

We have been looking at the Revelation or the revealing of Jesus Christ and His plan for what will take place at some future time transitions from time and space as we know it, into eternity.

There are a lot of big issues and questions that will come about today:

- What happens when we die?
- Do we go in the ground & souls sleep until Jesus returns or go to Heaven?
- In what way will Jesus return?
- Will He come to rescue His church before the tribulation, or during, or end?
- Who is Israel described here? Is it the modern nation of Israel or is it the church?

Of course, we cannot address all of these issues. I will touch on a few give you some ideas and resources to explore this more on your own.

I want to focus on is the events and the lessons we draw that can help us today.

It's fun to speculate on this stuff about the end times. This week an article came on 7 card keys that were distributed to seven people in seven nations that would come together to reboot the internet if it was ever brought down.

There are people I know who have all their end time theology worked out to the detail but don't love their spouses or work at their job with integrity. This is getting it all wrong.

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!"

What are the seals sealing? They seal a scroll that describes how the world will end as we know it and transition into eternity. I think that ranks as pretty important.

John is going to give us an overview of what is going to transpire. All these events will happen later in detail. (DRAW ON BOARD)

²I 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.

We are introduced to infamous 4 riders of the Apocalypse (Grk word for Revelation).

The traditional view is that these four riders go out to bring destruction on the earth. (Zech 6)

They do not go out at this point but are called forth with the word, "COME".

The crown the rider is given is not for Him but a reward to those on the earth who are faithful.

Rev. 19:11,21 - both refer to Jesus riding on a white horse. The Bible does not tend to mix metaphors or types so I believe if later Jesus is on a white horse to conquer, here He is on a white horse to bring His reward.

***LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD.
Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember
mercy.***

You uncovered your bow, you called for many arrows. Selah

You came out to deliver your people, to save your anointed one. Hab. 3:1, 9, 13

If Jesus goes forth with His bow what are the arrows He uses for His purpose?

***Before I was born the LORD called me; from my birth he has made mention of
my name. ²He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his
hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his
quiver.***

***³He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my
splendor."***

***⁴But I said, "I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and
for nothing. Yet what is due me is in the LORD'S hand, and my reward is with
my God." Isa. 49:1-4***

He rewards us for persevering in times of hardship and for reaching-out to others.

***Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the
test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love
him. Jam 1:12***

***³When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say,
"Come!" ⁴Then 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
sword.***

The first step in what will later happen in detail. Those who believe that Revelation is all about the 1st century church (Preterist view) say this refers to the "Pax Romana" or the "peace of Rome" which the world had lived under for several centuries.

Whether it is that period or war at the end of the age we certainly do not have to look

very far over the last couple of centuries to see how easy conflict can escalate into world war.

War is always followed naturally by the next apocalyptic doom.

⁵When 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. ⁶Then 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!"

Lack of resources, poverty, and famine. This description of food was the common allocation of what a person or a family ate in a day. In other words, everything people had was going to just get enough food to survive. This describes oppression. This naturally leads to the next step.

⁷When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" ⁸I 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.

War leads to famine, disease, and death and hell close behind. You see the horrible vision of people turning on one another killing, spreading disease, and death follows.

In the midst of pain and bloodshed there are those who will be faithful to Christ. Those who will hold on to Him in extreme circumstances and not give into the barbarianism and hoarding and attacking others. They are ready to love, and lay down their lives for others.

Why is it today that most of these "survivalists" have a gun in one hand and a bible in the other and think this is heart of Christ? If we see the last days what will we do? Run to the hills and hide, just take care of ourselves?

If we see the thing happening Jesus said to lift up our heads our time is near. To transition into eternity we may have to lay down our lives. THAT IS WHY THIS BOOK IS WRITTEN TO US!

Our goal should be to reach-out, to share, to use resources God has given us to bless others so we may reach them before they face eternity without Christ.

⁹When 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. ¹⁰They 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.

These are the people who have laid down their lives and stayed true to Christ. See it doesn't matter whether this was the first century or the end times, the message is the same.

Don't let this last statement trouble you. God does not have quota or giant bucket of blood He is waiting to be filled. He simply knows the right times He has set and even though there is pain and suffering His timing is perfect and it has not yet come. Listen to the apostle Paul,

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure.⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. 2 Tim. 4:6-7

¹²I 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.

John is using figurative language to describe the impact of this great earthquake or shaking.

¹⁵Then 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?”

What a contrast between the “Day of the Lord” bringing hope to one group of people and dread on another.

Rev. 7

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.² Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given

**power to harm the land and the sea: ³“Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.” ⁴Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.
v. 5-8 - From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed....**

This seal is not a mark like a tattoo or the Mark of the beast we will see later. This is a seal of the heart.

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.
Eph. 1:13-14

v. 9-12 – This continual party of praise and celebration before the throne in heaven.

John takes these interludes in the midst of what is going on in the earth to remind his readers that in Heaven everything is in order and God is in control.

Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?”

¹⁴I answered, “Sir, you know.”

And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵Therefore, “they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.

¹⁶Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

No matter what amount of suffering or sacrifice anyone goes through on earth, the reward of walking into God’s presence, seeing Jesus will heal everything. All of our “why questions” will be immediately abandoned when we drink from this spring of living water and God wipes every tear from our eyes.

Conclusion:

Today God is here. He is inviting you to drink from His living water. As I mentioned He is using us to minister to one another. We are His arrows with God’s Holy Spirit dwelling in us and ready to bring His help to you.