



Revelation 6–11



# Review

## **Big Picture**

Rome

Gospel and Counter-Gospel

Worship and blessing

Overlapping stories

The sacrificial lamb is the messiah and one with God

Spiraling (intensifying) structure of judgments

# How Far Down the Rabbit Hole?

Are there seven Spirits or one (1:4, 3:1, 4:5, 5:6)?

“before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God” (Rev 4:5)

“I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain... with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.” (Rev 5:6)

What is John doing?

And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep. 2 And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and behold, **a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it.** 3 And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.” 4 And I said to the angel who talked with me, “**What are these, my lord?**” 5 Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” 6 Then **he said to me**, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: **Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts...** “**These seven are the eyes of the Lord**, which range through the whole earth.”



# How Far Down the Rabbit Hole?

John takes “seven spirits” (1:2) and “my Spirit” (1:6) and combines them

The Lamb is empowered and sees by the Spirit of God

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.” (Isa 42:1)

The “seven churches” are empowered by the same Spirit

# Numbers 4 and 7

- **Four—the world** (four corners and four divisions 5:13, 7:1, 14:7, and 20:8)
  - "the **peoples** and **tribe** and **languages** and **nations**," repeated seven time (5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15)
- **Seven— completeness**
  - “Lamb” mentioned 28 times– (7x4); Jesus’ complete victory over the world
  - Seven spirits (x4=28)– power of witness to all nations
  - “Spirit” and “Jesus” mentioned 14 times
  - “Prophecy” (x7)
- Importance of numbers and number of times things are said!!!

# Connecting 1–6

What can connect us (ch. 2–3) with God (4)?

The elders throw down their **crowns**

The lamb has opened the scroll, which details God's eschatological judgments

Earth (1–3)—>Heaven (4–5)—>Earth (6–22)

God and his prophetic power as King (1–5)

vs.

The Empire and its prophetic power (6)



# Judgments and Interludes

**7 Seals** (6–8:1)— 1/4 destroyed

**7 Trumpets** (8:2–14:20)— 1/3 destroyed

**7 Bowls** (16)— complete destruction

**From Babylon to New Jerusalem** (17–21:8)

# Judgments and Interludes

## **Preliminary points**

- 1.) Judgments do not conflict with sacrificial, non-violent image of God and Lamb in chs. 4–5
- 2.) Revelation's visions of judgments on evil are *symbols* rather than depictions of divine activity.
- 3.) The visions of judgment are for the Church, not Babylon
- 4.) Why is there evil after the resurrection?

# The Four Horsemen

## **Preliminary points**

Connection with ch. 4–5: think Rom 1:18–32 (esp 24 and 28)

Modified image from Zech 1:8–11 (false peace v. global calamity)

Horsemen represent regular figures throughout history

God allows the suffering, but it is also due to the existence of Empire and sin

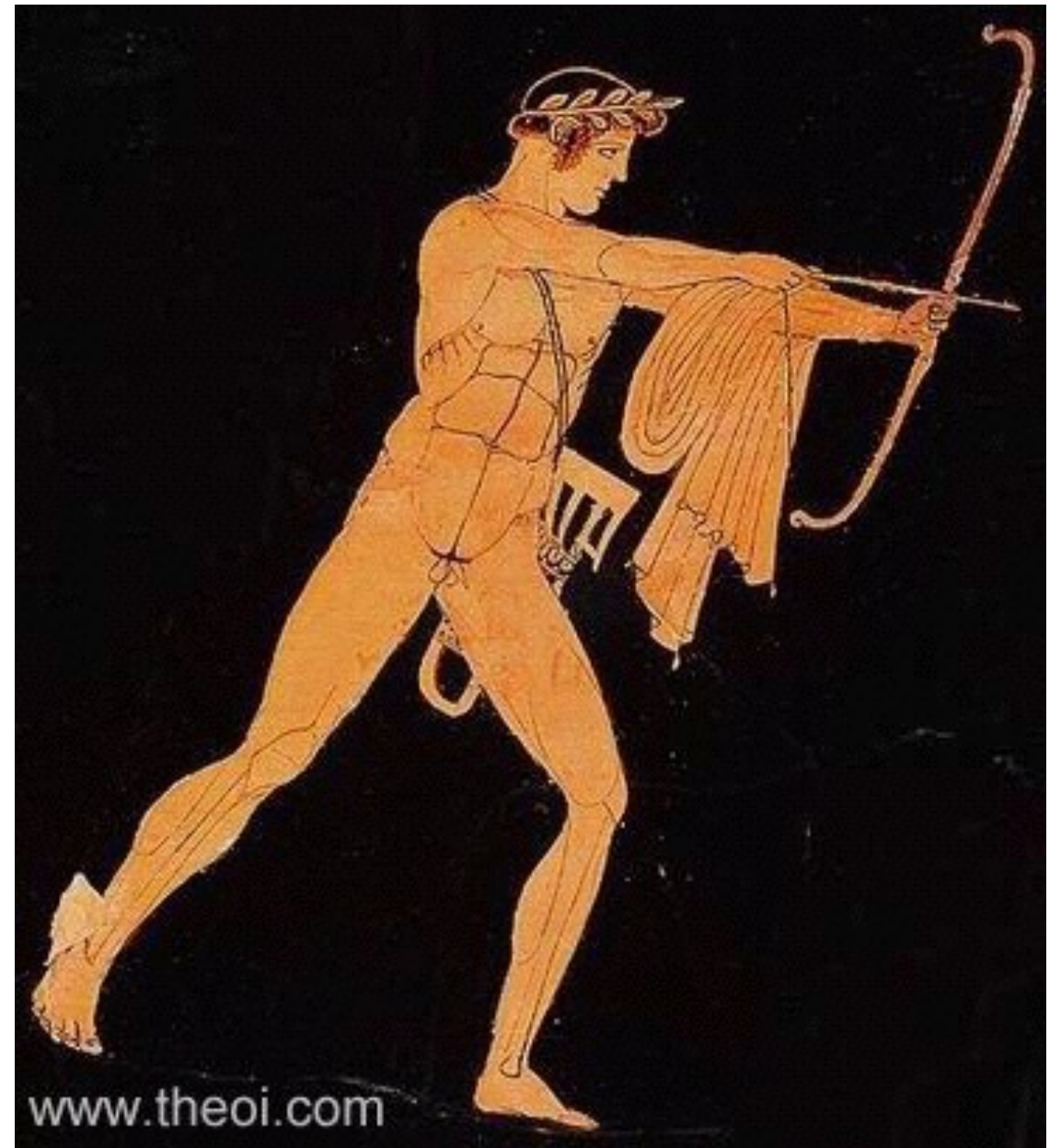
The horse is the animal of warfare

The basic nature of human history is warfare



# Ch. 6: The 4 Horsemen

- First four seals opened
- The White Horse: the bow and crown
  - Jesus or a false messiah?
  - The bow, the crown, and Apollo
  - The oracle of Delphi (also Ephesus and Thyatira)



“For the **testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy**. Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a **white horse**! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war...and on his head are many **diadems**... **From his mouth comes a sharp sword** with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.” (Rev 19:10–15)

Watch out that no one misleads you. For **many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,'** and they will mislead many. You will hear of **wars and rumors of wars**. Make sure that you are not alarmed, for this must happen, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise up in arms against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be **famines** and earthquakes in various places. All these things are the beginning of birth pains. Then they will hand you over to be persecuted **and will kill you**. You will be hated by all the nations because of my name.” (Matthew 24:4–9)





The white horse is the “gospel” that precedes and supports the objectives of the Empire.  
“Apollo” with a bow as the giver of prophecy instead of Christ with his sword.





# Ch. 6: The 4 Horsemen

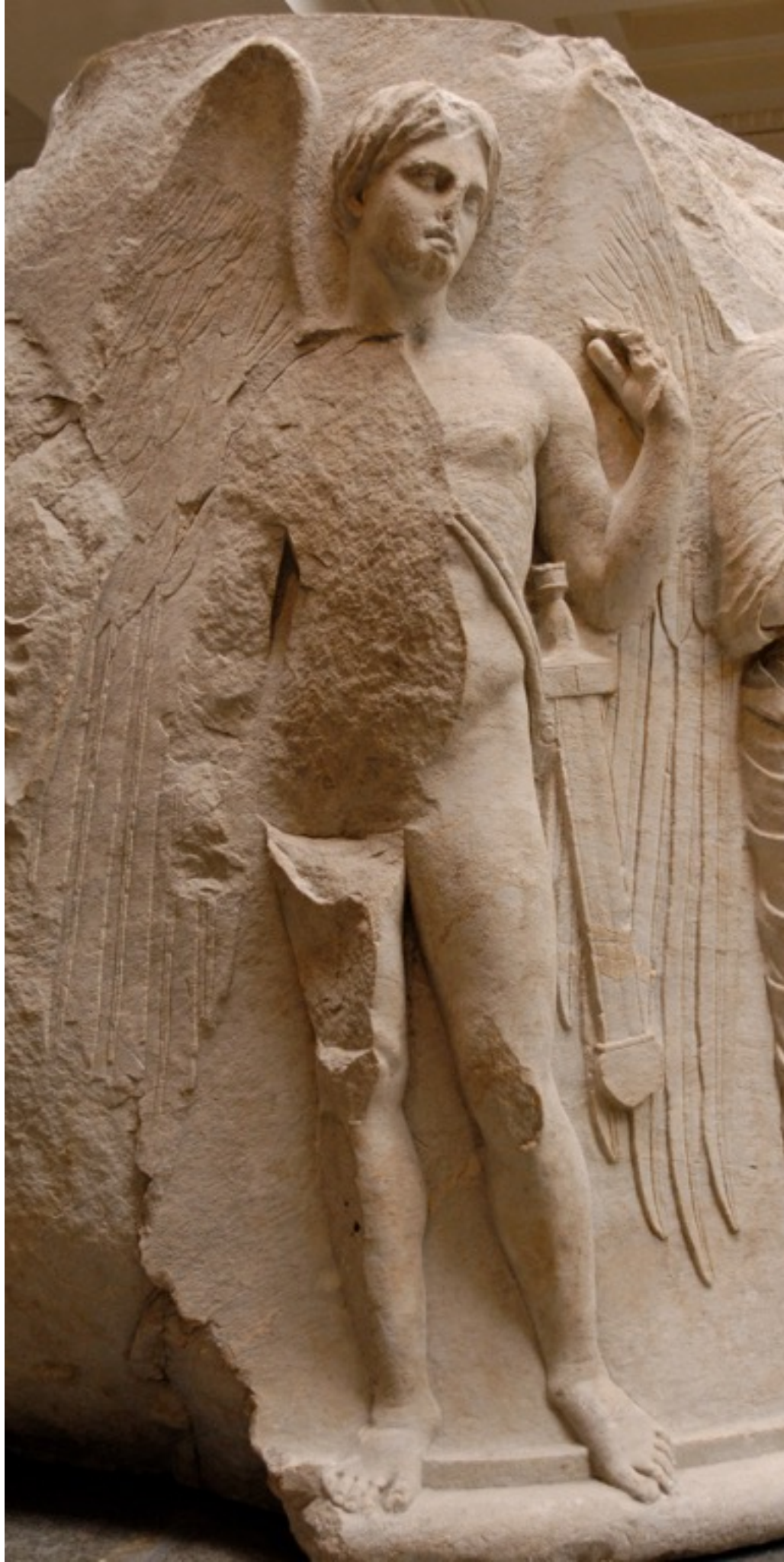
- The **red horse: war** that follows the prophecy of the empire
  - War is part of the machine and gospel of Empire
- The **black horse: famine**, the result of warfare and social inequality
  - Famine and starvation is often the result of systemic sin
- The **pale-green horse: Death (thanatos) and Hades**, the end-result of Apollo's prophecy/gospel
- Empire's Gospel: false religion->war->famine->death



## The Roman Empire in 117 AD







# Seals 5 and 6

- Seal five— those under the altar; the suffering of believers from evil
- Seal six— general suffering endured by all from evil
  - Evils covered: false prophecy, war, famine, sickness to death, persecution, and natural disasters
  - The result of turning from God



# Chapter 7

- Interlude between seals: the 144,000
  - Looking at how God's people share in his purposes
- Large, “complete” number: **12x12x1000**= 144,000
  - Symbolically significant rather than literal (v.9)
  - Why are they counted?
  - What tribe is missing? (Judges 18:30–31)
- The “144,000” is multi-national “Israel” (Ezek 36:24; Rom 9)
- Christian response to evil (ch. 6) is to worship God (7:10)

# The Final Seal: Ch. 8

- Interlude over: peace and order of heaven vs. chaos of earth
  - How are these two places connected?
  - The prayers of the saints (Eph 2:6)
- Silence for 30— so that the prayers of the saints can be heard
- Prayer— prayers of the saints (esp. 6:9); prayers for protection and judgment; God listens
- God not depicted as acting directly until 21:3

# The Trumpets: Ch. 8

- **The Trumpets**– intensification of seals (spiral structure)
  - Earth, waters, and sky ruined- there is no place safe for the ungodly
  - Violence used metaphorically
  - Exodus imagery (thunder and plagues)– the eschatological exodus from the Empire

# Trumpets 5 and 6: ch. 9

- Demonic hordes released (Joel 1); the eschatological exodus continues
- Parody of the 4 creatures
- ‘The effect is something like an orchestral performance in which the strings scrape dissonant chords, while woodwinds shriek ... in what seems to be a wild discord – except that all the players move to the steady beat that is set by the conductors hand’



# Trumpets 5 and 6: ch. 9

- Apollo (9:11) and the Emperor
  - Apollyon and Abaddon
- The angels at the Euphrates (9:13–16)
- The arrival of the Parthians via Nero?
- “They did not repent” (9:20–21) think Exodus and Rom 1:24





# An Angel: Ch 10

- An interlude in the Trumpets
- Angels encourage the persecuted
  - Seal up the seven thunders (4th series of seven)
  - Connected with Daniel 8:26 and 12:9, prophecy about the future
  - Therefore “thunders” about “future,” but the other judgments (seals, trumpets, and bowls) are “present”
  - Offering an interpretation of the fearful present

# A Parable: Ch 11

- Two witnesses: Moses and Elijah (?) as representatives of the Law and the Prophets (need 2 witnesses)
  - Back to Zech 4:11–14— connected with the seven Spirits
  - Metaphor for content of Church's ("lampstands") message (11:5) in its role as "witness"
  - "Witness" and "prophecy" connected
  - Pronouncing truth; rejecting them is rejecting reality
  - Merging Jerusalem and Babylon
- The "rest" (9:20; 11:13) repent when the witnesses are vindicated (our sharing in Jesus' victory)



# The Last Trumpet: Ch 11

- The final trumpet: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord.” Really?
  - The final people have been brought in