

Rev 26-01-07a

Greetings, fellow members of Grace and Truth Bible Church. Everyone that is here is a member. This is the 7th of January, 2026.

We continue our study in the book of Revelation. We have come to this fascinating chapter. It's the first chapter in the next section of the book.

We had sort of the bridge in chapters four and five after the letters to the seven churches and introduction that we found in the first three chapters. So the first section was chapters one through three. The second section, chapters four and five, the heavenly scene that precedes the opening of the seals, which begins in chapter six.

Chapter six is where we find ourselves. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our concentration, our ability to understand what is here and to see its pertinence and application in our lives. And we will begin.

Father, how grateful we are for the opportunity to be raised above the earthly and the mundane, the temporal, the transitory, and to see eternal truths, to see the outline of your plan and purpose, and to see our place and role in it as we learn principles and truths by observing what you have done in the past, what you are doing in the present, and what you will do in the future. We thank you for detailing the Lord Jesus Christ to reveal these things to us through his servant, the Apostle John. We're grateful for this account, and we pray that as we look at it together, you will bless it to our hearts through the ministry of your spirit, so that we can be strengthened with might in the inner man.

We can have a perspective that keeps us balanced and effective in our reflection of the glory of the Lord Jesus as we seek to represent him on this earth as his body until the day when he comes to take us to himself. We pray that each one will find a meaningful blessing in the material we covered tonight, that we will be motivated to faith, hope, and love in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Let's review our passage. We have chapter six opening with John looking when the lamb opens one of the seals.

He hears one of the four living creatures. This is actually number one of the four living creatures saying with a loud voice like thunder, calm. 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. Let's take a look at this first seal. First of all, the voice like thunder issuing from the first of the four living creatures.

You know what this is like when you're outside. It can be a sunny day. You don't notice any clouds immediately overhead, but the harbinger of a change in the weather and a coming

storm.

Often the first thing we know if we haven't watched a weather forecast is thunder. We will hear the rumbling of thunder and know that there is an inversion. There's going to be cold air and warm air encountering each other and producing condensation, cumulus clouds and thunderheads.

And next thing you know, there is a significant change. That's what this voice of thunder represents. It is a harbinger of darkness to come.

With that voice authorizing the riding forth of the white horse with its rider, we see with John, he who sat on the white horse has a bow. What do we know about a bow? It shoots arrows. And this is the earliest form of artillery.

I like to think it is a means of projecting force at a distance. And when you have archers, when you have someone with a bow, there's not the kind of defense that you can make if someone is going to throw punches or attempt to run you through with a spear or hack you with a sword. This is the projection of force at a distance.

And evidently this individual, because he is not shooting arrows in this picture, he has a bow. And so those who view him are given the impression that he has the ability to exert force at a distance. You could imagine in the modern day, this would be the possession of intercontinental ballistic missiles, ICBMs, or an air force or a Navy that can, from a distance, launch cruise missiles or other kinds of weaponry that put you in a purely defensive posture.

It's very difficult to get at the launch site. Forty odd years ago, when I was called to Lebanon multiple times, one of the reasons they wanted me to come back as an artillery person was that there were rocket attacks from MLRS, multiple rocket launch systems. These were highly mobile.

The bad guys had them. They would pull in, launch their rockets, and before those things had even impacted at or near the target, the launcher had driven away. What can you do by way of suppression of that kind of weapon, unless you can see it before it strikes? So in the world in which we live, this bow would seem to represent the potential.

And you have the idea that this is the threat of the use of force from a distance that suppresses the ambitions of those who might want to exercise their own form of government or hegemony or expansion, and you have this deterrent effect. So the bow would easily serve as a metaphor for that kind of power. Secondly, and interestingly, the word here in Greek and in the Septuagint where Greek translates Genesis, this word is also used for a rainbow.

God says, I will put my bow in the clouds. I will put my bow in the sky. What does the rainbow represent? It is a reminder of a covenant.

And there are some who see this bow and think that this is, it is of course an actual archery type

of bow, but that there is a double entendre or a pun, which scripture uses many figures of speech. And these words that have a double meaning are not uncommon, especially in prophetic scripture. And it may also be that this rider on the white horse is achieving a kind of peace through both the threat of projection of strength at a distance and by making treaties, using that as leverage.

I want to pause here and say that it is a fascinating come to pass in recent years. I just heard today, and I've heard it often over recent months, that our current president, Mr. Trump, beginning in 2016, introduced a new kind of politics and a new kind of public persona and policy implementation that has not previously been seen. And he did that in domestic politics and has done for the last 10 years.

In this second term, he is now crafting and implementing a new kind of international policy. They're calling it the Don Roe doctrine, which is the somewhat eclectic and hybrid use of force, where the offer of peace and the use of leverage via economic sanctions or tariffs or whatever, and appeals through diplomatic channels don't work. You never know when he's going to pull out the big guns and just get done what he wants done.

Mr. Trump is not the beast. He's not the antichrist. But I do think that the innovation that he has established, both domestically and internationally, because of its success, is going to be imitated and may be adopted and expanded by those down the road.

He'll be in office, if he doesn't get removed sooner, for another three years. And we always pray God's protection on all of our leadership, whether we agree with them or not. Violent removal is what communist dictatorships do and other very bad forms of government.

We are supposed to operate peacefully and democratically. I will say as a brief commentary on current events, it is somewhat hypocritical to label your political opponent as a threat to democracy and then encourage your people to try to use force and threat and mob violence to perpetrate your views about domestic policy, rather than finding ways to vote in people who will implement your policies. And it is extremely obvious to those who are more objective that calling for your opponents to be democratic and then use underhanded tactics to try to further your own objectives is very blatantly hypocritical.

I say that to say this, it is so easy to see in someone else what we don't observe in ourselves. And this is human nature, unregenerate, on display. This is human nature, even regenerate, even among believers and those who claim Christ as their savior, who have not had minds renewed by the cleansing grace of God to remove sin and the regenerative power of the word and the spirit.

And when we see people with whom we disagree politically or socially or economically acting out in ways that are extremely destructive and counterproductive, we should stop and think. There isn't anything I can do about what mobs of people are perpetrating in other cities. And if my TV didn't work, I wouldn't even know about it.

But when I do observe it, I should be able to say, there but for the grace of God go I. And we should avail ourselves of God's grace that we don't partake of that same kind of blindness to our own foibles, inconsistencies, injustices, wrong-headed judgments, and appeal to the objective standard of God's word in the hands and in the light of God's spirit to balance us so that our moderation can be known to all because the Lord is at hand. The Lord is nearby observing, and we will one day be judged. And I am much more concerned about my future judgment than on some crowd in a city in a different state.

So when we see these examples, rather than strut and fret and expostulate about the criminality and the unfairness and injustice of it all, we should use that energy to examine ourselves and ensure that we are in the faith and that we're not looking at the last half of Romans chapter 1 and then perpetrating Romans chapter 2 ourselves. By patient continuance in well-doing, we should be seeking for glory and honor and immortality, the immortality that follows hard on the heels of the study we're undertaking here in Revelation. So as we look at these seals lifting and events unfolding as they do, we want to be watching for personal application.

And I have some suggestions on that as we continue, especially for these first four. So what do we see? This is this rider coming forth and with the apparent ability to project force at a distance represented by the bow. A crown has been given.

This could either be democratic election. This could be acclamation. This could be someone who is selected by other leaders who say, you're obviously the man for the hour, but he goes forth conquering and to conquer.

And the crown that he wears is the victor's crown. But he doesn't take that crown by conquest. It is given to him.

And ultimately, this crown being given to him is under the oversight and the authority of God himself. We're going to see that here in just a minute. So he is given a crown and he is riding the white horse.

White is the color of purity, of righteousness. He seems to be motivated to do what is best and to do what is right. So much so that some interpreters, even pretty good Bible scholars, have said, well, this is Jesus Christ because in Revelation 19, he's riding a white horse.

But this is an imitation. This is a knockoff. And Jesus warned about this.

You see parallels in Matthew chapter 24 and Luke chapter 21 for what unfolds here. For example, Matthew 24 verses four and five, looking at this first seal. This is a conquering figure.

He appears authoritative. He appears to be a good guy. He is given a conqueror's crown.

He's the subject of Jesus' warning. Jesus in Matthew 24, four and five, Jesus answered and said to them, take heed that no one deceives you. Many shall come in my name saying, I am Christ

and shall deceive many.

You can debate whether that quote, many shall come into my name saying, are they saying that our Lord Jesus is the Christ? Are they affirming Christian truth in order to get those who claim Christ on their side or are they saying that they themselves are a new Messiah? And again, Scripture often doesn't say one is right and one is wrong. They can both be true. And he can both be acknowledging that the Lord Jesus is Christ to sit at ease the minds of people who think, oh, he could be the antichrist.

He says, no, no, Jesus is the Christ. And yet he is basically claiming to be the savior of the current situation. And he will bring in peace and he will bring in prosperity.

And he makes these promises. And if anyone argues, I've got the bow, don't make me knock an arrow and start shooting them. So I would like to suggest that these horsemen that appear at the breaking of the first four seals, the man on the horse, these are not necessarily separate individuals.

These are metaphors. And I think that these are phases and they are chronologically successive. These are phases of the implementation of the rule of the beast, popularly called the antichrist.

And is the writer of the antichrist? It more represents the implementation of his power and authority. He's not actually getting off of one horse and climbing onto another and riding back out again, but these are the phases. And so phase one, I would call this of the program of the beast is he appears, he is recognized by acclamation.

Yes, please. You fix this. You've got the skills.

You've got the persona. Think of our current president only internationally on steroids. And when this individual comes inspired by Satan, I think he's going to be reading the Donald Trump playbook and seeing what worked in our present day.

I think this is a sort of a foretaste, a preview of coming attractions. So he's going to appear and his cause is just, he's going to use power projected at a distance as a lever, and he's going to dominate. You either it's my way or the highway.

Jesus warned about this again, don't be deceived. Many will come and they're going to try to follow the pattern of the Lord Jesus where he's the lamb and he's not wanting to hurt anyone. And this is the caricature of the first coming of the Lord Jesus.

He's peaceful and he's not judgmental. And all he wants to do is promote love and harmony and prosperity for everyone. Many will be deceived.

In Luke 21, verse eight, Jesus says, take heed that you are not deceived. Many shall come in my name saying, I am Christ. I think both things can be true.

And the time draws near. Do not be fooled by them. Do not go after them.

The second seal opens and the second living creature says come. And another horse, the second horse, fiery red went out and it was granted to the one who rode on it to take peace from the earth and that people will kill one another. And there was given to him a great sword.

Notice again, the first rider is given a crown. This second one is granted the ability to take peace from the earth and is given a great sword. I think this is phase two of the coming beasts policy.

He's going to begin and lead with peace through strength. I just want the best for everyone. I'm on the white horse.

Don't make me use this bow. And that's going to work for a while. And he may also, the bow may represent covenant.

He'll make treaties. He will contract peaceful coexistence, but it will fail. It always fails because of human nature and people will not recognize that the current situation is actually what is best for them.

They will want more. And the corrupt fallen nature of people is concentrated when you group them. And this is why there is much greater crime in urban areas.

You congest people. I've said many times, it reminds me of nuclear fission. You get nuclear material and condense it enough.

It will go nuclear. And when the peaceful approach fails, when they don't respond to treaties and they don't listen to the threat represented by the bow, now the policy will change. I'm going to bring the sword.

And you notice in the millennial kingdom, the Lord Jesus rules with a rod of iron. He will shatter opponents. He doesn't conquer them with a bloody sword.

He smashes their ability to cohere. He will separate them into fragments that can't get together and make an effective opposition. But it appears to be bloodless in that sense, where you rule with a rod of iron.

He doesn't rule with a giant, sharp, two-edged sword. This second phase says, what I can't achieve by peaceful ends, I will endeavor to implement with conflict and warfare and people will start killing each other. And he's going to lose control of these that he's endeavored to subjugate in phase one.

So in Matthew 24, this is verses six and seven. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. Don't be troubled.

All these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. Sequentially with what we just saw in the first seal, Luke 21 verses

nine and 10, you'll hear of wars and commotions.

Don't be terrified. These things must first come to pass, but the end is not by and by. Nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom.

So when the peace fails, believers are not to be terrified, not to be troubled. That brings you to the third seal in verse five. When he, the lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, there's no doubt that these are in order by face, as we saw last time.

So fascinating, isn't it? To see that the reflection and expression of these identities of the lion and the ox and the face of a man and the flying eagle are reflected in what happens as each of them calls forth a horse and a horseman. So the third living creature, this is the one with a face like a man. This is human intelligence trying to orchestrate, dominate, organize, systematize supply and demand and economic governmental functioning.

Come, I looked and behold a black horse and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. This you would think is peaceful. The bow and the sword in the first two represent the threat of force.

Here is the scale. What is equivalent to what? It's all about exchange and economy. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures.

Notice this voice is not the third living creature or one of the other three. This voice comes from the midst of the four living creatures. Who's speaking? We just saw in the preceding chapter the description in verse six.

I looked and in the midst of the throne and in the midst of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders stood a lamb as though it had been slain. Seven horns, seven eyes and so on. So when the voice comes, the individual that we have specifically seen described as being in the midst of the living creatures is the lamb as it had been slain.

This is apparently and evidently the Lord Jesus speaking. And notice what he says, a quart of wheat for a denarius and three quarts of barley for a denarius do not harm the oil and the wine. You know, a denarius from the parable of the workers in the field is a day's wage in the ancient world.

And so a quart of wheat, that's enough to get one person through a day. What this indicates is you can't reduce how much someone can buy beyond the sustenance level, the subsistence level. If someone works all day long, they will be able to buy just enough food to keep them alive to work tomorrow.

Three quarts of barley, if someone is working to sustain a family, they're going to have to go down. Barley is normally sort of animal food. This is what you feed the stock.

Poor people eat barley bread because it's what they can afford. And so you'll get three quarts.

This is enough for a husband and wife and, you know, two children on average in families.

And so someone can work all day long and get enough barley to keep themselves and their family alive. But wheat, barley, oil, and wine are staples. They are the basic subsistence items.

And you can't live on oil and you can't live on wine. The food here, and of course, wheat and barley represent in the modern world, what you can afford to put on the table. This could be soda crackers and pork and beans.

It could be, you know, hot dogs and macaroni and cheese. It's low level food that keeps body and soul together. So the idea here is that this is very harsh economic condition, but not enough that people are dying of starvation.

If they are willing to work, they can stay alive. And the Lord Jesus limits the economic leverage, the economic pressure that the third phase of the beast's plan will put on people. The Lord Jesus basically ensures that they are able to stay alive so that there is still an opportunity to repent.

There's still an opportunity to recognize that this is not a genuine answer to man's problems. And there is the opportunity to turn before things get any worse. There's already conflict and warfare and bloodshed.

There is already economic hardship, but they're not starving to death. They're not having to go through some of the awful stages that are represented in cities under siege in the ancient world, where some of the things people have to do to stay alive are beyond description. This is regulated.

It is limited. And all of these things, the speaking of the living creatures, what is given and allowed for the beast to implement. He's given the crown.

He's given the sword. He's given the ability to take peace away when he wants to. And he's given the ability to exert economic leverage, but only up to a point.

It reminds you of the wonderful promise to believers that we're never tested above what we're able to bear. And it is clear that the purpose of allowing these increasing levels of hardship and oppression and suffering is to grant the opportunity to turn and to repent before things progress to where we know they're going a bit later on in the program. So the voice of the Lord Jesus of the lamb as it had been slain says this far and no farther reminds you of God's instructions to Satan in the first two chapters of Job.

This is what you can do, but no more. You can take what he has, but don't touch him. You can touch him, but you can't take his life.

And even in allowing the enemy to pursue his program, God establishes limits. We know later on, Jesus says about this timeframe, except those days were short, no flesh would be saved. But

for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened.

God permits things up to a point. And there's wonderful application for us in this. And what I would like to suggest is the following.

These are written for our instruction. The first seal, the offer of false peace. This can be the threat to our personal peace.

We are troubled. We're unsettled. There is conflict.

There's relationship issues. There's all kinds of other things that want to take away our peace. And we crave peace.

We want to feel settled and secure and have a reasonable amount of satisfaction and joy in our lives. Where do we turn? There is the offer of peace represented by this white horse going forth and everyone turns to him. He's got this crown.

He seems to have the leverage to bring about peace. And you turn, I'll give you just a few verses for personal application. Jeremiah chapter six, verse 14.

There are those who appear and Jeremiah says, speaking for the Lord, they have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly saying, peace, peace. When there is no peace, this will work. This will solve the problem, but it doesn't.

Matthew chapter 24, verses four and five. Many will be deceived. Here's the Christ.

He's going to bring in the peaceable kingdom. And it's a deception. Colossians two, eight through 10, beware, lest anyone spoil you through philosophy and empty deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudimentary principles of the world and not after Christ.

In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in him. He is the head.

He is the authority over all principality and power. Even in this 70th week, this time of Jacob's trouble, he is still the authority over it. He regulates it.

He limits it. He oversees it. He lets it go for a space of time.

And it's the same in our lives. Hardship and difficulty are allowed, but it is always under the oversight of the Lord Jesus. He will not suffer the righteous to be moved.

He will use it to bless us and turn hardship into blessing. The second seal, you have the red fiery horse coming forth. Peace is taken away and there is a sword.

And this creates fear. You've got war, civil and social unrest. You've got hostility, the society breaking into factions.

And what does Jesus promise in John 14, 27? Peace, I leave with you. My peace, I give to you. Not as the world gives.

We're not going to find peace from what the world provides. Not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Jesus reiterates what we find at the beginning of that 14th chapter. Let not your heart be troubled. Don't let fear come in because of situations, circumstances, what's on the news.

Psalms 46, verses one through three. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear.

Though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, the fixtures and structures that we've taken for granted, suddenly there's upheaval and there's complete instability around us. We will not fear. Though the waters thereof roar and are troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof, Selah.

We will not fear. Our hope and trust are in God. Romans chapter 12, verse 18.

What we can do given the promise of God to receive and dwell in his peace, we should endeavor to live peaceably with others. We should not be the source or the cause of a lack of peace. So Romans 12, 18, as much as it is possible to the extent that it is possible and within your power, as much as lieth in you, says the King James, live peaceably with all men.

We experience God's peace. We should be beacons of peace and the hope for peace. And we should not be the cause of conflict and disturbance.

The third seal, economic pressure, scarcity, lack of subsistence. You remember Matthew chapter six, right in the middle of the sermon on the Mount, take no thought saying, what shall we eat? What shall we drink? Where with all shall we be clothed? This is what the Gentiles seek. The godless, your heavenly father knows that you have need of all these things.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. These things will overtake you. These things will be added unto you.

When you quit worrying about them and pursuing them, they will suddenly appear. Hebrews chapter 13, verse five, let your lifestyle. The King James says your conversation, let your lifestyle be without covetousness.

Be content with such things as you have. God has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. That's what counts.

We saw this in first Timothy chapter six, verses six through eight. Godliness with contentment, that's prosperity. That is gain.

That is genuine possession. We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry

nothing out. Having food and clothing, let us be content with that.

God will supply your needs. Your basic needs are promised by God and we qualify for the fulfillment of that promise when we ensure that we are godly. We are oriented to God's grace and God's faithfulness and we aim our faith at it.

Well, that brings us to the fourth seal by way of personal application. Let's pause here and take our break. Enjoy our special music.

When we come back, we'll take a look at the fourth, fifth, and sixth seals, not only with what they portend in this time after we leave the earth, but we'll answer for ourselves the question, what does that mean to me? Let's pause here and take our break.