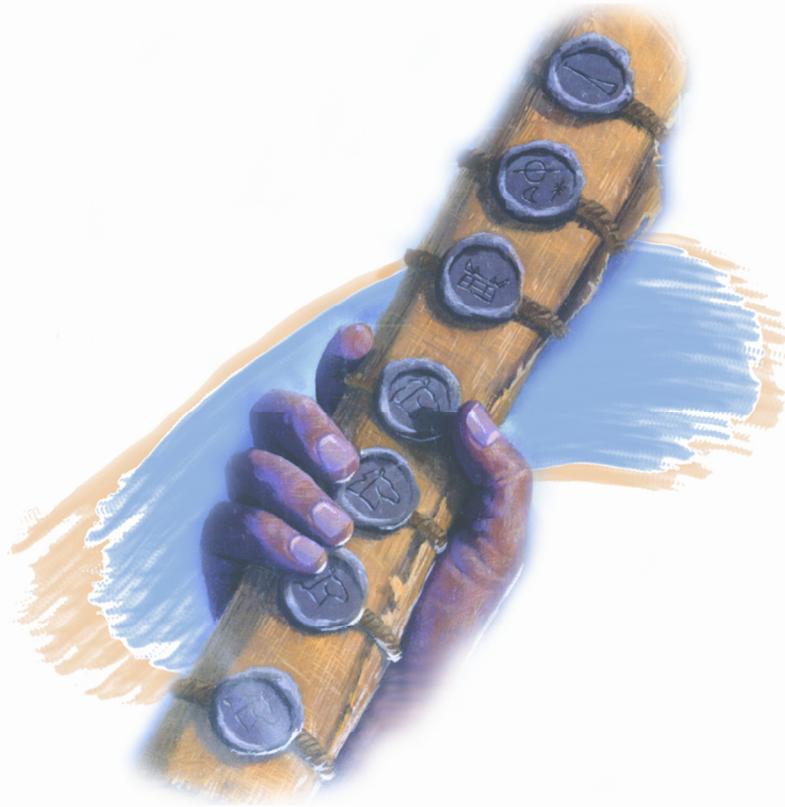


THE SEVEN SEALS OF REVELATION

INTRODUCTION TO THE END-TIME PLAYERS



Franklin S. Fowler, Jr.

WORKBOOK

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WORKBOOK

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These conclusions are always subject to progressive understanding.

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Lesson 1: Journey Through the Open Door (Revelation 4)	2
Lesson 2: A Sealed Scroll (Revelation 5)	14
Lesson 3: The Lamb Was Worthy (Revelation 5)	20
Lesson 4: Introduction to the Seals	27
Lesson 5: Seal One	29
Lesson 6: Seal Two	34
Lesson 7: Seal Three	39
Lesson 8: Seal Four	45
Lesson 9: Seal Five	52
Lesson 10: Seal Six	60
Lesson 11: Seal Seven	70
Other Materials	78



INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN SEALS OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Structure of Revelation – Review

This book has five major types of segments:

- Introductory thoughts
- Commentary – special *comments* God sporadically inserts
- Interludes – breaks in the flow of a prophetic message to explain what was just presented
- Earthly prophecies – visions of end-time events on the earth
- Heavenly prophecies – visions of end-time heavenly events

When John is invited to *observe* or do *something*, he becomes a symbol of God's people – the remnant – to do exactly the same thing. He will be asked to “Come up,” “Come and see.”

Foundational Points – Revelation 4–6:

- Jesus the Lamb will open the first four Seals, but **not** until *four living creatures* are introduced. They are part of the meaning of those Seals. So we must first meet those awesome “creatures.”
- They are in heaven.
- Therefore, we must study the first of the heavenly prophecies found in Revelation 4, where the four living creatures are working.
- The “door” that John is invited through to enter heaven – even though in vision – was first presented in the message to the Philadelphia church – “behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it” (Revelation 3:8).
- Thus, it relates to a **time** of that church and after the door was opened.
- That is, **when** He says, “Behold I come quickly” (3:11), then promises that they will be pillars in the temple:
 - **When** the saints already have crowns (“Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” – 3:11). They have gotten something very special to hold on to.
 - **When** that group of saints anticipate sealing.

That is where we must begin our study of the Seven Seals – at the time all these things setting.



JOURNEY THROUGH THE OPEN DOOR (REVELATION 4)

Invitation to Enter Heaven – John’s First Heavenly Vision

“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter” (Revelation 4:1).

“After this” simply means **after** John had the vision messages of the seven churches, this vision begins.

- John again “was in the spirit” (4:2).
- He had been in the spirit to see Jesus before (1:10).
- However, he was “out of the spirit” for a period of time before this new vision began – likely to complete recording what he had just seen.

“I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven” (vs 1)

This is the same “open door” alluded to in the Philadelphia Church (3:8).

- There, he was told that it was open, never to be shut.
- Now we are going to see what is on the other side of that door. It will lead to the throne room – the heavenly sanctuary.
- Every quotation of E. G. White, related to the “open door,” is associated with that second apartment of the sanctuary.
- She perceived that the way to that room had been opened in 1844.

“This door was not opened until the mediation of Jesus was finished in the holy place of the sanctuary in 1844. Then Jesus rose up and shut the door of the holy place, and opened the door into the most holy, and passed within the second veil, where He now stands by the ark, and where the faith of Israel now reaches.

“I saw that Jesus had shut the door of the holy place, and no man can open it; and that He had opened the door into the most holy, and no man can shut it (Rev. 3:7,8); and that since Jesus has opened the door into the most holy place, which contains the ark, the commandments have been shining out to God’s people, and they are being tested on the Sabbath question.” – *Early Writings*, p. 42 (1849). This prophecy of Revelation 4 is after 1844.

Note that the door **had already been open** in the Biblical text. In the Philadelphia Church message, the open-door imagery was **past tense**, as here in Revelation 4. That church relates to the corporate body of the 144,000.

- Many expositors perceive that open door to represent the new access to God because of Christ's death, occurring at Christ's ascension.

Way opened into heaven by the Holy Spirit sent *after* Christ ascended

“Before the entrance of sin, Adam enjoyed open communion with his Maker; but since man separated himself from God by transgression, the human race has been cut off from this high privilege. ***By the plan of redemption, however, a way has been opened*** whereby the inhabitants of the earth may still have connection with heaven. God has communicated with men by His Spirit, and divine light has been imparted to the world by revelations to His chosen servants.”¹

That access to heaven is a “direct” link to the Father because of Christ:

“When Christ bowed on the banks of Jordan, after his baptism, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended in the form of a dove, like burnished gold, and encircled him with its glory; and the voice of God from the highest heaven was heard, saying. ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ ***The prayer of Christ in man’s behalf opened the gates of heaven***, and the father had responded, accepting the petition for the fallen race. Jesus prayed as our substitute and surety, and ***now the human family may find access to the Father through the merits of his well-beloved Son***. This earth because of transgression had been struck off from the continent of heaven. Communication had ceased between man and his Maker; but the way has been opened, so that he may return to the Father's house. Jesus is ‘the way, the truth, and the life.’ ***The gate of heaven has been left ajar, and the radiance from the throne of God shines into the hearts of those who love him, even though they dwell in the sin-cursed earth***. The light that encircled the divine Son of God will fall upon the pathway of all those who follow in his footsteps. There is no reason for discouragement. The promises of God are sure and steadfast.”²

“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. Rev. 14:4, 5.” – *Early Writings*, p. 30.

The setting here in Revelation 4, begins long *after* that 1844 period and will progress right to the end.

And the first voice which I heard was as it were a trumpet talking with me” (vs 1)

- This is exactly the language John uses in 1:10-12. It continues that prophecy!
- The imagery is one of the Feast of Trumpets.
- There, he saw and heard Jesus.

¹ White, Ellen G.; *God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 190.

² White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, February 28, 1888.

2. Chapter 4:

Sanctuary

Heaven

Trumpet voice

To all the churches
(judgment has begun)

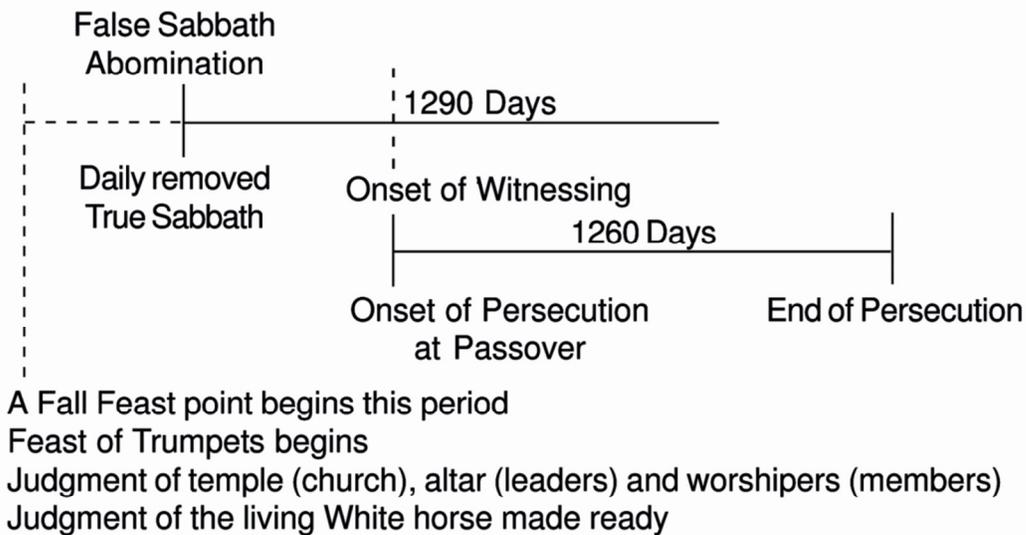
After the first voice comes the great messages to the seven churches. This appears to be a final directive to church leaders (the “angels” of the seven churches – 1:20).

The judgment of the living is also described in Revelation 11:1: “measure . them that worship.”

- Then comes the three and a half year period of persecution
- And three and a half years of witnessing
- The Trumpets appear to be God’s final warning before probation closes.

A Sabbath *issue* relates to the onset of these end-time periods?

- Daniel 12 introduces these timing periods.



- The abomination or false sabbath and the removal of the true Sabbath precedes the 3½ years.
- As does the judgment of the living (Revelation 11:1-3).

“Which said, Come up hither” (vs 1)

God called Moses to “the top of the mount” (Exodus 19:20).

- That related to the law.
- John is called to the Most Holy where the law was “housed” – reflecting God’s character.

- The law is the basis for all that happens at the end.

“I will show thee things which must be hereafter” (vs 1)

What is Jesus going to show?

- At the beginning of the book Gabriel had said that he was going to be shown “things which must shortly come to pass,” “time is at hand,” then the second coming (Revelation 1:1, 3, 7, 19).
- Here, the theme of anticipation is repeated by Jesus Himself.
- This must be the ***continuing flow*** of key eschatological prophecies of what occurs shortly after the final trumpet warning begins.

This brings into view the ***climax*** of the prophetic expectations that were unfolded in Daniel 2.

- Where an earthly kingdom will be replaced by a heavenly.
- “The kingdoms of this world are become [the kingdoms] of our Lord, and of his Christ” (Revelation 11:15).

“And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne” (Revelation 4:2).

“And immediately I was in the spirit” (vs 2)

- Again, these are exactly the words of 1:10 on the “Lord’s Day.”
- That means between the first vision, including the audition of the seven churches, and here there was a break in time. Likely for John to “catch up” in his writing!
- The trumpet voice suggests that we are now continuing with urgent preparation themes beginning in chapters 1 through 3.

“and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne (vs 2)

John’s first visual picture is God’s throne (introduced in promise to the Laodicean church overcomers – Revelation 3:21).

- We know this throne room is vast.
- Elsewhere it will be surrounded by all the heavenly host and the redeemed.

The throne is a symbol of *sovereignty*, majesty and judgment.

- *“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at*

the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke” (Isaiah 6:1-4; cf. Ezekiel 1:26-28).

- This is beautiful imagery of heaven.

John notes the throne “was set.”

- This reflects on a previous act of **placing** traceable to Daniel 7:9a [Beale, G. K.; *The New International Greek Testament Commentary; The Book of Revelation* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan – 1999), p. 320].
- There, thrones were “set up.”
- There, a judgment scene began.
- Here, a **new judgment** scene is depicted, related to the period immediately preceding the second coming.

The words “one sat on the throne”

- Alludes to God the Father
 - He is distinguished from the Lamb (5:5, 7; 6:16; 7:10) and from the Spirit (4:5; 19:4).
 - Portraying His **glory** is the objective, not a detailed description of His person (as we saw of Jesus in chapter 1).
- “set” and “sat” are prophetic judgment words (cf. Psalm 9:4, 122:5; Judges 5:10; Revelation 20:4)
 - The rainbow seen in the next verse reveals mercy (*Education*, p. 115).
 - Thus, mercy still pleads – but an end is in view (based on succeeding chapters 5–8:1).
 - “God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness” (Psalm 47:8).

God is described as ‘sitting on the throne’ often in the book (4:2, 3, 9, 10; 5:1, 7, 13; 6:16; 7:10, 15; 19:4; 20:11; 21:5), and the imagery alludes to the supreme Potentate sitting in final judgment upon the world. (Osborne, Grant R.; *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 226).

What John Saw

“And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald” (Revelation 4:3).

God the Father’s appearance in Scripture has very limited description. What is seen tells more about who He is than His actual visual imagery.

“I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus’ countenance and admired His lovely person. The Father’s person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered Him. I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like Himself. He said He had, but I could not behold it, for said He, ‘If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist.’” (*Early Writings*, p. 54).

Because His form is hidden we are given a treatise as to what divine glory looks like. The “light” was like:

- Jasper – anciently translucent like a diamond
(mercy) – last stone on High Priest’s breastplate
– first precious stone of the New Jerusalem and the only one tied to God’s glory (Revelation 21:11)
- Sardine – deep red
(justice) – first stone on High Priest’s breastplate

This directs our attention once again to a judgment scene.

- All over issues related to God’s character that symbolize the great meaning of the most Holy
- A comparison seen in the Old Testament (Ezekiel 1:4, 8:2; Daniel 7:9; Revelation 1:14, 10:1) – in those we see white vs fire

The rainbow also represents the combined power of mercy and justice (Maranatha, p. 326) or simply “God’s mercy” (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 675).

- BUT – here it is different as John sees it as emerald or green in color.
- Green is a symbol for mercy. This may be the predominant message from this picture.
- Though judgment activity is underway – the throne is exuding with mercy!

The vision unfolds:

“And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold” (Revelation 4:4).

Here, they are called seats. The Greek word is *thronous* – thrones.

- They surround God’s throne.
- In a judgment setting, as we noted in Daniel 7:9, it is assumed they are witnessing the judicial review process.

On the thrones were 24 elders – the same number as the thrones.

- Why?
- Those beings are affirmed as relating to the legal proceedings.

Who are these beings?

- The word “elders” is more easily applied to men than angels (Hebrews 11:2).
- They have robes of white (ties directly with the translated saints in Revelation 7:13-15; cf. 3:5, 18).
- They have crowns (*stephanous*), meaning they have had victory over something – presumably sin.

Intriguingly: white garments, crowns and thrones were promised to overcomers (3:5, 11, 21).

- 24 Elders represented the thousands of priests in Israel (I Chronicles 23:3-4, 24:7-19, 25:9-31).
- They sing about their redemption. They are translated saints (Revelation 5:8-10), likely ascending to heaven with Christ (Matthew 27:51-53).

“And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal” (Revelation 4:5-6a).

Here the Holy and Most Holy are a single room.

Additional sanctuary information is presented in 8:5 (where coals from the altar and censer are thrown to the earth – purifying the saints, giving judgment on the wicked), 11:19 (seventh Trumpet) and 16:18 (seventh Bowl).

- In Revelation 4:3 we saw God’s ***justice*** and ***mercy***.
- Here, we see a judicial response.

Here there are:

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lightning (exhibition of God’s power and authority) • Thunder (judgments) underway or immediately pending • Voices (judicial decrees) • Seven spirits – full expression of the Holy Spirit – early/latter rain | } | Setting - judgment |
|---|---|--------------------|

The seven blazing lamps are the “seven spirits of God” first presented as part of a divine greeting in 1:4.

- This ties to Zechariah 4:1-10, where seven lamps are seven eyes of God.
- This is an expression of a perfect or ***complete*** manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

- It is the time of the **Early and Latter Rain**.

Note: Many try to state the seven candle fires before the throne is proof that it is the Holy Place before 1844. The whole context is against this. Also, the sea of glass is before the throne. The imagery draws from the courtyard, the Holy Place **and** the most Holy Place. The issues associated with each are what is being presented.

The “sea of glass” is before God’s place for the saved (15:2) – a place also symbolic of judgment.

“and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle” (Revelation 4:6b-7).

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First beast – like a lion • Second beast – like a calf • Third beast – had a face like a man • Fourth beast – like a flying eagle | } | Cf. Ezekiel 1:10 |
|--|---|------------------|

What or who do these creatures represent?

- There are similarities to the cherubim of Ezekiel 1:5-6, 10 and 10:14 and the seraphim of Isaiah 6.

What deeper issue does all this relate to?

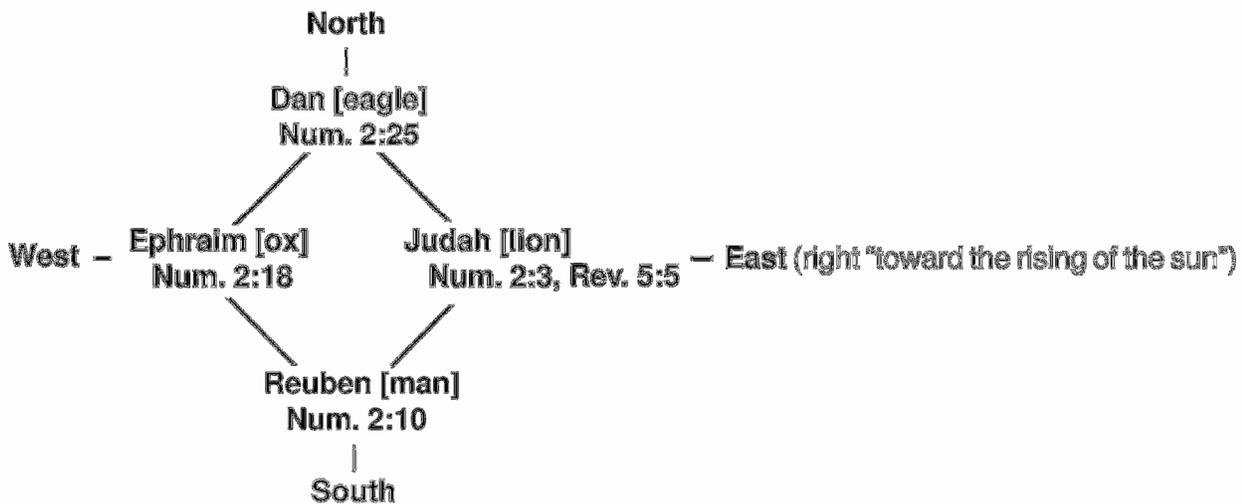
- First – the number “four” is a universal, all-inclusive number (Revelation 7:1, Ezekiel 7:2, Matthew 24:31, Mark 13:17) **and** is an “earth” number (three refers to heavenly things).

The lead tribes of Israel hold the key.

- Each lead tribe had a standard or symbol (Numbers 2):

Lion	Judah	east
Ox	Ephraim	west
Man	Reuben	south
Eagle	Dan	north

- **The 24 elders represent redeemed man to God. The four living creatures represent God to man.**



These animals represent the lead tribe banners (or “standards” – Numbers 2). This is *confirmed* by Jewish tradition and ancient writings.

- Jesus is called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah in Revelation (5, 10) – both.

Living-Creature Qualities:

- They were nearest of all beings to God’s throne (Revelation 5:6).
- They had eyes all over their bodies (Revelation 4:6, 8) – to see and understand God’s will.
- Around throne on four plains – representing all directions of the universe
- Many wings to speedily fulfill God’s wishes

Lion: boldness, strength, courage

Ox: submissiveness, strength, patience

Man: intelligence, wisdom, spiritual insight, reason

Eagle: sees things easily, swift

The four living creatures in Ezekiel guided wheels within wheels. All that imagery reveals that “the complicated play of *human events is under divine control*. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations, he that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of the earth.” – *Education*, pp. 173, 177-178.

There is more we must discover:

God told Ezekiel information about the temple (church) at the end of time being restored to a perfect state. Dispensationalists incorrectly feel the temple will be rebuilt on the *Temple Mount* in Jerusalem partially based on this. It represents God’s vast corporate body soon to be seen as the white horse.

- The curtain that would divide the holy and most holy was to have a palm tree, a creature with two heads, a palm tree, then that creature alternating again with the palm (Ezekiel 41:17-19).
- At the time of “measuring,” the church represented had only two lead tribes left.

What were those two heads?

- Lion and man – Judah and Reuben (also symbolic of the two witnesses of Revelation 11).
- Where were the ox and eagle (Ephraim and Dan)?
- They weren’t there.
- Notice Revelation 7 and the 12 tribes representing the 144,000.

Where is Dan (eagle) or Ephraim (ox)?

- They aren’t there!
- People are lost

Ezekiel’s temple symbolizes the *final church* when God’s kingdom is made up.

- Judah and Reuben are the lead tribes.
- They represent the 144,000 and the great multitude that come out of Babylon.

Symbols

- Palm tree – righteous flourish like this tree (Psalm 92:12)
– God’s people are upright like a palm tree (Jeremiah 10:5).
- Lion and man are *facing the palm* – therefore, they represent upright and righteous people.



A SEALED SCROLL (REVELATION 5)

John Sees God’s Hand

“And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne” (Revelation 5:1a).

This new chapter is a continuation of the throne-room scene from chapter 4, where:

- God is on the throne – but His form is not visible.
- Detailed aspects of His glory are described.
- Christ is initially not present in the throne room.
- He is, however, directing in what John sees.
- The judgment of the living is underway.
- God is part of a judgment scene.

Now God’s *hand* is seen.

- The *right* hand means whatever it holds is important and being protected.
- Also, that hand suggests that it is a divine legal document.
- Similar imagery is seen in Ezekiel 2:9-10, where a “hand” holds a “roll of a book” containing:
 - Lamentations } Judgments or Destinies
 - Mournings } • Judicial decisions
 - Woes } • Court sentences

E. G. White warned God’s people that “the fifth chapter of Revelation needs to be closely studied. It is of great importance to those who *shall act* [future] a part in the work of God for the *last days*.” – *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 267 (written 1904-1909) (emphasis added).

- Those who finish the last work on earth
- The 144,000
- Those who shout the Loud Cry message
- Must understand Revelation 5

The Book/Scroll in God’s Right Hand

“a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals” (Revelation 5:1b).

The scroll in God’s hand is sealed with Seven Seals.

- This is a perfect or complete number.
 - They are numbered and
 - They are in a sequence.

Those Seals mean something was perfectly protected from understanding.

- When the last one is opened, a mystery will unfold.
- When there are *seven* numbered items in prophecy, it is always divided in a 4–2–1 fashion, i.e., three divisions.
 - 4 will represent one group
 - 2 will stand apart
 - 1 will finish the sequence – always associated with Christ’s second advent on a Sabbath or sacred seventh

The scroll is written inside and out – it is full. Whatever is recorded is finished, completed.

- When can the scroll be read?
- *Only after* the last Seal is broken – crucial point!!

What is written on that scroll?

- Drawing on Ezekiel 2:10, where that scroll was written on both sides, we note that it contained lamentations and woes, we have the suggestion that the *destiny* or judgment of certain people is recorded.
- Psalm 139:16 notes that all our future days are ordained *before* they come to pass, suggesting a foreordained destiny (legal decision/divine judgment).
- There is an allusion to Daniel 7.
 - Ancient of days did sit (vs 9 – judgment scene)
 - Judgment was set, books opened (vs 10 – judgment scene)
 - Son of Man came in clouds to Ancient of Days to receive His dominion – it’s made up. The Revelation 5 scroll has a mystery given to Jesus before He receives that dominion.
 - Judgment shall sit (vs 26 – unique judgment court scene) (millennium noted in Revelation).
 - The end (vs 26 – everything is completed)

A judgment scene in Revelation has consummated (God “sat”). It is the judgment of the living. But before it is complete, the judicial scroll is handed to Jesus.

- The breaking of the Seals is in preparation for opening the scroll and studying its contents.
- The scroll will be given to the Lamb – another process is about to begin while the Ancient of Days is on His judgment throne.

Internal evidence about that scroll (remember also that the Seals are numbered – thus, sequenced):

- *Before* the seventh Seal is broken, the second Advent of Jesus is declared under the sixth Seal (Revelation 6:16).
- Thus its *contents* are to be reviewed **after** that time.
- No events on earth are recorded after the sixth Seal is broken – only silence in heaven (8:1). Note: Revelation 7 is an interlude within the vision (not sequenced).
- The end of history is in view.

Since Jesus will be the only one who can unseal it and since it is in God's hand – it must contain a "mystery of God."

- Revelation 10:7 said that at the sounding of the seventh Trumpet the "*mystery of God*" would be complete or fully open.

Does that mean that the seventh Seal and seventh Trumpet would occur together? Yes. The review noted in Daniel 7:26 is in view!

- Revelation 11:15 – at *that* final Trumpet heavenly voices announce, "*The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.*" This announces the time the saints receive their rewards and reign with Christ.

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:10).

- It is not only judgment imagery but that of the Consummation, redemptive imagery and release.

If it is opened after the second coming of Jesus, it must contain records other than the saints. The judgment scene of Daniel 7:26 is in view!

- What judgment occurs after the second coming?
- Executive review of why the wicked were not saved.

External Evidence for What Is in the Scroll

It is a book of destiny that the Father had *previously* recorded (Psalm 139:16). The *investigative judgment* decided who would make up the kingdom. The wicked are killed before the millennium. Yet, they are judged during the millennium. How then were they killed before the judgment?

- Jesus will know who would make up His kingdom when He comes.
- The wicked die from the brightness of His coming (II Thessalonians 2:8, Revelation 6:16). Why they were not chosen must be recorded in that sealed scroll.
- Christ permits this to happen in symbolic language (Matthew 25:31-46).

- The scroll must reveal God the Father’s predictive judgment. If they all coincide, God’s character will be vindicated.

“There in His open hand lay the book, the roll of the history of God’s providences, the prophetic [written beforehand] history of nations and the church. Herein was contained the divine utterances, His authority, His commandments, His laws, the whole symbolic counsel of the Eternal, and the history of all ruling powers in the nations. In symbolic language was contained in that roll the influence of every nation, tongue, and people from the *beginning* of earth’s history to its *close*.

“This roll was written within and without. John says: ‘I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon’ [verse 4]. The vision as presented to John made its impression upon his mind. *The destiny of every nation was contained in that book*. John was distressed at the utter inability of any human being or angelic intelligence to read the words, or even to look thereon. His soul was wrought up to such a point of agony and suspense that one of the strong angels had compassion on him, and laying his hand on him assuringly, said, ‘Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof’” – *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, pp. 296-297.

Sentencing by the court on those wicked occurs during the millennium:

- That scroll contains the record of the world, God’s requirements and the *destiny – or judgment* of mankind.
- It records God’s mercy and justice in dealing with the wicked.
- There, God’s eternal character is revealed.
- But it won’t be opened until after Jesus comes.

Reviewing the Judgment of the wicked during the millennium, based on God’s divine standards, will be the last act in the vindication of God and settling the legal issues before the courtroom of heaven.

- If what Jesus did in separating the sheep from the goats matches what is in this foreordained scroll, God will be vindicated. (Matthew 25, cf. John 5:22)
- At His coming, Jesus (who died for all), rules against those His blood never cleansed.

What the Scroll Isn’t

1. Some feel that this scroll is the same as the *little book* in Jesus’ hand recorded in Revelation 10.

“The book that was sealed was not the book of Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel which related to the last days. The Scripture says, ‘But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased’ (Dan. 12:4). When the book was opened, the proclamation was made, ‘Time shall be no longer’ (See Revelation 10:6).

The book of Daniel is now unsealed, and the revelation made by Christ to John is to come to all the inhabitants of the earth. By the increase of knowledge a people is to be prepared to stand in the latter days.” – *Selected Messages*, bk 2, p. 105 (1887).

Was this *book of destiny* part of Daniel?

- No
- The sealed portion of Daniel 8–12 (the vision designated as the “*chazown* vision”) was sealed with only **one** Seal.

“Daniel has been standing in his lot since the **seal** was removed and the light of truth has been shining upon his visions. He stands in his lot, bearing the testimony which was to be understood at the end of the days.” – *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, p. 225 (1893) (emphasis added).

2. Many contend that this is the *Book of Life*, and that Jesus “comes” to take it to begin the investigative judgment.

- There is no record that the *Book of Life* was sealed.
- The scroll isn’t opened until **after** Jesus comes.
- By then the judgment of the saints will be *complete* – the review of the Book of Life.

That Scroll of Destiny

“The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work [from the judgment of the righteous] and takes place at a later period.” – *The Faith I Live By*, p. 210.

- The saints with Christ will review the records of the wicked.
- They will then have access to this book of destiny which God made long before.

Then all will see that God’s judgment was correct, His mercy and justice right. His character will be finally vindicated before the universe.

- Why? If the wicked are not saved, they were prejudged *before* the one thousand years.

“*Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?*” 1 Cor. 6:3. This is a final affirmation or vindication of God!

“During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection the judgment of the wicked takes place. The apostle Paul points to this judgment as an event that follows the second advent. ‘Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.’ 1 Corinthians 4:5 [That is when the scroll, added to all heavenly records reveals the ‘deeper things’ of man’s rebellion]. Daniel declares that when the Ancient of Days came, ‘judgment was given to the saints of the most High.’ Daniel 7:22 [Note: This is not verse 9 that covers the end of the 2300-“day”

period but after Jesus' second coming noted in I Corinthians 6:2-3; cf. Revelation 20:4a]. At this time the righteous reign as kings and priests unto God. John in the Revelation says: 'I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.' 'They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.' Revelation 20:4, 6. It is at this time that, as foretold by Paul, 'the saints shall judge the world.' 1 Corinthians 6:2. In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death." – *Maranatha*, p. 335.

"God will soon vindicate His justice before the universe. His justice requires that sin be punished." – *The Upward Look*, p. 49.

- Not only will His justice and fairness in excluding the wicked from the kingdom be seen by the saints, angels and unfallen worlds
- BUT all the wicked will one day acknowledge their eternal punishment.

"He will . 'convince all that are ungodly among them of all ungodly deeds' Jude 14-15. Every sinner will be brought to see and acknowledge the justice of his condemnation." – *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 393.

Additional Reason Scroll and Seven Seals are Very End Time

"Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness this decision will appear before them in the day **when** this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah." – *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 294 (1900).



THE LAMB WAS WORTHY (REVELATION 5)

An Angelic Question

“And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” (Revelation 5:2).

John is a witness to this angel’s question. He records for the first time hearing a “loud voice” (there will be many more “with a loud voice” – Revelation 14:7, 9, 15; 5:12; 6:10; 7:2, 10; 8:13; 10:3; 18:2).

- Each time this is mentioned
- It relates to a message that the whole world must hear.
- It applies to a time just before or during the loud cry, when the *final appeal* to accept Jesus will come to the world.
- This period of time is called in the Old Testament the “appointed time” (Daniel 8:19 and Habakkuk 2:2-3).

This “loud voice” is another clue that the Seals are very end-time.

- Jesus’ voice, open door, judgment
- *Now* we have unfolded a forward-moving message to the ***end of time***.
- Preparation is being made for another judgment.

While John is in that magnificent throne room, before the very throne of God, Gabriel, (the “strong angel”) is seen and raises a question.

- The “who” individual must be eligible and qualified to:
 - Break the Seals
 - Open the book
 - Review its contents
- That person apparently must be able to ***confirm*** or validate what is in the scroll (legal language).

That is profound information!

- A qualified individual was needed.
- Any unqualified person/being could *invalidate* what was about to happen!
- God needs someone to vindicate His prior judgment and actions.
- He needs someone who is so pure and holy He can corroborate God’s very judgment.
- He needs someone who knows all about man’s plight.

Before Gabriel's question is answered, the statement comes that no man in heaven or earth or hell is even worthy to *look* at the scroll (Revelation 5:3).

“And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon” (Revelation 5:3).

Jesus proved Himself to be a *standard of righteousness* – as a man.

- He is the arbiter of all truth, of life and death.
- *“And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”* Revelation 1:17-18.

He remained Godlike unto death.

- In His humanity He was victorious over principalities and powers.
- He is the only being in the universe worthy to preside over the judgment or destiny God has foreordained.
 - Wicked are dead (during the millennium, when this book is opened)
 - Unfallen worlds, the angels, the four living creatures cannot make final decision
 - Only those who were *victorious over wickedness* can legally declare that it is time to finish the cases before the court.

John Weeps

“And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon” (Revelation 5:4).

This is a fascinating picture. John is reacting with keen sadness (as have other prophets like Daniel).

- He wanted a “man” to open it! God was about to punish – execute judgment. He sits on the throne. The wicked will be sentenced to eternal death. Is that fair?
 - Gabriel must have asked the question in a way that it sounded like no one anywhere could be found.

John also, in ways not recorded, senses the value of what is in that scroll and the urgency to have it opened.

- Why? Because John was in love with the divine. He wanted the issues of the court to get over with. Only a man who was victorious over sin has a right to judge God's judgment on sin.
- This mystery scroll would:

- Either remain a heavenly enigma or
 - Be indefinitely postponed
 - At least it seemed that way to John
- } Was there to be no end to this scene of judgment, prayers, head tribes and destinies?

But – there is more to discover.

- Everything at the end of time depends on who is “worthy.”
- (1) Who is worthy to enter the kingdom is what is important to you and me. John went a step further. (2) He was concerned as to who was worthy to end the controversy over sin within the universe!!

Note: If this was not end-time, there would be no need to get emotional!

One of the 24 elders (a redeemed person) announced that a worthy being was found (Revelation 5:5) and asked John to stop crying.

“And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” (Revelation 5:5).

- The seemingly unanswerable emotional question only tended to focus attention on who was found!
 - “The Man” – metaphor
 - Lion of the tribe of Judah – the Deliverer
 - The head of a lead tribe – the standard bearer
 - This tribe was a symbol of the 144,000 – Jesus the Messiah was that “lion” leader.
- Jesus confirmed that it was He at the end of the book by saying: *“I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” Revelation 22:16.*

Very Important Concept

- Jesus’ life and death enables Him to open the scroll of destiny
- To preside over the final stages of human history
- To prepare to vindicate God’s character of love, mercy and justice to the universe

The imagery of God on the throne with the scroll is one where He waits for the great vindication time to arrive.

- Wonder of wonders
- Jesus invited John into heaven to witness that arrival to set the stage to vindicate God’s character!

What point in redemptive history marks this arrival?

“But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end” (Daniel 7:26).

- We saw it could not be Daniel 7:9.
- We saw that the Seals have to be opened before the scroll is read (Daniel 7:22).
- It has to be somewhere between when the saints possess the kingdom and the judgment of the living in Revelation 4.
- Somewhere between 1844 (the open door) and Jesus’ second coming:
 - A document transfer scene occurs
 - A special preparation work of the Vindicator will be done during the “appointed time.” He will receive the scroll and begin preparations for the end.
- This begins at a time when the judgment of the living is underway – as we will see shortly (when Seals broken)!

The Lamb Comes into View

“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth” (Revelation 5:6).

The Lamb has specific characteristics:

- “In the midst of the throne” = place of honor within the area of all the heavenly beings
- “Stood” = representing something, an attorney, legal imagery continues
- “Seven horns” = total power – omnipotent
- “Seven eyes” = all-knowing – omniscience
- “Seven spirits” = omnipresent through the Spirit – time when power is complete – study Revelation 1:4 and 4:5 (7 lamps before the throne) (period of Holy Spirit rain).
- “Slain” = still bleeding = blood still pleading

The Lion of the tribe of God’s remnant people is announced, but amazingly, He looks like a lamb. Why?

- The scroll will be taken by Him as a lion ready to execute judgment and as the great standard bearer (that’s what the elder said).
- But He still, as a slain lamb, pleads His blood – probation hasn’t closed(!) when the scroll was taken.

“Christ is our Mediator and officiating High Priest in the presence of the Father. He was shown to John as a Lamb that had been slain, as in the very act of pouring out His blood in the sinner’s behalf. When the law of God is set before the sinner, showing him the depth of his sins, he should then be pointed to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. He should be taught repentance toward God

and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus will the labor of Christ's representative be in harmony with His work in the heavenly sanctuary." – *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 395. "The Lamb of God is represented before us as 'in the midst of the throne' of God. He is the great ordinance by which man and God are united and commune together. Thus men are represented as sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is the appointed place of meeting between God and humanity

"Christ brought human nature into a personal relation with His own divinity. Thus He has given a center for the faith of the universe to fasten upon." – *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 124.

Yet in spite of this imagery, we find the Lamb fighting a final battle with evil.

- *"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."* Revelation 17:14.
- There He is also King of kings and Lord of lords.
- The Lamb means everything to us. It symbolizes the "great submission" of heaven to save mankind! Yet, His Godly power remains.

The Lamb Acts

And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne (Revelation 5:7).

The Lamb approaches the place where God is seated – "he came" (vs 7; cf. Daniel 7:22).

- The scroll is taken out of God's right hand – where the mystery of His mercy and justice was all recorded.
- Jesus – the Lamb – is prepared to break the Seals.

Something dramatic now occurs:

"And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints" (Revelation 5:8).

- Instantly, four beasts and 24 elders fall down and worship the Lamb.
- They each had harps and golden vials full of odours.
- Odours are "prayers of saints." God's people are in a time of intense prayer.
- They are called "saints" (*hagios*) – morally pure (like some in Philadelphia church). They are praying – living.

Why? What does that mean?

- There is now also a group of morally pure people.

- A time of trouble has begun (Daniel 12:7, Revelation 8:3-4, 11:2). The saints are pleading for God's protection and guidance.

Taking the scroll marks the initiation of proceedings to open its contents. It heralds that the end of earth's history is imminent.

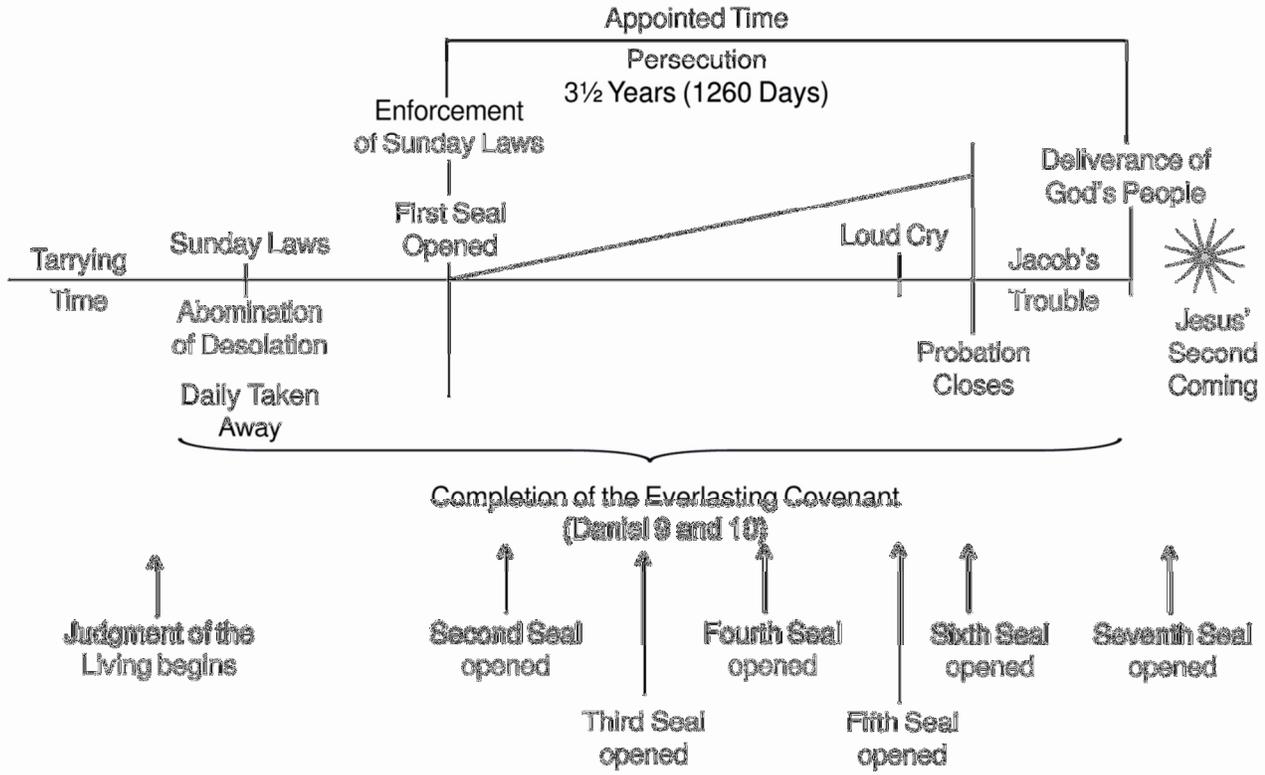
A series of heavenly anthems of praise now come before God. The heavenly court in essence is saying: "You are worthy to initiate the final stages of the sin conflict and brings it to an end."

- Remember E. G. White's thoughts that even after the cross there were issues that the angels needed to work out? – time had to go on longer (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 761).
- Now the whole angelic host and representation of the universe are around His throne. In a great theophany of praise they are now saying, "We now understand it all."
- **"You are worthy to bring things to an end."**

Why the "prayers" of the saints?

- This represents a time of intense prayer by God's people – they are in great need.
- It relates to the "beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:8) and the persecution that follows.
- The Little Time of Trouble has started.
- This ties directly to Revelation 8:3-5! – where the prayers of the saints are coming to the altar, and Jesus needs more incense!
- The 24 elders are God's redeemed and are depicted here as "priests," fulfilling Revelation 1:6.
- It is a time of persecution and oppression.

Daniel 8–12 in Review

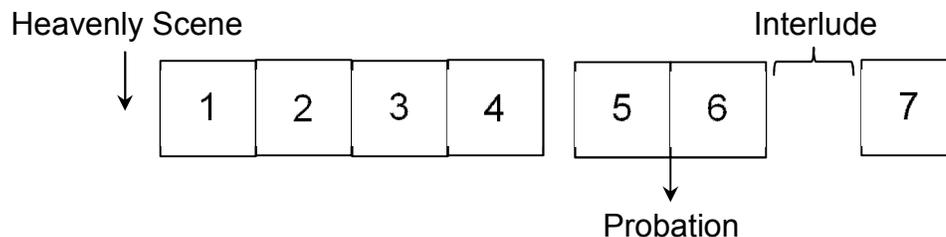




INTRODUCTION TO THE SEALS

A Fascinating Division

The Seven Seals are divided into three segments, as are the Trumpets and Plagues, in a 4–2–1 arrangement.



- 1–4 = The major players in the battle between good and evil
- 5–6 = Specific end-time events directed at or by Satan and his minions
- 7 = Events surrounding the second coming

Notice the “interlude.” That represents a break in the prophetic vision with a special bulletin or message.

- Interludes usually refer back to the beginning of a section to fill in special details.
- They always add very important information for God’s people.

The Seven Churches were *not* numbered. They do not bear a prophetic sequence or special order.

- The Seven Seals are numbered.
- They represent *sequenced* end-time happenings, which lead up to the time the scroll can be unrolled.
- Each event occurs “when” the Seal is broken.
- There is an escalation of issues that culminate at Christ’s second coming in the sixth Seal.

The opening of the Seals is heaven directed – not Satan-commanded.

- They describe circumstances that God permits right at the end of time.
- Thus, they are heaven decreed.
- But – they all occur on earth.
- What is opened to our understanding in chapters 4–7 is finalized in chapter 19.

The Seals

These prevent the contents from being prematurely seen or understood.

- When the people and issues of each Seal are revealed, the contents of the scroll can then be understood!
- The Seals also certify that the contents are genuine and authentic.
- Breaking the Seals is so important to heaven and the universe,
 - The contents bear the final judgment of the wicked – their destiny.
 - It required Jesus the Lamb that had shed blood to be worthy. Why?
 - God’s character is vindicated by the contents. It is a record of His judgments.
 - When the saints review that record, they will find Christ’s life and death upheld what God wrote in that record.
 - They reveal a people who spurned the Lamb’s blood.
 - God’s judgment of the wicked and Christ’s choosing of the righteous will be in perfect harmony.
 - That Lamb has the right – He is worthy – to reveal from each Seal the final issues in the great controversy.

What does the breaking of the Seals mean?

God’s last judicial step can proceed when the scroll can finally be opened.

“Here were *scenes* presented to John that were not in reality [to his experience] but that which would be in a *period of time* in the *future* [Revelation 6:1-4 quoted].” – *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20, p. 198 (1898) (emphasis added).

- Are the Seals historical?
- Not according to this expositor.

What is that “period of time”?

- That is the “appointed time” of Daniel 8 and Habakkuk 2.
- Review this – the last three and a half years of earth’s history.
- (Best to have had Daniel 8 & 12 workshop)

Everything in the rest of the book has its basis in the bleeding Lamb that initiates the time of the end – that “appointed time”!

- It is Christ-centered
- Sealed in Calvary’s blood
- But now in an end-time setting



SEAL ONE

John Watches the First Seal Being Opened

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see” (Revelation 6:1).

John noted that when this Seal was broken and said, “I saw *when*” [a timing statement] the Lamb did it.

- His narrative reveals *real time*.
- He is an eye witness! Then he heard.
- We are to identify the time it is opened.

Since the Lamb, opening the Seals, is still bleeding:

- Man’s great Advocate is still interceding for the saints.
- John is a witness to another first-Seal *sensory* event:

He heard a noise like thunder.

- A judgment of the living had begun (Revelation 4:2), then John observed a theophany of lightning, thunder and voices, announcing that heaven was proceeding with final decisions for eternity (Revelation 4:5) – first thunder.
- The thunder associated with the breaking of this first Seal suggests that a “waymark” has occurred in this judicial process. Something appears to be “complete.” This is the second thunder related to this judgment scene. This time there are no “voices” emanating from the throne or lightning. A dramatic phase in heaven’s court room scene has occurred.
- Since this is the only Seal with thunder, what John is about to see must represent a group of individuals that have their eternal destiny fully made up (cf. Malachi 3:17).
- A “white horse” will be seen going out in battle. They are pure and righteous. They will represent the 144,000 as we will see.
- “Clad in the armor of Christ’s righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict. ‘Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners’ (Song of Solomon 6:10), she is to go forth into all the world, conquering and to conquer.” – *Prophets and Kings*, p. 725.
- “The battle raged. Victory alternated from side to side. Now the soldiers of the cross gave way, ‘as when a standard-bearer fainteth.’ But their apparent retreat was but an effort to gain a more advantageous position. Shouts of joy were heard. A song of praise to God went up, and angel voices united in the song, as Christ’s soldiers planted his banner on the walls of fortresses till then held by the enemy. The Captain

of our salvation was ordering the battle, and sending support to his soldiers. His power was mightily displayed, encouraging them to press the battle to the gates. He taught them terrible things in righteousness as he led them on step by step, conquering and to conquer.” – *The Review and Herald*, November 26, 1903.

- When this first Seal is broken, a group of *saints*, a *body of witnesses*, is ready to go out to finish the work. This will unfold in greater detail as we examine the horse and rider.
- We know that that “latter rain” or special outpouring of the Holy Spirit has begun because of the imagery of the Lamb with its “seven eyes” in the previous chapter. This suggests that soon after the onset of the judgment of the living has begun, that outpouring begins! By the time the first Seal has been broken, the world is receiving its “showers.”

What phase of judgment led to this? The judgment of the living.

Creature Symbolism

As we have seen, each of the tribes of Israel had a symbol or standard.

- “*Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father’s house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.*” Numbers 2:2.
- Each of the living creatures represents the standard of the four lead tribes.
- The *lead* tribes were symbols of the leading groups of last-day people who claim to be God’s.

What is the appearance of the first beast?

- The first creature is like a lion (4:7) (see pp. 3-4).
- The lion of the tribe of Judah
- Note: Judah heads the list of the 144,000 (7:4)

Is there another reason that the first creature’s voice is like thunder?

- Cross reference – “And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.” Revelation 10:3.
 - Jesus cries with a loud voice
 - Like a lion that roars

This beast – living creature – angel – represents those people whom Judah symbolizes.

- They are in the east.
 - They will work with Christ to bring deliverance.
- } Daniel 11:44

Our confidence is increased as to who these creatures are from the Old Testament references Ezekiel 1:10 and 41:18-19.

“And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer” (Revelation 6:2).

A white horse comes on the scene. “I saw” and I want you to “behold.”

- White
 - Purity (Psalm 51:7)
 - Perfect righteousness of Christ (Revelation 7:14, 19:8)
 - Victory (Isaiah 1:18)
 - Holiness (Revelation 7:13).
 - White stone of Revelation 2:17 represents Christ’s holy character freely offered to all.
- Horse
 - People, especially God’s people in military action (Song of Solomon 1:9, Isaiah 63:13, Zechariah 10:3)
 - Last-day context – Joel talks of God’s people as horses.

*“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. The appearance of them is **as the appearance of horses**; and as horsemen, so shall they run.” Joel 2:1-4.*

This horse represents the 144,000 who have the character of Jesus. They have been purified – they are holy – *their judgment has already occurred*. This is the first living group that fulfills the prophecy of Daniel 8:14.

A rider is directing each horse. Who is this rider?

- We are directed to Revelation 19:11-13 where the “Faithful and True” is riding a white horse, whose name is “The Word of God.”
- That is a different time and circumstance but the same rider.
- Some have asked, “How can a lamb, opening the Seals, lead at the same time the remnant to battle?”
 - Why not?
 - Revelation 1:16 – He lays His hand on John – but has seven stars in it.

- All is in symbolic language.

Only Christ can ride a white horse and lead forward a purified people!

- Since horses are also connected with war (Job 39:19-25, Psalm 76:5-6, Proverbs 21:31)
- This is a scene of war.
- It is symbolic of Christ and His people going out to finish a task.
 - Jesus has a crown (*stephanos*).
 - Crown of victory
 - This mission will be completed.

The bow:

- Has many symbolic meanings
- Here, it is a symbol of war, when a weapon *hits its mark*. It verifies truth. It is accurate.

The Purpose of the First Seal

The horse and rider go out (they are *active*), “conquering” and “to conquer.”

- The *double* use of these words means that the mission won't stop until it is *complete*.
- This depicts a people, who have the righteousness of Jesus, under His leadership, going out to finish the work.
- This represents:
 - The Loud Cry of the 144,000
 - At the time of the Latter Rain
 - It goes forth

“As the ‘latter rain’ experience will be worldwide in scope, I believe it to be a better match to the symbol of the White Horse than the ‘early rain.’

“It was with great interest that I came upon the following statements from the pen of Ellen White. On page 33 of *Early Writings* she wrote, ‘At the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully.’ She was apparently asked about this statement, because she later issued a clarifying statement that is recorded on page 85 of the same work. ‘The commencement of the time of trouble,’ here mentioned does not refer to the time when the plagues shall begin to be poured out, but to a short period just before they are poured out, while Christ is in the sanctuary . At that time . trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check .’ In this clarifying statement, Ellen White is saying that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that empowers the last-day church does not come at the commencement of the Great Time of Trouble, *but at the start of a little time of trouble* that will precede the Great

Time of Trouble. This is one of Ellen White's first references to the Early Time of Trouble, and at its start the Holy Spirit will be poured out.

“Besides the fact that the empowering of the church by the Holy Spirit matches the symbolic picture given in Revelation, and beside the fact that the timing coincides with what Ellen White saw in vision, there are other logical reasons that support this prophetic application.” – Clover, David; *Revelation, Chapters 4:1-8:5* (Prophecy Research Initiative document – 2002), p. 15.



SEAL TWO

“Come and see”

“And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see” (Revelation 6:3).

John hears the imperative command by the second beast to “Come.”

- The sequential nature of the Seals is now apparent – a number is given to this Seal related to a numbered beast.
- The timing, again, is in control of the Lamb.
 - Jesus opens the Seal.
 - The creature invites us to see what it represents.
 - It has an association with the second beast.
- Jesus doesn’t control the events but controls when they are permitted to occur or be revealed.

Who is this second beast or living creature?

- It is like an ox or calf (Revelation 4:6-8, Ezekiel 1:10) - a simile - similar to
- This is the standard of the lead tribe, Ephraim (Hosea 10:11, Deuteronomy 33:13-17).
- Ephraim’s name is missing from the tribes of the 144,000 (Revelation 7:4-8).
- The palm tree of victory in Ezekiel 41:19 does not include Ephraim.

This beast – living creature – angel – represents those people whom Ephraim characterizes.

What people on earth, claiming to be Christ’s, are represented by Ephraim? At the end of time?!

- This tribe made a molten calf at Horeb (Psalm 106:19-20).
- Ephraim was later judged as joined to her idols – let him alone (Hosea 4:17; cf. Zechariah 6:1-6).
- Ephraim joined the northern kingdom in worshiping two golden calves with a sun disk between its horns (honoring Baal), similar to the Egyptian god Apis, with the sun god Re.
- Hathor, an Egyptian goddess with two bull horns, also had the sun between those horns.



Hather



Egypt: Apis

Ephraim represents apostasy given to idolatry and sun worship. When Israel was led by Saul, he was from the tribe of Benjamin. David was from Judah. When the northern tribes broke away, they were under the leadership of Jeroboam of the tribe of Ephraim.

- Ephraim joined (reached her hand across the gulf) with the north (I Kings 12:28–13:10).
- The northern kingdom represents apostasy – Ephraim became the force in that rebellion.
- Jeroboam set up a false system of worship, making two golden *calves* to worship on the Day of Atonement. (So Israel wouldn't have to go to Jerusalem – the true center of worship.)

Who apostatizes from God's church at the end and brings in an idolatrous practice associated with sun worship?

- Apostate Protestantism
- A false system of worship is set up
- Through the United States (earth-beast) this false system of worship will be enforced.
 - Related to the sun
 - Related to love and peace – Ephraim united the ten tribes in idolatry. Revelation 17 notes that ten kingdoms or horns will unite with Babylon.
- By setting up idolatrous standards
- “Ephraim” joins herself to the *north* country, represented by the papacy, King of the North (Daniel 11:40-45).

What did Daniel call those idolatrous standards?

- Abominations
- What did Jesus say in Matthew 24 that we must study to know the rest of the story?
- Daniel – who talks of abominations that lead to desolation.

At the time of the Latter Rain and the Loud Cry (144,000 – white horse) comes this second Seal, which represents a people promoting an idolatrous standard, who joins herself to the people wanting to be like God.

“And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword” (Revelation 6:4).

This Horse Is Red

This second horse denotes a separate group of people and event from the first. There is, therefore, an unknown separation of time. The sequenced missive suggests that they aren't too far apart.

- Some interpret this red horse as representing war – and that is so, spiritually.
- This horse represents people out to fight.
 - Like the red dragon of Revelation 12:9
 - Similar to the scarlet beast of Revelation 17
- Red represents fire and blood (persecution and death).
- It is all negative.

This horse comes out in *response* to the first horse and “takes peace from the earth” – persecuting and killing (symbolized by the power of a “great sword” given to the rider).

- This horse represents the end-time earth beast of Revelation 13:15. (Daniel 11:33 is its fulfillment.) Christ prophesied of this time.
 - *“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake” (Matthew 24:9).*
 - It is the final work of apostate Protestantism against those without the mark of the beast.
- The mission of this horse is that of harm against the people of the first horse.

Where does the red horse get power?

- The rider Satan does not have power on his own.
 - Recall that the sea and earth beasts in Revelation 13:2 received their power from the dragon.
 - The dragon’s power is under heaven’s control (Revelation 12:7-9).
- **The Lamb frees (!) the red horse to exhibit its character and power for a short time.**
 - The Lamb broke the Seal. The rider, Satan, went forth, now giving power to beasts.

- Persecution follows

The red horse, apostate Protestantism, displays its reaction to the proclamation of the gospel given by the white horse people.

- These people tie together the earth-beast prophecies of Revelation 13 and the harlot of Revelation 17.
“And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration” (Revelation 17:6).
- They call themselves Christian but harbor hatred and death.

Note: Though martyrdom will come, the initial reaction of this horse is to persecution. That is why it is here that the shaking begins to occur.

This is warfare between God’s *professed* people.

- As the Levites did not worship the golden calf at Mt. Sinai and were set aside as priests –
- So the 144,000 will not worship the idolatrous standard of the “northern powers,” and they will be set aside as priests unto God.
- As the northern Israel tribes fought with Judah, so the apostate Christians (Ephraim and Dan) will lash out at the 144,000 (Judah).

The Idolatrous Standard

The symbol for a calf, representing the red horse, ties to those ancient Egyptian, Greek and Babylonian gods honoring *sun worship*.

- Rome claims its great mark of authority is Sun-day worship in place of the true Sabbath.
- That mark will be called the “mark of the beast.”
- The red-horse people - the Protestant world - will enforce laws giving deference to Sunday “sacredness” promoted by the papacy.

Note some of the symbols:



Egypt:
Hathor with calf
Horns and sun god
Between them



Egypt:
Apis



Canaan:
Baal sun god
of Canaanites



Rome:
Sun symbol of
papacy
Everywhere in
their Images
or idols



Papal Coin
1959



A sunburst above St. Peter's chair in the Basilica.

“The Scriptures teach that popery is to regain its lost supremacy, and that the fires of persecution will be rekindled through the time-serving concessions of the so-called Protestant world. In this time of peril we can stand only as we have the truth and the power of God.” – *Maranatha*, p. 194.

“The world is filled with storm and war and variance. Yet under one head—the papal power—the people will unite to oppose God in the person of His witnesses. This union is cemented by the great apostate. While he seeks to unite his agents in warring against the truth he will work to divide and scatter its advocates.” – *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 182.



SEAL THREE

“And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand” (Revelation 6:5).

The Third Beast Invites, “Come and see”

This living creature had the face of a man (4:7).

- This cherubim symbolizes the *standard* of the tribe of Reuben.
- In Ezekiel 41:19 the “lion” representing Judah and the face of a man representing Reuben were on the temple curtain.
- They faced a palm tree, meaning those two tribes would be victorious.
- Reuben is second on the list of tribes of the 144,000 (7:5).
- Reuben was the lead tribe to the south (Numbers 2:10-11).
- Not only does this horse represent people, the imagery relates to a special people.

Reuben’s Character

Jacob on his death bed said:

- He was “unstable as water” (Genesis 49:4)
- Lost his birthright as firstborn son because he lay with Bilhah, his father’s concubine (Genesis 35:22).
- In the last days:
 - Spiritual descendents of Reuben are *associated* with a prostitute woman – Babylon, the mother of harlots (Revelation 17:1-5).
 - They then respond to the Loud Cry from the four angels to “come out of Babylon.”
- How do we know? They are listed among the 144,000 who will be translated!
- Ezekiel 41:19 said the Reubenites repent and become victorious – through symbolism.

Black Horse

“Lo a black horse ” (Revelation 6:5)

- People associating with others who prostitute truth – illicit teachings.
- Part of a “black horse”

Why a black horse? Does that represent sinful people? If white represents purity and righteousness (first horse), then, surely, the black horse means sin, death or darkness.

- Black does tie to mourning and death (Jeremiah 4:28, 8:21-22).
- It also relates to famine (Jeremiah 14:1-2, Lamentations 5:10).
- It is a famine for food – spiritual food (it follows the red-horse persecution).
 - Red horse people are not permitting the truth to triumph
 - Black horse people are hungry and waiting for spiritual food – they are in **darkness**.

The black horse is the opposite of the white horse.

- This group has only a partial understanding of truth.
- They are in spiritual darkness – a spiritual famine is experienced by these people.

What “horse” group of people, claiming to be God’s, are lacking spiritual nourishment?

- Those in Babylon who are waiting for the Loud Cry call!
- These will become part of the great multitude (Revelation 7:9-17).
- They are associated with the harlot church – *waiting* – to hear “Come out of her my people” (Revelation 18:4).

Activity

The white horse went out to “conquer” (vs 2). The red horse “went out to take peace from the earth” (vs 4). The black horse was motionless. It had no activity.

- It is *waiting* – for you and me – for the Loud Cry call.

Balances and Market Prices

“and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.” (vs 6:5)

Who is it that holds balances in his hand? Jesus – judging (John 5:26-27, 30).

- Remember the Lamb – “Attorney Lamb” is His name.
 - in this context
- Standing before the throne – with:
 - Blood to cover our sins
 - A full measure of the spirit ready to give us power
 - Power in horns to fight our enemies
 - Eyes given by the Spirit. Time of the Latter Rain.

What do balances represent?

- Judgment (Job 31:6, Daniel 5:37, Proverbs 16:11) – weighing something – **but**
- Jesus is given this final task (John 5:26-27).

There is no evidence that there is anything in those balances.

- God is *prepared* to judge, to weigh this people – but He's waiting.
- What is the waiting for?
 - To see how they will respond to the Elijah or last gospel message.
 - He is waiting to judge them favorably.
 - *"The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up."* Matthew 4:16.

Who is the rider?

- None other than Jesus.
- The same rider as on the white horse.

"And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" (Revelation 6:6).

Are the balances weighing the wheat and barley?

- No!
- The balances are empty and relate to **weight** – AND – are anticipating the evaluation of the character of this group.
- The message of the wheat and barley is related to **volume and price** – *"a measure."*

What does that mean – "A measure of wheat for a penny and three measures of barley for a penny" (vs 6)?

- The focus is on **cost** – not the grain.
- This is about an *exorbitant cost!*
- A measure of wheat = slightly less than a quart (dry measure)
- Only enough to sustain a person for one day.
- Three measures of barley (a cheaper grain) were needed to equal one of wheat for nutritional and satiating value.

Here's the challenge:

- These prices – a penny for each noted volume – were 8–16 times the average price in the Roman Empire at that time.

- Wheat and barley are used to make bread, which represents here the Word of God.

Why is there a famine for truth?

- It is hard to come by because of persecution **and** deceptive teachings.
- Falsehood is being promoted.
- It now comes at a great cost!
- A famine for truth is in the land.
- It now is difficult to obtain unadulterated truth.

Oil and Wine

“see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” (vs 6:6c)

Why does the heavenly voice now command the oil and wine be protected?

Oil:

We appeal first to expositor White.

- Let’s first look at the oil, a symbol related to influence on children or little ones.
 “In view of the infinite price paid for man’s redemption, how dare any professing the name of Christ treat with indifference one of *His little ones*? How carefully should brethren and sisters in the church guard every word and action *lest they hurt the oil and the wine!*” – *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 614 (emphasis added).
- What about the oil and wine in these little ones? Are they the same as in this Seal?
 - Imagery that represents the *Holy Spirit* is found in *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 188.
 - It also represents the *righteousness of Christ* within the character.
 “Let everyone who loves God consider that now while it is day is the time to work, not among the sheep already in the fold, but to go out in search of the lost and perishing ones. These need to have special help to bring them back to the fold. Now is the time for the careless to arouse from their slumber. Now is the time to entreat that souls shall not only hear the word of God, but without delay secure oil in their vessels with their lamps. *That oil is the righteousness of Christ. It represents character*, and character is not transferable. No man can secure it for another. Each must obtain for himself a character purified from every stain of sin.” – *Testimony to Ministers*, pp. 233-234 (emphasis added).
- Emblem of what the Holy Spirit does.
 “We may have long followed the narrow path, but it is not safe to take this as proof that we shall follow it to the end. If we have walked with God in fellowship of the Spirit, it is because we have sought Him daily by faith. From the two olive trees the golden oil flowing through the golden pipes has been communicated to us. But those who do

not cultivate the spirit and habit of prayer cannot expect to receive *the golden oil of goodness, patience, long-suffering, gentleness, love.*” *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 511 (emphasis added). Fruits of the Spirit.

Biblically, oil is widely understood as the Holy Spirit. Oil was used for millennia as a vehicle to anoint (Exodus 29:21, I Samuel 16:38). That is *symbolically* carried through in such verses as:

- “*And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.*” *Isaiah 10:27.*
- “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,*” *Luke 4:18.*
- Acts 10:38 – God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost
- I John 2:27 – Anointing – abideth in us, teaches us – is truth
- Matthew 25:1-13 – Need oil in our lamps

Collectively, we can see the oil is a beautiful symbol of the work of God’s Spirit in the heart, bringing righteousness and its maturing fruits – in this setting, to those *young in the truth or under conviction.*

- The people of the black horse are in darkness.
- But they have been receptive to the Spirit.
- The **voice** (Jesus’) in the midst of the four beasts says: Don’t dare hurt the work that has been going on.

Wine:

The wine relates to the blood of Jesus. But it also, with the oil, brings healing to wounds (Luke 10:34).

- These babes in Christ (black horse – people still in Babylon) will come out and join the remnant.
- They will go through the time of trouble (Revelation 7:14).
- They, too, like the 144,000, will permit their robes (characters) to be washed in this blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14).
- While they wait, protect the work that God’s Spirit has already accomplished and what the blood of Jesus has already cleansed.

Beautiful Old Testament Imagery

In Zechariah’s vision of the four chariots, the black horse went “forth to the north country.” The north is where apostasy has gone to “be like God.”

- The white horse goes after them (Zechariah 6:6).
- Exactly the imagery we see in the Seals.
- The 144,000 go to those in Babylon and cry: “Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins.”
- What happens from these efforts?
“Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.” Jeremiah 31:8.
- What an incredible Old Testament promise.
- You and I can be part of this rescue mission.

BUT – remember “the team” – people and Jesus:

- Will hit the mark
- Will be crowned with victory
- Will conquer



SEAL FOUR

“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see” (Revelation 6:7).

Fourth Living Creature

This living creature (beast) waits for the Lamb to break the Seal. Then he calls out “Come and see.”

- Leave what you are doing
- See what now will happen

Sequence unfolded thus far:

144,000

Latter Rain

Apostate Protestantism

Power to persecute

People in darkness, waiting for gospel call

Gospel call difficult to give

God’s warning to protect those waiting to be called out

This fourth creature was like a “flying eagle” (Revelation 4:7). This was an unclean bird (Deuteronomy 14:12) and represented the lead tribe of Dan to the north!

- Jacob, Dan’s father, had prophesied that he would be a serpent, a viper that bites horses’ heels (Genesis 49:16-17).
- He would be devil-like, hurting and killing others.
- The snake, however, became an eagle on its tribal flag – and here in Revelation as well.

Jesus noted that the eagle represents those that are lost in the judgment, symbolizing impending death and doom (Luke 17:35, 37). It was also a symbol of self-exaltation (Obadiah 4). *“Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD.” Obadiah 4.*

- What exalts itself to the stars? Who wants to sit in the sides of the north, where God’s throne is (Psalm 48:2), to be like God?
 - A “little horn” power, the end-time antichrist (Daniel 8:11, 23)
 - Satan and his representatives (Isaiah 14:12-15)

Dan – the Northern Lead Tribe

“North” in prophecy has represents two things:

1. **This is where God’s throne resides.**

“Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.” Psalm 48:2.

- This is where the table of shewbread was located in the ancient tabernacle – the bread of God’s presence.

This is where God’s glory emanated from.

- *“And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.” Ezekiel 1:4.*

2. It is the place *where false christs say they live – abide.*

- **Satan:** *“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the **north**: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” Isaiah 14:13-14.*
- **Where evil people come from to persecute:** *“Thus saith the LORD, Behold, a people cometh from the **north country**, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth. They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion.” Jeremiah 6:22-23.*
- **Evil comes from the north:** *“Then the LORD said unto me, **Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.**” Jeremiah 1:14.*
- King of the North, leader of end-time apostasy – Babylon (Daniel 11) – the antichrist

Satan was once, as Lucifer, on the holy mountain (Ezekiel 28:14). He wants to return through deceit and falsehood. He returns to the temple (God’s church) through apostate Christianity: *“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” II Thessalonians 2:4.*

Dan represents the papacy – the “mother church.”

- The “MOTHER OF HARLOTS” (Revelation 17 – drunk with blood of martyrs) wants to kill along with her cup of deceptions.

- This parallels the Thyatira church – Jezebel, there seducing its members to commit fornication and knows the “depths of Satan” (Revelation 3).
- It is the same as the sea beast of Revelation 13, making war with the saints.

Fourth Horse

“And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth” (Revelation 6:8).

The pale horse is the color of death – yellow-green.

- This horse is given *power* to kill. They didn’t have permission at first.
- This is by a people who claim to be God’s but are under the control of Satan.
- They exalt themselves. (Note: In Revelation 7 the tribes of Ephraim and Dan are not listed. They have no part in the kingdom.)
- Anciently, Ephraim joined with Dan and became the northern kingdom (Zechariah 6:8).

This union represents Babylon.

- The papacy is seen as the “king of the north” in Daniel 11:28-45.
- Babylon is associated with an eagle swooping in to kill (Habakkuk 1:1-17, Jeremiah 48:39-47).

Amazingly graphic are the words “Death” with “Hell” following, describing the rider – obviously Satan.

- His mission, with his people, is death – not persecution!
- Martyrdom will follow. Important: The horse appears at this moment as **not** being active.
- Note: There is hope for all of God’s people.
 - Jesus said, “I . have the keys of hell and of death” (Revelation 1:18).
 - And death and hell will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:13-14).

Amazing Quotation:

“At the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost [Latter Rain – Seven Spirits of Lamb] as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully. This *enraged the churches* and nominal Adventists, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth. And **at this time** God’s chosen **all** saw clearly that we had the truth, and **they came out** [third Seal] and **endured the persecution with us** [second Seal]. [But then she says] I saw the sword, famine, pestilence, and great confusion in the land [United States] [Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 signs]. *The wicked thought that we had brought the judgments*

upon them, and they rose up and took counsel to rid the earth of us [fourth Seal], thinking that then the evil would be stayed.” – *Early Writings*, pp. 33-34 (emphasis added). **The fourth Seal is the planning and preparation for death to God’s people – not a decree.**

Jesus already told the disciples that all this would occur. Observe in Matthew 24:7-13 the *sequence* of end-time events.

Matthew 24:

Vss 7-8:	Vs 9:	Vs 9:	Vs 10-12:	Luke 21:11:	
Time of Sorrows	Persecution	Martyrdom	Wicked Betray One Another	Great Tribulation Celestial Signs	End
Wars Pestilences Famines Earthquakes Signs in heavens (Luke 21:11)	Second Seal	Fourth & Fifth Seals	Fifth Trumpet		
Salvation to Those Who Endure (vs 13)					
(Same as Daniel 12:12)					

This covers the same period as the “appointed time” of:

- Daniel 8:19: “And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the **time appointed** the end shall be.”
- Habakkuk 2:2-3: “And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an **appointed time**, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”

What does it mean “power was given” to Satan over a “fourth part of the earth?”

- 1/3 in prophecy represents the wicked apostate creation (people or angels).
- 1/4 symbolizes God’s true people.
- Satan has power over part of God’s people. Is it total control? Never. All throughout Revelation it is clear that God is always in charge! (Note: “power was given” – God permits and tempers all.)
- In the Old Testament famine, sword and wild beast were judgments against God’s rebellious people (Ezekiel 14:12-19, 21).
- Here, Satan uses these modalities against the righteous.
- A large number of God’s people will be killed (in symbolic language).

Samson came out of the tribe of Dan.

- His last act in life was death to others and himself.

“But our [papacy expressing its final plans] principal concern is to silence this sect of Sabbath keepers. We must excite popular indignation against them. We will enlist great men and worldly-wise men upon our side, and induce those in authority to carry out our purposes. Then the sabbath which I have set up shall be enforced by laws the most severe and exacting. Those who disregard them shall be driven out from the cities and villages, and made to suffer hunger and privation. When once we have the power, we will show what we can do with those who will not swerve from their allegiance to God. We led the Romish church to inflict imprisonment, torture, and death upon those who refused to yield to her decrees; and *now that we are bringing the Protestant churches and the world into harmony with this right arm of our strength, we will finally have a law to exterminate all who will not submit to our authority. When death shall be made the penalty of violating our sabbath, then many who are now ranked with commandment keepers will come over to our side.*” – *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 473 (emphasis supplied).

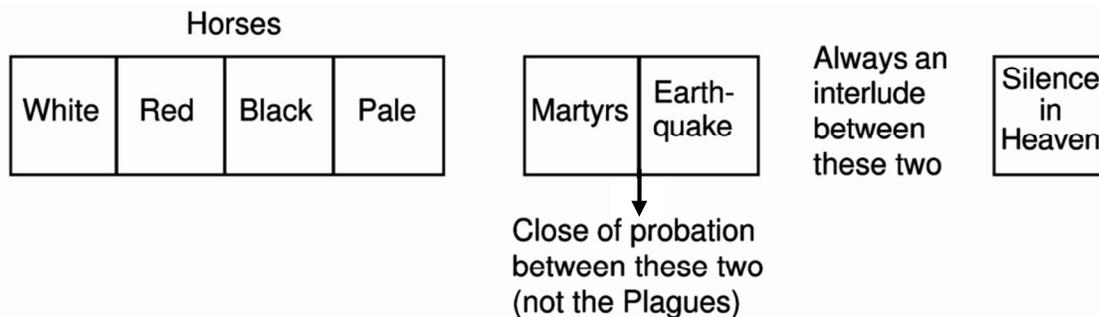
“History repeats itself. The same masterful mind that plotted against the faithful in ages past is now at work to gain control of the Protestant churches, that through them he may condemn and put to death all who will not worship the idol sabbath.” – *The Signs of the Times*, 11/08/1899.

Summary of the First Four Seals

These Seals symbolize the key corporate players in the final drama of the ages.

- God’s righteous people – spiritual awakening
- Apostate Protestantism – persecution
- Those waiting to be called out of Babylon
- Papacy – Roman Catholicism – promoting death of God’s loyal people

The three sequentially numbered sevens in Revelation – the Seals, Trumpets and Plagues – are divided into three parts in a 4–2–1 sequence.



- All numbered prophecy has these divisions, i.e., Daniel 2 image, Daniel 7.
- The first four include warnings and/or trouble.
- The second group is action by or against Satan and his followers.

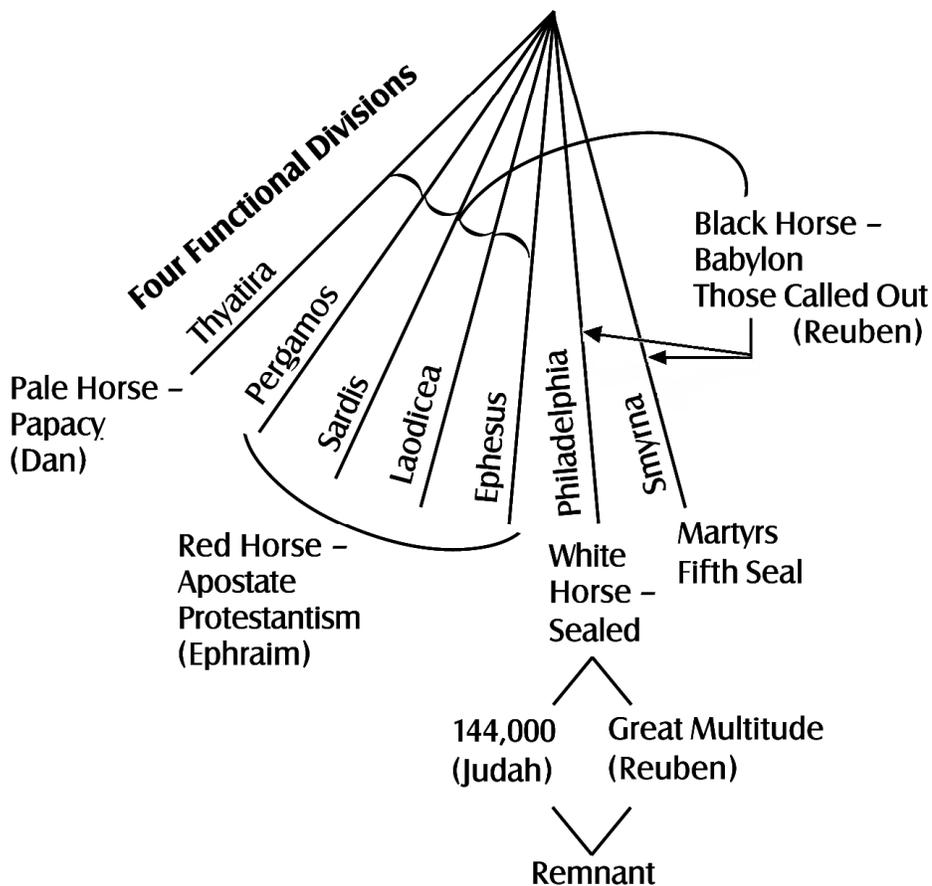
- The third group (the seventh) is related to the glorious return of Jesus.

The Lamb releases the end-time players to perform their final acts in earth's history.

- Each has a role to perform.
- Collectively, they will bring the world to one of two great decisions.
- When those decisions are complete, probation will close.

How does this relate to the seven churches?

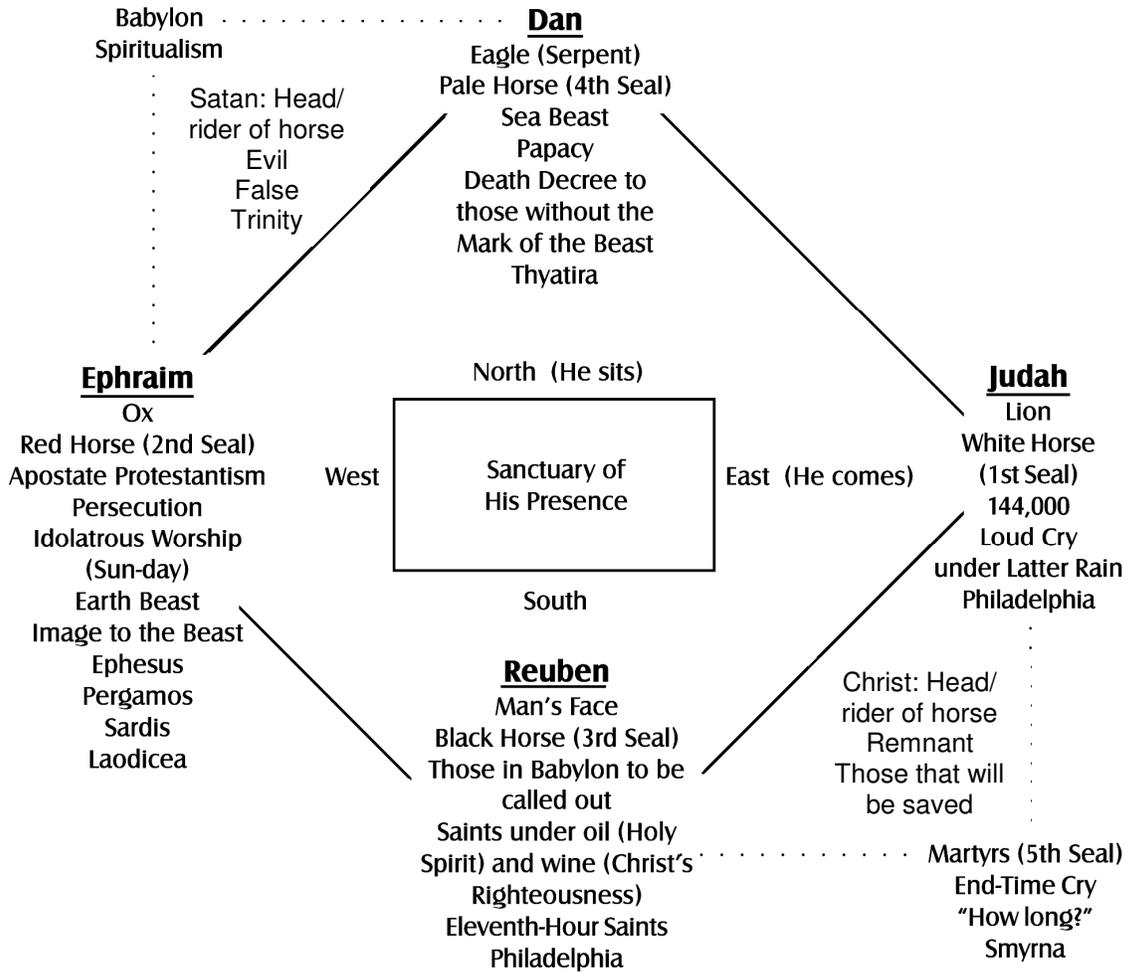
Divisions of Christian People Claiming Righteousness at the Final End of Time



Putting it all together:

End-Time Players from the Churches and Seals

(Based on Revelation 2, 3, 4, 6 and 13)





SEAL FIVE

The Horse Imagery is Gone

In the 4–2–1 motif, we now begin the “duo.” This will introduce *final* acts against Satan and his minions or by them against God’s people. The executive agencies of heaven have ceased their representations. The voices of the living creatures are silent. From this point on, the end-time players will function within event-driven prophetic boundaries until the battle for hearts ceases. The focus moves from earth to heaven. The fifth Seal begins:

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:” (Revelation 6:9).

This Seal simply says “and when he had opened the fifth seal.” There is no command to “Come and see,” “Behold” or “Lo.”

- It is a timing statement – the event described doesn’t occur until Jesus breaks this Seal.
- It is a sequence statement – it follows Seal number four – when death decrees against God’s people have already begun.
- God is leading His people on little by little to hate this world and cry with one hundred percent dependence to Him! “Help – we don’t know where to turn except to You!”

This Seal is opened *within*:

- The little Time of Trouble
- After the Sunday laws are passed
- When enforcement of such laws is almost universal and God’s people are feeling the sting of legal coercion
- When accelerated boldness against God’s children is demonstrated

“*When* the defiance of God’s law is **almost** universal, *when* his people are pressed in affliction by their fellow men, God will interpose. Then will the voice be heard from the graves of martyrs, represented by the souls that John saw slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, which they held,—then the prayer will ascend from every true child of God: ‘It is *time* for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law.’” – *Review and Herald*, 12/21/1897.

John sees (“I saw”) souls of those slain under the altar. Let’s evaluate what he is observing:

Altar

- Scenes related to the heavenly sanctuary are frequent in Revelation.
- Some conclude that this is the “altar of sacrifice” (cf. Exodus 27), others the “altar of incense” (cf. Exodus 30).
- They both have merits – here’s why:
 - Sacrifice altar – The courtyard represents the world where the saints are killed.
 - The martyrs symbolize “following in the footsteps of Jesus” by making the ultimate sacrifice – dying in the courtyard as He did.
 - The blood of the victim in the ancient tabernacle rite was poured out at the base of this altar (Leviticus 4:7, Exodus 29:12).
 - Thus, John could see the “souls” – the “lifeblood” (Leviticus 17:11) of those martyrs.
 - Incense altar – The martyrs are symbolically crying/praying to God
 - Prayers are processed at the altar of incense or incense censer
 - Commentator White tied the fifth Seal to this particular altar (*Manuscript Release*, vol. 20, p. 197).
 - The altar of incense will be highlighted shortly.
 - BUT – altar sacrifices wouldn’t be needed in heaven.

“Souls crying out” suggests life after death to some.

- “Souls” (*psuche*) means *to breath*.
- This sounds like a *living being* – they are crying out, they are “alive.”
- Is this literal or a metaphor for something?
- This imagery draws on God’s words to Cain: “*And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.*” *Genesis 4:10*.
- Is Able’s blood alive and crying from the ground literally or symbolically?
- What these souls cry out is recorded in the next verse.
- It is not a “life after death” doctrinal statement.

Jesus had said that at the end people will kill God’s people and think they are doing His work (John 16:1-4).

- This relates to the harlot (apostate Christianity) of Revelation 17:6 (“drunk with the blood of the saints”).
- *It does symbolize the faithfulness of God’s people, however.*
- But also the vindictiveness of sin and evil.

What they cried out represents the plea of the *living* saints.

The Causes of Death

Why were the martyrs killed?

- “For the word of God” and the “testimony they held” (6:9)
- These two items represent the theme of the whole book!

What did they represent?

How was it revealed?

Jesus (1:5)	Word of God (1:1)	Testimony or “witness” of Jesus
Gabriel		
“his angel” (19:10)	Word of God (1:2)	Testimony of Jesus Christ (1:2)
John	Word of God (1:9)	Testimony of Jesus Christ (1:9)
Martyrs	Word of God (6:9)	Testimony (6:9)
Two Witnesses		Testimony (11:7)
Saved		Word testimony (12:11)
Woman	Keep commandments of God (12:17)	Testimony of Jesus Christ (12:17)
Saints	Keep commandments (14:12)	Faith of Jesus (14:12)
Fellow Servant (Gabriel)		Testimony of Jesus (19:10) (this is spirit of prophecy)
Martyrs	Word of God (20:4)	Testimony of Jesus (20:4)

What is the testimony of Jesus?

- Word of God
- Revelation 19:10 refines what that means – the prophetic word of God.

The book of Revelation is a special prophetic word from God. Its details are witnessed or testified by Jesus through Gabriel and John.

- All of God’s creatures bring loyalty to God’s Word by revealing in their lives the character or testimony of Jesus **and**
- They also bear witness to the prophetic testimony of Jesus, called “the spirit of prophecy.”

What is this prophetic testimony?

- The whole book of Revelation
- Which must “shortly come to pass” (1:1)
- Because “the time is at hand” (1:3)
- What time? (1:7 – second coming of Jesus)

Seal five relates to the saints at the time Satan wars against them. These contextual ties reveal that it is end-time. He knows that his time is short (Revelation 12:12).

- Bible prophecy always shows Satan’s wrath first.
- Then comes the promise of God’s wrath.
- When does God’s wrath come? We studied about that in detail in Daniel 8:19.

- Appointed time
- Time of the end

“And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Revelation 6:10).

Loud Voice

The martyrs (those living saints seeing friends and relatives killed) cry out with a “loud” voice.

- Jesus appeared to John in chapter 1 by speaking to him in a “loud” voice (Revelation 1:10).
- Gabriel cried with a loud voice, “who is worthy?” (5:2).
- An angel (God’s remnant people) cried with a “loud” voice the three end-time woes (8:13).
- Jesus cries with a “loud” voice that the tarrying time has ended (Revelation 10:3, 6).
- The 144,000 give the three angels’ messages with a “loud” voice (14:7).
- The 144,000 cry (fourth angel) with a “loud” voice to come out of Babylon (18:2).

These *all* relate to a very short period beginning and within the “appointed time” (*mowed*), when God’s work on earth is finishing – this particular “loud cry” signals the soon onset of the – yes – the Trumpets.

Timing of this Seal

Many expositors see a Dark-Ages fulfillment of these martyrs.

- We have seen overwhelming evidence of the end-of-time application of the first four horses.
- This fifth Seal follows that sequence.
- The parallelism with Christ’s Olivet discourse (Matthew 24:9) is striking.
- First tribulation, then restoration, then the second coming.

Expositor E. G. White noted long ago: “When the fifth seal was opened, John the Revelator in vision saw beneath the altar the company that were slain [past tense] for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. *After* this came the scenes described in the eighteenth of Revelation, when those who are faithful and true are called out from Babylon [Rev. 18: 1-5 quoted] (MS 39, 1906) [the Loud Cry].” – *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 968 (emphasis added).

- Seals 1–4 — Fifth Seal (martyrs) — Loud Cry

Reviewing Again:

“When the defiance of God’s law is almost universal, when his people are pressed in affliction by their fellow men, *God will interpose* [that’s a promise in Daniel 8–12]. Then will the voice be heard from the graves of *martyrs*, represented by the souls that John saw slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, which they held,—then the prayer will ascend from every true child of God: ‘It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law.’” – *Review and Herald*, 12/21/1897 (6BC 1081) (emphasis added).

Seals 1–4 ——— Fifth Seal (martyrs) ——— Wrath of God
(end-time players) (Loud Cry) (1st four Trumpets)

Timing Concerns

“How long?” is asked in many settings in the Bible.

- Its *final* answer is in Revelation 8:5, 10:6 and 14:15: “*And swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: . And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.*”
- “The time has come” means at Jesus’ second coming – at the harvest – at Tabernacles.

The imagery is bathed in death – BUT – precious words ring from these pages: “O Lord, holy and true” (vs 10) (cf 3:14).

- Though that ultimate price has been paid by these martyrs.
- These saints acknowledge the wisdom of God’s judgment.
- They see Him as high and lifted up. They perceive all His ways as the best.
- Lord – absolute ruler. “Though You are above me, You are all powerful, You are just and You will judge rightly!”

Yet they cry, “How long?” For what?

- When are you going to exercise your ultimate justice in executive judgment?
- “How long?” they ask, “dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth (vs 10).”
- **As with all of prophecy, timing issues are raised again and again.**

The answer comes at the end-time in two distinct acts.

- Judgment Final decision – already recorded in the scroll – against a segment of earth dwellers
- Punishment Begins before the next Seal when the Trumpets break upon the world

The judgment yet needs the review of the saints (I Corinthians 6:2). By doing that, they will vindicate God’s sentence on all the wicked, beginning with the Trumpets. This cry of “How Long?” was asked by Daniel 2500 years ago, representing the exact same issue for this exact same time. [Read Daniel 3:13, 12:7]

Cry for Justice

The martyrs cry for:

- Judgment
- Vengeance for their blood

The Greek word for “judgment” means condemn or sentence them. The Greek word for “avenge” is **not** a request for revenge but for punishment to complete justice. That is, “When will you condemn, sentence and punish these people to vindicate your character?”

This goes along with Luke 18:7-8: *“And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”*

It is *not* a request for revenge!

When does God respond with His wrath?

- The first four Trumpets are a direct response to this cry.
- Daniel also gave us incredible clues in Daniel 8:19.
 - At the “appointed time” (cf. Habakkuk 2:2-3)
 - At the time of God’s wrath
 - The end of time comes

“And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled” (Revelation 6:11).

How are robes given to dead people?

- They aren’t.
- As soon as they are martyred
- The assurance of righteousness is given.
- Their names have been judicially reviewed.
- They are saved (Zechariah 3:4-5).

That white raiment is one of the great eternal promises to overcomers.

- “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.” *Revelation 3:18*.
- What is the “legal tender” to buy? *Trading our sins for His righteousness*.

Now we come to a difficult passage. Why did God say:

- For awhile longer there is to be no retribution (implied) – “rest yet for a little season?”
 - Other believers
 - Must be killed
 - To fulfill *something*

These words are directed at the *living faithful*.

- **It means that the work has not yet been completed but will be fulfilled in a “little season.”**
- As it is being finished, others will die.
- When the task is completed, the spilling of blood will cease.

Note the timing in these thoughts.

- No martyrs now:

“If the blood of Christ’s faithful witnesses were shed at this time, it would not, like the blood of the martyrs, be as seed sown to yield a harvest for God.” – *The Great Controversy*, p. 634 (1911).
- Many will be martyred in the future: “Many will be imprisoned, many will flee for their lives from cities and towns, and many will be martyrs for Christ’s sake in standing in defense of the truth.” – *Selected Messages*, bk 3, pp. 397 (1889).

“The two armies will stand distinct and separate, and this distinction will be so marked that many who shall be convinced of the truth will come on the side of God’s commandment-keeping people. When this grand work is to take place in the battle, prior to the last closing conflict, many will be imprisoned, many will flee for their lives from cities and towns, and many will be martyrs for Christ’s sake in standing in defense of the truth You will not be tempted above what you are able to bear. Jesus bore all this and far more.” – *Selected Messages*, bk 3, pp. 397-398.
- Spirit we are to retain:

“The best thing for us is to come into close connection with God, and, if He would have us be martyrs for the truth’s sake, it may be the means of bringing many more into the truth.” – *Selected Messages*, bk 3, p. 420 (1886).

“In the past many have suffered for the truth’s sake. To them *truth was dearer than all else*, and they willingly gave up this present life for the life eternal. We shall be called upon to sacrifice for the truth’s sake. Those who share in Christ’s glory must share also in his suffering. But let us remember that in the home which the Saviour is preparing for us, there is no sorrow nor suffering. Of those who overcome it is written: ‘Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.’” – *Youth Instructor*, 10/3/1901.

- Promise for strength:

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” I Corinthians 10:13.

“We are not to have the courage and fortitude of martyrs of old *until* brought into the position they were in We are to receive daily supplies of grace for each daily emergency. Thus we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and if persecution comes upon us, if we must be enclosed in prison walls for the faith of Jesus and the keeping of God’s holy law, ‘As thy days, so shall thy strength be.’ Should there be a return of persecution there would be grace given to arouse every energy of the soul to show a true heroism.” – *Our High Calling*, p. 125 (1889) (emphasis added).

The people were instructed to “wait till others are martyred” – wait a “little season.”

Little season is *chronon mikron* – a *very short period of time!* This would not fit into the Dark-Ages motif.

“*When death* shall be made the penalty of violating our sabbath, then many who are now ranked with commandment keepers will come over to our side [Satan speaking].” – *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 473 (emphasis supplied).



SEAL SIX

Introduction

We have now been introduced to the players in the end-game of earth's history. The first five Seals reveal:

- 144,000 (those who are in the forward movement to finish the work) – white horse (first Seal) – Philadelphia Church – the judgment of the living has come
- Great multitude (those waiting for the call to come out of Babylon) – black horse (third Seal)
- Martyrs (those slain during the final push to bring the gospel to the world) – fifth Seal – Smyrna Church
- Papacy (the great apostate church – the antichrist in its full array) – pale horse (fourth Seal) – harlot (Revelation 17:6) which has a cupful of the blood of saints – Thyatira Church
- Apostate Protestantism (the great power at the end centered in the United States, who persecutes those who do not support the image to the sea beast) – red horse, (second Seal) – earth beast – Ephesus, Pergamos, Sardis and Laodicea churches

When all those entities have completed their task, probation closes and the end is ushered in.

“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places” (Revelation 6:12-14).

Is this the 1750–1833 celestial signs and Lisbon earthquake record?

- The first major introduction of earthquake, lightning, thunder and darkness was at Mt. Sinai. This was God's prototype theophany.
- When these come, God is introduced as in control of Creation, as sovereign Lord and as ready to step into history with something dramatic.
- The sixth Seal opens up the last cosmic display of God's controlling power, which leads right up to His second coming.

Earthquake

There are many references to earthquakes in the Bible, especially in the book of Revelation. When this Seal is broken it heralds a “great earthquake.”

- This coincides with the close of probation and begins destructive earthquakes that lead up to the second coming of Jesus.

“Greater wonders than have yet been seen will be witnessed by those upon the earth a short period previous to the coming of Christ. ‘And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke.’ ‘And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.’ ‘And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.’” – *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 84.

- That can’t be 1755, 1780, 1833.

Since the Seals are numbered, this earthquake follows the first five.

- Then celestial signs follow – discussed below.
- Finally, another earthquake is described. As the heavens are departed as a scroll, mountains and islands are moved out of their places.
- All of these events tie directly to several Biblical references:

“The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel” (Joel 3:16).

“For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts” (Haggai 2:6-7).

“Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven” (Hebrews 12:26).

“And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail” (Revelation 11:19).

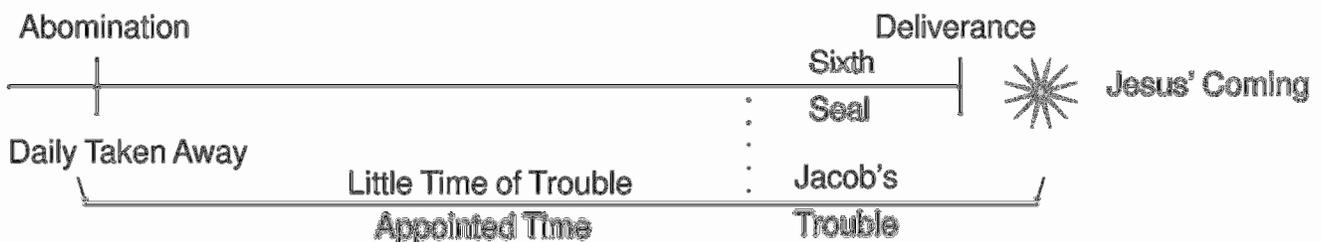
“And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.” (Revelation 16:18, 20-21).

The earthquake eventually becomes so severe that islands and mountains disappear. With this is the dramatic allusion that there will also be great movement in the heavens. Jesus had noted this sequence:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Matthew 24:21, 29-31) | Abomination
Tribulation
Celestial signs
Coming of Jesus |
| Luke 21:25-26 | Celestial signs
Distress of nations
Sea and waves roaring
Men's hearts failing with fear
Power of heaven shaken
Coming of Jesus |

“That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake, ‘such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.’ [Revelation 16:17-18]. The firmament appears to open and shut. The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury [Haggai 2]. There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness are swallowed up by the angry waters. Babylon the great has come in remembrance before God, ‘to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.’ Great hailstones, every one ‘about the weight of a talent,’ are doing their work of destruction. Verses 19, 21. The proudest cities of the earth are laid low. The lordly palaces, upon which the world’s great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes. Prison walls are rent asunder, and God’s people, who have been held in bondage for their faith, are set free.” – *The Great Controversy*, pp. 636-637.

Daniel 12 discusses the “appointed time” addressed in Daniel 8:19 and Habakkuk 2:2-3. Those prophecies collectively show:



The sixth Seal occurs during a brief period called Jacob's Trouble. It ends with the coming of Jesus. Daniel suggests this period is only a little over one month.

Isaiah associates this earthquake with God's wrath and celestial signs.

- *“And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree”* (Isaiah 34:4).

“Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger” (Isaiah 13:13).

- We see a literary theme in Revelation:

Great earthquake

Sun, moon and stars malfunction

Sky recedes like a scroll

Every mountain and island was removed

Earthquakes begin the final desolation of earth. It appears that during Jacob's Trouble of apparently 45 days from Daniel 12.

What is the earth like after this earthquake?

“The earth looked like a desolate wilderness. Cities and villages, shaken down by the earthquake, lay in heaps. Mountains had been moved out of their places, leaving large caverns. Ragged rocks, thrown out by the sea, or torn out of the earth itself, were scattered all over its surface. Large trees had been uprooted and were strewn over the land. Here is to be the home of Satan with his evil angels for a thousand years. Here he will be confined, to wander up and down over the broken surface of the earth and see the effects of his rebellion against God's law. For a thousand years he can enjoy the fruit of the curse which he has caused. Limited alone to the earth, he will not have the privilege of ranging to other planets, to tempt and annoy those who have not fallen. During this time, Satan suffers extremely. Since his fall his evil traits have been in constant exercise. But he is then to be deprived of his power, and left to reflect upon the part which he has acted since his fall, and to look forward with trembling and terror to the dreadful future, when he must suffer for all the evil that he has done and be punished for all the sins that he has caused to be committed.” – *Early Writings*, p. 290.

Celestial Signs

Peter, in his great Pentecostal sermon, referred to the last days using Joel 2:28-32.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will

show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:17-21).

The celestial signs of the sixth Seal is alluded to in Isaiah 13:10-13, 24:1-6, 19-23, 34:4; Ezekiel 32:6-8; Joel 2:10, 30-31; 3:15-16 and Habakkuk 3:6-11. Why so many places?

- It depicts the *very last* signs before Jesus comes!
- What about the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, the darkening of the sun and moon of 1780 and the falling of the stars of 1833? The Great Advent Millerite Movement and the Seventh-day Adventist Church declared them to be this sixth Seal sign.
 - If they are the only fulfillment, the time of tribulation of the Matthew 24:21 and 29 sequence is **past** (Dark Ages). (It precedes the celestial signs.)
 - That would mean that there is no “Time of Trouble” yet to come.
 - Furthermore, Jesus said that **all** the signs of Matthew 24 would be fulfilled in one generation (Luke 21:32).
 - The 1844 message was a “disappointment” – but it is a model/metaphor for the end.

The generation that sees the celestial signs and the great earthquakes will see Jesus come.

- Thus – the ancient signs noted are metaphors for what will happen right at the end.
- Contextually, they reveal that Jesus’ return is immediate.
- They reveal in apocalyptic language that the Day of God is imminent.

Did Expositor White see this?

“December 16, 1848, the Lord gave me a view of the shaking of the powers of the heavens. I saw that when the Lord said ‘heaven,’ in giving the signs recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, He meant heaven, and when He said ‘earth’ He meant earth. The powers of heaven are the sun, moon, and stars. They rule in the heavens. The powers of earth are those that rule on the earth. The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places. They will not pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God.

“Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back; then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God. The Holy City will come down through that open space. I saw that the powers of earth are now being shaken and that events come in order. War, and rumors of war, sword, famine, and pestilence are first to shake the powers of earth, then the voice of God will shake the sun, moon, and stars, and this earth also.” – *Early Writings*, p. 41.

Are these celestial events literal in this Seal?

- The Greek word *hos* used as “as” in verses 12-14 tell us they are.
- A simile is compared to a literal illustration.
 - Sun became black – *as* sackcloth of hair
 - Moon became – *as* blood
 - Stars of heaven fell – *as* a fig tree casteth her figs in the wind
 - Heavens departed – *as* a scroll
 - Such a linguistic arrangement means literal events.

In the 4–2–1 pattern:

- First four Seals are symbolic
- Fifth and sixth Seals are literal
- Seventh Seal is mixed

The Wicked React

“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;” (Revelation 6:15).

The wicked, who have thrown insults and abuses at God’s people, suddenly realize that they are lost and are the object of God’s wrath. They want to hide from God.

- The wicked now fully realize who they are and their destiny.
- Here, every powerful leader and every individual is recognized.
- Wealth, rank or power is now useless.

“Thick clouds still cover the sky; yet the sun now and then breaks through, appearing like the avenging eye of Jehovah. Fierce lightnings leap from the heavens, enveloping the earth in a sheet of flame. Above the terrific roar of thunder, voices, mysterious and awful, declare the doom of the wicked. The words spoken are not comprehended by all; but they are distinctly understood by the false teachers. Those who a little before were so reckless, so boastful and defiant, so exultant in their cruelty to God’s commandment-keeping people, are now overwhelmed with consternation and shuddering in fear. Their wails are heard above the sound of the elements. Demons acknowledge the deity of Christ and tremble before His power, while men are supplicating for mercy and groveling in abject terror.” – *The Great Controversy*, pp. 637-638.

What paradoxical request do they now make?

- They didn’t have trust in God.
- They now appeal to something God created to kill them – the mountains and rocks.
- This parrots Adam and Eve trying to hide “from the presence of the Lord.”
Genesis 3:9.

What repose do they have?

“And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:” (Revelation 6:16).

- God’s face is His glory and love. It is seen by the world as the Lamb’s wrath.
- They wanted to kill God’s people.
- Now they appeal to the earth to kill them.

“The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us” (Hosea 10:8).

“The whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; they shall go into thickets, and climb up upon the rocks: every city [shall be] forsaken, and not a man dwell therein” (Jeremiah 4:29).

When uncontrolled, they are intolerant of others – when punished, intolerant of themselves.

The God Factor

The last part of this Seal has profound information regarding Jesus. The wicked see His face and recognize that it is the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne, who exudes wrath.

- This raises interesting questions.
- What is it about the face of Jesus that causes the wicked to hide?
- How can a Lamb have wrath?
- What does the “great day of His wrath” mean?
- Why don’t they refer now to Jesus as an “act of God,” “a mighty king,” “its gentle Jesus.”

Face of Jesus

- The Greek word for “face” is *prosopon*, referring to His countenance or His presence.
- The brightness of Jesus’ coming brings death to the man of sin – the lawless one (II Thessalonians 2:8 (cf. Hebrews 12:29)).
- There are two interesting prophecies that directly address the face of Jesus (cf. Ezekiel 1:26-28, 3:23, 8:2).
 - *“Face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire” Daniel 10:6.*
 - *“His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength” Revelation 1:16.*
- This metaphorically depicts the “Sun of righteousness” that Malachi presents (Malachi 4:2).
 - What is this appearance?
 - Eyes relate to His “all knowing” in judgment – nothing is hidden.
 - Facial appearance is His glory to the saints!

What is this glory?

- It is *God's glory* as seen in Jesus (Hebrews 1:3).
- That glory, that light, brings knowledge and enlightenment regarding God (II Corinthians 4:6).
- The wicked recoil from light, knowledge and anything that describes God.
- Why? It penetrates the conscience and awakens guilt – it is seen as His wrath.

Wrath of the Lamb

- God gave Jesus – His Son – authority to execute judgment on the world (John 5:27).
- This continuing theme is unfolded in Revelation, especially in the Trumpets and Bowls.
 - Revelation 11:18 “Thy wrath is come”
 - 14:7 “Hour of his judgment is come”
 - 14:10 “Wine of the wrath of God”
 - 14:19 “Winepress of the wrath of God”
 - 16:1 “Vials of the wrath of God”
 - 16:19 “Fierceness of his wrath”
 - 16:15 “Fierceness and wrath of Almighty God”

“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent” (Revelation 2:5).

It is the Son of Man who executes the judgment of God. He does it *because* He was the Lamb who died in *that* judgment on the cross.

This second coming “wrath” is depicted many times in Revelation – the three **key times** Jesus is seen as judge.

- All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him (Revelation 1:7).
- Great day of His wrath (Revelation 6:16)
- He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of the Almighty God (Revelation 19:16).

“The bolts of God's wrath are soon to fall, and when He shall begin to punish the transgressors, there will be no period of respite until the end. The storm of God's wrath is gathering, and those only will stand who are sanctified through the truth in the love of God. They shall be hid with Christ in God till the desolation shall be overpast. He shall come forth to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity, and ‘the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.’” – *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 182-183 (emphasis added).

“The Lord does not delight in vengeance, though he executes judgment upon the transgressors of his law. He is forced to do this, to preserve the inhabitants of the earth from utter depravity and ruin. *In order to save some, he must cut off those who have become hardened in sin.* Says the prophet Isaiah: ‘The Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act.’ The work of wrath and destruction is indeed a strange, unwelcome work for Him who is infinite in love.” – *The Signs of the Times*, 08/24/1882 (emphasis added).

“To our merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act. ‘As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.’ Eze. 33:11 Yet He will ‘by no means clear the guilty.’ ‘The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.’ Ex. 34:6, 7; Nahum 1:3. By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. The severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor may be judged by the Lord’s reluctance to execute justice. *The nation with which He bears long, and which He will not smite until it has filled up the measure of its iniquity in God’s account, will finally drink the cup of wrath unmixed with mercy.*” – *The Faith I Live By*, p. 338.

Day of His Wrath

- Isaiah calls this the “day of his fierce anger” (Isaiah 13:10, 13).
- “Day of wrath” to world is the “day of the Lord” (Zephaniah 1:14-18, 2:3; cf. Joel 2:11, 31)
- Paul calls it the “day of wrath” (Romans 2:5) and “day of Christ” (II Thessalonians 2:2).
- Jude 6 declares it to be “the great day.”

All these references (and more) refer to the time when the Lord God will execute His judgment on the human race.

God’s wrath is depicted as retribution, vengeance, judgment, plagues, and finally, death.

Final Question of the Wicked

- “Who shall be able to stand?” (Revelation 6:17).
- This contrasts with the world’s question later noted of the sea beast – the papacy – “*Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?*” (Revelation 13:4b).
- The answer: The 144,000 are.
- Naham 1:6 and Malachi 3:2 has then a rhetorical question – “Who can stand against God?” (cf. 2:11).

Though this ends the narrative on the sixth Seal, God answers the wicked’s question in an interlude – chapter 7. There will be multitudes – too numerous to count – who will never tire of looking at the face of Jesus.

A beautiful theme of hope is painted for God's people coming out of this time. It is *their time* for deliverance and vindication.

- *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse”* (Malachi 4:5-6).
- *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”* (Hebrews 10:25).
- *“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day”* (II Timothy 1:12).



SEAL SEVEN

Introduction

In the 4–2–1 design of the prophetic sevens, we would expect the seventh Seal, the **last one**, to be related to the second coming of Jesus.

- But – you protest – the sixth Seal already talked about the “face of Jesus” creating panic among the wicked.
- That was the appearance of Jesus at His second coming associated with:
 - Earthquake
 - Celestial signs
 - Earthquake
 - Face of Jesus (which would destroy with the brightness of His coming) (II Thessalonians 2:8)

The seventh seal, therefore, can only be **after** He came.

- Why?
- Because everything in the Seals is numbered **and** sequenced.

If Jesus has already come, what could the last Seal be?

“And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour” (Revelation 8:1).

Jesus breaks the Seal. It *causes* silence in heaven.

Why is there silence?

- If Jesus came in the sixth Seal, heaven would be “empty.” Then:
“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory” (Matthew 25:31).
- Is that why there is silence?
 - This silence, following His earthly debut’ (not before), comes **directly from the opening of the Seal.**
 - Therefore, it didn’t exist till then! It must mean something besides “all the holy angels” who are away from heaven.

What could evoke silence following His second coming?

- There are no major clues in the New Testament.
- In the Old Testament we find these thoughts:
 - “*Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is **raised up out** of his holy habitation*” (Zechariah 2:13).
 - “*Be still, and know that I am God*” (Psalm 46:10).
 - “*Truly my soul waiteth [Hebrew = is silent] upon God: from him cometh my salvation*” (Psalm 62:1).
- These verses contemplate *meditative awe* in *worship* – when *in His presence*.

There are several other issues we might consider:

1. In the Jewish temple singing and musical instruments accompanied the sacrificial offerings.
 - But when incense (smoke) was offered, representing the sweet righteousness of God mingled with the prayers of the saints, all was solemn silence (Jamieson–Fausset Brown).
 - The burning of the incense follows this Seal in 8:2-5. However, that is a *commentary insert*, which takes us to a time *just before* Jesus returns and *before* probation closes.
 - Thus, this couldn’t apply.
2. With the last Seal being broken, the scroll can now be opened. It contains the destiny of the world – of the wicked.
 - Could it be that heaven awaits with silent anticipation the outcome of the judgment?
 - The temporal result of Christ’s coming has already occurred.
 - Since this Seal covers only a *brief time*, something else must be implied.
3. Several scholars see this as a metaphor for expectancy and awe. It is as if amazing things are happening and there is *baited breath* – scarcely taking a breath.
 - This is the first time the saints are with Jesus.
 - They are on their journey homeward to heaven.
 - With momentary expectancy they are enraptured with every word from Jesus, everything He might do.
 - It is symbolic of awe – “baited breath.”

It is a time of celebration at His personal presence.
It is the great antitypical Feast of Tabernacles!

Feast of Tabernacles – Celebration of Harvest

This is the last of the six main Jewish feasts. Historians (Philo and Josephus) state that the Hebrews called it the “greatest of the feasts.”

- It is called the “Feast of the Booths” or the “pitching of the tents” (John 7:2, Leviticus 23:33-43), commemorating their forefathers dwelling in tents in the wilderness.

To the Jewish people it was a time of great celebration.

- For the crops of the year (Deuteronomy 16:13, Exodus 23:16) – “Feast of Ingathering”
- It was a thanksgiving for their permanent abode in the Promise Land.

It also had other names: “The Harvest Festival” or “The Festival of Fruits.”

- The **early** summer saw the Feast of Weeks, which was also a harvest festival for wheat – later known as the “Festival of Pentecost.”
- This followed the “latter” or spring rains.
- This coincides with an **end-time setting**:
 - The Latter Rain (Pentecost)
 - Sealing and setting aside of the saints
 - Spiritual firstfruits of those who will be translated (Revelation 14:4)
 - The “wheat” represents the great multitude.

From midsummer on, the Jewish people enjoyed picking and harvesting their crops.

- They enjoyed the fruit of their labors.
- There is also an **end-time application** where:
 - The 144,000 had gone out (white horse) to conquer (barley after Passover).
 - And now see and begin to enjoy the fruits of their labors.
 - The great multitude continues to respond by “coming out of Babylon.”

Then the Feast of the Trumpets comes – **End-time application.**

- Last call to repentance which coincides with the **Loud Cry**
- Just preceding the close of probation

Then the Great Day of Atonement

- Sins are removed from the blood record of the sanctuary.
- They are put on Satan.
- All the people are sealed as a corporate body.
- The camp/kingdom is pure.
- Probation is closed.

Then comes the Feast of Fruits, Ingathering, Tabernacle, Harvest, etc. – as the saints (the harvest) return to heaven.

- Lasted 7 days
- 6th – Preparation day before the Sabbath when everything is cleaned up and made ready.
- 7th – Sabbath (holy convocation) Celebration
First Sabbath with Jesus
New relationship
- 8th – Sabbath (eighth day)
First Sabbath in heaven (holy convocation)
Great Feast of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

Awesome Firsts

These are *awesome first* experiences for the saints:

- When they see Jesus and don't have to leave
- To personally worship Him
- To celebrate Sabbaths with Him
- To listen to Him
- To adore Him face to face
- To sing praises to Him face to face
- It is a "breathtaking," a "breath-catching," time.

There is no English word to encompass the amazing experience that will transcend anything here mortals will have ever seen or experienced.

- The weight of evidence suggests that the word "silence" is used because
- Everyone is "gasping in wonder."
- All of man's words likely have been silenced also.

What about silence in *heaven*?

- The Greek word for heaven is *ouranus*.
- It can be sky or heaven (where God dwells) itself
- Or anywhere in between

The Feast of Tabernacles

- Celebrates completion – God's earthly purposes have ended.
- The harvest is ended.
- Celebration of renewal (time of a new year) – new beginning
- Is at a Sabbatical year when all comes to rest at this time – heavenly rest.
- Then at a Jubilee year everything is restored – when everything is made new.

Why did E. G. White say of **this** time that when Jesus comes and we go to heaven, “then commenced the Jubilee”? It relates to Daniel 9.

This is also when God tabernacles.

- *“My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people”* (Ezekiel 37:27).
“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Revelation 21:3).
- Thus, we are celebrating the presence of Jesus and God in a Tabernacle motif.

Isaiah 51:11 talks of the ransom of the Lord returning to Zion with singing:

“Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away” (Isaiah 51:11).

As the priests went each morning during that great feast to the fountain of *Siloam* to fill a golden vessel of water, so God’s people will be introduced to the water of life from the river of life, flowing from the throne of God (Revelation 22; cf. Ezekiel 47).

- Waters to immerse in (be completely covered) (Ezekiel 47:5)
- Waters of healing (Ezekiel 47:9)
- Either side of river is tree of monthly fruit for food and leaves to heal (Ezekiel 47:12).

At the **end** of the Babylonian captivity a remnant of Jews returned to Jerusalem. They celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in “very great gladness” (Nehemiah 8:17-18).

At the **end** the remnant:

- Come out of Babylon and head toward
- The New Jerusalem
- Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles en route
- Law was read – at the Sabbatical year – now they are with Jesus (the embodiment of the law) at the Sabbatical year
- Then on the *eighth day* – a holy convocation convenes:

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

After the seven days of celebration, an eighth day was added. This was a holy convocation – a special Sabbath day.

- Many Jews even felt this to be a separate festival time.
- It was celebrated in worship and

- Eating a great feast, honoring the harvest fruit God had provided

This brings to mind another feast – *a wedding feast* – a very special bride and groom:

- “To the mind of Jesus the gladness of the wedding festivities pointed forward to the rejoicing of that day when He shall bring home His bride to the Father’s house, and the redeemed with the Redeemer shall sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb. – *The Adventist Home*, p. 503.
- “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.” – *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 421, *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, March 7, 1899.
- “Christ looks upon His people as the reward of all His suffering, His humiliation, and His love, and the supplement of His glory,—Christ, the great center from which radiates all glory. ‘Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’” – *Christian Experiences and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, p. 209.
- That comes **after** Jesus comes.

The Siniatic Covenant was *a marriage agreement* (Jeremiah 31:32).

- When Israel persistently broke the terms of the agreement – committed spiritual adultery – her sins divorced her from the One who later became Jesus Christ (Jeremiah 3:8, 14; 31:32; Isaiah 59:2).
- When the covenant is complete
- Daniel 9:24 is fulfilled.
- Everlasting righteousness has come in.
- The prophecy of 70 sabbaticals or ten jubilees will have come to an end!
- It will be time for the marriage feast!

In Isaiah 54 it talks about spiritual Israel being *remarried to Christ*.

- The temporary tabernacle of our physical bodies (II Peter 1:14)
- Has now put on immortality
- The temporary booths have become the permanent abode in the Promised Land.
- The family is restored.

The end-time Feast of Tabernacles ushers in the millennium.

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Revelation 20:4).

The Space of Half an Hour

Since this relates to an *annual festival* setting, *half an hour* would represent *seven and a half days*.

- Is there a way to associate this to the period just following Jesus’ return?
- Let’s first look at what we have been told by expositor White regarding the *coming of Jesus*:

“Then Jesus laid off his priestly garment and put on his Kingly robe, and took his place on the cloud which carried him to the East, where it first appeared to the saints on earth – a small black cloud which was the sign of the Son of Man. While the cloud was passing from the Holiest to the East, which *took a number of days*, the synagogue of Satan worshipped at the saint’s feet.” – *Broadside*, vol. 1, par. 8, 04/06/1846 (emphasis added).

This does not represent the one half hour of silence because it precedes His coming.

Now E. G. White comments regarding the *return back to heaven*.

- “Then Jesus’ silver trumpet sounded, as He descended on the cloud, wrapped in flames of fire. He gazed on the graves of the sleeping saints, then raised His eyes and hands to heaven, and cried, ‘Awake! awake! awake! ye that sleep in the dust, and arise.’ Then there was a mighty earthquake. The graves opened, and the dead came up clothed with immortality. The 144,000 shouted, ‘Alleluia!’ as they recognized their friends who had been torn from them by death, and in the same moment we were changed and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.

“We all entered the cloud together, and were *seven days ascending* to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns, and with His own right hand placed them on our heads.” – *Early Writings*, p. 16 (emphasis added).

That is exactly the time period of the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:34).

- The round-trip for Jesus and His heavenly entourage is approximately two weeks.
- This refers to the week’s journey back to heaven.
- Its culmination was just described in chapter 7, verses 9-17.

What about the half day?

- That apparently represents the time Jesus is here visiting this earth – one half day or twelve hours – the preparation time for the glorious Sabbath to follow.

What would the “eighth” be?

- The day we arrive in heaven for a holy convocation
- The “marriage supper of the Lamb”

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