

The Book of Revelation Lesson 9 – Chapter 6

1. Key Verse is **Revelation 17:14** - **“These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they [also shall overcome] that are with him, called and chosen and faithful.”**
2. How you interpret the seven seals depends on how you view the book of Revelation
 - 2.1. The book is a symbolic representation of the continual struggle of good and evil.
 - 2.2. It is applicable at any point in history.
3. The book with the seven seals was about to be opened. As each seal was opened, a portion of the book was revealed.
 - 3.1. This is God's plan for mankind in the Christian Age. These are things John saw, a vision.
 - 3.2. He wrote them down for Christians to read and draw conclusions.
 - 3.3. These principles are true throughout the Christian Age.
 - 3.4. They work toward the final judgment and reward in heaven or punishment in hell.
4. **Rev. 6:1** - **And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, Come.**
 - 4.1. The seven seals of the book are now going to be opened.
 - 4.2. Christ the Lamb was worthy to open the book because of what he did on the cross.
 - 4.3. He began by opening the first seal. When he opened the first seal, one of the four living creatures commanded with a voice like thunder for the rider to come out.
 - 4.3.1. **Come and see** as rendered in the King James Version is not correct. Rather, it says, **Come**. John was already in a position to see. This command was for the horse and rider to come out.
 - 4.3.2. Then follows the appearance of a horse of a certain color with a rider together with an additional symbol or symbols suggesting the meaning of the seal.
5. **Rev. 6:2** - **And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon had a bow; and there was given unto him a crown: and he came forth conquering, and to conquer.**
 - 5.1.1.1. The first seal revealed a rider on a white horse with a bow and crown going forth to conquer. He said nothing. There is no other description. The meaning must be drawn from what is seen.
 - 5.1.1.1.1. The military conquerors usually rode white horses.
 - 5.1.1.1.2. The bow is that of a warrior. The crown is not the royal crown (**diadem**), but the crown of victory (**stephanos**). He came to conquer and did conquer. All this adds up to this symbol being the warfare of nations. It is not just Rome, but all of the warfare of nations throughout the Christian Age.
 - 5.1.1.2. It should be pointed out that many see this to be the Christ because of Revelation 19:11 where Christ is pictured upon a white horse. I do not choose this view for the following reasons:

5.1.1.2.1. The context of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse is that of death and destruction.

5.1.1.2.2. The horse is used as a symbol of war throughout the Bible.

5.1.1.2.3. White can symbolize victory as well as holiness.

5.1.1.2.4. The only similarity of the symbol of Revelation 19:11-16 is the color of the horse.

5.1.1.3. In **Revelation 19:11**, Christ is named. No one is named here. In Revelation 19 Christ fights with the sword of his mouth. In this symbol, it is the Parthian bow. In Revelation 19, Christ has diadems (crowns of royalty) on his head, in this symbol, the rider has a stephanos (crown of victory) on his head. Symbols must be interpreted in the light of their context. This context does not seem to refer to Christ.

6. **Rev. 6:3-4**

6.1. **And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come. And another [horse] came forth, a red horse: and to him that sat thereon it was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.**

6.1.1. The second seal is opened, and a red horse comes forth (**Rev. 6:3-4**).

6.1.1.1. 2nd horse follows first;

6.1.1.1.1. Where ever Christ makes His entrance, sword of persecution follows.

6.1.1.1.2. This is the persecution that always follows on the heels of the gospel.

6.1.1.2. The red of the horse symbolizes warfare and death via the blood of the martyrs.

6.1.1.3. That the purpose of horse and rider is "to take peace from the earth," so that they "slay (sacrificial term as in **Rev. 5:9** and **Rev. 6:9**) one another,"

6.1.2. Recalls the word of Jesus in **Matt. 10:34-35**.

6.1.2.1. The "sword" of this latter passage is the same term in Greek as the "great sword" given to the rider of the red horse.

6.1.2.2. That men should slaughter one another indicates not only war, but also civil commotion.

6.1.2.3.

7. **Rev. 6:5-6**

7.1. **And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, Come. And I saw, and behold, a black horse; and he that sat thereon had a balance in his hand. And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A measure of wheat for a shilling, and three measures of barley for a shilling; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not.**

7.1.1. The third seal introduces a black horse, and in the hand of the rider is a balance or pair of scales (**Rev. 6:5-6**).

7.1.2. The word for measure here represents a little less than a quart, which is considered enough wheat for one person for a day.

7.1.3. The shilling is the Greek denarius, which was a Roman silver coin, which was the wages of a day laborer for a day.

- 7.1.4. A measure of wheat for a shilling meant two things.
 - 7.1.4.1. First, it is ten or twelve times higher than wheat usually was.
 - 7.1.4.2. Second, it meant that a laborer made only enough to feed himself wheat.
- 7.1.5. If he purchased barley, he could feed a family of three on this less nutritious food. But a family needs more than food. If all of his money was spent on food, what about clothes and shelter?
- 7.1.6. So the scene represented inflation and high prices, economic hardship.
 - 7.1.6.1. The fact that the oil and wine were not hurt means they were plentiful, but only the rich could afford them. This condition is produced by war. It is also produced by persecution when a Christian cannot get a job because he will not worship the god of the trade guild.
- 7.1.7. A voice proclaims a desperate situation where a measure (quart) of wheat (a single day's provision of that food) sells for a shilling (the denarius, a day's wages); and three measures of barley (a cheaper, less nutritious food) for the same price.
 - 7.1.7.1. The symbolism suggests famine, and can be gathered from **Ezek. 4:16-17; 5:16-17**. Yet the famine pictured here is contrived (forced).
 - 7.1.7.2. The fact that the oil and wine are not hurt (that is, not affected by the famine) supports this explanation. In real famine, oil and wine would also be affected (**Hos. 2:8-9**).
 - 7.1.7.3. We understand the third seal to be discrimination, a major form of persecution practiced against the early church by the pagan trade guilds (**Rev. 13:16-17**).
- 7.1.8. Thus, the second and third seals go together and describe slaughter and economic discrimination, the two main forms of persecution for Christians.
- 7.1.9. Did we see this in any of the seven letters (**Rev.2-3**)?
- 7.1.10. The world will persecute the church in every conceivable way!

8. **Rev. 6:7-8**

8.1. **And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, Come. And I saw, and behold, a pale horse: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth.**

- 8.1.1. The fourth seal (**Rev. 6:7-8**) produces a pale horse whose rider is identified as Death, and Hades follows with him (**Rev. 1:18, 20; 20:13-14**).
 - 8.1.1.1. Pale is the color of a corpse.
 - 8.1.1.1.1. Symbolic of disease & death
 - 8.1.1.2. Death and Hades are under authority and the havoc they wreak through sword, famine, pestilence (plague) and wild beasts (**Ezek. 5:17**).
 - 8.1.1.2.1. Affects both believer and unbeliever
 - 8.1.1.3. Hades is the name of the place where disembodied spirits go until the resurrection (**Luke 16:23**).

8.1.1.4. Death did not have power of its own; it was given power. This power, though awesome, was restricted; it could only touch a fourth part of the earth.

8.1.1.5. The ability is limited (symbolized by one-fourth of the earth's being affected).

9. **Rev. 6:9-10**

9.1. **And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?**

9.1.1. The fifth seal, when opened (**Rev. 6:9-11**), reveals to John martyred souls underneath an altar (presumably the altar of sacrifice).

9.1.2. The altar reminds one of the altar of burnt offering when the blood ran underneath it after the sacrifice had been made.

9.1.3. These Christians had been faithful to God and had been sacrificed (killed) by the enemies of God.

9.1.3.1. They cried with a loud voice asking when God was going to punish the wicked people who had put them to death for standing up for Christ.

9.1.3.2. Their cry was to God whom they call master; hence, they picture themselves as servants of God, or slaves. God is the Holy and True One.

9.1.3.3. God loves righteousness; he cannot tolerate sin in his presence. The cry is not one for personal vengeance, but rather for divine retribution from the one who is "holy and true" (**Rev. 6:10; 15:3; 16:7; 19:2**).

9.1.3.4. God has promised he would punish the evildoers (Romans 12:19). A basic teaching of the Bible is that God will reward the righteous and will punish the wicked. This he will do! These Christians who had been killed wanted justice.

9.1.3.5. Remember this was a vision intended to re-assure Christians in the first century and every century that God is not unmindful of their deaths. The wicked will be punished. The righteous will be rewarded. Those that dwell on the earth are the wicked, and in their opposition to God they have killed his saints.

10. **Rev. 6:11 - And there was given them to each one a white robe; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who should be killed even as they were, should have fulfilled [their course].**

10.1. Each is given a white robe, symbolizing a pure and victorious life now completed (**Rev. 7:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:1-4**).

10.2. The answer given to their question is to the effect that they should rest (from their earthly trials) yet a little longer until others join them.

10.2.1. Other Christians who would be killed because of their faithfulness to Christ and his word just as they were. This no doubt refers to those who were alive at that time, but also throughout the Christian Age.

10.2.2. In order for His plans to be worked out, others will die for the faith, but be assured God will punish the evildoer at the proper time.

10.3. God works according to his purposes and his own timetable.

11. Rev. 6:12-17

11.1. **Rev. 6:12 - And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood;**

11.1.1. The opening of the sixth seal (**Rev. 6:12-17**) is the answer to the martyrs' cry and introduces final judgment,

11.1.2. The Lamb (Christ) opened the sixth seal.

11.1.3. The sixth seal introduced the final judgment day.

11.1.4. It was pictured under two symbols:

11.1.4.1. Catastrophic end to the universe

11.1.4.1.1. There are six objects of creation affected.

11.1.4.1.2. The finality of destruction is symbolized by classifying parts of nature affected:

11.1.4.1.2.1. Earthquake

11.1.4.1.2.2. Sun

11.1.4.1.2.3. Moon

11.1.4.1.2.3.1. All of these things are thought of as unchanging in the world. When they cease to perform their usual operation, the world is falling in about them, signifying the end.

11.1.4.1.2.4. Stars

11.1.4.1.2.5. Figs

11.1.4.1.2.6. Mountains

11.1.4.2. A thoroughly frightened human race.

11.1.4.2.1. The terror of the great day refers only to the wicked since believers will be few in number (**Matt.7:14; Luke 18:8**).

11.1.4.2.2. The symbol of six was seen here. Six means imperfect and is the number of man (**Revelation 13:18**).

11.1.4.2.3. There are six classes of men disturbed.

11.1.4.2.3.1. Kings

11.1.4.2.3.2. Great ones

11.1.4.2.3.3. Generals

11.1.4.2.3.4. Rich

11.1.4.2.3.5. Powerful

11.1.4.2.3.6. Lower classes (slave & free)

11.1.4.3. Taken as a whole the sixth seal teaches that the final wrath of God upon the wicked and a world that has persecuted his people (the church) will be terrible indeed.

- 11.1.5. It should be remembered that these are symbols and are representative of the end of time and the final judgment, not that it will be literally this way.
- 11.2. **Rev. 6:13 - and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind.**
- 11.2.1. The symbol here is that the stars fall from heaven as figs are shaken out of a tree by a strong wind. These are not comets or meteorites in space burning up as they hit the earth's atmosphere, but stars falling from heaven. The dissolving elements add to terror (2 Peter 3:10-12; Matthew 24:29).
- 11.2.2. The stars falling from heaven indicate the end of time.
- 11.3. **Rev. 6:14 - And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.**
- 11.3.1. This terminology is also found in **Isaiah 34:4**.
- 11.3.2. Every mountain and island were moved out of their places.
- 11.3.3. The world and universe are ending and falling apart.
- 11.4. **Rev. 6:15 - And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains;**
- 11.4.1. Here six classes of men are described with the main emphasis upon those who are rich and powerful, but including all men who are afraid of the judgment of God. The greatest fear of man is not death, but the revealing presence of God.
- 11.4.1.1. Kings are those highest in government authority.
- 11.4.1.2. Princes are those next in authority.
- 11.4.1.3. Chief captains are the military men who command mighty armies.
- 11.4.1.4. Rich are those in command of commerce and industry.
- 11.4.1.5. The strong are those who have great influence in any realm.
- 11.4.1.6. The rest of mankind is referred to as every bondman and freeman.
- 11.4.2. There will be no security in position or rank; all will be equally terrified. They will hide themselves in caves and mountains trying to get away from God, but there is no escape.
- 11.5. **Rev. 6:16 - and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:**
- 11.5.1. Wicked mankind had rather be crushed by huge boulders and mountains than stand before the Almighty in judgment.
- 11.5.1.1. This terminology is used in **Hosea 10:8; Isaiah 2:19; and Luke 23:30**.
- 11.5.2. He that sitteth on the throne is God the Father.
- 11.5.3. The Lamb is Christ.
- 11.5.3.1. The interesting expression is the wrath of the Lamb. Ordinarily, one does not think of the Lamb and wrath, so this is a paradox showing the greatness of the wrath of God. The Bible teaches a great deal about the wrath of God. God hates sin and will punish the sinner. This book has a great deal to say about the wrath of the Lamb. The Lamb

died for all men. All who believe in him and obey him will be saved. But those that disbelieve, ignore him or work against him will be punished.

11.6. **Rev. 6:17 - for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?**

11.6.1. The great day of wrath has arrived

11.6.1.1. **Rom. 2:5-11 – but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life: but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, [shall be] wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; but glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek: for there is no respect of persons with God.**

11.6.2. "... who is able to stand" (**Rev. 6:17**)

11.6.3. Chapter 7 answers this question as it will contrast the preparedness of the church with the panic of the unprepared world.

12. God is long-suffering not willing that any should perish and desires that all men come to repentance.

12.1. Every day that we are alive is another opportunity to believe, repent and obey.

12.2. But the time will come when our opportunities will vanish away and we will be judged based upon our spiritual condition at that moment.

12.3. Those who will not believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and obey his word will suffer eternal punishment (**2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**).

12.4. Many may reject God now, but when the end of time comes and Christ returns, no one will be able to stand, except the righteous.

13. The four horsemen of Revelation have ridden and continue to ride through the pages of history.

13.1. Man does not understand many of the things that befall him, especially righteous men who truly serve God and are afflicted and sometimes killed because of their faith. But the righteous ones are assured that they will have a home in heaven.

13.2. God knows what is going on. His plan is being executed.

13.3. The day is coming when every person will give account for his life, and those who have not been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb will be eternally punished.

13.4. God will reward the righteous. He will punish the wicked. But he will do it according to his timetable, not man's. God's plans will be accomplished.

13.5. There will be no escape when the final day of the Lord comes. No wicked person will stand or escape God's judgment.