

Lamb's Book | Chapter 13 | Fourth Seal in Revelation - Beginning of Judgment Day.

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The Judgment of the Living is Coming Soon

“When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, ‘Come!’ I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the Earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the Earth.”

(Revelation 6:7,8)

Seal #4 - Pale Horse – Coming Soon

When Jesus breaks the fourth seal, the Holy Spirit will leave Heaven’s temple and begin a campaign of horrific death and destruction which is beyond our ability to comprehend.

The fourth living creature has a face of an eagle. (Revelation 4:7) Eagles are birds of prey and are predators. Very few animals notice the swift and silent approach of a diving eagle. This face signifies sudden destruction. **“While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them *suddenly*, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.”** (1 Thessalonians 5:3, italics mine) Notice God’s use of parallel language when He was about to destroy Moab for its wickedness, He said to Jeremiah: **“This is what the Lord says: ‘Look! An eagle is swooping down [to devour, to destroy], spreading its wings over Moab.’”** (Jeremiah 48:40, insertion mine)

The words in the text, “Death” and the grave (Greek: *hades*) following “close behind,” personify the mission which the Holy Spirit “faces” when Jesus breaks the fourth seal. This combination means a fourth of Earth’s population will be killed and buried on a global scale not seen since Noah’s flood. God will display His sovereign authority to Earth’s final generation when the Holy Spirit leaves Heaven’s temple to carry out His mission. The breaking of the fourth seal also means that Judgment Day, a distressing time during which God will judge the living, has begun.

The Holy Spirit – Executioner of God’s Wrath

Jesus said, **“The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing.”** (John 6:63) Because the Holy Spirit gives life, it seems contradictory that the Holy Spirit is given the name “Death.” It is also difficult to think the Holy Spirit is implementing God’s wrath since He is called “The Comforter” in the KJV or the “The Counselor” in the NIV. Christians tend to think the Holy Spirit is the conduit for love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22,23) Therefore, it is difficult for a Bible student to associate the Holy Spirit with God’s wrath.

The problem with our genteel view of the Holy Spirit is that it produces a limited view of God. The Holy Spirit is no different in nature and character than Jesus and the Father. All three of them were in perfect unison when God destroyed the world in Noah's day, burned Sodom and Gomorrah, and destroyed Jerusalem with the Babylonians and later, with the Romans. The Holy Spirit has the same powers and prerogatives as the Father and Son.

At times, the Holy Spirit has enabled people to do incredible things. For example, Samson's great strength came from the Holy Spirit's indwelling power. **"The Spirit of the Lord came upon him [Samson] in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat."** (Judges 14:6) **"Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon him [Samson] in power. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of their belongings and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle."** (Judges 14:19)

Shortly after Jesus ascended to Heaven, the Holy Spirit surprisingly killed a husband and wife in Jerusalem for lying. This event caused early Christians to have a great deal of respect for the Holy Spirit. Here is the story: **"Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. Then Peter said, 'Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that *you have lied to the Holy Spirit* and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Did not it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, was not the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.'** When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, 'Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?' 'Yes,' she said, 'that is the price.' Peter said to her, 'How could you agree to *test the Spirit of the Lord?* Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.' At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events." (Acts 5:1-11, italics mine)

Judgment Day Is Coming! - Forth Seal

Judgment day will begin for people who are alive at the time the fourth seal is opened. **"For He [the Father] has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."** (Acts 17:31, insertion mine) God will perform astonishing signs and wonders in the heavens and on Earth to get our attention. Then, four horrific events will occur on Earth. The first event is a firestorm that will burn a third of the Earth and then two huge asteroid impacts will follow. The impacts will be civilization threatening. Finally, there will be many volcano eruptions and darkness will cover the Earth.

God's four deadly disasters will end life on Earth as we presently know it. He will mortally wound Earth's ecosystems and Earth will not recover. This will cause global famine and the clergy and laymen of the world's religious systems will be totally unprepared. The world's political leaders will not know what to do other than implement martial law. Every infrastructure created by man will implode. God's coming wrath is more encompassing and distressing than words can express. Every person on Earth will be dramatically affected. I believe almost two billion people will die during a very short period of time. God's wrath will be so extensive, so pronounced, so overwhelming, and so overreaching that many survivors will be afraid to even speak because they might further offend a very angry God. God will silence mankind's arrogance and impudence toward God and each other. The fourth seal will be deadly and serious. Jesus will halt the ways and thoughts of mankind to inform us that the time has come for Him to judge and sentence the living.

When God uses His four catastrophes to hammer the Earth, He will force the survivors to realize the reality of an angry God and the reach and power of His sovereign authority. His wrath will terrorize the whole world and in the process, He will accomplish two purposes: First, the quantity of death involved will create a whole new reality. God will put the entire world on notice that He, Jesus Christ, is Almighty God, the Ruler of Earth, and the Judge of Mankind. When you consider that over two-thirds of Earth's population does not believe that Jesus is Deity, God's wrath will be a bitter surprise. Second, while Earth's inhabitants are reeling from the destruction of everything they once trusted, Jesus will issue demands through His servants, the [144,000](#). All who put their faith in Jesus and obey His demands "shall not perish, but have everlasting life!"

The [great tribulation](#) will last 1,335 days. (Daniel 12:12) During this time, God's wrath will come in two waves. I anticipate the first wave of *seven first* plagues will last about 1,265 days and the second wave of *seven last* plagues will last about 70 days. The seven first plagues will be dreadful, but Jesus will announce a generous offer during that time. The [144,000](#) will proclaim that Jesus will save any sinner who desires eternal life if the sinner places his faith in Jesus and obeys His commandments. Tragically, billions of people will refuse the offer and will remain defiant. Ultimately, they will blaspheme the Holy Spirit and commit the unpardonable sin. When everyone has made a decision, Jesus will bring Judgment Day to a close and He will destroy everyone who refused salvation during the seven last plagues.

Jesus will accomplish many things during the fourth seal that He could not accomplish earlier. For example, His "acts of God" will humble the living so they will hear and intelligently consider the Creator's demands as well as His offer of salvation. Jesus will remove religious blinders and expose the foolishness of false gods. The [144,000](#) will speak with penetrating Holy Spirit power and clarity and millions of people will be saved! The Father deliberately designed this series of events before Jesus created the world. Remember, the Father ordained the revelation of Jesus. During the [great tribulation](#) the Father wants everyone to hear and receive the truth about His Son and be saved. (2 Peter 3:9)

Three Types of Wrath

Advocates of a pre-tribulation rapture believe “the church” will escape the [great tribulation](#). They typically combine the information from 1 Thessalonians 5:9, Romans 5:9 and Revelation 3:10 to support this claim. Unfortunately, the first two texts do not address escaping the [great tribulation](#). Instead, they address avoiding God's wrath (the penalty for sin) which is eternal death. Understand that there are three types of wrath in the Bible and the distinction between them is crucial if we wish to understand the punitive judgments that occur during the fourth seal. After reviewing the types of God's wrath, we will consider the information from Revelation 3:10.

1. The Wrath of Law

The Bible defines the *wrath of law* as the fruit or consequence that comes from doing wrong. If we violate a physical or moral law, there are consequences. Paul wrote, “**Because [the violation of] law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.**” (Romans 4:15, insertion mine) Notice how physical and moral laws work. If we violate the laws of health and eat too much on a regular basis, we will suffer for it. If we violate a moral law and are caught committing adultery, we will suffer the wrath of law (social consequences) and the innocents (the spouse, children, families involved) will also suffer the wrath of law as well. The Bible says, “**Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.**” (Galatians 6:7,8) Doing wrong by violating the law brings the consequences of the law's wrath which are sorrow, suffering, pain, and death.

2. Wrath as the Penalty for Sin

When Jesus created Adam and Eve, He immediately placed them under the obligation of this law: God said, “**But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.**” (Genesis 2:17, KJV) This law meant that God would execute Adam and Eve on the very day they sinned because the penalty for sin is sudden death by execution. God stayed the demand of this law and permitted Adam and Eve to live because Jesus offered to die in their place. However, God will not stay the wrath of the sudden death law indefinitely. God's final act in resolving the sin problem will be to execute all people who refused to embrace the Savior. God will send fire down from Heaven to execute the wicked at the end of the 1,000 years because the penalty for sin is death by execution. In Old Testament times, each time a sacrificial lamb was executed, God provided an illustrative lesson of the penalty for sin. The layman or the priest *slaughtered* the lamb on an altar and it did not die of natural causes. Even more, Jesus Himself was executed on the cross for our sins. (1 Thessalonians 2:14,15) He died this way because the penalty for sin is death by execution.

3. Wrath in the Form of Redemptive and/or Destructive Judgments

If a nation arouses God's anger with degenerate and decadent behavior, He will punish that nation with redemptive judgments. If that nation continues in defiant rebellion, God will punish that nation with totally destructive judgments. Jesus told Israel, “**But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws**

and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, then I will do this to you: I will bring upon you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and drain away your life. You will plant seed in vain, because your enemies will eat it.” (Leviticus 26:14-16)

For centuries Jesus patiently tried to get Israel to accomplish the purposes for which He delivered them out of Egypt, but due to Israel’s rebellion, Jesus sent the nation into Babylonian captivity in 605 B.C. Babylon’s first siege of Jerusalem and capture of Israel’s finest young men did not change Israel’s attitude or behavior. So, Jesus sent king Nebuchadnezzar a second time against Jerusalem in 598 B.C., but there was still no change of heart. Finally, Jesus told Ezekiel: **“For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: How much worse will it be when I send against Jerusalem my four dreadful judgments sword and famine and wild beasts and plague – to kill its men and their animals! Yet there will be some survivors – sons and daughters who will be brought out of it. They will come to you, and when you see their conduct and their actions, you will be consoled regarding the disaster I have brought upon Jerusalem – every disaster I have brought upon it.”** (Ezekiel 14:21,22)

According to His word, God sent King Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and this time the king totally destroyed the temple and the city. When God’s redemptive judgments do not produce repentance and reformation, His wrath escalates to total destruction. God caused global destruction in Noah’s day because He gave the world 120 years of probation and there was no improvement. Global destruction is coming again because God has given Protestants more than 200 years to spread the gospel and the world today mirrors the world in Noah’s day.

We have examined three types of wrath. Through Jesus, sinners can escape the penalty for sin, but no one can escape the wrath that comes from violating a physical or moral law. No sinner can escape God’s punitive judgments unless he is not at the location of the people who God intends to punish. Noah did not escape the flood; he survived the flood. Lot did not escape God’s fiery wrath on Sodom and Gomorrah; he survived the fire by leaving home and forfeiting everything he owned. Daniel did not escape God’s punitive wrath on Jerusalem; he lost his family and was taken to Babylon as a captive. Nine of the twelve apostles were martyred for their faith in Jesus! Make no mistake, the Bible says the saints will be on Earth during the [great tribulation](#): **“He [the beast] was given power to make war against *the saints* and to conquer them. And he [the beast] was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. . . I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of *the saints*, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished.”** (Revelation 13:7; 17:6, italics mine)

The Living Are Judged

Jesus will ensure that every survivor hears about His generous offer of salvation after He breaks the fourth seal! Jesus Himself will speak through the [144,000](#) and everyone will hear “the testimony of Jesus!” The Bible teaches that salvation comes through faith alone and ever since Jesus opened the first seal in 1798, the Holy Spirit has been advancing this message throughout the world. It is only by placing the entire world in a dire situation that Jesus will give the survivors a chance to live by faith regardless of religious heritage or background. The

judgment of the living involves four steps:

First: Enlightenment – Each survivor will hear God’s demands.

Second: Decision – Each survivor will thoughtfully consider God’s demands and then decide his course of action.

Third: Testing – Persecution will test the decision of each person who chooses to put faith in God.

Fourth: Sealing – God will reward those passing the test of faith, obeying Him without regard for the consequences, with the same awesome transformation he gave to the [144,000](#). A few days before the [great tribulation](#) begins, God will select the 144,000 and their sinful natures will be removed. Jesus will make the 144,000 into mirrors of Himself (the only person who lived without sinning). When Jesus sees a person enduring persecution because of his faith, Jesus will judge that person. He will remove the sinner’s sinful nature and the doorway to sin will be sealed. Suddenly, Jesus will set prostitutes, like Rahab, and demon possessed people, such as Mary Magdalene, free! Through their faith, Jesus will judge and transform all sinners. People that Jesus has sealed will no longer have any interest or attraction for sin. They will be like Adam and Eve before the fall, having no proclivity for sin!

God has designed a plan and persecution of His people has always been part of that plan. When we enter the [great tribulation](#), God will place everyone in this position. People who choose to obey God’s demands have to live by faith because they will eventually lose everything, including the right to buy and sell. The devil and his agencies will do everything possible to scare, torment, and abuse people so that they will give up their faith in God. Jesus told His persecuted followers at Philadelphia, **“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the Earth.”** (Revelation 3:10) Jesus pointed forward to an hour of trial that is coming upon the whole world and its purpose is **“to test those who live on the Earth.”** Advocates of a pre-tribulation rapture often use this verse to indicate the saints will escape “from” the hour of trial. The Greek preposition *‘ek* can be translated to mean “from the hour of trial,” but it can also be translated to mean “during the hour of trial.”

The fatal problem of the pre-tribulation rapture theory is that God is required to judge the people of Earth *prior* to the rapture, otherwise, Jesus would not be able to determine who should be raptured and who should not. So, if Jesus judges the whole world prior to the rapture, He would not need to judge the whole world *after* the rapture. The Bible does not support the idea that Jesus judges the whole world twice. Jesus is going to test everyone living on Earth at the same time. In effect, Jesus told His suffering saints in Philadelphia, “I know you are weary from years of persecution and I am aware of all the things that you have patiently endured for my sake, but do not be overcome with discouragement. I have sustained you thus far and I will continue to sustain you *during* the hour of trial that is coming upon the world.”

God Allows Persecution

Even though it may be hard to understand, God does have a reason for allowing the saints to be persecuted. Consider this scenario: After God has silenced the world with his four catastrophes, the 144,000 will tell the survivors that Jesus Christ is the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Jesus has given the world notice of His judgment and soon return. All people who wish to be a part of Jesus' coming kingdom must repent of their sins and put their faith in Him. The 144,000 will also tell the world that after creating the world in six days, Jesus rested and made the seventh day of the week holy. (Exodus 20:8-11) Jesus now requires everyone to rest from labor on *His* holy day which is Saturday, the seventh day of the week. Obviously, this will be very difficult for Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Atheists to accept.

The 144,000 will also explain that all human beings are condemned to death because all have sinned and the penalty for sin is death. The *only* way to eternal life is through faith in Jesus. Obviously, this will be difficult for Jews, Atheists, Hindus and Muslims to accept. The 144,000 will also tell the survivors that Jesus has paid the price for every repentant sinner with His own blood and He will return to Earth soon and gather the redeemed at the end of the Great Tribulation. Many of the world's survivors will scorn the 144,000 and the information they share.

The political and religious leaders of the world will respond to the 144,000's testimony with indignation and blasphemy. They will create a global government, called Babylon, trying to appease God so that He will cease His wrath. Of course, Babylon will do everything possible to make it impossible to observe God's Sabbath. In Muslim countries, Babylon will make laws to enforce Friday observance. In Catholic and Protestant countries, Babylon will make laws to enforce Sunday observance. In Israel, Babylon will make laws to enforce Saturday observance, but Israel will not embrace Jesus Christ as the Creator of Heaven and Earth! This shows that merely resting on God's Sabbath will not save a person. God does not require anyone to worship the Sabbath, instead He calls everyone to worship the Creator on His holy Sabbath day.

The devil will use Babylon to persecute everyone who puts faith in Jesus and the Creator's Sabbath will become a very inflammatory issue. Notice what the Bible says about Babylon (represented in the book of Revelation as a beast): "**He [the beast] opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander His name and His dwelling place and those who live in Heaven. He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.**" (Revelation 13:6,7, insertion and italics mine)

This is how Jesus will judge the living. Before Jesus created the world, the Father ordained that Jesus would judge the survivors during the last days of Earth's history. Because the Father foreknew the political, cultural, and religious diversity of mankind, He leveled the playing field by aligning the time of judgment with the four global disasters. Remember, Jesus does not save a person because he is a Hindu, Jew, Muslim, Catholic, or Protestant. God only saves a person by his faith which is doing whatever God commands without regard for the consequences. (Hebrews 11) During the Great Tribulation, God will abolish all religious systems because He must separate survivors of the four cataclysmic events from their religious heritage to see who will live by faith.

In a sense, the coming test mirrors Noah's day. For 120 years, Noah worked and preached that God was going to use a flood to destroy the whole world. Noah built the ark and then the antediluvians condemned themselves, by refusing to believe. They put no faith in God's message or his messenger. Jesus said, **"For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."** (Matthew 24:38,39)

Today, our world is full of antagonistic cultures, religions, and gospels. Long ago, the Father used His foreknowledge to devise a way to cut through our religious and political gridlock with "justifiable" judgments (disasters) to humble and silence the survivors. Furthermore, the Father will give the eternal gospel credibility by using the Holy Spirit to select, seal, and empower 144,000 people just *before* His judgments begin. The first four judgments will create a great theological vacuum. This vacuum is because the world's clergy do not properly understand the Bible (especially the books of Daniel and Revelation), God's wrath (the [seven trumpets](#) and the [seven bowls](#)), and God's end-time plan and purpose. Therefore, the religious leaders, as well as the laymen, will have an overwhelming surprise. People will quickly see that their religious leaders do not actually know God or His Word. Knowing God is not the same thing as knowing the framework of a religious system. God will use death and destruction to break religious paradigms. When God humbles the people of Earth and replaces cultural and religious bias, they will listen to a gospel they have not heard before. God will use this temporary vacuum to propel the eternal gospel throughout the world swiftly with little resistance. Man's resistance will come later.

God Is Looking for Honest Hearted People

God's method for judging people from every walk of life illumines a profound fact. Anyone who conscientiously does the good that he knows he should do is honest-hearted. Each time a person's knowledge of "good" expands, God challenges our honesty again. As attorney Richard J. Humpal once said, "When a man who is honestly mistaken hears the truth, he will either quit being mistaken or cease being honest."

God is constantly challenging our faith to see if we would be happy in an environment where advancing knowledge of eternal truth never ends. An honest-hearted person will embrace God's truth regardless of the consequences because he loves God and His truth. A truth-loving person, even if he died having only 1% truth, would be happy for eternity with God and the holy angels. This is because his attitude toward God is right and will continue as his knowledge of God's truth forever expands. Jesus said, **"But whoever lives by the truth comes [keeps on coming] into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has [learned and] done has been done through God [God's power]."** (John 3:21, insertions mine) The eternal gospel is so simple a child can understand it. (Revelation 14:6,7) The gospel commands all created beings to worship our Creator, Jesus Christ, and Jesus has made it clear in the Ten Commandments that His holy day is Saturday, the seventh day of the week. The 144,000 servants will proclaim this simple gospel throughout the world with great power and authority for 1,260 days. The Holy Spirit will torment each person to convict them of sin, righteousness, and

judgment to make sure they know that the 144,000's testimony is true! (John 16:8; Revelation 14:11) The honest in heart will respond to this enlightenment just like steel responds to a magnet's pull and making a decision about the Holy Spirit-filled message will separate the sheep from the goats!

God is love and Jesus is more than fair! Jesus will judge the survivors according to our faith. Each person will decide whether to embrace the eternal gospel and obey the conviction of the Holy Spirit when the price for doing so demands a sacrifice. This coming process will prove to the watching angels that anyone who loves truth and lives up to what he knows to be right and true is safe to redeem for eternity. An honest-hearted person thirsts, seeks, and welcomes more truth. Jesus said, "**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.**" (Matthew 5:6)

Summary

We have now examined all four horsemen of Revelation 6 and they reveal a very interesting progression. The first campaign began with a message to the world: Salvation through faith in Jesus. The second campaign began with Bible societies translating and distributing the Bible around the world so that people could learn Jesus' teachings. The third campaign began with a message that Jesus had started cleansing Heaven's temple by judging the dead. The fourth campaign will be a mission of wrath that will kill 25% of the world's population. This coming display of God's wrath will provide the means for the 144,000 to share the eternal gospel with people who survive these cataclysmic events. Their response to the gospel will determine their eternal destiny.

The stage is set. Earth's cup of iniquity is overflowing and its people do not anticipate that they are about to be participants in a drama. God is holding back the "four winds" of His wrath until the time He has determined. Soon, Jesus will select and seal the 144,000 (Revelation 7:1-4) and God's wrath will begin. Jesus will speak through His servants and the survivors must consider a gospel that is contrary to everything they currently believe. The Bible says that amazingly, there will be an innumerable group of people who will pass a test of faith, embrace Jesus' testimony, and be saved. (Revelation 7:9-14)

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