

# God's Revelation of the Future

Community Baptist Church  
Lesson 3

Adult Bible Fellowship  
Spring, 2024

## The Book of Revelation

### Four Introductory Questions

- Who wrote the book and to whom?
  - John wrote the book (1:1, 4, 9; 21:2; 22:8) as a letter to seven churches in Asia (1:4-6)
- When was the book written?
  - Those holding to a pre-Tribulation rapture of the Church generally think the book was written in the mid-nineties.
- Why was the book written?
  - First, it is a declaration that God is sovereign and omnipotent and as such it glorifies him.
  - Second, it is a disclosure of things previously concealed (1:1; 22:6).
  - Third, it brings promise of blessing (1:3; 22:7).
- What is the book's overall structure?
  - Futurists see the basic outline in 1:19.
    - Past – Chapter 1
    - Present – Chapters 2-3
    - Future – Chapters 4-22

In our study of God's revelation of the future we will be considering only this future section of Revelation. In lesson 1 we looked at chapters 4-5 where we observed a throne room setting with the Father seated on a throne and the Son who was pictured as a Lamb. In that scene the Lamb takes a seven-sealed scroll from the Father. Starting in chapter 6 the Lamb begins to open the seals. These seals represent the first of a series of judgments (seals, then trumpets, then bowls).

### The Seal, Trumpet, and Bowl Judgments

- How do these judgments interrelate?
  - Successive: seals then trumpets then bowls
  - Yet overlapping: the 7<sup>th</sup> seal with the 7 trumpets and the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet with the 7 bowls
  - Punctuated by references to thunder and lightening

- What value do these judgment passages have for us?
  - We learn about God himself.
  - We rejoice in seeing righteousness triumph.

## The Seal Judgments

These are the seals on the seven-sealed scroll given to the Lamb (5:1-2, 5b, 7).

The account of these judgments is recorded in 6:1-17 and 8:1.

It is the Lamb, the Son himself, who opens the seals (thus also the trumpets and bowls), unleashing their associated judgments.

The first four seals form a group, sometimes referred to as "the four horsemen of the apocalypse."

### The 1st Seal – 6:1-2

- The rider on the white horse.
  - He has a bow (an implement of war), receives a crown (made a ruler), and goes forth conquering (forces his will on others).
- Who is this rider?
  - It is not the rider on a white horse of 19:11-16, who is Christ.
  - Other descriptions of this rider include: the "little horn" (Daniel 7:8, 20); the "prince who is to come" (Daniel 9:26-27); the "willful king" (Daniel 11:36); the "man of sin" (2 Thessalonians 2:2); the "antichrist" (1 John 2:18); the "beast from the sea" (13:1-2).
- It appears that this rider brings peace to the earth, a peace removed by the next rider.

### The 2<sup>nd</sup> Seal – 6:3-4

- The rider on the red horse.
  - He takes peace from the earth, such that "people should slay one another." He has "great sword."
- Who is the rider?
  - Like the first rider, he is not identified. It may be the same person.

### **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Seal – 6:5-6**

- The rider on the black horse.
  - He has “a pair of scales in his hand.”
  - The black color and what is said by the four living creatures suggest the idea of famine. (Cp. Lamentations 4:8)
- Who is the rider?
  - Rather than a particular person, the rider seems to picture the need to measure out scarce commodities.
    - Things needed to sustain life are scarce.
    - Things used by the rich are to be protected.

### **The 4<sup>th</sup> Seal – 6:7-8**

- The rider on the pale (yellowish-green) horse.
  - His name is “Death” and he is followed by someone named “Hades.”
  - These two were given authority to kill by using a sword, famine, and pestilence and by wild beasts.
- Who is the rider?
  - Rather than a particular person, the rider and the one who follows seem to picture widespread death.
- As a result of this judgement one fourth of those on earth will die. (Today this would be more than 2 billion people!)

### **The 5<sup>th</sup> Seal – 6:9-11**

- What is recorded here about this judgment is unusual when compared with others.
  - We see the results of what has happened on earth.
  - And those affected by it are saints!
- These saints were slain (indicating violence) “for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.” (Cf. Matthew 24:9)
- These slain saints reverentially ask God “how long” before he will “judge and avenge” their deaths.
  - Their question is not answered.
  - They are clothed in white robes and instructed “to rest a little longer.” They represent only part of those who will be slain.

### **The 6<sup>th</sup> Seal – 6:12-17**

- This is the first seal that directly manifests divine judgment. It originates with God and is directed at evil human beings.

- When this seal is broken great cataclysmic events occur evidently resulting from “a great earthquake.” (But compare 16:18.)
  - This earthquake’s effects are seen in the dimming of the sun, moon, stars, and sky, and the shaking of mountains and islands.
- No segment of society is left untouched by this judgment.
  - People hide themselves “in the caves and among the rocks” to “hide from the wrath of the Lamb.”
  - People recognize this as a judgment from God.
  - They ask, “who can stand?”
    - The answer is no one. (Cp. Nahum 1:6)
  - However, what they do not do is repent!

### **The 7<sup>th</sup> Seal – 8:1**

- There is no specific judgment associated with this 7<sup>th</sup> seal, only “silence in heaven.”
  - It is suggested that this silence may be due the fact that the scroll is now completely unsealed making apparent the further judgments about to take place.
    - Recall that the scroll is written on its front and its back (5:1).
- What starts to take place at this point is the sounding of the seven trumpets.

Note: All references are to the book of Revelation unless otherwise specified.