

# The seven seals

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Revelation 6 + 8:1





# Three lenses for reading

- **Wide angle:** seeing Rev 6 in the context of the whole book
- **50 mm standard lens:** the groups of seven and how this one is organised
- **Zoom:** focus on the saints' suffering and the lamb's wrath





# Wide angle

*Seeing Revelation 6 in the context of the whole book*

# Wide angle: Revelation's setting

- Seeing and hearing
- Seeing vv 1 2, 8, 9, 12
- Hearing vv 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10



# Wide angle: Revelation's setting

- Speaking to the seven churches of Asia Revelation 2-3



I, John, your brother and companion in the **suffering** and **kingdom** and **patient endurance** that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Revelation 1:9

# Wide angle: Revelation's setting

- Speaking to the seven churches of Asia Revelation 2-3
  - Jewish opposition 2:9; 3:9
  - Warnings
    - Complacency 2:4-5; 3:1, 2, 15-17
    - False teaching 2:14-15, 20-23
    - Suffering to come 2:10, 13; 3:10



# Wide angle: Revelation's setting

- Does God care?
- Can God change things?
  - Strengthening believers to live for Christ
  - Calling believers to faithfulness and holiness



# 50 mm standard lens

*The 'sevens' of Revelation*



## 50 mm: the sevens

- The seals on the scroll 6 + 8:1
- The trumpets 8:2–9:21; 11:15–19
- (The thunders 10:1–4)
- The seven bowls of God's wrath  
16:1–21

# 50 mm: the sevens

- The series are in parallel
- Each one closes with the End of this age: here vv 12-17 + 8:1
- 4 + 3 format
- An interval between 6th and 7th

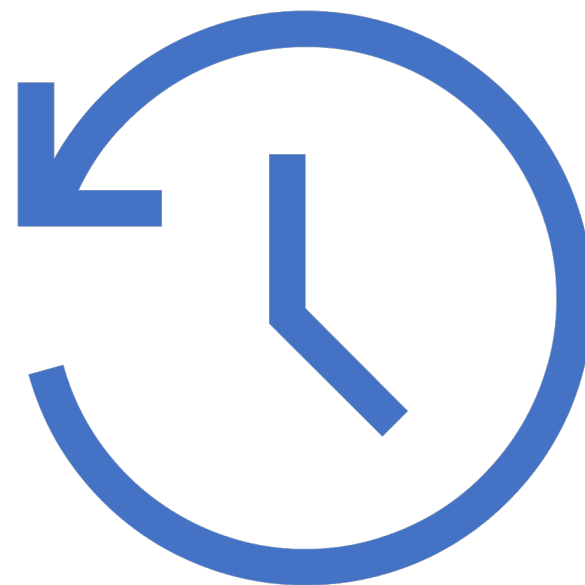


## 50 mm: the sevens

- The series are in parallel
- The same story of history from three angles
  - Seals: suffering of the world and God's people
  - Trumpets: warnings to the world
  - Bowls: God's wrath against those who reject Jesus

# Think and talk...

- What are the challenges facing the church today in terms of...
  - suffering
  - kingdom
  - patient endurance (Revelation 1:9)?
- What impact do these challenges have on you (and your family)?



# The four horsemen vv 1-8



- **White horse** v 2: conquest
- **Red horse** v 4: war
- **Black horse** vv 5-6: famine and economic collapse
- **Pale (green) horse** v 8: death and Hades
- ‘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!’ Ezekiel 14:21



# The four horsemen vv 1-8

- Echo of Zechariah 1:8-11; 6:1-7
  - God's rule over the whole earth
- 'Come!' vv 1, 3, 5, 7
  - 'The Spirit and the bride say, "**Come!**" And let those who hear say, "**Come!**"' 22:17
  - 'Amen. **Come**, Lord Jesus.' 22:20



# The four horsemen vv 1-8

- Echo of Zechariah 1:8-11; 6:1-7
  - God's rule over the whole earth
- 'Come!' vv 1, 3, 5, 7; 22:17, 20
- 'he was/they were given'  
vv 2, 4, 8
- Christ is sovereign over all things





# Zoom lens

*God's people and the lamb's  
wrath*



## Zoom lens 6:9-19 + 8:1

- The suffering church vv 9-11
  - Faithfulness in suffering 2:2-3, 10, 13, 25; 3:10-11—vv 9, 11
  - Resisting false teaching 2:6, 14-15, 20
  - They call to God for justice

# Zoom lens 6:9-19 + 8:1

- The End of all things vv 12-17 + 8:1



**The LORD is angry with all nations;  
his wrath is on all their armies.**

He will totally destroy them,  
he will give them over to slaughter.  
Their slain will be thrown out,  
their dead bodies will send up a stench;  
the mountains will be soaked with their blood.  
All the stars in the sky will be dissolved  
and the heavens rolled up like a scroll;  
all the starry host will fall  
like withered leaves from the vine,  
like shrivelled figs from the fig tree.

Isaiah 34:2-4

The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder,  
the earth is violently shaken.

The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in  
the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion  
that it falls—never to rise again.

In that day **the LORD will punish the powers in the  
heavens above and the kings on the earth below.**

They will be herded together like prisoners bound in  
a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be  
punished after many days.

The moon will be dismayed, the sun ashamed;  
for **the LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and  
in Jerusalem, and before its elders**—with great  
glory.

Isaiah 24:19-23



## Zoom lens 6:9-19 + 8:1

- The End of all things vv 12-17 + 8:1
- God's wrath is not vindictive v 16
- Two ways to face God's wrath
  - At the last day vv 15, 16
  - Now, through Jesus

‘Then I saw a Lamb, **looking as if it had been slain**, standing in the centre before the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. (5:6)

‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, **because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God members of every tribe and language and people and nation.**’ (5:9)

‘Worthy is **the Lamb, who was slain**, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!’ (5:12)

‘These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; **they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**’ (7:14)



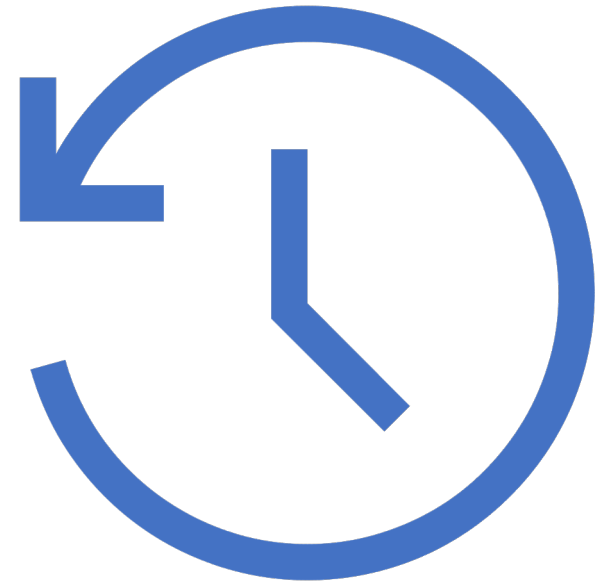


## Zoom lens 6:9-19 + 8:1

- The End of all things vv 12-17 + 8:1
- God's wrath is not vindictive v 16
- Two ways to face God's wrath
  - At the last day vv 15, 16
  - Now, through Jesus 5:6, 9, 12; 7:14
- Silence in heaven 8:1

# Reflect and talk...

- How will I...
  - ...pray
  - ...think
  - ...live...
- ...because of the seven seals?



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