

Rev. 6:1-8 *Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come." 2I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.3When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come." 4And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.5When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. 6And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine."7When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come." 8I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.*

This is where the rubber meets the road.

I mean if you're the person who is trying to close the gap between the world and christianity; you're trying to paint a picture where the secular world and the church aren't so far apart, and you're working hard to normalize things like miracles, trying to make the Bible square up - mostly - with modern rationalism, and science - (so-called)

You gloss over and explain away most or all of the miracles of the gospels so that you can keep the moral high ground of Jesus teachings - or at least a romantic fantasized version of them. Paul and the others make some useful points - where they're useful - and you can take or leave what you want of what he said - the old woman hater -

The old testament was obviously written by primitives. Select a few useful stories from there for illustration (and the children, if they're not too violent). Agree that the creation account and the flood are hebrew poetry.

There! You've "tamed" the Bible. You've civilized it and citified it!  
Almost politically correct!!

But what - OH! what - are you going to do with the revelation of Jesus Christ to Saint John?

Reading this week, a history of Eastern Montana that Tina bought me for Christmas - the author; Jonathan Raban, says; "We were high church Anglicans, to whom the book of Revelation has always been an embarrassment. p231

Chapter 6 is the jumping off point. You're forced to make a commitment at the precipice of Revelation 6:1

Either John is on an acid trip and is abducted by aliens - or -

he's as rational as you and me, and he's doing his best to find words to adequately describe what he saw!

Which is it? Do you realize that the entire genre of "science fiction" has cheapened the book of Revelation. We read through this stuff and our brains are saying that sounds like a movie I just saw, or a book I read. Great science fiction. A nice little escape from the drudge of reality.

This is real! Not only that, the author keeps telling us, the time is SOON!

*1 Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come." 2 I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.*

The question came up last week about the word "mighty" regarding the angel that asked "who is worthy". What is the significance.

I didn't come up with any definitive answers. I think chances are, since

it's the 4 cherubim around the throne who are doing most of the talking here, it may have been one of them, and they are by definition, "strong".

The other thought is the nature of the question. If it was a wimpy angel, asking

who is worthy to open the scroll??

You might have some locksmith saying, "I'll give it a shot." Strong rhetorical question, it sort of requires a strong angel.

*Vs. 1 Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder,*

The other thing is: I'm unconvinced that the church in America has a clue about the strength of the foe who is going to be defeated here.

This is a strong enemy! He's been able to hold the world captive for thousands of years! He's not going to give it up without a fight. Everything about this situation of Christ re-taking the authority to reign, the Kingdoms of this earth, is huge, and requires enormous strength.  
*saying as with a voice of thunder*

Ever had thunder hit within a few hundred feet of you? LOUD! This voice is loud, and it has authority! And it says; *"Come."*

Now the cherubim is not telling John to come over here and have a look. The voice is directed at the first horseman. *"Come."*

God is in control of all of these events. They are orchestrated according to His time clock. He is the one who directs the church to *"Come up here."* And He is the one who directs when this horseman will ride out on the scene of the great battle to take back this earth. That horseman doesn't move an inch until our God gives the direction and this cherub, or angel says; *"Come."*

*2 I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to*

*conquer.*

Who is this? Well, some folks over the centuries have said 'this is Jesus'. Jesus is the one who comes on a white horse with a crown and conquers.

Confusing, isn't it. Exactly. Exactly. Because this is anti-christ, and antichrist will come and he'll look so much like what the world expects a messiah to look like, that he fools the entire world. Almost.

Notice, this rider has a bow. No arrows. Just a bow. He's going to conquer by negotiation. By dipomacy.

Why wouldn't this be the messiah. Isn't that what He said he was coming to do. This looks like the messiah. He brings peace. Surely! This is the messiah! This is what the world will be saying. So how DO we know the difference?

*30“And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.* Mt24:30

When Jesus comes, every tribe on earth will see this event at the same time. Nothing like it ever before in all history. Every eye will see Him. It doesn't happen in a corner somewhere.

*23“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ,’ or ‘There He is,’ do not believe him. 24“For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. 25“Behold, I have told you in advance. 26“So if they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out, or, ‘Behold, He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe them. 27“For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

When Jesus comes, he comes with a sword dipped in blood. Not a bow without arrows.

So let's take a look at this 'false' messiah. The world doesn't want the true messiah. They don't want a messiah with a sword. They are enchanted with this false messiah that brings peace and ends war. That's the exact messiah they want.

*I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.*

Something happens, I don't know what, but something happens that affects the entire earth, and this man, with the miraculous help of satan, fixes it. And the entire world will be saying; *"Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"* Rev. 13:4 so That's how he conquers without any arrows. Just the bow.

I'm going out on my guessing limb here, so the Starbuck thing goes; Something happens right around the time of the rapture, and the anti-christ comes on the scene, and by miracles, fixes it.

Here's a couple of guesses. I'm a nobody who only affects 8 - 12 people, so I get to make guesses. John Mac can't get away with this. 2 possible scenarios. Maybe even tied together.

Does Israel launch a retaliatory nuclear attack to finish off the Iranian nuclear option once and for all? And if they do, does Russia march down as in Ezekiel 38-9 to retaliate against Israel. Does WWII look like it's starting up! Nuclear bombs getting thrown all over the place. Then the mountains fall on that enemy and they are annihilated. Miraculously.

And does Anti-christ get the credit somehow for stopping the war and bringing a seemingly impossible peace to the world? *"Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"*

Something happens so that the entire world bows down to him and gets on board with his peace plan.

The other scenario that I think is possible is a total world financial melt down after the rapture. And the anti-christ is the one who can, with miraculous power given by satan, put that humpty - dumpty back together. On his terms of course. With him in power over the whole earth. *"Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"*

*2 I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.*

World peace! At long last, and the world is desperate for this! Peace has come! This man has miracle powers, like a promised messiah, and he brings real peace! The world was on the precipice of ultimate disaster, and this man brings peace!

Can you not see how the whole world would bow down to *that*!

The mixture of peace and miracle power is going to be an elixir that will fool the entire earth. Every religion on earth will get on board. Including the luke warm church that was spewed from Christs mouth at the rapture.

Now I'm going to go out on my limb again, and this time I really am going to say that I'm willing to go against the grain of 98% of evangelicals. I don't know of anyone else teaching this passage quite this way. That should throw up a flag. It's supposed to.

2Thess. 2:1-12 *Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, Now this is talking about the rapture. Our gathering together to Him. No one disagree's with that. That part is easy.*

*2that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first,*

OK, stop right there, and do a word study with me about that word

apostasy. The church says that means a falling away. A large portion of the church is going to go bad, like so much rotten meat. It apostasizes and becomes luke warm spew.

That's what the entire evangelical church says about that passage. And the church fathers have pretty much agreed with that translation since the church was 3 weeks old.

Here's the difficulty I have with that. There's ALWAYS someone, some group, apostasizing, and it has been ongoing, for 2000 years. There's always tares mixed in with the wheat. There's always good looking trees that are making bad fruit. It never ends. It has always always defined the church. Good fruit and worthless fruit...together.

So how does that define anything here in what Paul is telling the Thessalonians? Don't be fooled. The 'day of the Lord' will not come unless the apostasy comes first. Apostasy is on-going! That isn't helpful.

Well, the church says, this is a really big apostasy! Oh, like the Catholic church in the dark ages? Still not helpful.

So look again at that word apostasy. The different english versions render that word for the most part with 3 possible words. The old authorized is the closest. It says "falling away". The newer translations either say apostasy, or rebellion.

At least the translation rebellion gives the idea of a definitive split into 2 companies.

Let's do a greek word study; 646 apostasía (from 868 /aphístēmi, "leave, depart," which is derived from 575 /apó, "away from" and 2476 /histēmi, "stand") – properly, departure (implying desertion); apostasy – literally, "a leaving, from a previous standing."

Well, duh. Paul's talking about the rapture in the context of the passage. And this word means one company departs, and leaves the presence of the other company. Why wouldn't you understand this as the rapture.

The spewing of the lukewarm believers out of His mouth. The final harvest of the wheat, while the tares stay behind to be gathered into the furnace.

So Paul's saying, you can't have the 'day of the lord' end time events happening if the rapture hasn't happened!

*Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the rapture comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what restrains him now, (the Holy Spirit influence in the church) so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.*

OK, here, I'll make a second departure from the mainline church. Listen to what this is saying.

*10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.*

I believe this is talking about people who have heard and understood the gospel, just like a bunch of the people I work with, who say, when this stuff all starts happening, you leave in the rapture, and all this stuff starts happening, then I'll believe.



I think not. I think this is clearly teaching that if you heard the gospel, and rejected it because you wanted to continue in wickedness, God is going to send a deluding influence, and you're going to believe the deception of the anti-christ.

*11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.*

So those people who have heard and understood the terms of the gospel, and rejected figuring, if this all starts happening, then I'll get on board, NO.

So, I'm out on that limb, separate from most of the church, and this passage in 2 Thess makes perfect sense the way I've just interpreted it, and here I'll stay.

The first event of the seals is the man of lawlessness. And here Paul tells us clearly that it won't happen until after the rapture of the saints out of the world, and also that those who rejected the truth before the rapture will go into perdition believing the delusions of the anti-christs miracle powers.

Now that doesn't in any way preclude the gospel being spread and a huge group of tribulation saints being formed. But it does blow a big hole in Tim La Haye's "Left Behind" series.

Years ago. Lots of years ago, my own sister, pulled this same thing on me. If you get raptured, then I'll believe. And I took her to this passage and said, I believe you won't get that 2nd chance. And it frightened her, and she believed. So I've held this persuasion for over 30 years. Be a Berean and prove me wrong.

I've decided this is as far as we're going to get tonight. Hopefully that's a mis-statement. The Spirit has decided, I pray.

But just to round things up, let's look at some supporting passages. Turn

to Matthew 24. The Olivet discourse. What Jesus says to the disciples fits perfectly with Revelation 6. Same thing. Same order. It's fascinating.

*Mt. 24:1-8 Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. 2And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down." 3As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"*

*4And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. 5"For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.*

Stop right there. That's the first horseman of the apocalypse. False messiahs. Deception. He'll mislead many. That's exactly what we've just seen

*6" You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. 7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,*

2nd horseman of the apocalypse. We'll be there next week. War.

*and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.*

3rd horseman of the apocalypse. Famine. Luke adds pestilence. Earthquakes. And implied, is the 4th horseman of the apocalypse. When you have war and pestilence and famine and natural disaster, death and hades follow immediately.

Same order.

*8" But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.*

Daniel's account in Daniel 9:27 also starts with this false peace;

27*“And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”*

The anti-christ will make a covenant with Israel. He will be the protector of Israel. I'm really curious how Ezekiel 38 and 39 play into that covenant. Every day I turn the news on to see if Israel has bombed Iran.

However this comes about, Israel is the key. It's going to revolve around Israel. How much will we get to see, before we're removed? I really don't know.

In recapping; 2 things to think about. The anti-christ comes on the scene almost immediately after the church is raptured. Most of the world will be fooled. Deluded. They will think he's the messiah. He'll bring about a peace that is nothing short of miraculous. The world is going to think their messiah has come.