

2. SEAL SIX – A DARKENED SUN

JUST A REMINDER

Just a reminder that our goal is to create our new (and first) website, initially posting nine or so topics that refer to the post tribulation rapture. However, if the site is up and running before those individual topics have been completed, we will post what we have and add the others as they are completed. Many of the topics have been the subject of the study of a lifetime and have appeared in book and booklet form. However, offering them in a manner that fits a website, presentation is something else, hence the time needed. Let us remind ourselves of the relevant scripture to launch our study of the events in the heavenlies that will impact our earth so dramatically.

MATTHEW 24 v 29 – 31

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn....

We must emphasise again and again that our Bible is clear and incontrovertible when it categorically states that these events take place IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIBULATION. In books and booklets we have considered the events of REVELATION CHAPTERS FOUR AND FIVE, and although incredible, deeply instructive and sadly rarely commented on faithfully as to their eschatological meaning, they cannot detain us here. If we are to do justice to our subject, we must spend a little time in consideration of this vision of the book sealed with seven seals which sets the scene for all that is to follow. Before we refer briefly to the other seals of the vision, so as not to lose our train of thought, let us ponder the details of the events of seal six which is just an enlargement of MATTHEW 24 v 29 – 30 referred to above.

REVELATION 6 v 12 – 17

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

The first four seals, known as "THE HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE", precede and lead into the Great Tribulation. It is the "softening up" process that prepares the way for the manifestation and dominance of the Man of Sin, The Antichrist. This period of his

ascending and reign are briefly referred to and occupy the fifth seal. Although only briefly referred to here, this period is viewed in considerable detail later in the Book of Revelation. Let us consider the relevant scripture:

REVELATION 6 v 9 – 11

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

If we note particularly the tribulation martyrs which indicate that Antichrist is now dominant and the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel and cited by our beloved Lord Jesus and also the Mark of the Beast, an awful reality.

THE GREAT APOSTACY

There is an event already in motion for a number of years but that has accelerated in more recent times. We refer to the Great Apostacy or falling away. We cite the scriptures that refer to this. Careful consideration of them throws considerable light on other aspects of our study and only endorses and confirms the fact that the rapture and resurrection can only take place AFTER THE TRIBULATION.

2 THESSALONIANS 2 v 1 -3

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.

That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, EXCEPT THERE COME A FALLING AWAY FIRST, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

The Greek word for "falling away" is apostasia, hence the expression, the great apostacy. We suggest that SEAL ONE describes this falling away or apostacy period.

REVELATION 6 v 1 – 2

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

And I saw, and BEHOLD A WHITE HORSE: AND HE THAT SAT ON HIM had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Please note the exact correspondence of the phrase "Behold a white horse and he that sat on him" with the identical phrase in *REVELATION 19 v 11, And I saw heaven opened, AND BEHOLD A WHITE HORSE; AND HE THAT SAT UPON HIM...*

The first Horseman of the Apocalypse astride a white horse represents a pseudo Christ. The second is our beloved Lord Jesus also astride a white horse, not false, but faithful and true, and returning to set up his Millennial Kingdom.

THE PARALLEL WITH THE DECEITS OF MATTHEW TWENTY FOUR

So, we conclude the First Horseman of the Apocalypse of Revelation Six and the great apostasy of 2 Thessalonians describe the same period and events as the deceits referred to by the Lord Jesus in Matthew Twenty Four in the period known as the beginning of sorrows, continuing into the tribulation itself. Let us look at the deceits as the Lord Jesus referred to them:

MATTHEW 24 v 4 - 5, 11, 23 - 25

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Behold, I have told you before.

SUMMARY SO FAR

The first of our topics, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIBULATION, followed by the second SEAL SIX – A DARKENED SUN, have contained a considerable amount of detail and development of the subjects. Before we proceed to a development we deem of considerable importance, we must note that at the time of the darkened sun and the mourning of the tribes of the earth and all their chief men, rulers and captains, the sign of the Son of Man appears. Glorious to His awaiting children but meaning only wrath to those who do not know Him. Note well, it is universal.

REVELATION 1 v 7

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so. Amen.

Again is mentioned all tribes mourning and wailing, again is mentioned the Coming with clouds, and also mentioned EVERY eye shall see Him, even those who pierced Him dwelling in hell itself. May we remind ourselves that everything we have considered takes place AFTER THE TRIBULATION.

WORTHY OF CONSIDERABLE REFLECTION

The development of what has gone before, if correct, is of considerable help in understanding the visions that John received on the Isle of Patmos, which we know as the Book of the Revelation. A colleague and I made our way to that tiny Island, much closer to Turkey than to mainland Greece. We climbed the hill to where it is believed that John had his Revelation. We entered the cave within the monastery where, it is said, that so bright, so omnipotent was the presence of the Lord Jesus that a great fissure appeared in the roof of the cave. My colleague and I, to the consternation of the monk

who was our guide, fell to our knees and prayed that God would give us all the light we would need to present to those we ministered to, the wonders of this book. This is what we are endeavouring to do, mindful that we see only through a glass darkly, and the words of this and Daniel's revelations are sealed up until the time of the end.

DANIEL 12 v 9

And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

However, if something of what is presented to our readers is a challenge, a blessing and at least "truth" enough to encourage further prayer, reflection and study, we shall be well content. So, what we present now is from a human mind, lips and pen and remember, only the sacred Word of God is perfect. So, to your knees and to the Word and may the dear Lord bless you.

A SERIES OF UNFOLDING VISIONS

We have long been suggesting that the Book of the Revelation can only be clearly understood if the book is seen as a series of unfolding visions. These visions, though complete in themselves, are expanded with greater detail in subsequent visions. It is also instructive to note that many of the visions terminate at the same point, namely, the return or second coming of our beloved Lord Jesus to the clouds to reap His harvest through rapture and resurrection. Let us illustrate this by tracing the terminal point of the three major visions of John's Patmos Revelation:

1. THE VISION OF THE SEVEN SEALS
2. THE VISION OF THE SEVEN TRUMPETS
3. THE VISION OF THE SEVEN VIALS OF GOD'S WRATH

As with many of the other visions seen by John on Patmos they have differing starting points but their termination is at the return of the Lord Jesus. As an aid to interpretation, knowledge of this factor is so very beneficial. We would like to draw our readers' attention to the identical features of the last or seventh seal, the last or seventh trumpet and the last or seventh vial. We will now read them in scripture and then place them in a table with both a startling and helpful result.

THE SEVENTH SEAL

REVELATION 8 v 1 and 5b

"When he had opened the seventh seal, there were voices and thunderings and lightnings and an earthquake."

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

REVELATION 15 and 19b

"And the seventh angel sounded his trumpet and there were lightnings and voices and thunderings and an earthquake and great hail."

THE SEVENTH VIAL

REVELATION 16 v 17, 18a and 21a

"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air and there were voices and thunders and lightnings and there was a great earthquake and there fell upon men a great hail."

And now the table.

SEVENTH SEAL	SEVENTH TRUMPET	SEVENTH VIAL
VOICES THUNDERINGS LIGHTNINGS EARTHQUAKE	VOICES THUNDERINGS LIGHTNINGS EARTHQUAKE GREAT HAIL	VOICES THUNDERS LIGHTNINGS EARTHQUAKE GREAT HAIL

Only one conclusion can be drawn from the above and we will consider it. If there were one or two identical features at the termination of the seventh seal, seventh trumpet and seventh vial, although striking, it would not be conclusive evidence that the terminating point of the three major Patmos visions were one and the same. However, from the conclusive evidence which is drawn from the above complete and identical correlation the only possible conclusion that can be reached is that the seven major visions of the Book of the Revelation all conclude at the same point.

That concludes SEAL SIX, A DARKENED SUN and its development. As with all our topics, we will finish with a presentation that is relevant to all the subjects under consideration.

EVEN BIG MEN CAN BE WRONG

Putting together 1 CORINTHIANS v 12 and 9 we read *"For now we see through a glass darkly; for we know in part and prophesy in part"*. So even the very best have their limits. Whilst recently debating (in the loving spirit of iron sharpening iron) with dearest friends, pre-trib versus post-trib, the final clincher from the other side, intended as a "coup de grace" was, Ah, but brother X teaches a pre-tribulation rapture. The name of a well known, highly respected Bible teacher was mentioned. Our reply was terse, "never mind what he teaches, what does the Bible teach".

BIG MEN CAN BE WRONG

One of the pioneers of the Early Church and in its formative years, its major spokesmen. One who undoubtedly sealed his testimony with his martyr blood. One who wrote two most precious Books of our Bible, was the Apostle Peter. But read what Paul, also an Apostle, said of him concerning the error of circumcision.

GALATIANS 2 v 11

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

BIG MEN CAN CERTAINLY BE WRONG

Solomon was the wisest man on planet Earth, yet was so stupid as to place an idol dedicated to Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, on the hill before Jerusalem. This hill is known as the "Mount of Corruption", indeed, the "Mount of Olives" from where the Lord Jesus ascended and to where He will return. Please read 1 KINGS 11 v 1 - 13, also 2 KINGS 23 v 13 and margin.

BIG MEN CAN BE STUPIDLY WRONG

Jude gave us some very sound advice of what not to do. JUDE 16 *"Having mens persons in admiration because of advantage"*. It is so easy to admire, so easy to place a respected teacher on a pedestal and accept every utterance as "gospel". Always

remember BIG MEN CAN BE WRONG. Elihu encapsulated it all when ministering to Job, saying "Great men are not always wise".

There is only one sure word and we have it before us in our Bibles.

2 PETER 1 v 19

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed...

Now we come to our third topic, "WHO ARE THE ELECT".