

Revelation 6

I. The Tribulation Period

Revelation chapters 6-19 cover the future period on earth known as the Great Tribulation. Revelation 7:14

a. What is the Great Tribulation?

The word 'tribulation' means trouble, affliction, trial. In general terms the word refers to any trial or persecution (Jn 16:33), but in prophetic terms, the word refers to a definite future period of great world-wide trouble.

A number of words and phrases are used concerning this coming era:

- Great Tribulation – Matt 24:21; Rev 7:14
- Time of Trouble – Daniel 12:1
- Time of Jacob's Trouble – Jer 30:7
- Time of the End – Daniel 11:40
- The Hour of Temptation (Trial) – Rev 3:10
- The Day of Wrath – Rev 6:16-17; I Thess 1:10, 2:16
- The Indignation – Is 26:20; 34:2
- God's Melting Pot – Ez 22:19-22

b. When is the Great Tribulation?

The Great Tribulation is known as the 70th week of Daniel. – Dan 9:23-27
It will commence immediately after the rapture and last for seven years.

c. Why will there be a Great Tribulation?

- To save Israel

This period will be a refining fire for Israel and will cause them to turn to Christ. Jer 30:7; Daniel 9:24; Zech 13:9

- To punish iniquity on the earth

All sin must be punished (Rm 6:23; Gal 6:7), and it will be during the Great Tribulation that the wall of long-suffering will finally burst, releasing the waters of judgment. II Pt 3:9-10; Ps 7:11-13

Christ rejectors in this present day of grace will find no repentance in Tribulation – like Pharaoh their hearts will be hardened. Rev 11:18; 16:9-11; Isaiah 66:4; II Thess 2:10-12; Ex 7:3

- To vanquish Satan

The Great Tribulation is the culmination of the great 'battle of the ages' which began in heaven. Is 14:9-17.

The sentence of death was passed upon Satan on the cross (Jn 12:31) – at the second coming, it is executed.

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The divine judgments in the Book of Revelation follow the following sequence:

Seals (6-7)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Trumpets (8-11)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Vials (15-16)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

II. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse – vs. 1-8

a. The Opening of the Seven-Sealed Book – vs. 1

1. John in Glory – pictures the present-day believers raptured out of the world just prior to the Tribulation.
2. The Opener of the Seals – The Lamb, Jesus Christ
3. The noise of the Thunder – Impending Judgment
4. The Invitation to Observe

Note: When the 4 beasts speak, the subject has to do with things on earth. When the 24 elders speak (Rev 7:13), it relates to heaven.

b. Seal #1 – The Rider of the White Horse – Rise of Antichrist – vs. 2

1. The Counterfeit Christ

This is not Jesus Christ (Rev 19:11) based on three things:

- This does not fit the prophetic sequence
- This rider has one crown (stephanos' – victor's wreath), Jesus Christ has many crowns ('diadema' – sovereign's crown) Rev 19:12

2. A diplomatic "Messiah"

The rider has a bow, but no arrow. This suggests a 'bloodless' conquest

According to Daniel 9:27, the 'Prince that shall come' will confirm the covenant with Israel. It seems the Antichrist will ride on the world scene as a great statesman, solving the world's troubles, literally destroying by peace – Dan 8:25.

3. A conquering "Messiah"

The Antichrist will conquer by deception. See: Matt 24:5, 24; II Thess 2:7-11; Rev 13:14

c. Seal #2 – The Rider on the Red Horse – War – vs. 3-4

"Peace, Peace, when there is no peace." Jer 8:11, 15; I Thess 5:3

This is a world conflict – peace it taken from the earth. It is a terrible time of war – a 'great sword'. See: Dan 11:40-44

It may be this war refers to the great middle eastern conflict between Russia and her allies and the allies of Israel which is prophesied in Ez 38-39. In this battle,

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5/6 of Russia's army will be destroyed (Ez 39:2). It appears this great battle may occur at the beginning of the tribulation, because it is going to take 7 years to clean up the debris – Ez 39:9.

d. Seal #3 – The Rider on the Black Horse – Famine – vs. 5-6

Famine always follows war – Lam 4:9; 5:10

- A measure of wheat – what a man would eat in a day
- A penny – considered a man's daily wage
- Three measures of barley – cheaper grain, for those with families
- Hurt not the oil and the wine – the fare of the rich

As is often the case in times of war, the wealthy manage to survive, and the poor suffer.

e. Seal #4 – The Rider on the Pale Horse – Death – vs. 7-8

1. Pail in color – 'corpse-like'

2. Followed by Hell

All the wicked dead go to hell upon their death. Lk 16:22-23; Ps 9:17; Is 5:14.

Those in hell will be brought up to stand at the Great White Throne Judgment before being cast into the lake of fire – Rev 20:13

3. Over 1 billion dead

Already the population of this earth exceeds 7 billion souls. ¼ will perish in the world war, the subsequent famine, pestilence, and the ravages of the animal kingdom turned mad. – What a horrific picture!

III. Seal #5 – The Martyrs of the Tribulation – vs. 9-11

Three times the book of Revelation indicates many multitudes will be saved during the Tribulation – 7:9-17; 13:15; 20:4.

a. The Martyrdom of the Tribulation Believers

Verse 9 indicates, faith in Christ will mean death to multitudes.

b. The Prayer of the Tribulation Believers – vs. 10

This is not a prayer belonging to the present age of grace (Rom 12:19-21; Matt 5:44), but certainly in keeping with a time of divine judgment.

c. The Rest and Resurrection of the Tribulation Believers – vs. 11

The Word of God does not give us a detailed picture of when the dead in Christ of the Tribulation will be resurrected, but this verse indicates their resurrection will occur at the end of this period.

IV. Seal #6 – The Beginning of Divine Wrath – vs. 12-17

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To this point, the troubles that have befallen the earth have resulted from the actions of man (albeit only by divine permission).

Now we see the beginning of God's anger. – Isaiah 13:9-13

a. Catastrophic Terrestrial and Celestial Judgment – vs. 12-14

1. A world-shaking earthquake
2. The sun darkened
3. The moon turns blood red
4. Stellar showers – vs. 13

See also: Joel 2:2, 10, 30, 31; Is 13:6-13; 34:4; Lk 21:25

b. The General Reaction of the people of the earth – vs. 15-16

1. Panic and great fear

Class distinction is bridged by the terror of what takes place. Is 2:11-12; Lk 21:26

2. No repentance and turning to God

This is a phenomenon seen in the Book of Revelation. In times of unspeakable horror, men will not turn to Christ. See: Rev 9:20-21; 16:21.

3. A recognition of divine wrath – vs. 17

Who shall be able to stand? Chapter 7 somewhat answers this question. Is 2:8-11; Ps 2:1-5