

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Welcome to our study of the book of Revelation using *Victory Assured!* as our guide.
- B. Purchasing the book is not necessary but will help deepen your understanding of the lessons.
- C. *Victory Assured!* is a thematic (or subject study) of the book of Revelation. *Victory Assured!* does not focus on the various details of the Revelation but rather stressed the main subjects and themes to help the reader gain the overall teachings of the book.
- D. Last week, Overcoming Spiritual Death from the letters to Sardis and Philadelphia:
Overcoming Spiritual Death (Rev. 3:1-13).
- E. This week, Overcoming Hardship (Rev. 6:1-12).

OVERCOMING HARDSHIP

I. THE SEALS.

- A. The First Seal (6:1,2).
 - 1. A representation of: **Jesus the Triumphant One.**
See Revelation 19:11-13; 2Corinthians 2:14-16.
 - 2. Jesus leads us in a triumphal procession. When I think of a procession, I usually think of death. A saddened, defeated march to the end of all living--the grave. But, in Christ, this physical body that is headed toward death is walking in a triumphal path.
 - 3. This procession is more like a wedding processional--a joyous walk! Jesus has overcome death, and wants us to live victorious lives. This parade of life can be joyous even in the midst trials, it can be hopeful even in the midst of setbacks, and it can be ever vigilant in the midst of temptation.
 - 4. One of the keys that I have found to overcoming hardship is to realize that there is nothing that is going to happen that God cannot handle.
- B. The Second Seal (6:3,4).
 - 1. A representation of: **The Persecution against the church.**
See 1Peter 4:12.
 - 2. In the first century, persecution was the order of the day. But people realized that what was at risk was more valuable than any earthly problem yet to be encountered. John is writing of this heavenly vision to assure his brothers and sisters in Christ that no matter the persecution the church will be victorious!
 - 3. The rewards of being in Christ outweigh the hardship. It is a matter of perspective, and John wants us to know that no matter how bad the violence becomes, Jesus is leading His people in a triumphal procession to overcome it.
- C. The Third Seal (6:5,6).
 - 1. A representation of: **Economic Discrimination against the church.**
See Revelation 13:16,17.
 - 2. When someone loses their job, their entire life can cave in with the possible loss of home, car, adequate medical care, and daily provisions. Couple that with the fact that in this case a person might lose their job because they are a Christian (not because they did anything worthy of being fired), it makes for a very real temptation to renounce Christ and get those needed physical blessings back.
 - 3. The third seal tells us that this type of persecution, economic discrimination, will continue but that it is not going to ultimately win. Jesus sits on His horse and leads discrimination in a triumphal procession. Christians who refuse to play by Satan's rules will be rewarded in this life and greatly rewarded in the life to come. There is no reason to be jealous or envious of the financial success and material wealth of others. Jesus has victory assured over this tiresome problem!

- D. The Fourth Seal (6:7,8).
1. A representation of: **Death and Hades**.
See Luke 16:19-31.
 2. Each of us has an appointment with death (Heb. 9:27). Spiritually speaking, physical death seals the eternal fate (2Cor. 5:10). At the time of death all of a person's works, both good and bad, are complete and will follow them (14:13; 20:12).
 3. Most people fear death. Even the writer of Hebrews talks of the activity of Satan and death, and how people are held in its slavery all their lives (Heb. 2:15). No one likes death, it is an unpleasant fact. If the Lord tarries, we will all die.
 4. But, once again, the vision of John and this seal is one of triumph. The Lord is riding His victory stallion; persecution and famine have been overcome, and now death need not be feared.
- E. The Fifth Seal (6:9-11).
1. A representation of: **The soon to be vindicated saints**.
See Revelation 14:13; Matthew 11:28-30.
 2. This seal confirms the victory over the first four. In the fifth seal, we are allowed to look at the souls who had been martyred for Christ's sake and the eternal triumph they enjoy. They have been sacrificed by the world, but their sacrifice is not in vain. They now reside in the Hadean realm and enjoy the blessings of Paradise (2:7). They are told to take a white robe (symbolizing purity) and to rest (6:11). Rest is what each disciple ultimately finds in Christ (Mt. 11:28-30; Rev. 14:13). Paradise is a place of sinless rest!
 3. The cry of the martyred saints is that of vindication. They know they have done the right thing in giving their lives for God's sake. Now they ask for vindication so that their enemies will know that what was done to them was wrong. They want vindication for doing the right thing and having to pay the ultimate price for it. God's reply to their request is that it will come in due time. Unfortunately there are still others who will become martyrs for the faith. They must join those already under the altar before full vindication can take place. Paul instructed the Romans not to take their own revenge, but to leave room for the wrath of God (Rom. 12:19-21).
- F. The Sixth Seal (6:12-17).
1. A representation of: **The Coming Vengeance of God**.
See Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:26-31.
 2. This seal takes the coming vengeance of God one step further. Terror will strike the minds and hearts of those who have tormented the saints on the earth. Judgment is coming! Once again some very graphic OT verses speak of this great judgment to come upon those who are not faithful to the Lamb. Images from Joel and the locust plague as well as from Isaiah are used to illustrate the terror to come.
 3. The wicked know of their pending doom. The time given them to repent is over. Their only recourse is to destroy themselves before God does, as if that will help! An interesting way to view 6:15,16 is that it would be better to be hit by a mountain, than face God in judgment unprepared! Those who dealt death to Christians will get their due! The vindication cried out for in the fifth seal will begin to happen in the sixth seal. God will come in judgment.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Chapter six is Jesus opening, the book of seals. In the first four seals we see four horses. Jesus rides the first horse, leading the three others. The three horses behind the Lord represent the ever-present problems of persecution, famine, and death. Yet it would seem that Jesus is leading these problems in triumph! There is something worse than persecution, famine, and death—and that is meeting God in judgment unprepared! The fifth and sixth seal speak of the safety and blessings of the departed saints, and the certainty of coming judgment on the persecutors.
- B. Next time: Overcoming by Knowing the Warning Signs (Rev. 8:1-11:19).

