

Revelation 5 & 6 – Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Chapters 4 & 5 are a *set piece*.

John is called up to heaven and shown the throne-room of God. In Chapter 6, his visions of the judgments that mark the Last Days commence – but God wants John to realize that it's not all chaos and confusion.

There's a *purpose* behind the judgments.

They aren't random events – rather, they flow from God's throne.

So that's where John starts, before the throne of God, realizing that all that will come down in the last days is actually a part of an epic story that began at the dawn of creation.

In chapter 4, John sees God, or rather, he sees the glory that radiates *from* God.

Then he sees 24 elders who represent the redeemed of all ages on lesser thrones surrounding God's central throne.

He sees 4 super-intelligent and mobile *living ones*, as he calls them, which hover around God's throne.

What John hears is continual praise and worship.

CHAPTER 5

As we begin, it may be helpful to think of what we find in chapter 5 as a kind of escrow.

When you buy a house, you enter into a time of *transition* when all the details and specifics of the transfer of the house from the previous owner to you are worked out.

Every so often, someone will sell a house they've been renting out.

The renters aren't always happy about having to move and so they will sometimes try to stay, even though the escrow says they have to vacate.

They may even get nasty and do damage to the property.

This is loosely what we find in the Book of Revelation.

Jesus Christ reclaimed the right to restore mankind's lost dominion.

When we say that Jesus is the *Redeemer*, we mean that He redeemed mankind and Planet Earth from the Fall.

God gave dominion of Earth to Adam, who in turn turned it over to the devil in the Fall.

This is why the Bible calls Satan the “god of this world” and the “prince of the power of the air.” (2 Cor. 4:4 Eph. 2:2)

At the Cross, Jesus reclaimed man’s lost dominion and redeemed the Planet from the effects of the curse.

With Jesus’s resurrection and ascension into heaven, history entered a kind of escrow.

Jesus has the *right and authority* to take possession of what He redeemed with His blood, but He delays closing escrow.

As Jesus said in Matthew 28:18 - “**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**” (cf. John 13:1-3)

What we find in this chapter is Jesus moving to close escrow.

The time finally arrives for Him to take possession of that which rightly belongs to Him.

The problem is, as we see in chapters 6-19, the devil doesn’t want to give up what he’s managed to hold for some 6000 years.

He refuses to abide by the terms of the escrow and like a squatter, refuses to yield to Jesus.

The judgments of chapters 6-19 are God’s way of evicting Satan and rebellious mankind who is in league with him.

Let’s take a look -

¹And I saw in the right *hand* of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

Since we covered the first 7 verses of chapter 5 in our study Sunday, I’ll be brief with them this evening.

The description of this scroll points to it being a legal document – it’s the title deed to Earth.

As was typical for title deeds in Israel, on the inside were the specifics of the land, giving the boundaries and the owners right to it.

On the outside was written the terms for redeeming it from the creditors to whom it had been turned over because the owner had fallen into debt.

The seven seals revealed it was a *legal document* and represented the years the land would be forfeit to creditors until it could be redeemed.

2Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” **3And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.**

The time specified on the scroll for its redemption has come – and an official herald from the court of God, a strong angel, comes forward to proclaim it to all creation.

But once the news is broadcast, no one steps forward to initiate the closing of the escrow.

When John sees this and realizes that what’s at stake is nothing less than Planet Earth and the entire human race, he’s overcome with despair -

4So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

John says he wept much – the words mean he was wracked with convulsions of weeping.

This is the kind of sorrow that moves in waves through your body and soul until you are so wrung out you lose all strength.

5But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”

As we saw Sunday, these titles; the lion of the tribe of Judah, and the Root of David, were solid and well known OT titles for the Messiah – the Christ.

One of those 24 elders who sit on lesser thrones surrounding God’s central throne, comes to John in the midst of his despair and tells him to cease his weeping – the Messiah has prevailed, He’s conquered – and has now come to take the scroll.

6And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the

elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Though the elder has referred to Christ as the lion of the tribe of Judah, what John sees when he turns to the throne to witness the taking of the scroll is a lamb; and not only that, but a lamb that bears the marks of having been sacrificed.

The first time John had seen Jesus was at the Jordan River while John the Baptist was baptizing people in preparation for the coming of the Messiah.

John was one of John the Baptists' disciples, and when Jesus passed by, the Baptists pointed at Him and said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."

Then John stood at the foot of the cross and watched while Jesus was crucified – He witnessed Him offering himself up as the Lamb of God for the sins of the world.

Now he sees Jesus in heaven, implementing the *redemption* the Cross secured.

But the lamb John sees was a bit unusual.

This lamb has 7 horns and eyes.

Horns are a consistent OT symbol for power.

Eyes speak of intelligence & awareness.

7, as we've seen again & again, is the number of perfection, of completion.

7 horns speaks of the fullness of power; the theological term for that is *omnipotence*.

7 eyes pictures the lamb's fullness of intelligence; He is *omniscient*. (Zech. 3:9; 4:10)

As we've already seen in chapters 1, 3, & 4, the 7 spirits are an allusion to Isaiah 11:2 and refer to the 7-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit.

When the lamb is spoken of with the 7 spirits of God, it means He is full of the Holy Spirit, as indeed Jesus was and is.

But here John tells us the 7 spirits are sent out into *all the earth*.

This speaks of Jesus's *omnipresence*.

Omnipotence, omniscience, & omnipresence = John means to make clear to us that the Lamb who was slain is both God and Man.

8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”

I'll never forget the day escrow closed on our house on Geranium. Lynn & I had pretty much resigned ourselves to the fact that we would never be able to afford a house.

We counted renting as just part of the cost of being in full-time ministry.

But my sister and brother-in-law wanted to partner with us in buying a house, so we found one, entered escrow and finally the day came to take possession.

We were so excited it's hard to describe.

That's what we're seeing here.

When Jesus took the scroll from the right hand of the Father, the cherubim and elders fell on their faces before Him and worshipped.

They each had a golden bowl with burning incense in it.

This incense represents the prayers of the saints.

It isn't that the elders are *interceding* before God's throne as mediators.

The picture here is that the bowls hold the prayers of God's people throughout the ages who have prayed, “Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

As Jesus takes the scroll and moves to apply His redemption of Earth, those prayers are being answered in their fullness.

The faithful OT Jews longed to see the Kingdom Come.

Christians have longed for Jesus to return and set up His throne. When we pray as Jesus taught us – “Your kingdom come, your will be done,” we mean it in both an immediate and a final sense. Immediately, we mean we long to see Jesus reigning in our daily lives and situations.

But ultimately, we mean that we want Him to come again in glory and banish all sin from the creation.

What’s interesting about this passage is that it reveals to us that as far as our prayers are concerned, they are always in God’s “active” box.

We may stop praying about something, but God will not put it aside.

Think of Zacharias – John the Baptist’s father.

In Luke 1 we learn and he and his wife Elizabeth were old, well past the time of child-bearing.

The prayers of their youth when they asked for a child were long past and they were barren.

Then, one day while serving in the temple, an angel appeared to him and told him his wife Elizabeth would conceive.

Zacharias’s response was shock – that was a prayer they’d stopped praying long before.

But it was a prayer that was still fresh before the attention of God.

For generations, God’s people have prayed for the Lord to come – and it may seem at times that it’s a fruitless prayer. IT ISN’T!

Every time we pray it, another piece of incense is placed in one of those golden bowls held by the 24 elders.

There will come a day when those prayers will be answered.

Another thing to notice is what our prayers are likened to – incense!

In Psalm 141:1-2 we read this -

1 LORD, I cry out to You; Make haste to me! Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You.

2 Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

Your prayers may not be all that eloquent – it doesn’t matter.

Before God they are like sweet-smelling incense.

Besides the golden bowls with the prayers of the saints the elders have harps and they sing a new song.

It’s from this verse that we get the popular idea that when we get

to heaven we'll be issued a harp but that isn't the case.
The elders have harps, and lead out in a new song.
It's *new* because it's a song that could only be sung since the Cross.

**“You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals;
For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God . . .”**

The story of Ruth is helpful at this point.

Ruth was a Gentile woman in Moab who married into the family of Israel.

When her husband and father in law died, she returned with her mother in law Naomi, to the Land of Israel to reclaim their ancestral lands.

But being poor, they found their lands leased out to creditors and unable to redeem them.

Ruth then fell in love with a relative of her husband's named Boaz.

Boaz likewise fell in love with her and moved to fulfill his role as kinsman-redeemer.

But there was a closer relative who had the right to redeem the land ahead of him, so Boaz went to him and told him.

The man said he wanted to take possession of the land, but then Boaz told him there was one sticky condition – Ruth, as the rightful owner of the land would have to be married.

In other words, the land could only be acquired if he married Ruth, whose land it was.

Well, the man didn't want to marry her, and so begged off.

Boaz gladly offered to take the man's place.

But Boaz wasn't mainly motivated by the acquisition of land – He wanted Ruth!

The land was just a happy addition.

And so it is with Jesus and what we find here in chapter 5.

Jesus is our kinsman-redeemer and we are like Ruth the Gentile bride.

Jesus' redemption secures the world – but what He really wants is a bride.

We who were not the people of God have been made the people of God, and the heirs of a vast fortune.

So the elders sing -

**“You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals;
For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by
Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people
and nation, ¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to
our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”**

In John’s day, when the Roman Emperor would enter the Senate, Forum, or theater he would be greeted by the crowd with the words “*Vere dignus*,” Latin for “You are worthy.”

Here in heaven, Jesus is greeted by the elders with the same words for He is the *true* ruler of the world.

When the elders say they’ve been redeemed “*out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation*” we realize they stand as representatives of the saints of all ages – of the people of God who have been saved by faith in Christ.

But then they go on to reveal something dramatic – Jesus’s redemption doesn’t just liberate us from the curse and free us from bondage to sin and death – it does much *more*.

They sing – **“And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.”**

This will be my message for Sunday, so we’ll leave further comment till then.

There’s one more thing I want to note here before we move on – John Walvoord mentions that this is the first time we see *singing* in heaven since the creation.

Up to this point, the praise seems to have been *spoken* or even *shouted*, but no mention is made specifically of *singing* until this point.

In Job 38:7 we read about the angels that prior to the Fall, **“the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”**

But after that, we do not read about singing in heaven.

Then in Ezekiel 28:13, we read this about the creation of Lucifer as the chief of the cherubim –

The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created.

Timbrels and pipes are musical instruments.

Some bible scholars believe that in his original creation and office,

Lucifer was assigned the role of leading the angelic worship of God.

And with his fall, the music of heaven was stilled.

Now, the angels shout and cry out their praise and adoration, but they do not sing.

Singing is done only by the redeemed – by those who have been delivered from bondage to satan, sin and death.

Therefore, the devil *hates it* when we sing to the Lord a new song – because it reminds him of his defeat and failure.

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice:

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

As we noted when in chapter 4, John witnesses an ever expanding circle of worship.

First it's the 4 cherubim, then the 24 elders.

Then here in 5:8 it's the cherubim joined by the elders.

Now we see the cherubim, the elders, and a whole lot of angels.

And the praise becomes one long peal of accolades –

The Lamb is worthy to receive Power – Wealth – Wisdom – Strength – Honor – Glory – Blessing.

This list is the proverbial “Etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.” There is no end to what the Lamb is worthy of.

When we're in worship – you will often hear people say, “Praise You Lord!”

That's fine and expresses the heart that God be honored, but really – think about the words.

“Praise You Lord!”

If my wife sat down next to me on the couch and said, “Lance, I want to praise you.”

I'd say, “Okay – go ahead.”

What I expect to hear is specific compliments and honor.

“You're a good husband, father, pastor, teacher.”

“You’re a good driver, I always feel so safe.”

“You have really good taste and I love it when you buy me clothes.”

“You’re a good BBQ-er.”

The same ought to apply to our praise of Jesus. We need to be specific.

It’s fine to say, “Praise You!” but may I suggest you get specific. Do what the angels do here – tell Him He is worthy to receive glory and honor and dominion and might and thanks, and worship, and beauty, and strength etc., etc., etc..

13 And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

“Blessing and honor and glory and power *Be* to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

14 Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

Finally, John sees all of creation offering up to praise and worship to both God the Father and to His Son.

All of this praise and worship is the result of their joy in the Lamb’s taking the scroll.

In Romans 8:18-23 we find these interesting words from the Apostle Paul –

18 Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will give us later. 19 For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. 20 Against its will, everything on earth was subjected to God’s curse. 21 All creation anticipates the day when it will join God’s children in glorious freedom from death and decay. 22 For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 And even we Christians, although we have the Holy Spirit

within us as a foretaste of future glory, also groan to be released from pain and suffering. We, too, wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised us. (New Living Translation)

The entire physical creation has been subjected to the curse and yearns for the day of its liberation.

What we see here in Revelation 5 is the *beginning* of that liberation.

Chapters 6-19 are the *application* of that liberation.

Chapters 20 & 21 are its *culmination*.

CHAPTER 6

Okay, so here we go.

Jesus has the scroll, the title deed to earth.

It belongs to Him since He is worthy because of His death and resurrection.

He now moves directly to take possession of what rightly belongs to Him.

But there's a problem, there are squatters who don't want to yield. So Jesus has to evict them.

¹Now 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." ²And 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.

The scroll had seven seals, marking the terms needed to redeem what was written on the inside.

The only person who had the legal right to break the seals was the one who had provided the redemption.

So when Jesus breaks each of these seven seals, it's a sign He's been found worthy and has the legal right.

When He breaks the first seal, John is invited by one of the cherubim to see what it signifies.

In this case, he sees a white horse with a rider.

The rider has a bow and a crown and he goes forth with political

and military power.

Now, at first, we might be inclined to think this is Jesus.

After all, we're looking at Jesus redeeming the earth from the curse and we know that when He comes again, He comes in power as a King.

The crown and bow seem to give this image, but the real clincher is that this is a white horse.

We've seen the westerns - it's the *good guy* who rides the white horse!

But a closer investigation leads us *away* from this conclusion.

As we read the next verses, we see that what follows in the wake of this white horse and rider is war, famine, and genocide (cf. Rev. 19: 11-16 & 6:2)

One of the primary tools of Bible interpretation is to ask, "What would this have meant to the people it was originally addressed to?"

This image of a rider on a white horse with a bow would be well understood by John and his readers.

The Romans were the most powerful nation in the world – their armies conquered the known world.

But in 62 AD they were badly defeated in the east by the Parthians.

An entire Roman army surrendered to them in a stinging defeat that Rome never really recovered from.

The Parthians rode white horse and were crack archers.

From a full gallop they could rise in the saddle and knock a bird out of flight.

Even in full retreat, they could look back over their shoulder and unleash hell with their arrows.

From this tactic, the phrase "Parthian shot" came to mean a final, devastating blow.

We get the term "parting shot" from this.

To John and his readers, this horse and rider would convey the idea of *irresistible military might*.

The rider is *given* a crown.

This crown is not the diadem - the *royal* crown – it's the *stephanos* - the crown of the victor, the conqueror. This is the crown given to the winning athlete in the games.

And note carefully that this rider is *given* the crown – his victories

are *given* to him, they are *staged* for him.

This is none other than the last times ruler foretold by the prophet Daniel, the Apostle Paul, and others. (Daniel 7,9,11 2 Thess. 2 1 John 2:18)

He's called; Antichrist, beast, mouth, man of sin, son of destruction.

And that is precisely what follows him - death and destruction.

He *looks good* but he's *all bad*.

He rides a *white horse* but he wears a *black hat*.

In 2 Cor 11:14-15 Paul says –

Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

The Antichrist cannot rise to power until God permits it so notice; it isn't till Christ opens the first seal that the antichrist gets his crown and can go forth conquering.

The Holy Spirit is restraining the emergence of the antichrist, but as it says in 2 Thess 2:7-10, one day that restraint will be lifted and the man of sin will be revealed.

The world is looking for a leader – someone who can bring peace.

The problem of terrorism is making people frantic.

The problems of the Middle east seem to be without a solution.

Tensions between nations with nuclear weapons is on the increase.

And at the same time that we have so many pressing needs there seems to be a lack of credible & effective leadership.

The world is getting desperate for someone who can provide solutions to the many problems our world is facing.

One day a man will arise who will hold out an incredible set of proposals which look like the solution to all the things and the world is troubled by and they will flock to his banner.

He promises peace and holds out the tokens of peace, but in his back pocket is a blueprint for evil.

Behind his smile is the gloating face of death.

Neville Chamberlain returned to England after meeting Adolph Hitler in 1938, saying he found the German Fuehrer to be a reasonable

and peaceful man.

He promised Europe that there would be – “Peace in our time!”

A short while later, the German armies blitzkrieged over Poland. The Antichrist will make Adolph Hitler look like a choirboy.

³When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come and see.” ⁴Another 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.

When the second seal is broken, John is again invited to take a look.

This time he sees a red horse goes forth; it represents *war*.

The peace promised by the antichrist is soon seen for the sham it is.

In 1 Thess. 5:3 we read, “When they say ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them.”

Three things happen when this horse and rider are let loose –

- 1) World peace is shattered – “And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth.”
- 2) Murder abounds “people will kill one another”
- 3) Civil government becomes despotic and tyrannical “and there was given to him a great sword.”

In Romans 13, Paul says that God gives to the civil rulers the power of the sword to keep order and enforce justice.

But what we have hear is the perversion of the God-ordained power of the civil government.

Instead of using force to *restrain* evil, the civil governments of the world will use force to enforce and promote evil.

While the things we are reading about here in chapter 6 won’t take place till the Tribulation, we see that they won’t arise out of no where.

They will flow naturally out of historic roots and even now the world is being conditioned for the terrors of the last days.

Just as the world is being conditioned to accept a world ruler, wars are increasing, in spite of all the talk of peace.

There has always been war, but there have been more wars in the 20th Century, with a greater loss of life, than in all of the rest of

history *combined*.

Genocide, the systematic attempt to wipe out entire racial or ethnic groups, has been used in this century as in no other time.

Violent crime is skyrocketing and I don't need to quote statistics because you know it well.

In v. 4, the word "kill" is literally –"to butcher; slaughter"

Serial killers have become epidemic with the FBI employing people called "profilers" whose job is to chart the mind of people who commit mass murders.

⁵When 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. ⁶And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

Jesus pops the third seal and John sees a black horse and a rider, holding a pair of scales.

Scales were used in the marketplace for measuring out food.

The symbolism here is *famine*. (Lev. 22:26 Eze.4:16)

Historically, famine often follows war.

Farmers have to leave their fields to fight and the crops go untended.

As land shifts hands, there's a lag time between planting and harvesting and so the food supply is diminished.

In this case, as John sees global famine, it may be that there's a problem with fallout from nuclear weapons.

On April 26, 1986, Leonid Toptunov, a young, inexperienced and tired operator at the Chernobyl Nuclear Facility in the Ukraine noticed the reactivity had dropped too low. In his attempt to correct it, he went too far and the power went too high, causing a meltdown of the reactor. Next came a steam explosion that rocked the plant and then a hydrogen explosion that was so hot it ignited a graphite fire. Millions of curies of radioactive material were spewed into the air.

130,000 people were evacuated from their homes in the surrounding

area and permanently resettled. Over 1 million continue to live under a strict regimen caused by the contamination.

Over 3 million acres of prime agricultural land will be useless for decades because of the fallout. Milk and other dairy products had to be discarded as far as Western Europe because of the fallout and in Western USSR, thousands of livestock had to be destroyed. (Medvedev, Zhores The Legacy of Chernobyl)

John heard one of the cherubim say, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.”

1 qt. of wheat was a day's ration while 1 denarius was a day's wage.

In other words, a person will have to work all day just to earn enough to buy a loaf of bread.

Barley is a coarse grain that is used for the livestock.

When the cherub says, “three quarts of barley for a denarius” it's saying that in order to feed your family, you will have to eat the cattle's food.

When 1 qt. of wheat costs a denarius, oil and wine are luxuries.

And yet, the cherub says they are not to be harmed.

This is a picture of luxury in the midst of famine-time.

Those who have money will still be able to afford their pleasures.

It will be a time of great inequity.

Just prior to the time John wrote this, the Roman Empire had seen such times of inequity.

During Nero's reign, there were terrible famines that depopulated entire regions of the empire.

There were even famines in Rome.

During one such famine, ships brought grain from Alexandria in northern Africa.

One day a ship came in and the starving people stormed it only to discover it was filled with sand to cover the floor of the Coliseum so the rich could enjoy their gladiatorial games!

They rioted and thousands lost their lives.

Famine is depopulating large portions of our planet today.

Ethiopia, the Sudan, and North Korea are some examples.

India & Bangladesh are locked in a constant struggle to feed their people.

And yet there is great prosperity in other regions of the globe.

The U.S., Canada, and Europe have sent a lot of relief to the famine ridden areas of the world.

But many of the governments of these famine stricken countries have sold the supplies on the black market and become rich!

Great inequity is going on in the very presence of famine

We think of what happened in Haiti & the Duvaliers.

Here we see that it's going to get worse – much worse.

⁷When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." ⁸So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. 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.

When the fourth seal is broken, John sees a *pale* horse.

The word 'pale' is *chloros* from which we get the word chlorine; active ingredient in bleach.

It's a livid and sickly shade of green.

Death rides this pale horse and Hades follows after, swallowing all those Death mows down.

This fourth horse is the mop-up operation for the first three.

One quarter of the world's population will be killed by the career of these 4 horsemen.

There has been nothing like it since the Flood.

There are about 5 billion people on the earth today.

1/4 of that is 1 billion, 250 million.

If 1 person died per second, it would take over 39½ years for that many people to die.

That is more than the population of the U.S., Canada, Mexico, South America, USSR, Europe, and Japan combined (The 1990 Information Please Almanac)

That 83 WWII's. (ibid)

Four means of death are given here –

1) The sword: that's the violence of war.

2) Hunger: starvation from famine

3) Death: a better translation of the word is *plague; epidemic* (Ezekiel 14:21)

It's interesting that researchers are growing increasingly concerned about the reemergence of old diseases that are now resistant to antibiotics and conventional treatment.

Then we hear the frightening report of such things as Ebola and Hemorrhagic fever.

There's abundant evidence now that terrorists have investigated the idea of setting off a biological weapon in a densely populated area of the world.

Just this week we heard about the plot to explode a dirty bomb in the US and officials are holding Jose Padilla on charges.

4) Beasts of the earth: wild beasts

We read in Romans 8 how the entire creation groans under the weight of sin that was placed on it by rebel mankind.

As the time ticks down for the creation to be liberated from the curse, and rebel mankind tries to resist the planet's redemption, it may be that the animal world attacks man!

We think of movies like *The Birds*, *Arachnophobia*, *Prophecy*, *Willard*, *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes!*

It's interesting that in Lev. 26:21-26, God said that if the Jews rejected Him, all these things would come on them.

In the last days, all these things will come upon the human race because they have rejected their Creator.

There is only one thing that keeps these things from happening right now - God's grace!

And yet, people still reject God.

One day God will give people what they want - He will withdraw His gracious restraint of evil.

They have rejected Him; He will show them what that rejection means.

He will withdraw his grace of resisting man's sinfulness and it will explode on the scene in full force, wreaking ruin and destruction as it goes.

The destruction will be beyond comprehension.

CONCLUSION

We'll finish chapter 6 next week, but let's end with this . . .

In May of 1980, geologists from all over the country packed their gear and headed for Oregon. Mt. Saint Helens began to pour plumes of gray steam and ash into the air and many were convinced she was about to blow. They set up their instruments and as the days passed, their readings were more and more convincing that the volcano was building pressure.

Roads were closed and the Highway Patrol began diverting traffic from the area. Forest Rangers swept the area and told everyone to evacuate. But one lone man who lived near the mountain refused to budge. His name was Harry Truman. He was the caretaker of a recreation lodge on Spirit Lake. Everyone warned him but he wouldn't listen. He said he'd lived there so long if anybody ought to know if something was wrong, it was him.

At 8:31 on the morning of May 18th, the mountain exploded. No one was around to see what happened to Harry but the shock wave that came from the volcano was so great it flattened everything within 150 square miles. The waves of superheated gas which came forth scorched the land and a wall of mud and ash 50 feet high buried his cabin.

Harry had been warned and had seen the evidence, but he refused to believe his beautiful surroundings could be shaken.

There are many Harry's in the world today. Long foretold events which herald the return of Christ are coming to pass before our eyes, but many people will not heed them - to their own peril, because, like Harry, the knowledge the warnings were true will come too late for them.

It's not at all difficult to see how the world is being set up for the ride of these four horsemen we've looked at tonight.

These things all point up the fact that this book is more than just some old religious essay.

It really is the Word of God – and prophecy is His fingerprint and signature.

It's all true – what are you going to do with it?