

Revelation 6: The First Two Seals and the Great Sword

Revelation 6:1–4 | Sunday, April 26 | Revelation Series

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OVERVIEW

The first stretch of this hour repeats the close of the last one — the pronoun in Daniel 9:27, the 144,000, the two halves of the seven years — and then Hal reaches the point he has been building toward. Even some of the greatest Bible teachers he has known, he says, miss it: war does not begin in Revelation 6 until the middle of the seven years, when the abomination that causes desolation is set up and the sacrifices are stopped. He reads Matthew 24:15–22 for the timing and 2 Thessalonians 2 for what the abomination is. Only then does he open the seals. The rider on the white horse has a bow but no arrows — he has control of military power and can use it, but does not have to. The second seal is the red horse, granted to take peace from the earth, and to make men slaughter one another, with a great sword given to him. Hal spends the last stretch on that sword, the makhaira, and on the Roman legionnaire trained to use it.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Revelation 6:1–4 — The first and second seals — the white horse, and the red horse that takes peace from the earth

Daniel 9:27 — The Antichrist causes sacrifice and sacrifices to stop in the middle of the seven

Revelation 11:2–3 — Forty-two months, and the days of the two witnesses — the two halves of the week

Daniel 12:11–12 — 1,290 days, and blessed is he who attains to the 1,335 days

Zechariah 12:10 — They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and mourn as one mourns for his only son

Matthew 24:15–22 — Flee to the mountains when the abomination stands in the holy place; for the sake of the elect the days are cut short

2 Thessalonians 2 — The man of lawlessness takes his seat in the temple of God and declares himself to be God

Daniel 11 — The invasion — and the armies spared

Ezekiel 38 — The beginning of this war

KEY TERMS

The abomination that causes desolation — a technical Jewish phrase for desecrating the holy of holies; here, the man of lawlessness declaring himself to be God in the temple

Makhaira — the short Roman sword — a blade of about 24 inches, straight, pointed, sharp on both edges — and in that day the symbol of weapons of war

Megale — great; put in front of the sword, it means the rider is given a great weapon with which to let men slaughter each other

A bow with no arrows — control of military power that he can use but does not have to

“Go,” not “come” — how Hal translates what the living creature says at the breaking of each seal

The elect — those who believe during this time — the ones for whose sake the days are cut short

Sanctified guess — Hal's own name for a conclusion he draws but does not claim the text states

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Answer from the message itself. Every answer is in the teaching.

1. How does Hal identify the “he” who confirms the covenant for one seven?

2. What is the order of events at the beginning of that last seven?

3. What two purposes does Hal say those seven years serve for Israel?

4. What does Zechariah 12:10 say they will do, and how does Hal describe it?

5. How do the two numbers in Revelation 11:2–3 divide the seven years?

6. What is Hal's sanctified guess about the extra days in Daniel 12:11–12?

7. In Matthew 24, what does Jesus tell those in Judea to do, and why does he mention pregnant women and the sabbath?

8. What is the point in Revelation 6 that Hal says even great Bible teachers miss?

9. Why is the rider on the white horse given a bow and a crown?

10. Why did general allenby dismount before entering Jerusalem, and what did his entry bring to an end?

11. What is granted to the rider on the red horse, and what does the Greek word behind “killed” actually mean?

12. What was the makhaira, and what does a great sword mean here?

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

1. Hal says the world will hand itself to a man because it is terrified of war and he appears able to stop it. What are people most afraid of now, and what would they trade to be rid of the fear?

2. The bow has no arrows. How much of the power you have seen used over you has been threat rather than force?

3. Jesus tells people to run and not go back for a coat. What in your life would you find hardest to leave behind at a moment's notice?

4. Hal says God grants the rider the sword and lets men slaughter one another — he lets them do it. What do you make of God permitting what he hates?

5. He calls it prewritten that Israel will look on the one they pierced and mourn. Where have you seen grief become the doorway to faith rather than the end of it?

6. General allenby got off his horse because he believed the Bible said the city was not his to enter as a conqueror. What conviction of yours has cost you a gesture like that?

MEMORY VERSE

“And to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men should slaughter one another; and a great sword was given to him.”

— Revelation 6:4, as Hal reads it in this message