the wrath to come

(Revelation 6)

Last week we saw that Jesus took the scroll with seven seals on it out of the hand of the Father—a picture that God is placing the execution of His judgments in the hands of His Son—the Lord Jesus Christ.

The world we live in is adamantly opposed to the idea of a God who punishes or executes people for their sin. They cannot comprehend such an idea. But the Bible is clear from the beginning to the end that the God who created all people and all things is a God of judgment

All the way back in Genesis 18, God is called “the Judge of all the earth” (Gen 18:25).

**1 Samuel 2:10**-----10 The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces; From heaven He will thunder against them. The Lord will **judge** the ends of the earth.

**Psalm 96:12–13**-----12 Let the field be joyful, and all that *is* in it. Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the Lord. 13 For He is coming, for He is coming to **judge** the earth. He shall **judge** the world with righteousness, And the peoples with His truth.

**Psalm 98:8–9**-----8 Let the rivers clap *their* hands; Let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, 9 For He is coming to **judge** the earth. With righteousness He shall **judge** the world, And the peoples with equity.

**Acts 10:42**-----42 And He [God the Father] commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He [Jesus] who was ordained by God to be **Judge** of the living and the dead.

**Revelation 14:7**----- “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His **judgment** has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

The world does not accept this. When it will even accept the idea that there is a God who created all people, it wants to paint Him only as a God of love and not a God of punishment. But the Bible paints a clear and true picture of God. He is a God of love AND a God of wrath. And that is what I would like to speak to you about this morning.

**Title:** The Wrath to Come

(Prayer)

Revelation 6:1-2 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.” 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.

**Seal #1---The White Horse---Jesus the Victorious Conqueror**

Most see this as the Anti-Christ. But there are many good reasons to take this as Christ (of the best being that John the Apostle had a disciple named Polycarp, who had a disciple name Irenaeus. Irenaeus was the first to write down what he was taught by his mentor regarding Rev 6:1-2 and this is what he wrote:

“For to this end was the Lord born … of whom also John says in [Revelation]: ‘He went forth conquering, that he should conquer.’”

The judgments of God on rebellious mankind **begin** with Jesus riding forth on a white horse in chap 6 and **end** in chap 19 with Jesus returning to earth on a white horse.

Once Jesus brings believers to Himself at the Rapture, He will begin to unleash judgments upon rebellious mankind. Jesus referred to these initial judgments as **the beginning of sorrows** (or labor pains):

Matthew 24:7-8 …nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

What our Lord says here in Matthew 24:7-8 is reflected in the next three seals of Revelation 6. Look at vv. 3-4:

Revelation 6:3-4 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.

# Seal #2---The Red Horse---Conflict

After the rapture, the world will suddenly become filled with murder, violence, and war as it never has before. And the death toll on planet earth will escalate. People will kill one another and nations will be at each other’s throats.

And as God allows wars and conflicts to escalate around the globe, another judgment that falls will be an unparalleled time of famine:

# Seal #3---The Black Horse---Famine

Revelation 6:5-6 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 [= a day’s wages], and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.”

The cost of food will go so high that, according to verse 6, a person will have to work all day just to buy a quart of wheat---basically one meal for one person. Or, a day’s wages will be enough to buy three meals consisting of barley---an inferior food product. As you can see, these will be very difficult times. Olive oil and wine will not be affected by God’s judgment, for the horseman is told not to *harm the oil and the wine*. The average person will not be able to buy them anyway. He will be lucky to get one meal a day to his family.

So, because mankind continues to fight against God, conflict and famine are given to it.

Now the Lamb who was slain opens another seal:

Revelation 6:7-8 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.

# Seal #4---The Pale Horse---Innumerable Deaths

Hadesof course is the place of suffering lost people go to until the time of the Great White Throne Judgment found in Revelation 20---after Christ’s 1000-year reign on earth. So what we see here is a judgment from God in which billions of lost people lose their lives and hell is following behind to scoop them up. According to verse 8, this one judgment alone will reduce the earth’s population by 25%:

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.

If the world population at the beginning of the tribulation is 8 billion people, we are talking about the death of 2 billion people. The Pale Horse Rider, as an instrument of divine judgment, brings death to humans four ways:

* **Murder---***“sword”*
* **Famine---***“hunger”*
* **Disease---**“*death”*

BAGD**:** qavnato" can, through the context, come to mean a particular manner of death; e.g. *fatal illness, pestilence.*

Once again, this accords well with Christ’s words in Matthew 24:

Matthew 24:7-8 …nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, **pestilences**, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

* **Wild Animals---***“the beasts of the earth”*

It is estimated that wild animals and insect infection kill over a million people a year on earth. Imagine what it will be like in a world that is overtaken by famine.

\* \* \*

Now, as we look at the remaining two seals of Revelation 6, we will instantly recognize that we are in the last 3½ years of the Tribulation Period. (I’ll explain that in just a moment).

# Seal #5---The Cry of the Martyrs (those killed by the Man of Sin in the last 3.5 years)

Revelation 6:9-11 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.

---The ministry of the Two Witnesses (= first 3½ years)

---Many saved

---Two Witnesses killed by Man of Sin after 3½ years

---Matthew 24:15---“When you see…”

---Converts circle the globe…but many are killed:

**Revelation 20:4**-----Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

---In Rev 6, we see a foreshadowing of the Tribulation martyrs crying out for God to avenge their blood.

And BTW, these martyrs will have special rewards in eternity (white robe, reigning, etc.).

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# Rev 6 ends with Seal #6 starting in vv. 12-13:

*Revelation 6:12-13 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.*

# Seal #6---Cosmic Chaos Just Prior to Christ’s Return

Just before our Lord returns to earth, the Bible teaches in many places that disastrous things will occur in relation to the physical universe.

Let’s look at some of these cosmic disruptions (v.12):

*…there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.*

Verse 13: *13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth…*

Probably meteor showers—definitely not a reference to stars like our sun which would obliterate the earth.

*14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up,*

We know from the OT that during the Tribulation Period, the entire earth will be enveloped in thick, dark clouds. Thus, this reference to the sky receding as a scroll could very well refer to the cloud cover dissipating so that Christ’s return to earth can be clearly viewed.

*…and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.*

Obviously major plate tectonic shifts occurring here due to this great earthquake---in fact, when we get to the Bowl Judgments, we are told that just prior to the return of Christ, the greatest earthquake the world has ever seen will occur---undoubtedly, the shifting of every mountain and island on earth would correlate with this.

When these very scary and fearful events are coming to pass in conjunction with Christ’s return to earth, how do the unsaved respond? Do they turn to God? No. Look at v. 15:

 *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?”*

Unsaved people will try to hide from God’s judgments, but this is a losing proposition. Even if they avoid death, immediately upon Christ’s return, Matthew tells us that the Lord will send His angels throughout the entire earth and will fish out every single person on earth who has survived the judgments of the previous 7 years—and they will stand before Him in judgment.

(Closing comments)

**Invitation**