Revelation 6 and

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

Pastor Emeritus Joe Fuiten, December 18, 2019

Revelation 6 is one of history’s decisive pivots. We are currently living in the era of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit prophesied by Joel and celebrated by Peter.[[1]](#footnote-1) We see the last days outpouring happening as Christianity during this last decade has been increasing by 8% a year and 175,000 new believers every day. [[2]](#footnote-2) The Assemblies of God has been increasing by about a quarter million members a month worldwide. There is a tremendous move among Muslims as we have been hearing. The recent activity with people like Kanye West is another sign of the tremendous moving of the Spirit in the world. It is a truly awesome time to be serving the Lord. The increase in intensity of the outpouring can be seen as a fulfillment of ancient prophesies and is a clear signal of where we are in God’s plans. We have proposed that chapters 4 and 5 show us what is in heaven and what will be “thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.”

Once we arrive at chapter 6, it is quite a different story and a dramatic pivot. If the last two thousand years have been the era of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, then Revelation 6 is the outpouring of God’s correction and judgment. I believe it is the prophetic description of the end times when God increasingly brings this wayward world into correction. If I have the timeline right, then Revelation 6 takes place after the rapture.

To review, in the early chapters of Revelation we met the seven churches of Asia. Then God showed the Apostle John what will happen in the future. In Revelation 4:1-2 God said “…*I will show you what must take place after this."*

**In chapter 5 we have the scene in heaven.** "*You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth*."[[3]](#footnote-3)

So in chapters 4 and 5 we have been in heaven and have seen a preview of what will be coming to the earth at the conclusion of the book.

 Beginning in chapter 6 we have the description of events that “must take place.” God will use many tools to reassert his claim to the earth against those who deny him. Revelation 6 is an end-time scenario but it gives us some idea of how God works. As you try to make sense of what has been happening in the world it will help you to have some sense of how God works. I believe Revelation 6 and beyond are future yet one can see the outline of those future events beginning to take shape.

Chapter 6 begins like this: ***“****I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" 2 I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.*”

 The white horse, whose rider wore a crown and is armed with a bow, is the first seal. He rode out as a conqueror. That is, the beginning of conquest is marked by the opening of the first seal. This is the D-Day invasion as far as the kingdom of God is concerned. The good guys always ride white horses. That has to be a clue. Further, the rider wears a crown. This is none other than Christ going forth to battle.

 If you insist on betting on the horses, may I suggest betting on the white horse in the last race!

*3 When the Lamb opened the* ***second seal****, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" 4 Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large swor*d.

 The rider of the red horse brings war. His large sword is a symbol of the killing and conflicts associated with war. I presume this will be nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom as the national wealth of the rebellious people is spent on war. When you think about this, think about the current crop of leaders and the amount being spent on armaments. Then think about the number of nations engaged in wars in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia, and the increasing amount of killing in the Americas. The fact that already so many kill one another is reminiscent of the Old Testament days when God confuses the enemy and they destroy each other while Israel looks on in wonderment. But with the second seal opened it gets dramatically worse.

*5 When the Lamb opened the* ***third seal****, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a* ***black horse****! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. 6 Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"*

 The third seal is the distortion and disruption of the economic system. You will still work, but you won’t get ahead. You will barely have enough to eat. The scales represent imbalance. Nothing will work right economically. War and violence will disrupt the food chain. Food won’t get to the cities. Whenever there is war there is also starvation.

 In biblical language, having to measure your bread, the most common staple, describes the judgment of God. *When I cut off your supply of bread, ten women will be able to bake your bread in one oven, and they will dole out the bread by weight. You will eat, but you will not be satisfied*.[[4]](#footnote-4)

The fourth seal and the fourth horseman are inevitable consequences of the previous horsemen. *7 When the Lamb opened the* ***fourth seal****, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" 8 I looked, and there before me was a* ***pale horse****! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.*

 Each of the living creatures announces a separate seal in turn. With the fourth seal, all four of them have spoken. The ride of the pale horse is Death followed by Hades. It will be death on a vast scale destroying a quarter of the earth.

 Almost certainly these horses and riders are metaphorical. In simple terms there will be death at every turn. Disease, starvation, and war will combine to destroy another quarter of the population. Those who will not submit to the rule of Christ over the earth will destroy each other. Their insatiable demand for “freedom” will mean that law will disappear to be replaced by a spirit of lawlessness. They will adopt a survival of the fittest attitude. It will be every man for himself. The people will “no longer remain united.” There will be social and political chaos. Political gangs like Antifa will be unleashed in vast numbers all over the world.

 Apparently the bloodthirst will extend beyond humans with an unnatural bloodthirst from animals. It will be more than the planet of the apes. Every sort of wild beast will lose their fear of people. Whether it will be loss of habitat and food or a spiritual removal of the created order, the beasts themselves will execute the judgment of God. After the rapture you won’t even be able to trust your cat.

*9 When he opened the* ***fifth seal****, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. 10 They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" 11 Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of* their fellow servants *and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.*

 With the fifth seal, the four living creatures no longer are making the announcement but John himself sees the condition of believers. They had been slain because of the word and because of their testimony. They were standing firm for Jesus in the midst of spiritual rebellion.

 These last verses could describe the condition of those who are already dead. They are not asleep (as the old Adventists teach) since they participate in discussion Why give a white robe to a sleeping person? I think that might be a nightgown but not a robe.

 I wonder if this white robe is related to the white robed saints in chapter 6 and to the white robed saints of chapter 19.

 We know that white robes are an indication of the righteous. In Daniel 7:9 that is how God himself is described. “*As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow*;”

 The righteous people of God are described that way in Rev 3:4-6. “*Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. 6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches*.”

 It was the same message to the Laodicean church. Rev 3:17-18 “*I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness*;”

 The twenty four elders also were dressed in white. Rev 4:4 “*Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads*.” The other angels are also described as dressed in white.

Revelation 19:6-8 is quite clear as the great multitude shouts "*Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)”*

 The saints who followed the Lord in Rev 19:11-14 also were dressed in white. “*I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.”*

 These saints indicate the spirit of the end times. Lots of kindly and good people are inclined to think that the days of persecuting the church because of their religious principles is in the distant past. That is, unless you read the daily paper. Starting with the Obama administration and now in the State of Washington there are laws forcing religious institutions to pay for abortions and fining them if they do not. Indeed, the consequence of gay marriage is not that someone can live their life in peace but that religious people will not be allowed to hold a different view but will be coerced into acceptance or face the penalty.

 People who think the era of persecution of believers is past flatter themselves that the world has become too enlightened, too freedom loving, too humane, too civilized, and too much filled with a tolerant and reasonable spirit. The more paganism arises, the more we will return to the darkest of eras, the first three centuries after Christ.

Their murderous intent is clear from reading Revelation 13:15-17. “*He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. 16 He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, 17 so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.*” NIV

 There is presently the highest level of persecution of Christians of all time. It will soon get even worse as the devil’s schemes

 Humans and animals act badly in the first five seals. Now the physical world is unleashed.

*12 I watched as he opened the* ***sixth seal****. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, 13 and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. 14 The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. 15 Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. 16 They called to the mountains and the 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 their wrath has come, and who can stand?"* (NIV)

 Nature itself will be out of order. The weather and seasons will be messed up but that is only the beginning. The very elements of creation become distorted with disaster as the consequence. The world will be so disordered that people would rather die than live.

 Bear in mind, these things are not merely judgments. They are corrections designed, in their severe form, to get the rebellious to repent. God hopes for more like those souls under the altar.

 Peter understood this when he wrote: “*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives.”[[5]](#footnote-5)*

He also identified the correct response. We ought to live holy and godly lives.

1. Acts 2:17-18 "'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Jim Rutz in “Megashift.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Rev 5:9-10 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Lev 26:26 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 2 Peter 3:9-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)