

Rev 6:1-6:

There is power in a name.

[may show this]

"Gladiator": Power of Jesus' Name

Set in A.D. 180, *Gladiator* tells the story of General Maximus Decimus Meridius (played by Russell Crowe), who was about to be given reigning authority in Rome by the aging emperor, Marcus Aurelius. Before this could take place, however, the emperor's son, Commodus, killed his father in order to establish himself on the throne. He then ordered the murder of Maximus and his family. Maximus escaped, and the movie follows him as he is sold into slavery, becomes a nameless gladiator, and finally seeks justice against wicked Emperor Commodus.

The turning point comes late in the movie. After Maximus wins a great battle in the Coliseum, Emperor Commodus decides to meet this unknown gladiator face to face. The crowd watches as the emperor in full pomp strides with his soldiers onto the sands of the Coliseum.

The emperor asks the simple question: "What is your name?"

Maximus, streaked with blood and dirt from the battle, takes off his helmet and says: "My name is Maximus Decimus Meridius, commander of the Armies of the North, general of the Felix Legions, loyal servant to the true emperor, Marcus Aurelius, father to a murdered son, husband to a murdered wife. And I will have my vengeance, in this life or the next."

The crowd erupts with a deafening roar, while the emperor visibly shakes under the weight of the true identity of a man he thought was a mere slave. The emperor flees the Coliseum, only to face defeat and death later at the hands of Maximus.

Elapsed time: 01:29:09 to 01:33:08 (DVD scene 16).

Content: *Gladiator* is rated R for violence.¹

As Christians, we must all bow to the name of Jesus, but we are also secure in the name of Jesus. We have nothing to fear. We see in Revelation the power of the name of Jesus and the authority in the name of Jesus. The last two weeks we especially saw this.

Now, we move on to the wrath of God being poured on in these seals.

My theme today:

Christ Followers are Secure Even When the Wrath of God is Poured Out

¹ *Gladiator* (Dreamworks, 2000), rated R, written by David Franzoni, directed by Ridley Scott; submitted by Bill White, Paramount,

(Rev. 6:1-6)

An application: no matter what happens in this world, know that you are secure in Jesus. However, persevere in the Christian life.

Let's read Revelation 6:1-6:

I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!"² I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

³When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!"⁴ Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword.

⁵When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages and six pounds^[c] of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!

- I. What is going on?
 - a. At this time, we are seeing God's wrath on the world because of sin. We will deal with when this is happening in a moment, but the point is that this is when God is beginning to judge the earth.
 - b. We see three seals and the seals are being opened from the scroll in order to bring judgment.
 - c. The first Seal is in verses 1-2 and a question is "who is this"?
 - d. There are two camps of thinking:
 - e. The first view sees this rider as the antichrist.
- When John uses Antichrist it has nothing to do with the way we do in current dispensationalism
- With two exceptions, every use of conquering in John's vision is either of Jesus or the Saints.
- The Crown was given to Him, Jesus, it would have been God giving the crown.
- The Greek word used for "bow" is the same word used for "rainbow" in Genesis
- **But be careful getting caught up being too literal.**
- Be careful about forcing literalism on this imagery. John is trying to portray reality as best as he can.²
- - f. However, 1 and 2 John are the only books that use antichrist and they are saying that there were many already.

² Dr Mulholland

- g. Anti-anointed: these are people who reject Jesus as the Messiah. Reading on in 1 and 2 John we also see that they reject that Jesus came in the flesh. This is a type of proto-gnosticism.
 - h. It does not seem likely that this first rider is the antichrist.
 - i. The other camp is that this is Christ, Jesus.
 - j. Dr. Mulholland thinks that this can be proved.
 - k. He is described similarly to Rev. 19:11
 - l. In Revelation 19:11, in the Greek the rider is introduced in the exact same phrase as the first ride in Rev. 6:1-2.
 - m. That is the first evidence.
 - n. The second evidence is that the first rider is on a white horse. In John's vision "white" is only associated with the Redeemed and Divine beings.
 - o. The crown, "stephanos," crown is Jesus
 - p. With two exceptions, every use of conquering in John's vision is either of Jesus or the Saints.
 - q. The Crown was given to Him, Jesus, it would have been God giving the crown.
 - r. Though we must recognize that there is still a lot of dispute regarding who this is. There are different Greek words for crown between the crown Jesus has here and the "diadem" in other places.
- The next 3 riders are representing "Fallen Babylon" but we begin with Jesus.
 - We are backing off the microcosm of the seven churches and now looking at the reality that those seven churches are experiencing.
 - The second horse is bright red. We get our word "fire" or "pyro" from this.
 - Its' rider is taking three piece from the earth.
 - Again, we wonder who this is: looking at the Greek would suggest that this second rider is satan. The word used is used for satan.
 - This has the definite article and that is significant. The definite article is not in the NASB
 - He is taking "the" piece, so what piece. He is taking "God's piece."
 - This is a way of imaging the fallenness of God's creation.
 - As a consequence, purpose clause, in order that they will kill, slay one another and they are given a great word.
 - When we get away from our relationship with God, our relationship with others struggles. Our only unity is in God. We are life spokes on a wheel and God is the hub.
 - We are seeing the consequences of satan's rebellion
 - Images of the fallen narrative
 - Third seal:
 - Third living creature:
 - Black horse
 - Its rider held a pair of scales: balance type of scale
 - What seemed to be...
 - A voice in the midst of the four living creatures...
 - This is God from chapter 4
- s. In verses 3-4 we see "war."
 - t. Peace is taken from the earth and so we have war.

- u. Then, as a consequence of war, the third seal in verses 5-6 is poverty and economic inequality.
- v. No damaging the olive oil and the wine
- w. A denarius is a day's way
- x. A quart of wheat or 3 quarts of barley were minimal supplies, enough to support a family for a day.
- y. Olive oil and wine were processed foods.
- z. Grapes plucked, pressed, fermented etc. These are much more expensive... We now have an image of economic prosperity. This is showing the poor living at minimal existence (barley...) the rich have money: don't damage the wine and olive oil.
- aa. Later in chapter 18 John focuses in on the economic prosperity of fallen Babylon.
- bb. Economic despair emerges because I am playing God in this world and I want what I want.
- cc. This is what is happening as God is bring judgment.**

II. When does this happen?

- a. I want to briefly summarize some thoughts that came up during my study.
- b. There is a thought that this is happening right now and has really been happening since Jesus came the first time and then was ascended.
- c. There is a thought that this was happening during the time of this writing. It is like John has already been given these real and practical messages to the seven church and now he pulls back the veil and shows what is going on in Heaven during that time period. I get the impression that that is Dr. Mulholland's view.
- d. One writes: "*All events in the apocalyptic section of the book are initiated from the throne described in chapter 4 . . . , and must be understood in that light. Though indirect, all that transpires under the seals is in implementation of the 'book of doom' through the agency of the Lamb introduced in chapter 5.*"³
- e. We must remember that this is a seen from Heaven. We must remember that John is describing the indescribable. I also do believe that John is, at least to some extent, taken outside of time. We know that God created time.
- f. There is another VERY prominent thought that this is the beginning of the literal seven year tribulation period.
- g. There is a view that God gave him [John] this information to help us who read it to understand what will take place in the future (1:19). There is an idea that places the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments—that begin to unfold here—in the context of the earlier revelation concerning Daniel's seventieth week (Dan. 9:24-27).
- h. If this is the case it is possible that Christians are not present for this (1 Thess. 4:14-18 is written about the rapture and 1 Cor. 15:50-54).
 - i. One prominent view, is it is possible that Christians will have been raptured up to be with Christ.
 - ii. Or, it is possible that Christians are raptured in the middle of this period.
 - iii. Lastly, it is possible that Christians will be raptured at the end of this time period.

³ Thomas, Revelation 1—7, p. 423.

- i. Regardless of our view on the rapture and when this is happening in our time, our response must be the same.
- j. We must persevere following Christ. We must be ready. Then we must be encouraged. We encouraged and do not fear. Christian are safe eternally. We will suffer hardship but Jesus is with us and we are secure for eternity.

k. D.C. Talk song: *I wish We'd All Been Ready:*

Life was filled with guns and war

And all of us got trampled on the floor

I wish we'd all been ready

Children died the days grew cold

A piece of bread could buy a bag of gold

I wish we'd all been ready

There's no time to change your mind

The Son has come and you've been left behind

A man and wife asleep in bed

She hears a noise and turns her head he's gone

I wish we'd all been ready

Two men walking up a hill

One disappears and one's left standing still

I wish we'd all been ready

There's no time to change your mind

The Son has come and you've been left behind

Children died the days grew cold

A piece of bread could buy a bag of gold

I wish we'd all been ready

There's no time to change your mind

The Son has come and you've been left behind

The Father spoke the demons died

How could you have been so blind

There's no time to change your mind

The Son has come and you've been left behind

I hope we'll all be ready you've been left behind

I hope we'll all be ready you've been left behind

I hope we'll all be ready you've been left behind

Songwriters: Norman, Larry; I Wish We'd All Been Ready lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC

- l. Our response is to be ready for Jesus' return at any time.
- m. Our response is to recognize our security in Jesus.

We can only have one judge:

For the first three weeks of the 2012 NFL season, replacement referees took the place on the playing field of the regular refs. The team owners had locked out the regular refs because they could not agree on a new contract. The consequence of using college referees to judge pro games was predictable. The replacement refs missed calls, took too long to make the right calls, called too many fouls, and in the process made coaches, players, and fans furious.

The anger came to a head in the third week of the season. An angry Bill Belichick, coach of the New England Patriots, grabbed one of the replacement refs and was fined \$50 thousand by the league. And on Monday Night Football the game between the Green Bay Packers and Seattle Seahawks was decided by a call on the last play of the game that was so clearly wrong the whole country was talking about it the next day. The media pointed out that because of the missed call, 150 million dollars changed hands in Las Vegas.

Confidence in the credibility of the game had been marred. Players didn't know what to expect on the field and worried about injuries. Newspapers routinely used the word "outrage" to describe the reaction from millions of fans. ESPN declared, "Let's cut to the chase—the replacement officials have lost control of the game." Even an NPR (National Public Radio) blog chimed in: "It's the talk of the nation today as fans beg for the league and its regular officials to settle their differences so that the 'real' refs can come back."

All because the rules of NFL football were not being correctly applied by the judges on the field. Lots of people care about football, and as a result they care about having judges doing their job correctly on the field.

Apparently, despite decades of ethical relativism, we still long for justice and fairness—even in pro football. There is right and wrong, and the referee's job is to assure that right prevails. If we care that much about judges in sports, giving order to our games, how much more should we realize the importance of having a supreme Judge who makes the correct call on the actions of people in this world. God has given his law to bring order to relationships, to business, to society. Without his moral law, and his judgments that uphold it, life is chaos, and everyone is miserable.⁴

Jesus is our judge and we are safe with Him.

Proverbs 18:10 reads:

*The name of the LORD is a **strong tower**: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*

⁴ Craig Brian Larson, editor of *PreachingToday.com*; Gregg Easterbrook, "Losing control is refs' big blunder," *ESPN Playbook*(9-25-12); Mark Memmott, "Bring Back the Real NFL Refs!" *The Two-Way*, NPR's News Blog (9-25-12)

