souls.
38. The magnitude of this catastrophe can hardly be grasped in the annals of human history.
39. Truly, the statement in Isa. 13:12 in connection with the destruction of America will be seen to be true by the end of the tribulation (e.g., “I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold, and mankind than the gold of Ophir.)!
40. Death carries the connotation of pestilence in Rev. 18:8 where the meaning is clearly nuclear pestilence coming upon the citizens of economic Babylon (USA).
41. Again, this is the meaning in Rev. 2:23.
42. Nuclear pollution and death will rise into the atmosphere and spread all around the earth with four (notice the repetition of the number 4 in this verse) attendant phenomena that takes the lives of one-fourth of existing humanity.
43. The four ravages of Death are the same associated with Ezekiel’s warning to Jerusalem (cf. Ezek. 14:12-21; esp. v. 21).
44. The first three items are different means that God will allow Death to use in removing human life: sword, famine, pestilence (*thanatos*, death; pestilence), and wild animals.
45. The sword denotes death by violent means, usually warfare.

46. The term used here is the noun *hromphaia*, which term means a large broad-sword.
47. Of the 7x this term is used in the NT, six occur in Revelation (cf. Rev. 1:16; 2:12,16; 6:8; 19:15, 21).
48. It is used of the sword that proceeds from the mouth of Christ's omnipotence.
49. It is used of His wrath against the nations at the 2nd Advent in Rev. 19.
50. When the "great sword" of the rider on the red horse is unleashed on its enemy, there will naturally follow mayhem among the nations that will result in many millions and millions of deaths.
51. With war come famine due to disruptions in economies and crop failure.
52. Famine is seen under the third seal, but this represents famine at its worst.
53. With starvation naturally comes pestilence or pandemics which will stalk mankind.
54. Finally, with the breakdown of society and the resultant helplessness of humans, wild beasts will be compelled to look to humans to for sustenance (cf. Num. 21:6; Deut. 32:24; Josh. 24:12; 2Kgs. 2:24; 17:25; Isa. 30:6; Jer. 5:6; Ezek. 14:21; 33:27).
55. After such horrendous developments, could matters get worse?
56. The remaining seals will tell the story.
57. This interpretation of the 4th seal has the advantage of continuity with seals one through three.
58. Failure on the part of interpreters to identify the fall of the US in prophecy via a nuclear annihilation "in one hour of one day" (cf. Rev. 18:10, 17, 19), makes it next to impossible to be specific regarding the four horsemen of the Apocalypse.
59. In fact, if they understood this vital piece of the puzzle, they would look at these four riders in a different fashion.
60. The horrors associated with riders two through four is preceded by a specific time of peace mongering, which will totally delude the American establishment and citizenry.

Fifth Seal: Martyrs (vv. 9-11)

Their Location (v.9)

VERSE 9 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal [Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν πέμπτην σφραγίδα
[conj kai + adv hote when + aor.act.ind.3s. anoigo open; "broke" + art.w/adj.acc.f.s. pemptos fifth + noun acc.f.s. sphragis seal], **I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God** [εἶδον ὑποκάτω τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐσφαγμένων διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ *[aor.act.ind.1s. eidon see + prep ;hupokato beneath + art.w/noun gen.nt.s. thusiasterion altar + art.w/noun acc.f.p. psuche soul + art.w/perf.pass.part.gen.m.p. sphazo slaughter; metaphorical of Jesus' death as the Lamb of God in Rev. 5:6,9; put to death by violence as per 1Jn. 3:12 + prep dia because (reason) + art.w/noun acc.m.s. logos word + art.w/gen.m.s. theos God]*, **even because of the testimony which they had maintained** [καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἣν εἶχον *[conj kai-ascensive "even" + prep dia because + art.w/noun acc.f.s. marturia witness + rel.pro.acc.f.s. hos which + impf.act.ind.3p. echo have; "had maintained"]*];

ANALYSIS: VERSE 9

1. The fifth seal differs from the rest.
2. It has no summons and no horse or rider.
3. It is unlike the sixth seal with its upheavals and the seventh with its foreboding silence.
4. Its inclusion of martyrdom is appropriate because such often accompanies political, economic, and social chaos.
5. The subject of martyrdom fits well with the companion prophecies of Christ in the Olivet Discourse.
6. He prophesied about the hardships awaiting believers in the days just before His return (cf. Matt. 24:9-10; Mk. 13:9-13; Lu. 21:12-17).
7. A different kind of scene was revealed to John's sight after the Lamb opened the fifth seal.
8. The significance of the difference is missed by those who explain the fifth seal as producing martyrdom.
9. This is unacceptable because it ignores the basic principle that the seal judgments are God's wrath against those who live on the earth (cf. Rev. 3:10; 6:10).
10. Martyrdom for Christ's sake can hardly be looked upon as a judgment from God.
11. It is out of keeping with the other judgments in this series.
12. The judgment aspect of the fifth-seal judgment is gleaned from the cry of the martyrs in verse 10.
13. Their cry for God's vengeance against their persecutors is heard, and certain vindication against their murderers is fully assured.
14. The martyrs are clearly tribulational martyrs.
15. All who come to saving faith after the Rapture of the Church will be subject to worldwide persecution, of which, many will die rather than deny their faith.
16. The information revealed to John under this seal makes it clear that others will be added to their number (cf. v. 11).
17. When this seal is opened it is clear that martyrdom of believers has been in progress.
18. Because of the difference between this seal and the first four it has been supposed that this seal is not consecutive as are the first four.
19. The consecutive opening of the seals speaks of consecutive fulfillment.
20. The focus should be the fervent request of the martyrs for vindication and the divine assurance that it will soon take place, and not the fact of martyrdom.
21. The judgment aspect of this seal is the fact that God will in due time hunt down and destroy their enemies under the seals, trumpets, and bowls to follow.
22. This seal carries with it the assurance of judgment, and not any specific form of judgment against those who are guilty.
23. In addition to all the other crimes against humanity, there is the additional crime of genocide against God's people.
24. The vision points to the heavenly throne room.
25. "The altar" is in heaven as it is everywhere else in this book (cf. Rev. 8:3, 5; 14:18) except in 11:1.
26. What is described as a throne room in chapters 4-5 is now God's temple (cf. 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 8; Ps. 18:6; Mic. 1:1; Hab. 2:20)
27. The combined conception of heaven as a kingly palace and as a temple occurs elsewhere in Scripture (Pss. 11:4; 29:9-10; Isa. 6:1).

28. The nature of what is symbolized by “the altar” is important in tracing the continuity of the Apocalypse.
29. One view is that this heavenly altar is that after which the altar of burnt offering was patterned.
30. Another view sees it as the golden altar of incense.
31. The primary reason for seeing this altar as the golden altar of incense is the fact that all other references to this heavenly altar in the Apocalypse is to the altar of incense (cf. 8:3, 5; 9:13; 14:18; 16:7).
32. The judgments that are preliminary to the inauguration of the messianic kingdom are tied to the prayers of the saints.
33. So it seems best to keep that concept in view here with the request of the tribulational martyrs for vengeance.
34. Again, throughout the book the heavenly altar is connected with the execution of judgment for which the saints are praying, and the prayers of the saints are symbolized by incense (cf. 5:8; 8:3,4).
35. Heaven is spoken of as a sanctuary (11:9; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 8; cf. Heb. 9:24).
36. What John is enabled to view as a result of the opening of this seal, is, “the souls” of these martyrs positioned “under the altar.”
37. The term “the souls” refers to the actual person absent the biological body which has been left behind on earth awaiting resurrection.
38. Saints in heaven minus their bodies is called the intermediate state.
39. The intermediate state is clearly in view in 2Cor. 5:1-5.
40. That fact that each one of these martyrs is given a “white robe” suggests an intermediate body of some sort, since a robe cannot clothe that which is immaterial.
41. Their “souls” refer to that invisible, immaterial part that once animated their bodies.
42. The human soul comes from a creative act of God a physical birth.
43. The soul is referred to in these studies as the ‘real you.’
44. The soul constitutes a person’s most valuable possession.
45. The body comes via procreation and genetic engineering.
46. The body is referred to as the external or ‘overt you.’
47. The body contains the indwelling OSN/STA which is referred to as the ‘old you.’
48. The human spirit that comes via regeneration is referred to as the ‘new you.’
49. The martyrs John saw as disembodied spirits are believers whose persecutors are still alive on earth.
50. This, therefore, excludes martyrs that lived before the tribulation.
51. These are the martyrs who come out of the tribulation only.
52. Those John saw were those who came out of the first half of the tribulation, with more to follow (cf. v.11).
53. The reason for the murder of these saints is expressed by John as being “because of the Word of God.”
54. As with Rev. 1:2, 9 where the same expression occurs, a precise definition is possible.
55. The Word of God here is none other than “the testimony which they maintained.”
56. This takes the *kai* (“even”) immediately after “God” to have its ascensive force, as it often does in this book.
57. This matches the construction in the two earlier verses (cf. Rev. 1:2,9).
58. Their testimony/witness regarding who and what Christ is was the basis for their death.

59. This testimony they held came via GAP, and they wore it like a badge which cost them their lives (cf. 12:17; 20:4).
60. Their loyalty to Christ was conspicuous in their refusal to submit to the mark of the beast (cf. Rev. 13:7, 15).
61. These martyrs are seen in chapter seven verse 14.
62. They are those over the course of tribulation, from the time when the mark of the beast system is implemented, who refuse this mark and are killed.

Their Plea (v. 10)

VERSE 10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying (καὶ ἔκραζαν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγοντες [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3p. krazo call out, exclaim, cry out + noun instr.f.s. phone voice + adj. instr.f.s. megas great; "loud" + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. lego say*]), **"How long, O Lord, holy and true** [Ἔως πότε, ὁ δεσπότης ὁ ἅγιος καὶ ἀληθινός [*prep eos until; to denote the upper limit of a thing + interrog.adv. pote when + art.w/noun voc.m.s. despotes master, owner; a title for Christ + art.w/adj.voc.m.s. hagios holy + conj kai + adj.voc.m.s. alethinos true*]], **will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth** [οὐ κρίνεις καὶ ἐκδικεῖς τὸ αἷμα ἡμῶν ἐκ τῶν κατοικούντων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς [*neg ou; "refrain" + pres.act.ind.2s. krino judge + conj kai + pres.act.ind.2s. ekdikeo avenge, get justice for + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. haima blood + pro.gen.p. ego "our" + prep ek + art.w/pres.act.part.gen.m.p. katoikeo dwell + prep epi upon + art.w/noun gen.m.s. ge earth*]]?"

ANALYSIS: VERSE 10

1. In approaching the plea of the tribulational martyrs, it is important to keep in mind that believers in heaven are never maladjusted or out of fellowship; or do they entertain human viewpoint, no matter how spiritually deficient they might have been at the moment of their passing from this life.
2. At first glance it might appear that these representatives of the growing numbers of martyrs are distraught and impatient.
3. Actually, their plea is an intense longing for vindication.
4. Even though they are in heaven, they are anything but indifferent to the consummation of the spiritual warfare they knew so intimately while on earth.
5. The manner of their petition is extraordinary.
6. It is an outcry and is in a loud voice.
7. The words "they cried with a loud voice", points to the urgent need of the times (e.g., the hour of the coming kingdom).
8. The verb tense shows this to be a single appeal, not one that is repeatedly urged.
9. "How long" is found frequently in the LXX.
10. It is the well-known cry of the beleaguered psalmist (cf. Pss. 6:3; 13:1-2; 35:17; 74:10; 79:5; 90:13; Isa. 6:11, et al).
11. It poses the question regarding the ignorance of these saints at this juncture.
12. Did they not know that the seven year tribulation must run its course before they would be fully vindicated?

13. If so, then this example does suggest that believers in heaven may not know everything they could have known had they received it under GAP in time.
14. If their plea is not merely rhetorical, then it demonstrates a lack of full understanding.
15. Or, there is such a high degree of righteous indignation over the cruel and vicious indignities these martyrs had experienced under the genocide of the Antichrist, that this plea is more rhetorical than actual.
16. In other words, maybe it is more a plea for reassurance than anything else.
17. It is hard to imagine that these believers were not sufficiently briefed on the times they were living in by those who evangelized them.
18. In any case, their intense cry is not in the same category as that of John in chapter four where he clearly is out of sorts with the scene he was transported into.
19. Their cry is addressed to “the master” (*ho despotes*), probably a reference to God the Father.
20. This title carries the implication of God’s absolute sovereignty.
21. It is not the common word for “lord” in the NT.
22. It is used here and in Lk. 2:29; Acts 4:24; 2Tim. 2:21; 2Pet. 2:1, and Jude 4 of deity.
23. This title is coupled with two qualities ascribed to God, “the holy and true One.”
24. God’s holiness demands that all evil be judged.
25. The divine attribute of veracity is seen in the second term.
26. The implication is that God is faithful to His Word.
27. Being holy He cannot tolerate evil, and being true He must avenge all evil.
28. The same two qualities are applied to Christ in Rev. 3:7.
29. The carefully stated appeal avoids the mistake of telling God what He must do and when He must do it.
30. It simply poses the question of how long He is refraining from judging the wicked and avenging the blood of the righteous.
31. The object of the judging is the earth-dwellers named in the final clause (“from those who dwell on the earth”).
32. The blood (synonym for murder) of the righteous recalls the blood of the first martyr, Abel (Gen. 4:10).
33. The expression “those who dwell on the earth” is semi technical in the Apocalypse for those who are negative and in rebellion to the directive will of God (cf. Rev. 6:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:2, 8).
34. They are the opponents of the servants of God and persecute them in a variety of ways.
35. The most pronounced is the genocide sponsored by the Antichrist and the False Prophet.
36. These believers recognize that revenge is God’s providence.
37. They recognize that it is His prerogative as to time and manner, and so should we.
38. Nevertheless, it is okay to offer up a sanctified lament.
39. Unlike the first Christian martyr, Stephen, who prayed for grace for His enemies, this company plea for vengeance (cf. Acts 7:60).
40. This is similar to the pleas in the imprecatory psalms (e.g., Ps. 75:9-10).
41. This plea suggests that the time for grace has passed, and that those who did this, had spurned the grace offered to them.
42. All that is left for such types is vengeance.

God’s Twofold Response (v. 11)

VERSE 11 And there was given to each of them a white robe (καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἐκάστῳ στολῇ λευκῇ [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. didomi give + pro.dat.m.p. autos "them" + pro.dat.m.s. hekastos each one + noun nom.f.s. stole robe + adj.nom.f.s. leukos white*]); **and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer** [καὶ ἐρρέθη αὐτοῖς ἵνα ἀναπαύσονται ἔτι χρόνον μικρόν [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. eipon say; "it was told" + pro.dat.m.p. autos "to them" + conj hina that + fut.mid.ind.3p. anapauo rest + adv eti yet, still + noun acc.m.s. chronos time; "while" + adj.acc.m.s. mikros little*], **until the number of their fellow servants and [even] their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also** [ἕως πληρωθῶσιν καὶ οἱ σύνδουλοι αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτῶν οἱ μέλλοντες ἀποκτείνεσθαι ὡς καὶ αὐτοὶ [*conj heos until + aor.pass.subj.3p. pleroo fill (up); become full; "would be completed" + conj kai even + art.w/noun nom.m.p. sundoulos fellow servant + pro.gen.m.p. autos "their" + conj kai and + art.w/noun nom.m.p. adelphos brother + pro.gen.m.p. autos "their" + art.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.p. mello be about "who were to be" + pres.act.infin. apokteino kill + comp.adv. hos as + conj kai also + pro.nom.m.p. autos "they were"]*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 11

1. God's response to their appeal is by way of symbolic and spoken word.
2. The symbolic act is the granting of each one of the martyrs a white robe.
3. The term "robe" (*stole*) was a robe of state, flowing to the feet (cf. Mk. 12:38; 16:5; Lk. 15:22; 20:46; Rev. 6:11; 7:9, 13, 14; 22:14).
4. The white color denotes beauty and righteousness.
5. It is parallel to the white garments promised to the church age overcomer in Rev. 3:5.
6. The color white signifies imputed righteousness that comes via justification by faith as well as the divine good production of believers (cf. Rev. 19:8).
7. Obviously these robes are placed upon bodies supplied for the intermediate state as the resurrection of their earthly bodies awaits the 2nd Advent.
8. For documentation of resurrection of trib martyrs at this time see Rev. 20:4: "Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the Word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead or hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."
9. Clearly we see an example of believers in heaven prior to the resurrection of their earthly remains.
10. A temporary body is provided to all who go to heaven before actual resurrection is the obvious teaching here; otherwise there is the problem of a physical garment upon an immaterial, incorporeal entity, namely, the living soul.
11. The spoken word to the martyrs, presumably from the Lord, is somewhat difficult to analyze because of the two possible senses of "they should rest."

12. There is little question that it includes the thought of abstaining from their plea of vengeance and resting from their toil and pain.
13. A case can be made for limiting the advice to this.
14. The cognate noun *anapausin* (“rest”) in Rev. 4:8 is limited to rest from suffering.
15. Yet this limitation determines that the word to them was an admonition to control their impatience, an unworthy trait attributed to saints in heaven.
16. It is more in keeping with the scene to view the term as denoting rest from the cry for vengeance.
17. It harmonizes better with their Ph 3 perfection to tell them to rest in the enjoyment of the blessing of being with the Lord in heaven.
18. This is the meaning of the verb in Rev. 14:13.
19. An invitation to such rest is inseparable from the bliss of those already in glory with Christ.
20. The phrase “for yet a little while longer” expresses the extent of the proposed rest.
21. The identical expression (*eti chronon mkkron*) comes from the lips of Jesus twice, once in Jn. 7:33 and once in Jn. 12:35.
22. The same words minus the *eti* (“yet”) are used in Rev. 20:3 to tell of Satan’s brief period of freedom after the 1000 years.
23. In the former case (John’s gospel) the time is not more than a year, and in the latter, just a matter of days, weeks or months.
24. This expression of indefiniteness should be linked with the intensified wrath of Rev. 12:12: “For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has *only* a short time.”
25. It makes sense that the two periods should coincide, because Satan in his wrath will take it out on those who will yet be martyred.
26. His “short time” comes to an end when he is defeated and bound (cf. Rev. 20:1-3).
27. The little time of Rev. 6:11 of the tribulation martyrs in heaven ends then too, for that is when they are raised to sit on thrones and reign for a thousand years.
28. As far as the saints of the fifth seal are concerned, they are told that there will be a necessary delay, albeit a relatively short one, to accomplish the purposes of God.
29. Note the angelic announcement in Rev. 10:6 in which there is to “be delay no longer.”
30. This is obviously the announcement of the end of the delay of which God informs the martyrs in 6:11.
31. This fifth-seal delay coincides with the period of Satan’s special wrath.
32. The remainder of v. 11 explains the need for the delay in God’s avenging of the martyr’s blood.
33. Others were yet to offer up their lives for Christ.
34. The number set in God’s predetermined plan had not at this juncture been reached.
35. The conjunction *heos* (“until”) followed in the Greek text with the aorist passive subjunctive of *pleroo* (“to complete” or “fill up”) is used to speak of completing a stipulated period of time (cf. Lk. 21:24; Acts 7:23, 30; 9:23; 24:27), but only here does it specify the reaching of a predetermined number of people.
36. The notion here is that God has decreed a certain number of tribulational martyrs.
37. The participial phrase “who were to be killed” (*hoi mellontes anoktennesthai*) modifies “their fellow servants even their brethren” and puts them into a single class.
38. “Their fellow slaves” is made more specific by “even their brethren.”

39. The word to the souls under the altar gives them reassurance that God will soon avenge their blood, but the time for the culmination of that vengeance has not yet arrived.
40. One feature that must yet transpire beforehand is the increase of their number through additional martyrdoms.
41. The earth dwellers under the beast will take an even greater toll of human lives before Christ intervenes through His personal arrival back on the earth.
42. Until then, the already martyred are told to rest and enjoy their time of blessedness in heaven.

Sixth Seal: Super Quake (vv. 12-17)

Visual Effect on Sun and Moon (v.12)

VERSE 12 **I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake** (Καὶ εἶδον ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν ἕκτην, καὶ σεισμός μέγας ἐγένετο [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. eidon see + adv hote when + aor.act.ind.3s. anoigo open; "broke" + art.w/noun acc.f.s. sphragis seal + art.w/adj.acc.f.s. hektos sixth + conj kai + noun nom.m.s. seimos earthquake + adj.nom.m.s. megas great + aor.dep.ind.3s. ginomai "there was"*]); **and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair** [καὶ ὁ ἥλιος ἐγένετο μέλας ὡς σάκκος τρίχινος [*conj kai + noun nom.m.s. helios sun + aor.dep.ind.3s. ginomai "became" + adj.nom.m.s. melas black, dark + conj hos as + noun nom.m.s. sakkos sackcloth + adj.nom.m.s. trichinos made of hair, hairy*], **and the whole moon became like blood** [καὶ ἡ σελήνη ὅλη ἐγένετο ὡς αἷμα [*conj kai + noun nom.f.s. selene moon + adj.nom.f.s. holos whole + aor.dep.ind.3s. ginomai "became" + conj hos as + noun nom.nt.s. haima blood*]);

ANALYSIS: VERSE 12

1. Seals one through four are largely man-made phenomena centered on a nuclear war affecting the entire world in varying degrees.
2. Seal five is also a man-made event, that is, the wholesale genocide of tribulational saints.
3. One should learn to distinguish between what God permits and what He directs.
4. In these first five seals we have something God permits in order to accomplish His overruling (and directive) wills in the realm of judgment.
5. Seal six is different in that it is not man-made, but the result of God's sovereign power over nature.
6. It is necessary before examining the earthquake and other natural phenomena associated with it, to dispense with the symbolic interpretation advanced by a good number of commentators.
7. The figurative interpretation of the 6th seal judgment sees the earthquake as political and social convulsions among the peoples of the earth, and the rolling up of the sky and the falling of the stars as punishment of principalities and powers that stand behind the authority of human rulers.
8. The most glaring deficiency of a symbolic interpretation of the features of the sixth seal is that the things allegedly symbolized by the convulsions of the heavens (6:12-14), i.e., the

- convulsion of the nations, are described in literal terms in (6:15-17) alongside the heavenly phenomena.
9. The same distinction between the shaking of the heavens and a convulsion among the people of earth is seen in the OT counterpart to this description.
 10. Hag. 2:21-22.
 11. The seal can hardly be seen as containing two descriptions of the same thing.
 12. Maybe the most convincing reason to take the events of this seal literally is Jesus' plain words in the companion Olivet discourse about coming earthquakes (Matt. 24:7//Mk.13:8; Lk. 21:11).
 13. His language is clearly not figurative.
 14. Besides this, nothing short of an apparent dissolution of the natural order would have such a devastating effect on the psyche of mankind as this seal projects in verses 15-17.
 15. The literal interpretation of these words is necessary to do justice to OT prophecy, the Olivet discourse, and the psychological trauma envisaged in verses 15-17 of Revelation chapter six.
 16. Also, keep in mind the dependence of the creation upon the Creator.
 17. He is more than capable of doing something that appears to be the end of the world, and still keep order to advance His prophetic plan onward to the 2nd Advent and millennium.
 18. Some cautionary remarks about the literalness of the sixth seal are in order.
 19. And that has to do with stark literalness.
 20. The language in verses 12-14 is hyperbolic.
 21. The falling of the stars and the rolling up of heaven are only apparent.
 22. If the moving of the mountains and islands from their places (6:14) were universal and complete, there would be no hiding places for men to seek refuge (6:15-16).
 23. At the same time the phenomena are so severe that they are unparalleled in human history.
 24. They are sufficiently catastrophic as to leave even the strongest with the full impression that the end of all things has indeed arrived, but when this seal has run its course, the phenomena contained herein is not sufficient to amount to a total destruction of life on the earth.
 25. Human activity and history continues after these disruptions.
 26. Another preliminary question about the sixth seal has to do with the time of its fulfillment relative to the seven year tribulation.
 27. Does it come at the very end in conjunction with Christ's appearing to the nations (cf. Rev. 1:7) or is it merely a harbinger of the last calamities?
 28. In the scheme of this book, this cannot be the absolute end because the seventh seal has not yet been opened.
 29. The end cannot come until the great persecution has run its course (cf. Rev. 6:11).
 30. Revelation 16:18 speaks of another earthquake at the very end (i.e., under the seventh bowl) that is unparalleled in human history.
 31. As severe as the 6th seal earthquake is, no such statement accompanies its description.
 32. So the sixth-seal events are best understood as preliminary and probably occurring around the midpoint of Daniel's 70th week.
 33. The onslaught of this panic-evoking sequence is a *seismos megas* ("a great earthquake").
 34. Earthquakes are a familiar birth-pain occurring with greater frequency and intensity as history moves closer to Christ's advent (cf. Matt. 24:7).
 35. This earthquake may occur just before the manifestation of the abomination of desolation at the midpoint of the 70th week of years (Matt. 24:15).

36. Luke's account of the Olivet discourse does allude to things which could involve this seal judgment: "And there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven" (Lk. 21:11).
37. Again, the placement of this seal judgment just before the beginning of the last half of the prophetic week of years is most likely.
38. One possibility is the earthquake mentioned in connection with the defeat of Gog and Magog (i.e., Russian alliance) on the hills of Israel (cf. Ezek. 38:19; cp. vv. 18-22).
39. Another possibility is the earthquake mentioned in Rev. 11:13 at the time of the resurrection of the two witnesses.
40. Following the mention of this super quake, come four more phenomena which are atmospheric in nature.
41. In OT apocalyptic literature references to the darkening of the sun are common (Isa. 13:10; Ezek.32:7-8); Joel 2:10, 31; Amos 8:9; cf. Matt. 24:29//Mk. 13:24-25//Lk. 21:35).
42. Some of these references have to do with celestial phenomena related to the 2nd Advent proper.
43. The one in Isa. 13:10 has to do with the blotting out of the sun and moon due to nuclear warfare.
44. That effect will gradually dissipate.
45. Here there is no direct natural connection between this earthquake and the sun appearing black and the moon appearing red colored.
46. This probably speaks of a super eclipse.
47. A deep red or copper color with respect to "the whole moon" can be observed under conditions of an eclipse.
48. This will constitute a sign to earth dwellers especially since it is timed to coincide with the super quake of the sixth seal.
49. Other references in prophetic literature to the sun becoming dark include Joel 2:10, 31 (US destruction); 3:15 (2nd Advent phenomena; cp. Matt. 24:29; Lk. 21:25).

Angelic Warfare in 2nd Heaven (v. 13)

VERSE 13 **and the stars of the sky fell to the earth** [καὶ οἱ ἀστέρες τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔπεσαν εἰς τὴν γῆν [conj kai + art.w/noun nom.m.p. aster star + art.w/noun gen.m.s. ouranos heaven, sky + aor.act.ind.3p. pipto fall + prep eis into, to + art.w/noun acc.f.s. ge earth], **as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind** [ὡς συκῆ βάλλει τοὺς ὀλύνθους αὐτῆς ὑπὸ ἀνέμου μεγάλου σειομένη [conj hos as + noun nom.f.s. suke fig tree + pres.act.ind.3s. ballo cast + art.w/noun acc.m.p. olunthos unripe fig; hapax + pro.gen.f.s. autos "its" + prep hupo by + noun gen.m.s. anemos wind + adj.gen.m.s. megas great + pres.pass.part.nom.f.s. seio shake, quake; disturb; agitate]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 13

1. Most take this aspect of the 6th seal as falling meteors.
2. The term "stars" is used in the Bible of heavenly bodies, including planets (cf. 2Pet. 1:19; Rev. 2:28; 22:16; Matt. 2:2,7,9,10), suns (1Cor. 15:41; Gen. 1:16; 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; 37:9; Ps. 147:4; Lk. 21:25; Acts 27:20; Rev. 8:12; 12:1); angels (Deut. 4:19; Judg. 5:20; Job 25:5;

- 38:7; Isa. 14:12, 13; Mk. 13:25; Rev. 9:1; 12:4 saints (Dan. 8:10; Rev. 1:16, 20; 2:1; 3:1 false teachers (Jude 13); and Christ (Num. 24:17; Rev. 2:28; 22:16).
3. If this verse is dealing with heavenly bodies then it would have to refer to smaller objects hurled from space to the earth, like meteors.
 4. Clearly a meteor bombardment is in view as a part of the 7th bowl judgment (cf. Rev. 16:21; cp. Ezek. 38:22).
 5. In this case the physical stars are probably not in view.
 6. One interpreter (Thomas) says that these stars only appear to be falling to the earth causing men to fear the end of the world.
 7. The straightforward language of this verse says “the stars of the heaven/sky fell to the earth.”
 8. If this refers to the fifth fall of Satan and his angels of Rev. 12:7ff., then the 6th seal judgment would occur in connection with Satan’s defeat by Michael.
 9. This event occurs at the midpoint of the tribulation.
 10. There is a remarkable similarity between this verse and Isa. 34:4 which reads: “And all the host of heaven will wear away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; all their hosts will also wither away as a leaf withers on the vine, and as *fruit* falling from a fig tree” (cf. vv. 1ff.).
 11. Further support for this identification of the “stars” as the physical confinement of Satan and his angels to the earth during the second half of the tribulation note the analogy to unripe figs being stripped from a tree by a “great wind.”
 12. The “great wind” would be the effect of Michael and his angels physically overcoming Satan and his angels.
 13. The fallen angels are barred from their long access to the 2nd and 3rd heavens forever according to Revelation chapter 12.
 14. This seems a reasonable and literal interpretation of this verse considering Isa. 34:4 where “host of heaven” is used in a context dealing with the tribulation and not the final dissolution of the universe.

Fourth and Fifth Disturbances (v. 14)

VERSE 14 **The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up** (καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς ἀπεχωρίσθη ὡς βιβλίον ἐλισσόμενον [*conj kai + art.w/noun nom.m.s. ouranos sky, heaven + aor.pass.ind.3s. apochorizo; of person = separate; pass. = part company; of things be swept aside, be split off, disappear; here translated “rolled up” + conj hos as + noun nom.nt.s. biblion scroll*]), **and every mountain and island were moved out of their places** [καὶ πᾶν ὄρος καὶ νῆσος ἐκ τῶν τόπων αὐτῶν ἐκινήθησαν [*conj kai + adj.nom.nt.s. pas all, every + noun nom.nt.s. oros mountain + conj kai + noun nom.f.s. nesos island + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.m.p. topos place + pro.gen.nt.p. autos “their” + aor.pass.ind.3p. kineo move; stir up; instigate; remove (thing); pass. = move about*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 14

1. The fourth disturbance under the 6th seal judgment will effect the whole expanse of heaven from the vantage point of mankind.
2. Heaven will split and roll back in two opposite directions: “The sky was split like a scroll when it is rolled up...”
3. The edges on either side of the split will peel or curl back in two opposite directions (cf. Isa. 34:4 “and the heavens will be rolled up like a scroll...”).
4. Context precludes that our verse and Isa. 34:4 does not refer to the phenomena associated with the final dissolution of the universe after the conclusion of the 1000 years (cf. Rev. 20:11; 21:1; cf. Ps. 102:25-26; Matt. 24:35//Mk. 13:31//Lk. 21:33; Heb. 1:10-12; 2Pet. 3:10).
5. The phenomenon that produces this effect is not explained.
6. It could be something that God permits when the demonic hordes led by Satan effect upon their defeat and being cast down to the earth.
7. Men will not see the fallen angels but they will see a dramatic splitting of the sky that will result in great fear and despair.
8. The account of the sixth seal returns to the earth with the moving of every mountain and island.
9. This fifth and final phenomena associated with the sixth seal is probably tied to the great earthquake that began this sequence of terrifying actions.
10. The shifting of the earth’s mantle rock is absent nonliteral elements as indicated by the similes introduced by the comparative conjunction *hos* (“as) in verses 12 [2x], 13, and 14.
11. Such a geophysical alteration of the earth’s surface, effecting mountains and islands, occurs on an even larger scale as a feature of the final and 7th bowl judgment of Rev. 16:20.
12. Under this judgment all mountains will be abolished (cf. Zech. 14:4).
13. Again, the complete removal of every mountain would leave no hiding places for men to seek (6:16).
14. All elevated topography will be affected in varying degrees.
15. A particular mountain or mountain range does not have to be moved that much to fulfill the letter of this prediction.
16. The movement will be measurable.

World-Wide Panic (vv. 15-17)

VERSE 15 **Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong** (καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς καὶ οἱ μεγιστάνες καὶ οἱ χιλιάρχου καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι καὶ οἱ ἰσχυροὶ [*conj kai + art.w/noun nom.m.p. basileus king + art.w/noun gen.f.s. ge earth + conj kai + art.w/noun nom.m.p. megistan very important persons [only plural in NT]; “great men” + conj kai + art.w/noun nom.m.p. chiliarchos commander [of a thousand]; in Roman times aa tribune of a cohort [c. 600]; generally a high ranking officer + conj kai + art.w/adj.nom.m.p. plousios well-to-do; rich + conj kai + art.w/adj.nom.m.p. ischuros strong; of physical strength = robust]* **and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains** [*καὶ πᾶς δοῦλος καὶ ἐλεύθερος ἔκρυψαν ἑαυτοὺς*

εἰς τὰ σπήλαια καὶ εἰς τὰς πέτρας τῶν ὀρέων [*conj kai + adj.nom.m.s. pas all; “every” + noun nom.m.s. doulos slave + conj kai + adj.nom.m.s. eleutheros free + aor.act.ind.3p. krupto hide + pro.acc.m.p. heautou oneself + prep eis in + art.w/noun acc.nt.p. spelaion cave + conj kai + prep eis in + art.w/noun acc.f.p. petra rock a opposed to an isolated stone + art.w/noun gen.nt.p. oros mountain*]);

ANALYSIS: VERSE 15

1. For the enemies of truth and righteousness the day of the Lord will be a time of terror.
2. The effect of the six-part trauma of the sixth seal upon negative volition will be nothing short of a morale meltdown.
3. The focus under the sixth seal is psychological misery more than physical pain and death as is the case with the preceding seal judgments.
4. Obviously death will result for some under this seal, but the real emphasis is the terror this seal strikes in the hearts of men.
5. By listing the various categories that seek refuge in the great day of God’s wrath, John’s intention is not so much to cover the range of human society as it is to demonstrate that those who might be expected to keep their poise will be utterly unhinged (cf. v.16).
6. The sixth seal judgment will freak-out everyone without exception is the information John received in connection with seal six.
7. The kings of the earth are those individuals who are at the head of nation-states and who by their status represent the top of the authority ladder.
8. The “great men” (*megistanes*; 3x always in the pl.) represent those other than national rulers, who wield enormous power on the national and international stage (cf. Mk. 6:21; Rev. 18:23).
9. The classification “commanders” is the word for a Roman tribune (Moffatt).
10. The term signifies here those individuals throughout the world who possess significant rank within the armies, navies and air forces of the nations.
11. These men are especially conditioned and trained to remain calm and in control under the adversity of combat.
12. They will be faced with a threat that they know to be completely out of their power to understand or counter.
13. “The rich” will not take refuge in their considerable financial assets as we saw under the fourth seal.
14. The power of money will confer no comfort or power of deliverance as it once did for these types.
15. Then there are those who by reason of sheer physical prowess who will lose their manly bravado under the psychological terror of the 6th seal.
16. “The strong” refers to those whose physical attributes sets them apart from the ordinary.
17. These first five classes represent the best the human race has to offer, and all five without exception will find no comfort or hope in their advantages.
18. They will see the future as hopeless, individually and collectively.
19. John’s portrayal reflects Isa. 2:10, 19, 21, which prophesies of the day of the Lord.
20. The average man is represented by two categories, considered as one group: “every slave and free man.

21. The adjective *pas* (“every”) governs both “slave” and “free man,” uniting them in one group.
22. Political and social standing means nothing to the masses at this juncture.
23. We might expect panic among those who have little.
24. As always social and material advantages gain no credence with God (cf. Jer. 9:23-24 “Thus says the LORD, “Let not a wise man boast in his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises loyal-love, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD.”).
25. All classifications of society will respond in the same fashion; they will take to the hills!
26. Physically people will attempt to relocate to elevated terrain, or if not to burrow into holes in the earth in an attempt to avoid face-to-face contact with God almighty.
27. They seek shelter from what they consider to be the collapse of the natural universe.
28. Strictly speaking they overreact to the significance of the 6th seal.
29. Negative volition interprets the phenomena of the 6th seal as the end of the natural order.
30. This mass hysteria affects all classes throughout the world.
31. During the days of this seal judgment the human race losses all morale.
32. People will flee homes, cities, jobs (including military service), etc. under the terror of this seal.
33. This too is a part of the wrath of God against negative volition.
34. This mass hysteria and its consequence of running into the hills and rocks probably occur just after the phenomena of the 6th seal have run their course.
35. At one level it is not rational to hide in the very terrain that was directly affected by the 6th seal judgment.
36. Obviously the “great earthquake” that begins the sequence of phenomena was not when this mass exodus to the hills began.
37. The mental hysteria triggering this startling behavior is the result of universal observation of the six features of the 6th seal, the last item being the dislocation of all mountains and islands.
38. Humanity interprets the 6th seal as being the 2nd Advent.

A New God (v. 16)

VERSE 16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks (καὶ λέγουσιν τοῖς ὄρεσιν καὶ ταῖς πέτραις [*conj kai + pres.act.ind.3p. lego say + art.w/noun dat.nt.p. oros mountain + conj kai + art.w/noun dat.f.p. petra rock (big)*], **"Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb** [Πέσετε ἐφ' ἡμᾶς καὶ κρύψατε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου [*aor.act.imper.2p. pipto fall + prep epi on + pro.acc.p. ego "us" + conj kai + aor.act.imper.2p. krupto hide + pro.acc.p. ego I; "us" + prep apo from + noun abl.nt.p. prosopon face + art.w/pres.dep.part.abl.m.s. kathemai sit + prep epi upon + art.w/noun gen.m.s. thronos throne + conj kai + prep apo from + art.w/noun abl.f.s. orge wrath + art.w/gen.nt.s. arnion lamb*]);

ANALYSIS: VERSE 16

1. The mass impulse is: that it is better to perish under an avalanche than to come face to face with the one sitting on the throne and the wrath of the Lamb.
2. Around the world groups of people huddle and pray “to the mountains and rocks” to fall on them, a fate better than to face God and His wrath.
3. By this juncture these people have already received a gospel hearing, but being negative they have no intention of taking this avenue of deliverance (cf. Rev. 14:6; cp. 9:19-21; 16: 9ff.).
4. This once again demonstrates the perversity and insanity of negative volition.
5. Here they are seen praying to the mountains and rocks to deliver them by killing them from facing God.
6. For the time being they abandon their regular objects of veneration, and turn to this feature of inanimate creation.
7. The mountains and rocks cannot hear or see, whether in their natural state or shaped into some object of worship.
8. All of this is completely irrational, yet there is a certain truth they all grasp, and that is the fact of Lord’s coming in judgment.
9. These survivors have been witnessed six seals of judgment and have heard from witnesses of the coming of the Lord and the need to believe in the Lamb.
10. The question is, will they literally refer to God the Father and God the Son in these terms?
11. Apparently so, as this is the manner in which God has been presented to the nations via His agents (e.g., 2 witnesses, 144,000, angelic witness).
12. What sinners dread most is not death, but having to stand before a holy and righteous God.
13. God’s wrath is referred to throughout this book (6:16,17; 11:18; 14:10,19; 15:1,7; 16:1,19; 19:15; either *orge* or *thumos*).
14. Only here we have the arresting expression “the wrath of the Lamb.”
15. It is an exceptional expression inasmuch as the wrath of the incarnate Jesus became visible only when He twice cleansed the Temple.
16. The noun *orge* is only used once of His actions (Mk. 3:5).
17. Yet His wrath is joined with the Father’s wrath in the coming visitations.
18. He is a lamb, but He also has horns (Rev. 5:6) and He is lion-like (Rev. 5:5).
19. Paradoxically, the contrasting qualities merge in one person.
20. That panic stricken men would recognize the Lamb’s role in afflicting their misery is remarkable.
21. What isn’t surprising is that having rejected the only way of deliverance, they would momentarily sponsor rock worship!

The Depth of their Apprehension (v. 17)

VERSE 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand (ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ μεγάλη τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτῶν, καὶ τίς δύναται σταθῆναι [*conj hoti (declaratively) + aor.act.ind.3s. erchomai come + art.w/noun nom.f.s. hemera day + art.w/adj.nom.f.s. megas great + art.w/gen.f.s. orge wrath + pro.gen.m.p. autos “their” + conj kai + interrog.pro.nom.m.s. tis who + pres.dep.ind.3s. dunamai be able, can + aor.act.infin. histemi stand]*)?"

ANALYSIS: VERSE 17

1. The depth of their doctrinal apprehension is even more remarkable in their grasp of the prophetic accountability that provokes this wrath.
2. Mankind in a state of rebellion and negative volition takes stock of the cosmic and terrestrial disturbances as part of the great end-time day of wrath from the one sitting of the throne and from the Lamb.
3. They acknowledge the source of their terror.
4. They do not attribute these things to purely natural phenomena.
5. The verb “has come” is aorist indicative, referring to a previous arrival of the wrath, not something about to take place.
6. Men associate this arrival at least as early as the cosmic upheavals and terrors associated with the sixth seal (vv. 12:14), but upon reflection they no doubt associate it with the preceding seals.
7. Apparently the full reality of, this is the day of God’s wrath, does not sink in until the phenomena of the sixth seal transpire.
8. The literal Greek expression is “the day, the great day.”
9. “The great day” is an expression borrowed from the OT (Joel 2:11; Zeph. 1:14; Mal. 4:5).
10. Its mention is seen in the NT as well (Matt. 7:22; 1Thess. 5:2; 2Pet. 3:10).
11. The primary OT passages that are reflected in John’s description of the sixth seal in connection with the day of the Lord are: Joel 2:11, 30-31; cf. Isa. 2:10-11, 19-21; 34:4,8; Ezek. 32:7,8; Hos. 10:8.
12. Unbelievers around the earth at that time will universally agree that “the great day of their wrath has come.”
13. But their theological perspective does them no good as they refuse to believe in the Lamb for salvation.
14. They have *gnosis*, which they express rather well, but no *epignosis*.
15. *Epignosis* is knowledge acted upon by faith.
16. The final part of their words, “and who is able to stand?”, raises the question of who will have the capacity to survive what the future holds.
17. It has to do with remaining on the earth and sustaining an existence in the face of the impending hardships which will worsen as the intensity of God’s wrath grows to the end.
18. The question is rhetorical and has the effect of an unequivocal assertion that no one will survive.
19. The prophet Nahum asks the same question about that future day: “Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken up by Him.” (Nah. 1:6)
20. The despair of mankind is complete.
21. Terror and despair is the fate of those who will not call upon the name of the Lord in that day.

End: Revelation Chapter Six
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Jack M. Ballinger

