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## REVELATION

Going Up or Coming Down?  
The Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Seals  
Revelation 6:7-17

- I. Visions of Heaven
  - a. After John receives the seven messages to the seven churches, he sees a door opened to heaven and he hears a voice like a trumpet saying - "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."
    - i. We are taken to this scene in Heaven
    - ii. The majesty of God the Father on the throne – surrounded by color, thunder, and lightning
    - iii. 24 elders - Seated around the throne, wearing white robes and gold crowns
    - iv. Four living creatures - Full of eyes, six wings each—resembling a lion, calf, man, and eagle
    - v. Revelation 5 - The Lamb (Jesus Christ)
      1. He is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah and Root of David.
      2. Appears as "a Lamb as though it had been slain"
      3. The scroll - He is the only one worthy to open the scroll with seven seals
    - vi. Multitudes of Angels - Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" around the throne
      1. And they declare the worthiness of the Lamb.
  - b. Chapter 6 – as the Lamb breaks each of these seals the scene shifts back to earth
    - i. Introduced to the anti-christ - white horse (anti-christ) disguised as an angel of light - promising peace
      1. Given a crown - temporary authority
      2. Bow - conquering and going out to conquer
    - ii. Rider on a fiery red horse
      1. Comes carrying a sword
      2. Given authority to remove peace from the world
    - iii. Rider - black horse – scales
      1. Famine - full days wage for a small amount of food
      2. All the results of global conflict
  - c. Culmination of what God promised back in Genesis 6 - My Spirit will not strive with man forever
    - i. Israel demanded a king and Samuel warned them that a human king would oppress and exploit them – taking their sons and daughters and the best of their fields
      1. Israel still insisted on a king of their choosing
    - ii. The anti-christ will not force anyone into worshipping him, nor will mankind be forced to go to war
      1. The peace of God is removed – people won't be sitting around singing kumbaya and God removes their peace

2. This is taking away that which the world has continually rejected – giving people what they truly want – I life without their Creator
  - a. This world has no idea what life truly looks like outside of God’s presence

***7 When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come and see.” 8 So 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.***

## II. The Final Rider on the Horse

- a. Pale - chloros - chlorine - yellowish green - the color of a corpse
  - i. Death and Hades (where the dead reside) followed after him
  - ii. All that comes from pride, lust for power, lack of compassion, war - sword, famine, plague, and wild animals (mankind is vulnerable, no longer at the top of the food chain)
    1. The rider on a white horse promised peace and instead brought the mass execution of 1.5 billion or more
    2. satan is a liar and deceiver and wants nothing more than to see the image of God destroyed
  - iii. Power (Authority) was given to them - who has authority over death? The one who conquered death and brought it into submission
  - iv. Notice – as terrible as these events have been – God has still shown restraint – food was extremely expensive but not impossible to get, a fourth of the world’s population is an immense number but it isn’t everyone
    1. What is God doing?
- b. The remnant – God is the same yesterday, today, and forever
  - i. ***Eze 14: 21 For thus says the Lord God: “How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem—the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence—to cut off man and beast from it? 22 Yet behold, there shall be left in it a remnant who will be brought out, both sons and daughters; surely they will come out to you, and you will see their ways and their doings. Then you will be comforted concerning the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem, all that I have brought upon it. 23 And they will comfort you, when you see their ways and their doings; and you shall know that I have done nothing without cause that I have done in it,” says the Lord God.***
  - ii. Do you see the heart of God in this? – yes, humanity is getting what they want but the Lord is still pleading with them – as He reveals what life looks like apart from Him
    1. Keep this in mind as the scene now shifts back to Heaven

***9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” 11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.***

- c. Not martyrs throughout history – but the tribulation saints who have been executed “for the word of God and for the testimony which they held”
  - i. Where they appear in chronologically in the opening of the seals
  - ii. Crying out for justice for those who dwell on the earth
  - iii. Specific ongoing period of martyrdom – culminates in ***Rev 13:7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.***

### III. The Pretribulation View of Revelation

- a. The breaking of the first seal in Revelation 6 marks the beginning of the 7-year tribulation period
  - i. A period in which God pours out His wrath on the world
  - ii. We have been approaching Revelation with a pretribulation view – meaning we believe that the church is raptured right before these events
- b. The pretribulation rapture is not without its critics
  - i. Many of these critics claim the pre-trib rapture view isn’t found anywhere in the writings of the early church fathers and wasn’t introduced until the 1830s, when it was made popular by the Anglican priest John Nelson Darby
    - 1. Later in the 1900s Cyrus I. Scofield, a Dallas-based pastor included the pretrib rapture in the study notes of his now famous Scofield Reference Bible
  - ii. Some of these critics credit The Left Behind series with popularizing this view in the modern church
    - 1. Pretribulation rapture is more wishful thinking the sound doctrine – a form of escapism
    - 2. I agree – if you foundation for holding a pretribulation view of Revelation is “you simply don’t want to be here” – you are on some shaky ground
- c. I’ve never read the Left Behind series and I know Christian’s have been suffering persecution for thousands of years
  - i. There is no promise for believers that following Jesus means we escape the pain and persecution of a fallen world – in fact, Jesus promises “In this world you will have tribulation, but be of God cheer, I have overcome the world”
  - ii. I also agree there is not a lot of discussion by the early church fathers about a pretribulation rapture
    - 1. You also don’t see a lot of discussion about Salvation by Grace through Faith Alone – or that Christ's righteousness is counted as our own – or a clear teaching or understanding of Trinity or that scripture could be read and understood but the laymen
      - a. Early on the church developed a divide between church leadership and the common man
    - 2. My point is – just because we don’t see something in early church history doesn’t mean we do not see it in scripture
      - a. That is our ultimate authority – as important as church history is – the primary question is what does the Bible teach? What did Jesus teach?

### IV. The Rapture and the Second Coming

- a. The teachings of Jesus on the Rapture
  - i. ***John 14:2-3 “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a***

*place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”*

1. Jesus speaks of receiving His own to a place He has prepared
- ii. In Matthew 24 Jesus teaches that no one knows the time of His return, not even the angels, just His Father
  1. His coming will be sudden and unexpected, like in the days of Noah, when people were living life normally until judgment came. Likewise, some will be taken and others left.
    - a. Believers must stay sober and alert because the Son of Man will come at an hour they do not expect.
  2. Sudden, unexpected, immediate event
- iii. ***Luke 21: 34 “Be on your guard, so that your minds are not dulled from carousing, drunkenness, and worries of life, or that day will come on you unexpectedly 35 like a trap. For it will come on all who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.***
  1. Couple that with what Paul writes in 1 Cor 15:52 – Christ’s will come - "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye”
  2. ***1 Thes 4:17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.***
  3. ***1 Thes 5: 5 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.***
  4. In ***1 Thes 1:10*** – As Christians we are to...***wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.***
    - a. ***1 Thes 5:9 “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”***
- iv. Christ coming – sudden and unannounced, no one knows that day and hour, Christ will receive us to Himself
- b. The teachings of Jesus about the second coming
  - i. ***Matt 24: 29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.***
    1. After the 7-year tribulation - Christ descends to the earth, stands on Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4)
    2. All people – public event – every eye will see
  - ii. ***Matt 25: 31 “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be***

***gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.***

1. To judge the world and establish the kingdom (Rev. 19:11–21)
- c. Two different events
  - i. One that is sudden and without warning (Imminent) - no prophetic signs that must occur first.
  - ii. Another with clear signs and a clear timeline
    1. A timeline that begins with the rapture of the church, the beginning of the seven year tribulation, when the anti-christ is revealed, then the abomination of desolation, followed by the great tribulation, then the gospel preached to all nations, and finally the battle of Armageddon, and then (Jesus' words) - ***“Immediately after the tribulation of those days... they will see the Son of Man coming...”*** – **Matthew 24:29–30** – Christ comes publicly and powerfully
    2. That doesn't sound like a thief in the night – that doesn't sound like an event where we don't know the time or the season
- d. Tribulation Saints
  - i. There will be those during the tribulation that see what is unfolding – they will believe the gospel and they will be saved
  - ii. And they will be killed for their faith
    1. How will they hear the gospel if the church is gone - 2 Thessalonians 2:6–7, the "restrainer" (interpreted by many pre-trib scholars to be the Holy Spirit working through the church) will be “taken out of the way.” This does not mean the Holy Spirit ceases to exist or operate on earth altogether.
    2. The church is gone, the Word of God remains - ***those who had been slain for the word of God***

***12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. 13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. 15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and 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 His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”***

V. That Which Holds All Things Together

- a. ***Col 1: 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (synistemi – held together, continuing in existence)”***
  - i. Jesus holds all things together, He is the sustainer of the universe, not just its creator.
  - ii. Heb 1:3 “...who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...”

- iii. Acts 17:28 Paul writes “For in Him we live and move and have our being..”
- iv. Rev 4:11 The elders fell down before the throne and sang “*You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.*”
  - 1. What happens when we reject that which holds all things together - Without Him, everything unravels
- b. The greatest tragedy of God’s Wrath is the removal of His presence
  - i. Even in those last days – He provides an opportunity for salvation