



– an uncluttered approach –

SIMPLIFYING

REVELATION

- Ch. 4-5 displayed the throne room in heaven & the glory of God.
- Ch. 6 is a huge contrast – we are brought back to the reality of this present life on earth through the image of the Lamb opening the seals on the scroll.



Jesus conquering hearts...



Violence reigns on earth...



Sorrow, distress & hardship...



Death & Hades (specifically non-peaceful deaths)...

4

Horsemen



ZECHARIAH 6 | **the four chariots**

- Seals 1-4 reveal 4 horses & their riders.
 - White, red, black & pale.
 - There are similarities between John's vision and **ZECHARIAH 6**.
 - There, the horses and chariots are "...four spirits of heaven, who go out from their station before the Lord..." (v 5).
 - They are sent to accomplish the Lord's will (stir repentance; exercise and execute judgment).
 - They black & white horses went to the "north country," referring to Assyria & Babylon (Jer 1:13-15; 4:6; 6:1, 22; 10:22; Eze 26:7; Zeph 2:13).
 - These nations were destroyed by the time of Zechariah, thus the text says the northern horses had "...given rest to My spirit in the north country" (v 8).

- They were the object of God’s wrath, though He employed them to punish His own people, they went beyond His plan (1:12-15).
- These first 4 seals reveal the condition of the world. For the most part, it is a grim picture in contrast to the throne room scene of the previous chapters.
- **SEAL #1** – a white horse.
 - *“...He who sat on it had a bow; a crown was given to Him, and He went out conquering and to conquer...”*
 - The rider is not identified nor is the cause of his conquering. But the colour white is a hint. Time and again, white is used of Jesus and His people (1:14; 2:17; 3:4-5, 18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13-14; 14:14; 20:11) – purity.
 - A white horse is pictured one other time (19:11-13), *“...I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and*

His name is called the Word of God.”

- **JESUS IS THE CONQUEROR IN 6:2**, conquering the hearts of men with the gospel message.
- **SEAL #2** – a red horse...
 - *“...to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another...”*
 - There is no reason to think a specific individual is intended by the rider on the red horse, but simply that **VIOLENCE REIGNS** upon the earth.
 - It was violence in the days of Noah that caused God to destroy the world (Genesis 6:5-6, 11).
 - Violence and unrest are unavoidable consequences of a world that is filled with sin.
 - Though various trials and troubles are part of this world, Christ offers peace.
 - In 14:27, *“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid...”*
 - In 16:33, *“These things I have spoken to you, that you may have peace. In the*

world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

- **SEAL #3** – a black horse...
 - *“...a pair of scales ... ‘A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius...”*
 - Life is filled with manifold trials, **TROUBLES & DIFFICULTIES**. In this 3rd seal, the black horse, John seems to refer to days of famine & hardship. At such times a day’s wages only buys a little bit.
 - The scales may be a measuring tool (used in ancient commerce) or representative of justice.
 - Even when circumstances of this life may not seem just, God, who judges in eternity is always just.
- **SEAL #4** – a pale horse...
 - *“...power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death...”*
 - Unlike the previous riders, this one is named – death and Hades accompanied it. There is no being, angelic or otherwise known as death. “The angel of death” is a misnomer

(Ex 12:12, 23, 29).

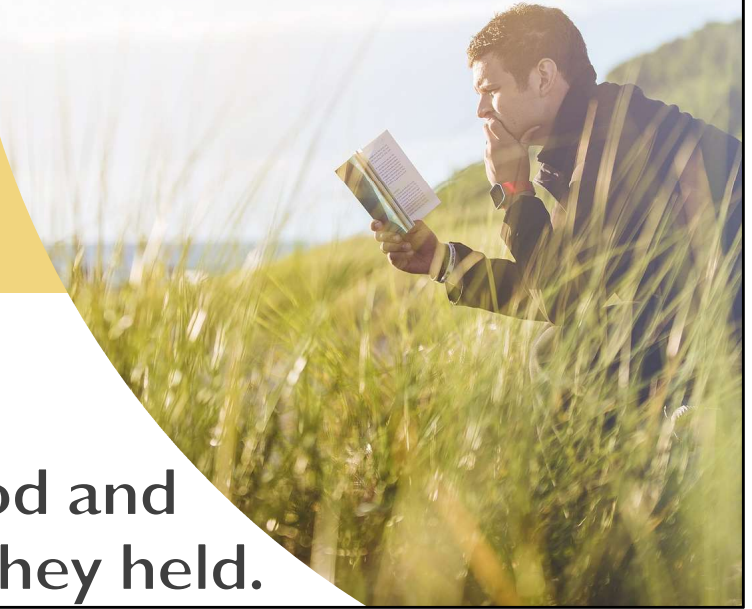
- In Revelation 6:8, “death” is personified.
- Though death is common to all, this horse and rider represent **NON-PEACEFUL DEATH**.
- A quarter of the earth – a sizeable % of the world do not die peacefully in their sleep at a ripe old age.

j u d g m e n t

How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? **(REVELATION 6:10)**

SEAL #5

...slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.



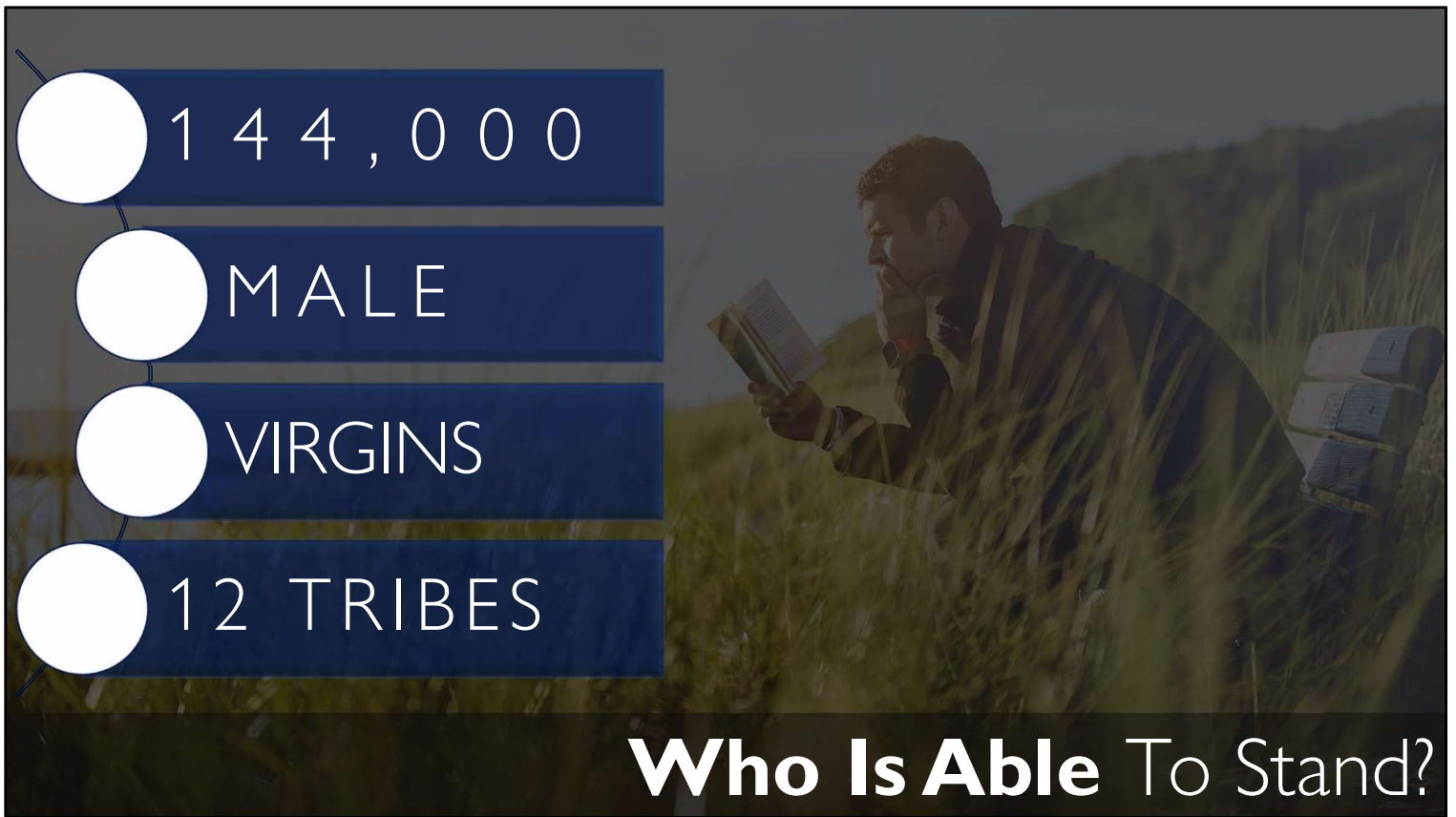
- In the remainder of ch. 6, we have 2 perspectives of the final judgment.
 - The saints who had been slain (who look forward to His coming), and
 - The wicked (who will be in terror when the Lord returns).
- In addition to being subject to all the troubles which are upon the earth (seals 2-4), Christians are also persecuted for their faith (**SEAL #5**).
 - The Bible and other historical records (Tacitus, Josephus, etc) speak of many Christians being put to death at the hand of the Romans.
 - This is not something that is limited to antiquity; there are areas today where there is great opposition to the gospel & Christianity.

- These murdered saints wondered **HOW LONG?**
 - How long before God would judge the wicked and avenge the blood on those who had persecuted them.
 - Those who remain on the earth may wonder the same thing – how long before He comes?
 - It will happen in the Lord's time. Until then, trust that God knows best.
- Until the time of His coming, the slain saints are given robes of white (purity).
 - More would die for their faith...
 - He would not come until that number is complete (v 11).
 - Inference – that number has not been complete.

judgment HAS COME

SEAL #6

- Seal #6 – verses 12-16
 - When the 6th seal is opened, the judgment has come.
 - The language used is the language of judgment (compare with Isaiah 13:10; Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15; Matthew 24:29; Acts 2:20).
 - This is not a temporal or local judgment – it is the final judgment.
 - That being the case, it is obvious the book is not a chronology. It is circular. We will come to the final judgment 5x.
- While the saints anticipate the judgment, the wicked are found hiding, desiring the rocks to fall upon them, rather than face the Lamb of God.



Who Is Able To Stand?

- The question in 6:17 (who is able to stand) is answered in ch. 7.
- The judgment is proclaimed, but restrained (7:1-3). The 4 angels are held back from destroying, until the seal of God's people is confirmed.
 - Later, we find Satan mocking the seal of the Spirit by marking those who are in bondage to him with a mark on their foreheads (Rev 13:16-17; 14:9, 11; 16:2; 19:20).
- There are **4 ATTRIBUTES MENTIONED** about those who are sealed:
 - The number of those who were sealed is given – 144,000.
 - The number and the details surrounding it are symbolic.

- There are varying interpretations of the number. A logical approach might be 12 (tribes) x 12 (apostles) x 1000 (perfection).
- All of God's people from both the OT & NT.
- In Revelation 14:4, the gender of those in the image is mentioned.
 - If taken literally, no women would be in heaven!
 - Again, it is part of a figure, not a literal description.
- Also in Rev 14:4, these 144,000 men are described as being virgins.
 - This is not an exclusion of marriage people.
 - It is a picture of purity.
- There are 12 tribes listed.
 - The listing of the tribes is not to limit this to Jews.
 - That would be especially odd, given the book was written to Gentiles.
 - Heaven is not limited to Jews. A tribe is a recognizable image of God's people.
 - This listing of the 12 tribes is unique.

Two tribes that are elsewhere included are excluded here.

- Ephraim and Dan – excluded because of idolatry (Bethel & Dan, where Jeroboam set up false worship).
- The image – God’s people cannot have any part in idolatry. Must be faithful to God.
- In verse 9, we’re told about a multitude which could not be numbered from every nation, tribe, people & tongue. Who are these?
 - Some contend it is distinct from the 144,000. Which means they limit the 144,000 to something less than all of God’s people.
 - The image is the same – recall, the number 144,000 was not literal, it is not the number of people included.
 - If you’ve ever been in a huge crowd, you’ll grasp the idea of this “unnumbered crowd.”
 - There is a sea of people – it’s not that counting them is impossible – but at a glance, they are innumerable.
- Four things are mentioned about this crowd:
 - They stand before the throne (in the

- presence of God);
- They are clothed in white robes (made pure by the Lord);
- They have palm branches in hand (tokens of joy & victory; Lev 23:40; Jn 12:13).
- They cry out “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne.”
- There is further praise to God by the elders & the living creatures (v 11-12).
 - (1) Blessing, (2) glory, (3) wisdom, (4) thanksgiving, (5) honor, (6) power, (7) might.
- Their identify is addressed (v 13-14).
 - They come out of the great tribulation and wash their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (14).
 - They went through trials in their service to God and are now rewarded.
 - Some folks get all kinds of kooky about the word “tribulation” in the book of Revelation. It simply means trials.
- The text ends with a parallel to the “...God will wipe away every tear...” text in Rev 21:4 (cf. v 16-17)

Next week...

- ❖ The Seventh Seal
 - ❖ The Seven Trumpets
 - ❖ The 144,000 are saved.
- What about the rest?

REVELATION 8-9

