

The Book of Revelation  
Lesson #10-The Seven Seals (Part One)

Opening Review:

- Chapter one was the vision of the glorified Son of God.
- Seven letters to the churches in chapters 2 and 3.
- Throne room vision of chapters 4 and 5 sets the stage for the opening of the scroll with its sequence of seals, trumpets, and bowls.
- The dramatic portrayal of God's righteous judgment is now under way (Jacob's Trouble/Tribulation).

I. The First Seal

*Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." 2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. Revelation 6:1-2 NKJV*

2 Views

A. Christ the Rider

1. Irenaeus (late 2<sup>nd</sup> century)
2. Primary reason for view

*Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. Revelation 19:11 NKJV*

- a. Revelation is allowed to interpret its own symbolism.
- b. Lion of Tribe of Judah triumphed (5:5).
- c. Here he goes out to conquer.
- d. Everlasting proclamation

*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. Matthew 24:14 NKJV*

3. Arguments against this being Christ

- a. Little in common except both on white horse
- b. 6:2; victors wreath and carries a bow
- c. 19:11; crowned with many crowns and a sword out of his mouth
- d. Context of 6:2 is conquest: 19; righteous retribution
- e. In 6 devastating calamities follow as a result of human sinfulness (war, famine, death).
- f. Can the Lamb open the seal and be the rider at the same time?
- g. Repeated use "there was given" speaks of divine permission

B. Anti-Christ the Rider

NOTE: At least the symbol of conquest and militarism and invasion from without.

1. Power comes from the dragon.

*Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. 2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. Revelation 13:1-2 NKJV*

*And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10 NKJV*

NOTE: Satan told Jesus (Luke 4:6) that the kingdom was his to give.

2. Prince that will come

*"And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. Daniel 9:26 NKJV*

3. Military conquest in the last half of the Tribulation.

## II. The Second Seal

*When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." 4 Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword. Revelation 6:3-4 NKJV*

A. This bloodshed symbolizes internal strife. (NOTE: If white horse symbolized invasion from without, this likely represents internal fighting).

1. "Great sword" Roman short sword for hand-to-hand combat.
2. People turning on one another.

*And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 2 Thessalonians 2:6 NKJV*

*It shall come to pass in that day That a great panic from the LORD will be among them. Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, And raise his hand against his neighbor's hand; Zechariah 14:13 NKJV*

*"I will set Egyptians against Egyptians; Everyone will fight against his brother, And everyone against his neighbor, City against city, kingdom against kingdom. Isaiah 19:2 NKJV*

3. Widely understood by first readers-30 year period between 67-37 B.C. before the reign of Herod the Great; 100,000 died in revolution in Palestine.

B. Anarchy and bloodshed are indications of the end.

## III. The Third Seal

*When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine." Revelation 6:5-6 NKJV*

- A. Famine that results as the first two seals are opened.
- B. Economic upheaval; may be the reason rigid control over buying and selling will be instituted.

*He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Revelation 13:16-17*

#### IV. The Fourth Seal

*When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." 8 So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth. Revelation 6:7-8 NKJV*

- A. As a result of war, famine and wild beasts (expected with famine) ¼ of the world's population is killed.
  - 1. More than destroyed in Noah's flood.

*For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. Matthew 24:21 NKJV*

- 2. Equivalent to destruction of Europe and South America.
- B. First readers; visions are to be experienced and not analyzed, point is destruction.
  - 1. When judgment begins
  - 2. When restraint is gone.

#### V. The Fifth Seal

*When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed. Revelation 6:9-11 NKJV*

- A. Martyrs under the altar; their untimely deaths on earth from God's perspective are a sacrifice on God's altar.

*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 2 Timothy 4:6 NKJV*

*Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Philippians 2:17 NKJV*

B. A cry for vindication; similar to others in the past.

*LORD, how long will the wicked, how long will the wicked triumph? Psalms 94:3 NKJV*

*O LORD, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear? Even cry out to You, "Violence!" And You will not save. Habakkuk 1:2 NKJV*

C. White robe and word of encouragement

NOTE: Implication of intermediate state!

## VI. The Sixth Seal

*I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. 13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. 15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" Revelation 6:12-17 NKJV*

A. Actually a response to the question: How long?

1. Not a certainty of time given.
2. But a demonstration that reveals God at work.
3. Cosmic disturbances will occur and the entire world will know that God has set in motion the events by which His wrath will be fully carried out.

B. Cosmic disturbances (12-14)

1. People held/hold that well-ordered movement of heavenly bodies was a token of God's providential control.
2. Breakdown of this order is a grim announcement that the end is near.
3. Language is well-known apocalyptic and may or may not be explicitly literal, not the point!
  - a. Earthquake a regular feature of divine visitations.

*Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. Exodus 19:18 NKJV*

*They shall go into the holes of the rocks, And into the caves of the earth, from the terror of the LORD and the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake the earth mightily. Isaiah 2:19 NKJV*

*"For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; Haggai 2:6 NKJV*

- b. Sun black and moon turning to blood

*The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. Acts 2:20 NKJV*

- c. Stars falling

*All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; all their host shall fall down as the leaf falls from the vine. And as fruit falling from a fig tree. Isaiah 34:4 NKJV*

- d. Mountains and hills

*The mountains quake before Him, The hills melt, And the earth heaves at His presence, Yes, the world and all who dwell in it. Nahum 1:5 NKJV*

*I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, And all the hills moved back and forth. Jeremiah 4:24 NKJV*

- C. A day of terror for the enemies of righteousness

*Therefore all hands will be limp, every man's heart will melt, & And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; they will be in pain as a woman in childbirth;*

*They will be amazed at one another; their faces will be like flames. Isaiah 13:7-8 NKJV*

*"But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears?  
For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderers' soap. Malachi 3:2 NKJV*

1. Even the secure will be undone.
2. Like Adam and Eve; will hide themselves.
3. No escape will be found.

*Also the high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, Shall be destroyed. The thorn and  
thistle shall grow on their altars; they shall say to the mountains, "Cover us!"  
And to the hills, "Fall on us!" Hosea 10:8 NKJV*

*The LORD gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; For strong is the One  
who executes His word. For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible;  
Who can endure it? Joel 2:11 NKJV*

*The great day of the LORD is near; it is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day  
of the LORD is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out. 15 That day is a day of  
wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of  
darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 A day of trumpet  
and alarm against the fortified cities And against the high towers. 17 "I will bring  
distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against  
the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, And their flesh like refuse."  
18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the  
LORD's wrath; But the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy, For He  
will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land. Zephaniah 1:14-18 NKJV*

#### Conclusion:

##### A. Stage is set!

1. 6 of 7 seals opened.
2. 4 horsemen revealed who bring death and destruction.
3. Agonizing plea of the martyrs.
4. God will indeed act.
5. So fierce will his actions be; who can stand?

##### B. God will vindicate Himself by vindicating His people.

1. The one who defeats all power through his sacrificial death.
2. He will return to put an end to all opposition.
3. He will claim his own people and forever reign in righteousness.