

# REV. 6:1-17

## DISCOVER THE PERFECTION OF JESUS

The greatest mystery in the world today is the patience of God in allowing sin to run ravagingly through this world.

- ✓ There is no village or town without its seething, and there is no human heart without its caliginous, black drop.
- ✓ There is no life without its tears and its sorrows.
- ✓ There is no home that ultimately does not break up, and there is no family that does not see the circle of the home dissolve in the depths of the grave.
- ✓ There is no life that does not end in the grave.
- ✓ The pages of history, from the time of the first murder until this present hour, are written in blood, tears and death.

Why God delays in taking, the kingdom unto Himself. That is the most inexplicable mystery that mind could dream of, the mystery of the presence of evil. For these thousands of years, God has allowed Satan to wrap his vicious, slimy, filthy, cruel tentacles around human life and around this earth. Does God know it? Is He indifferent to it? Is He not able to cope with it? Oh, the mystery of the delay of God!

- ✓ That mystery has brought more stumbling to the faith of God's people than any other experience in all life. The infidel, the atheist, the agnostic and the unbeliever laugh and mock us, and God lets them mock and laugh.
- ✓ Our missionaries are slain, our churches are burned to the ground, people in this earth by uncounted millions and millions are oppressed, living in despair, and God just looks. He seemingly does not intervene; He does not say anything, and He does not move. Sin just develops. It goes on and on. Oh, the mystery of the delay of the Lord God!

But somewhere beyond the starry sky there stands a herald angel with a trumpet in his hand, and by the decree of the Lord God Almighty, there is a day, there is an hour, there is a moment, there is an elected time when the angel shall sound and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ." <sup>1</sup>

Open with me to that moment when the trumpet sounds and the Lord takes back His world:

**PLEASE STAND AND LISTEN TO REVELATION 6  
AS I READ IT TO YOU!**

This chapter opens the Tribulation, the first step in Christ's taking back the earth, which is rightfully His. One by one Christ unrolls the seals. As each seal is broken, He takes

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from W. A. Criswell, *ExPositorY Sermons on Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961-66), p. 190. Used by permission,

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further possession and control of His inheritance. Finally, "the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever'" (11:15). When He unrolls the seventh seal and the seventh trumpet blows, the earth is His.<sup>2</sup>

Walk with me through the pages of Revelation chapters six, eight, nine, and sixteen. Briefly, may I describe the living hell you can avoid if you are a part of the Rapture. Here are only a few of the dreadful disasters that take place during the Tribulation:

1. One out of every four people will die (see Rev. 6:8), some through the ravages of war, others by starvation, and amazingly many others by the 'beasts of the earth'. So, whether by death that come instantly and thus less dreaded or a slow and painful death that is lingering and agonizing-25 percent of all people will die. The world's population was 5,733,687,096 in 1995, so that means at least 1,433,421,774 will die. That amounts to just about five times the current population of the United States-can you imagine that? And remember that the population of the world is doubling every 39.5 years. So every day the number of people who will die becomes larger and larger.
2. One third of all vegetation will be burned up. All grass, every tree, everything green will be destroyed (see Rev. 8:7).
3. The sun and the moon will be darkened as nature goes into revolt (see Rev. 8:12).
4. The gates of hell will open and hordes of locusts, the size of horses, will come upon the earth. Those locusts will be allowed to sting men like scorpions and the pain will last for five months. The Bible says men will beg God to let them die but they will not die (see Rev. 9:3-6).
5. There will be worldwide famine unlike anything the world has ever seen (see Rev. 18:8).
6. There will be a world war so bloody that the blood of those killed in battle will flow for two hundred miles up to the bridle of a horse in the valley of Jezreel. This will be the Battle of Armageddon (see Rev. 14:20).
7. All told, during the Great Tribulation, as many as half of all the people on the earth will be killed. Now do you see why God refers to the Rapture as a 'blessed hope'? Because the Tribulation to come is so horrible!

But tht means we are gone and will escape everything, right? Yes, exactly, we will miss every part of the TRIBULATION, but we will probably go through some of the worst days we have ever seen before it starts. Take for instance the following scenario:

What will this be like on earth. Have you ever thought about it? In Revelation 18: 23 we find some amazing words: "The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore . . . In 20<sup>th</sup> century terms, this verse says the power grid is shut down. It says no power, no electricity, no technology that uses electricity will be running. Revelation 18 marks the end of the world as we know it. That will not happen before at least the year 2005 according to the Word of God. But, it calls for us to ask ourselves a few questions based on this Scripture.

This evening we are faced with the very intriguing possibility that the comfort and conveniences of our civilization may become briefly impaired in the not too distant

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<sup>2</sup>MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

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future. Think back to 75 short years ago. Most people had no electricity, saw no television, heard very little radio, didn't use banks very much, worked all day, and prepared or even raised, their own food. These same people lived in small houses, heated the houses by fire, carried much of their water from a well to use in their homes, stayed very close to home because travel was difficult, and so on.

Then came the explosion of technology which gave greater comforts but charged higher and higher fees for maintenance. The electricity which feeds technology became vital. The speed of technology became critical and so on. What has happened to us is we are technologically dependent! Think of what many of us have lived through. The pace of change has been astounding. We now travel at the speed of sound, we communicate at the speed of light and we clothe our selves and live with materials made at the molecular level. Western society has grown into an inescapable interdependence with machines which can be greatly disrupted by any non-linearities.

There are seven events ahead on the calendar for this earth. They will happen. What will be the result of these seven only God in His plan can tell. Let me list them:

1. **A SOLAR HURRICANE** is expected to arrive and affect the earth all of late 1999 and 2000.
2. **THE HISTORICAL MILLENNIAL FEARS** of the "Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, black cat crowd" will be rampant (last millennium there were crazies that burned and pillaged and so on in Europe).
3. **THE GROWING GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS.** There is an avalanche of debt in Japan, Russia and Asia that is bearing down the global hillside toward our tidy chalet in America.
4. **THE GREAT DECEIVER WORKING OVERTIME.** From apparitions of Mary to alien encounters and UFOs Satan is out to make the most of these end days. Expect some incredible alien sightings and peace overtures.
5. **THE Y2K GLITCH WILL HIT THE HARDWARE OF OLDER MODEL COMPUTERS.** The good news is that 60% of the critical system computers (water, telecommunications, etc. mainframes are two years old) the bad news is
6. **THE Y2K GLITCH ON THE SOFTWARE.** There are hundreds of billions of dollars of new computers running 30 year old programs which have real problems with both 00 (year two thousand) and 99 (dates in 1999). And 70 % of those programs are COBOL which has proven to be susceptible to shut downs.
7. **LAST AND WORST, THERE ARE 40 TO 50 BILLION CHIPS** (embedded microprocessors) which govern our daily lives. These chips are of four types:
  - ✓ ROM (read only chips, burned in circuitry a factory)
  - ✓ PROM (read only chips burned in by customer on site)
  - ✓ E-PROMS (reprogrammable via UV flash if removed and flashed but only 80% at best respond)
  - ✓ E-squared PROMs (programmed via electric impulse to circuit boards; the newest and fewest)

There is a day in the very near future when we may all get to see just how much we have come to depend upon computers, electricity, technology and conveniences. The question is, are you ready for the lights to go out? When the power goes off, how well will you survive? From the newspapers and news magazines of America (like the NY

Times, LA Times, Chicago Tribune, Wall Street Journal, Newsweek, Time, and so on) let me read you these lines. You can quietly answer them in your mind.

Well, back to Revelation 6 and the times that are so bad no one could survive if God didn't shorten it.

## **REVELATION 6 THE FIRST SIX SEALS OPENED**

JESUS' DESCRIPTION of the Tribulation in (Matt. 24:3-34) exactly parallels the seals of Rev. 6!

**SEAL #1 FALSE PEACE** (vv. 1-2) Now 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."<sup>2</sup> And 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.

- ✓ **Without Jesus the WAY, TRUTH & LIFE** (14:6) - He guides us, apart from Him is only endless lostness.
- ✓ This is a picture of the release of Antichrist into the world scene; a white horse; its rider has a bow and crown, and he goes forth to conquer.

**SEAL #2 WAR** (vv. 3-4) When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see."<sup>4</sup> Another 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.

- ✓ **Without Jesus the DOOR OF SHEEP** (10:7,9) - He admits us to life, apart from Him is only hopeless exclusion.
- ✓ a red horse; a great sword given to the rider; peace taken from the earth (vs. 3-4) speaks of the unmasking of Antichrist who brings a false, superficial peace. But at this point, peace is removed from the earth and the time of killing begins (cf. Ezk. 38:21)
- ✓ One estimate counts 143 separate wars and more than 12 million dead since 1945.

WAR ITSELF HAS INTENSIFIED<sup>3</sup>: Moreover, the lethality of modern conventional weapons is virtually incomprehensible. In World War II, the standard infantry rifle, the M-1, fired an eight-round clip.

- ✓ Today's M-16 fires a 30-round magazine of far more devastating projectiles.
- ✓ The A-10 attack aircraft, a jet used to support ground troops, carries a heavier bomb payload than the largest World War II strategic bomber, the B-29.
- ✓ An AC-130 gunship, a transport aircraft configured for fire support, carries four 20mm Vulcan cannons with six barrels each, four multibarreled 7.62mm miniguns, a 40mm Bofors cannon and a 105mm automatic howitzer. In other words, one plane delivers the firepower of a World War I infantry battalion.
- ✓ Tanks and artillery shoot twice as far, several times more rapidly and much more accurately than in 1945. Or, as Professor Richard A. Gabriel of St. Anselm's College notes in his newly published book, *"No More Heroes"*: "A Soviet motorized rifle

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<sup>3</sup> **Insight, 6/1/87.**

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division can deliver ten times the firepower at three times the rate of a similar World War II division. The same is true of NATO divisions." His conclusion: High-intensity conventional warfare, like nuclear war, may now be too terrible to fight.

**SEAL #3** (vv. 5-6) When 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.<sup>6</sup> And 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."

- ✓ Without Jesus the BREAD OF LIFE (6: 35) - He sustains us, apart from Him is only unsatisfied hunger.
- ✓ A denarius was one day's wage (or fifteen cents). A slave would work a whole day and earn fifteen cents. Here we see that one meal of wheat or three meals of barley will cost an entire day's wages. Now that's famine! All a man's money will go to buy food. A terrible famine is going to hit the earth.

STARVATION<sup>4</sup> – (By Anastasia Toufexis) Close to the Zocalo, Mexico City's great central square, lies the barrio of Morelos, a vast warren of dusty, potholed streets and narrow entryways. The passages lead to a gloomy world. On each side of a roofless patio is a ten-room jumble. Each room holds a family; each family averages five people. The only bathrooms-two to serve 100 people-are located at the back of the patio. The odor of grease and sewage permeates the air. Flies buzz relentlessly. The people who live here are considered lucky.

In the shantytowns on Mexico City's outskirts, tens of thousands of people shelter in huts made of cardboard with aluminum roofs. There is no running water and no sanitation. The stench is overpowering: garbage and human waste heap up in piles. Rats roam freely, like stray domestic animals.

To the more privileged, those scenes look like a science-fiction vision of civilization's breakdown, perhaps after a nuclear war. In fact, Mexico City has been described as the anteroom to an ecological Hiroshima. With 20 million residents-up from 9 million only 20 years ago-the Mexican capital is considered the most populous urban center on earth. Mexico capital has been struck not by military weapons but by a population bomb.

**SEAL<sup>5</sup> #4 DEATH** (vv.7-8) When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see."<sup>8</sup> 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.

- ✓ Without Jesus the RESURRECTION AND LIFE (11:25) - He provides us life, apart from Him is only endless dying.
- ✓ With the breaking of this seal, one-fourth of the population of the world is going to die. As a green (greek chloros as in chlorine) horse: death, and hades follows. Death

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<sup>4</sup> Time, 1/2/89.

<sup>5</sup> MacArthur, p.

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receives the bodies and hades the souls of unbelievers. Death may refer to pestilence (Scott, Ironside, Gaebelein).

- ✓ **beasties of leuwenhook microscope** Think for a moment of the vast legions of deadly agents surrounding you this morning:
  - ✓ **TB:** once thought conquered has reemerged in highly resistant strains that have even known to piggyback with HIV to be contagious in an airborne infection.
  - ✓ **STAPH:** causing a fifth of the hospital systems two million infections a year has just shown up as staphylococcus aureus which is resistant to vancomycin, the final gun in the antibiotic arsenal. At present 60 to 80,000 die of staph annually but if aureus comes out it is so deadly the numbers will skyrocket.
  - ✓ **EBOLA:** with a mortality rate of 90% + in less than a week, ebola is horrible. Connective tissues of the body liquifies and every orifice of the body bleeds as the infected individual convulses and splashes deadly contaminated blood in every direction. There is no known cure, no treatment, infact no awareness of how it is transmitted. Chilling to say the least if it started in a populated area.
  - ✓ **BIOLOGICAL WARFARE:** anthrax is a cheaply produced poor man's atom bomb. Once infected the area is persistently a problem for decades. If Berlin had been hit with anthrax in WWII it would still be uninhabitable today!
  - ✓ **YURSINIA PESTIS:** or to us non-doctor types bubonic plague is (rod-shaped, non-motile, non-sporulating, gram-negative, aerobic bacterium) in other words it killed tens of millions of Europeans in the Middle Ages and it is being cultivated in terrorist counties laboratories this morning! Black Death as it was called in the 1400's goes from rats to fleas to humans to hemorrhages, to suffocation and/or general toxemia.
  - ✓ **BOTULINUM TOXIN:** this is the most powerful poison known to man. Nausea, diarrhea, dizziness, respiratory paralysis and death . . . all from a cultured bacteria called clostridium botulinum anyone can grow in their home lab with \$10,000 worth of equipment in a room 15 feet square. In 1986 Ma Anan Sheela confessed to growing and spreading trillions salmonella bacteria in four restaurant salad bars of Oregon as a biological terrorist. 750 people became seriously ill in that one town!
  - ✓ Up until 40 years ago there was no way anyone could kill one-fourth of the world. Today "beasts of the earth" are multiplying by the trillions in laboratories boiling in the cauldron of hatred in the Middle East and before long, they will spill out into the deadliest hour of the palnet. So dadly are these beasts that Jesus said in Mark 13:20 "And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days."

**SEAL<sup>6</sup> #5 MARTYRS** (vv.9-11) 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.

- ✓ Without Jesus the LIGHT OF WORLD (8:12) - He illumines us, apart from Him is only impenetrable darkness.

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<sup>6</sup> MacArthur.

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- ✓ When the fifth seal is broken, martyrs who died because of their faith during the Tribulation are seen under the altar in heaven, praying for Christ to take back the earth and avenge their blood.
- ✓ These are the souls of those who are slain during the Tribulation period on account of their testimony to the Word of God.
- ✓ The terrible martyrdom of Rev. 6 are much clearer to us who have lived through or pondered the horrors of World War II.

The atrocities of Nazi war criminals' discrimination -- ghettos concentration camps -- mass extermination; In 10 years, 60% of Jews in Europe, 6 million, were butchered. G. M. Gilbert wrote in his history of the criminal trials of those criminals called the Nuremburg Diary: "...the torture, the starvation, the mass murder, the diabolical experiments on live human guinea pigs. 'History,' he said, 'does not record a crime perpetuated against so many victims or ever carried out with such calculated cruelty.' 'Mass murder,' he said, 'was becoming a State industry, with byproducts.' That is only one page from the sordid story of modern persecution. There are many pages more. The world is getting ready for the breaking of this seal.

What is shown here, under the breaking of the fifth seal, is elaborated further in chapter seven, where the great tribulation is introduced. Here only a preview is given of the terrible persecutions which will engulf the globe in a coming day." What leads to such faithfulness even to death? One thing: **Faithfulness to Christ in life.**

Jesus Christ calls all of us to walk in faithfulness to Him each day....  
In fact, we are called to be in living crucifixion, Gal. 2:20, that equals:

- ✓ Christ is our high priest and we are His priests (Heb. 8:1; Rev. 1:6 who offer Him:
  1. Our lives as a daily sacrifice (Rom. 12:1; 15; 16; Darby);
  2. Our devotion as continual burnt offerings (Mk. 12:33)
  3. Our service poured out to Him as a drink offering (II Tim. 4:6, R. V. mgn; Phil. 2:17);
  4. Our deeds as intentional spiritual sacrifices (I Pet. 2:5; Heb. 13:16);
  5. Our prayers constantly ascending as an incense offering (Ps. 141:2; Rev. 8:3, 4);
  6. Our earnest worship poured out at His feet as a praise offering (Heb. 13:15).

**SEAL # 6 CHAOS** (V. 12-13) 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.<sup>13</sup> 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.

- ✓ Without Jesus the GOOD SHEPHERD (10:11) - He cares for us, apart from Him is only aimless wandering.
- ✓ a great shaking; signs in the heavens, terror on earth.
- ✓ This means earthquake, sun darkened, moon red as blood, meteors, disturbances in the atmosphere and on earth, terror on rich and poor alike.
- ✓ The great day of the wrath of the Lamb came; this clearly identifies the Tribulation period as the wrath of God.

In Revelation 6:15-17, John describes for us the greatest prayer meeting in the history of the world: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every slave, and every free man (that covers everybody) 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?"

- GOD HAS GIVEN TO US THE CONCLUSION TO HUMAN HISTORY- THE BIBLE! **Trust Him completely.** If people are the only investment that lasts.... invest heavily in disciple making.
- GOD HAS GIVEN TO US A JOB TO DO FOR HIM WHILE HE IS AWAY- SOULWINNING! Therefore, **obey Him now.** If you haven't started to give out the good news, start today.
- GOD HAS GIVEN TO US A WAY TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH HIM – TIME IN THE WORD! If you haven't started **start daily contact in the word and prayer today!**
- GOD HAS GIVEN TO US A MEANS TO START AN INVESTMENT ACCOUNT IN HEAVEN – SACRIFICIAL GIVING! **Give sacrificially to support His church.** God has indicated the earth is doomed so start today.

Pleasing God and making disciples must be a priority!