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# Heaven to Earth

## CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

*bimonthly (interim) schedule*

**1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of the month**

**3<sup>RD</sup> WEDNESDAY: 18<sup>TH</sup> OF DECEMBER**

**(NEXT BIBLE STUDY: TUESDAY, 14<sup>TH</sup> OF JANUARY)**

**12 NOON IN 318 CLOB (& ZOOM)**

☞ LUNCH PROVIDED FOR THOSE ATTENDING ☜

With so many telecommuting on Tuesdays, the Capitol Commission (interim) Bible Studies are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of the month. We will resume meeting (weekly) on Tuesdays when the legislative session begins. The *bimonthly Bible studies* are *nonpartisan* and *non-denominational*, in addition to being *open-to-all* (i.e. the entire Capitol community). For the month of December, we continue a new exposition of Scripture with the New Testament book of Revelation.

We have an in-person Bible study in 318 CLOB (Senate Committee Room) *and* also use Zoom. Scripture is taught so that everyone has the opportunity to comment or ask a question.

If you would like to learn more regarding the ministry of Capitol Commission, please visit <http://www.capitolcom.org>. *Capitol Commission's prayer is that this study will be edifying to you.* The sole intent of this ministry is to serve you, as a resource for pastoral attention, counsel, and prayer. *The present Bible study is just one aspect of that desire.*

– Dr. Ron J. Bigalke, Georgia State Minister, Capitol Commission

## Capitol Commission Bible Study

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**Wednesday, 18 December 2024**

**Revelation 6 — “Heaven to Earth”**

There are many reasons why Bible-believing individuals may hesitate to give emphasis to the doctrine of Messiah's coming in the same manner as the early church. Nevertheless, it is impossible to maintain belief in the deity of Jesus Christ and the truth of biblical revelation if the doctrine of the promised coming is permanently or persistently neglected. The common understanding of the Ante-Nicene period (the time in church

history until the First Council of Nicaea) was belief in the visible reign of Christ in glory on earth. The Apostles' Creed (of the Post Nicene period) affirms that Jesus Christ “will come to judge the living and the dead.” Angels told the apostles, “This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

Inviting crucifixion with his words, Jesus said, “hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, AND COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN” (Matt 26:64). The doctrine of Messiah's coming is an integral component of the faith once given to believers. Although it is not possible to know when Messiah will appear (Matt 24:36), He is definitely coming and those trusting in Him must always be ready for his advent. Revelation 6 reveals a preview of events preceding Messiah's coming.

## THE FOUR HORSEMEN

(Rev 6:1-8) Revelation 4—5 revealed events in heaven involving God's throne room. John was still “in the Spirit” (under the Lord's control), though now from heaven, he witnessed events impacting earth. The Lamb in heaven is seen to be controlling the global activities of peoples and nations.

When “the Lamb broke one of the seven seals,” the first series of God's judgment will come upon the earth (v. 1). By the time of the sixth seal, God's “wrath” will be evident (v. 17). When the first seal was broken, John saw “a white horse” emerge (v. 2). The horseman wore a crown as emblematic of victory and “had a bow” with him. Apparently, he will conquer through diplomacy since arrows are not mentioned.

The fact that the white horse rider wears a *stephanos* and the Lord Jesus Christ wears a *diadēma* does not differentiate the two horsemen, since Christ is later said to wear a golden *stephanos* (14:14). What distinguishes them is that one holds a bow and the other a sword. The *stephanos* worn by the first seal horseman puts an emphasis upon the counterfeit nature of false messiahs, with the conquering being in reference to their progress. Other biblical texts depict the bow as a component of deceit and ruin (Ps 11:2; 78:57; Jer 9:8; Hos 7:16; Eph 6:16). The fact that the sword of the Lord Jesus Christ is the very Word of God seems to imply that the bow is some form of biblical distortion that leads to the deception and ruin of those heeding that proclamation.

A false peace and security, in addition to religious apostasy, develops into multiple wars near and far from the land of Israel. Apparently, the false messiahs inspire their devotees to insurrection and wars. The second seal horseman (Rev 6:3-4) is an obvious parallel to Jesus' Olivet Discourse (Matt 24:6-7a; Mark 13:7-8a; Luke 21:9-10).



The prophesied warfare is part of what Jesus called “the beginning of birth pangs” (Matt 24:8), which is climaxed by his coming from heaven to earth. The third seal horseman, or black horse rider, brings famine, which is a foreboding precursor to the pale horse rider. His “scales” imply a rationing of food (Rev 6:5-6). The third seal will likely be broken shortly after the second seal judgment since famine often follows warfare.

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**THE LAMB IN HEAVEN IS SEEN TO BE CONTROLLING THE GLOBAL ACTIVITIES OF PEOPLES AND NATIONS.**

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The horse to emerge from the scroll when the fourth seal is broken is described as being “ashen” in color, which is a pale to yellowish-green color (vv. 7-8). The rider “had the name Death, and Hades was following with him.” He will have the ability to claim the physical lives of earth dwellers, resulting in their nonmaterial parts sent to “Death” and their bodies to “Hades” (the grave) to await final judgment.

The Lord Jesus Christ providentially casts the world of humanity into horrible confusion and disintegration, in addition to financial and social ruin. The judgment arises from the throne room of God in response to human depravity. “Authority was given” to the horsemen, indicating the Lord’s sovereignty.

### THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD

(Rev 6:9-17) A change in the revelation pattern occurs when the Lord breaks the fifth seal. Previously, a horse and rider emerged from the seal; now, John was given a vision, not of things on earth, but of an altar in heaven, where he saw the souls of “those who had been slain because of the word of God” (v. 9). Believers have been persecuted and martyred throughout the centuries. Jesus admonished, “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me” (Matt 10:38; cf. 16:24).

The mention of the martyrs immediately following the first four seals implies some relationship between their deaths and the horrible conditions resulting from the four horsemen. The martyrs are seen as being in the Lord’s presence clothed in white robes, which signifies a completed redemption (v. 11). Vindication is the plea coming from those martyrs (v. 10).

When the sixth seal is broken, there again is no mention of a horse or rider. John received another vision in which he observed phenomena more catastrophic than previously seen. The sixth seal will affect the land, sea, and sky (vv. 12-13). Celestial disruptions are frequently related to the coming of Messiah (cf. Isa 34:4; 50:3; Ezek 13:5-16; Joel 2:10-11, 31; Zeph 1:14-16).

Isaiah 42:5 reveals how the Lord God “created the heavens and stretched them out.” Isaiah 34:4 declares, “all the host of heaven will wear away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll.” People in antiquity perceived the sky as a vaulted dome covering the earth, which explains the idea of the sky being

“like a scroll when it is rolled up” (Rev 6:14). Scientific research demonstrates that the universe is expanding. The Hubble Space Telescope has measured the current rate of the universe’s expansion for decades. Cosmologists report the shape of the universe as being slightly curved, or scroll-like in form. John’s description is very similar to 2 Peter 3:10. God’s greatness and power will be evident through the breaking of the six seals.

All varieties of people will react to the global phenomena (v. 15). Sadly, the majority refuse to call upon the Rock of Ages (cf. Ps 71:3; Isa 26:4), and speak instead “to the mountains and the rocks” (Rev 6:16). In view of things to come, Jesus stressed the necessity for alertness, and “praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place” (Luke 12:36). Through the Lord Jesus Christ, God is “able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy” (Jude 24).

*Romans 5:1-2 – Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*1 Corinthians 15:1 – Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand.*

*1 Peter 5:12b – I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!*

Considering the wrath of God, “who is able to stand?” (Rev 6:17). The one who is justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ is able to stand (Rom 5:1-2; 1 Cor 15:1; 1 Pet 5:12b). Trust in God means looking beyond the six seal judgments to Christ Jesus, who breaks the seals, and controls the direction of history.

*Thank you for the privilege in providing you with the Capitol Commission Bible study. If we can serve you in any manner, please talk with us, or contact by email or phone.*

### About Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission exists to minister gospel hope and spiritual strength to legislators, staff, lobbyists (i.e. the entire Capitol community). The focus of our ministry is people as opposed to politics, and thus to be a spiritual resource to the legislature. Our ministry strategy is expressed by pastoral presence, the proclamation of the Bible, and fervent prayer for every legislator.

God values civilization. The Hebrew word *shalom* (“peace”) testifies to the Lord God’s desire for society. When peace describes society, it refers to a prosperous and wholesome civilization. God has a high standard for governing authorities, referring to them as his ministers (Rom 13:4). He desires their salvation and for them to have knowledge of his truth (1 Tim 2:1-2). Our passion is the same as the Lord God, which is why Capitol Commission provides hope “behind the scenes” through a ministry of presence.

The gospel “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16). The Bible provides equipping “for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17). Capitol Commission state ministers value prayer because we exist as a ministry to people. God hears and answers prayer! “The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (Jas 5:16b).

Capitol Commission is a charitable and religious nonprofit corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Capitol Commission is supported by the generous gifts of businesses, churches, and individuals. Capitol Commission is not state funded; rather, those with a heart for the Capitol community fund it. If you would like to partner with Capitol Commission, Georgia with your talents, time, or treasure, please contact us by email, mail, or phone; or, visit online at [www.capitolcom.org](http://www.capitolcom.org).

