

The Seven Seals

The Scroll and the Lamb (Revelation 5:1-14)

“Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

“And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

“And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

“Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”

“And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”
And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

From the introduction, we can see that the opening of the Seals takes place at the Table of Showbread, where the Father has the scroll. Also, the Seals are broken by Jesus since He was slain, and by His blood, He ransomed people. This work is not given to the Seven Angels around the throne.

“There in His open hand lay the book, the roll of the history of God's providences, the prophetic 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. 9MR 7.2

From this statement, we need to ask:

Where do we find God's authority in the Seals? Where are His commandments and laws? Where is the symbolic counsel of God? And finally, how does this show the history of ruling powers of nations?

One thing we will notice is that while each Seal starts in the time period of each of the 7 Churches, the work of the rider follows through until the 2nd coming.

The First Four Seals

These are the four horsemen having the Gospel message for the first four Church periods - Pure Gospel going forth during the period of the Church of Ephesus, Persecuted gospel going forth during the Period of the church of Smyrna, the false compromised gospel going forth during the period of the church of Pergamos, and the finally the false life-less gospel going forth during the period of the church of Thyatira. The four horsemen continue to ride until the end with their unique messages.

Recall the "Four living creatures" from Revelation 4:

*And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a **lion**, the second living creature like an **ox**, the third living creature with the **face of a man**, and the fourth living creature like an **eagle** in flight. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come!" (Rev. 4:6-8)*

Many see the four creatures as a representation of Jesus as a Lion who is King, as an ox who is the Sacrifice, as a man who is the God who became human, and as an eagle with heavenly divinity. We can see how each of the first four Seals represents Jesus as such.

1st Seal

"Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer." (Rev 6:1-2)

The 1st Seal began with the Church of Ephesus, with Jesus being the Lion of Judah and King of King, having the everlasting gospel message for the world. *"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)* He has a crown, and His message has conquered and will conquer. We will see this Rider again in Revelation 19. *"Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. (Rev.19:11)* Jesus has the pure, sealing message, and from the beginning, anyone who believes and accepts His message will be saved. He says, *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." (Matt 5:6)*

The pure gospel message of Jesus' death, resurrection, and heavenly ministry began in 31 AD and will impact all humanity until Jesus returns. Jesus stated: *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”* (Matthew 24:14).

2nd Seal

“When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.” (Rev 6:3-4)

The 2nd Seal begins with the Church of Smyrna, where many gave up their lives for Jesus. He is the sacrificial Ox who was persecuted and sacrificed. This Red Horse rider allows persecution to arise on all those who accept the Lamb. This rider tries to catch the White horse rider by persecuting and killing all who have accepted the message of the Rider on the White horse. He uses the pagan and anti-Christian sword of the state to persecute, beginning with Pagan Rome, with Islam, and then in atheistic nations. Jesus said, *“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* (Matt 5:10)

This period began in full at the end of the first century with the state-sponsored persecution of pagan Rome using their sword for over two hundred years. Yet, persecution continued, and Christian Rome persecuted pagans and all non-Nicene Christians. Persecution has continued throughout history.

3rd Seal

“When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, “A quart [a dry measure equal to about a quart] of wheat for a denarius, [denarius was a day's wage for a laborer] and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!” (Rev 6:5-6)

Jesus as the face of the man. While God is in human form, He knows our needs, including our daily substances, including bread, oil, and drink. The Red Horse Rider begins in the church of Pergamos, which is the church of Compromise. Jesus will provide all our needs, yet we get the message here that we can buy our own bread. This has the opposite message of the Rider on the White Horse. The Bread of Life is free, but this rider is selling it. His scales weigh wheat and barley, the meager substance of the day. While people in the 4th century were poor and toiled for their daily food, the Spirit represented by oil and wine was not compromised, and faith in Jesus and love for Him and our fellow man was freely available if they would only search for it. Jesus says, *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”* (Matt. 5:6)

4th Seal

“When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and

Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.” (Rev 6:7-8)

An eagle in flight represents Jesus’ divinity. He has the keys to death and Hades. This Pale horse rider has a message that leads to death, and more persecution is committed to this rider. Starting in the church of Thyatira, formalism set into the church. Just do what the church says, and you can earn merits in the afterlife. Also, if you don’t join the church-state Union, you will be persecuted and killed, either by the sword, a spiritual famine from the Word of God, or by pestilence-ridden errors.

Jesus said, *“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matt. 5:11-12)*

The Fifth and Sixth Seals

These two Seals are the results of the previous gospel messages during the Protestant Reformation and the End-time persecution periods.

5th Seal

“When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers [brothers and sisters] should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.” (Rev. 6:9-11)

The four horsemen have completed their work. Every inhabitant on earth will either accept the pure gospel from the true Rider of the White Horse, have been persecuted by anti-Christian nations for accepting the gospel under the rider of the Red Horse, or be lost because they compromised their faith and died spiritually under the rider of the Black Horse and the rider of the Pale Horse.

The souls of the Protestant and end-time martyrs rest until the 1st Resurrection. It was during the Reformation that the truth of Daniel’s Little Horn and Paul’s Man of Sin or Lawlessness was identified. Just as symbolically Abel’s blood cried out from the ground, the prayers went out, *“How long before you will judge [the Little Horn and that Man of Sin] and avenge our blood?”* This cry will be heard from future martyrs until Jesus comes again and they receive their *“white robe.”*

6th Seal

“When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves

and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?" (Rev. 6:12-17)

While the 5th Seal focuses on the persecuted righteous, the 6th Seal focuses on those with the false compromised and lifeless gospel. We clearly see the fulfilled prophetic events opening the End-time period with the earthquake, black sun, and falling stars. We also see the unfulfilled events forecasting the results of those who remain in their unrighteous ways, hiding from the wrath of God. Those who rejected the message of the Rider of the White Horse want to die and not see the face of Jesus.

There is a contrast between the "souls under the altar" in the 5th Seal and those calling for the "mountains and rocks to fall" on them during the 6th Seal. Matthew 25 illustrates this with sheep and goats.

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" (Matt. 25:31-34,41)

The 7th Seal

We have seen the first six Seals parallel the time periods of the first six Churches. Between the 6th and 7th Seals, we have an interlude with details about the Great Multitude and the 144,000. We dealt with the Reformation Christians in the 5th Seal and the End-time ungodly in the 6th Seal, and now we are given a look at God's End-time faithful people.

We clearly see the second coming of Jesus in the phrase "*the sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up*" in the 6th Seal. This has led some to place the 7th seal beginning after that point in time. Yet, recall that each preceding Seal began in a particular Church period. It would stand to reason that the final Seal would begin in the final Church period. Furthermore, the work of each Seal continues beyond its initial period to the second coming. Jesus still has a pure message, there is still persecution of the righteous, there are still compromise and legalism in the church, and there are still those sleeping who are waiting for vindication. All six Seals end at the second coming. Therefore, the 7th Seal must start during the time of the Laodicean Church period. In fact, when the Laodiceans "*buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see,*" they become one of the Great Multitude. When Jesus leaves, the Sanctuary, the living Laodiceans who open the door and "overcome," will be the 144,000.

When Jesus was transfigured on the high mountain (see Matthew 17), He was visited by Moses and Elijah. Moses is representative of those who study, go through trials, and die in the faith before entering the Promised Land. Elijah is representative of the 144,000 who go through great trials and tribulations, but God rescues them and carries them off to heaven in symbolic chariots of fire!

The Sealing

“After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” (Rev. 7:1-3)

Ellen White had this to say about the Sealing:

“Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads--it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved--just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already.” (4BC 1161 (1902))

The Sealed ones of the Churches of Philadelphia and Laodicea are the Great Multitudes who die or will die, in the truth of the 3 Angel's messages. The 144,000 are Laodiceans who go through the time of trouble.

Those who die before Jesus' return make up the Great Multitude of Revelation 8.

“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

*“Therefore they are before the throne of God,
and serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.*

*They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;
the sun shall not strike them,
nor any scorching heat.*

*For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of living water,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” (Rev. 7:9-17)*

Silence in Heaven

“When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.” (Rev. 8:1)

The 7th Seal gives no information about why there is silence in heaven for a week. We must seek further Scriptural passages to form an objective interpretation with a Biblical basis.

The margin of the KJV references Job 4:16-17, *“It stood still, but I could not discern appearance. A form was before my eyes; there was silence, then I heard a voice: ‘Can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?’* To these questions by Job’s friend Eliphaz the Temanite, God and all heaven who are witnessing the end-time scenes can say, Yes! The 144,000 can!

Another marginal text is Habakkuk 2:20, *“But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silent before him.”* Yes! Jesus is in the Most Holy Place but is about to leave and go forth on His white horse to conquer.

A final marginal text that we will look at is from Zechariah 2:13, *“Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.”* After “about a half an hour” or seven days, Jesus will rouse Himself from the Most Holy Place and leave the Sanctuary as we read in Revelation 15 5-8:

“After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent[tabernacle] of witness in heaven was opened, and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever, and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.”

Now let us go to the Old Testament to find what God’s priests did for a seven-day period, and then we will connect passages in Revelation.

Before Aaron and his sons could begin their work in the Most Holy Place of the Sanctuary, they had to take “Seven Days” for consecration to the work, for ordination as priests, and for an atonement to be made for them.

Leviticus 8:31-36:

“And Moses said to Aaron and his sons, ‘Boil the flesh at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and there eat it and the bread that is in the basket of ordination offerings, as I commanded, saying, ‘Aaron and his sons shall eat it.’ And what remains of the flesh and the bread you shall burn up with fire. And you shall not go outside the entrance of the tent of meeting for seven days, until the days of your ordination are completed, for it will take seven days to ordain you. As has been done today, the Lord has commanded to be done to make atonement for you. At the entrance of the tent of meeting you shall remain day and night for seven days, performing what the Lord has charged, so that you do not die, for so I have been commanded.” And Aaron and his sons did all the things that the Lord commanded by Moses.”

Aaron and his sons stayed in the Holy Place for seven days to be ordained and consecrated to enter the Most Holy Place. Atonement was made for them. The SDA Bible Commentary p. 745 states:

“This ritual meal concluded the ceremony of consecration. The eating of the flesh of the ram of consecration is in contrast to the eating of the flesh of the sin offering. The eating of the flesh of the ram was to consecrate the priests that they might eat the flesh of the sin offering and bear the sin of the people (ch. Lev. 10:17).

“Seven days. The service for the day was ended, but Aaron and his sons were not permitted to leave until after seven days. This was a time for study, for prayer, for meditation, for going through the ritual again and again, that they should make no mistake when the time came for them to officiate.”

After the ordination of Aaron and his sons (Lev. 8) and after the death of Nadab and Abihu because they were unworthy (Lev.10), the priests of the remaining family of Aaron were acceptable to enter the Most Holy Place. We read in Lev. 16:1-3, “The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the Lord and died, and the Lord said to Moses, “Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. But in this way Aaron shall come into the Holy Place...”

Now, we will look at Revelation 15 in connection to the work of the 7th Seal.

“Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished. (Rev. 15:1)

These “Seven Angels” probably are the same angels who had the Trumpets in Rev. 6 and 8:1. In the Trumpet judgments, God’s wrath was poured out in measure that needed completion later. Here, the Seven Plagues complete the wrath of God against those who have rejected Him and persecuted His people.

The first mention of the 144,000 is in between the 6th and 7th Seals. There an angel tells four other angels not to bring the plagues until the 144,000 are sealed in their foreheads. (Rev.7:1-4)

Revelation 15 goes on to talk about the 144,000 who “conquered the beast and his image” standing on the Sea of Glass singing the Song of Moses.

*“After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the **tent [or tabernacle] of witness in heaven was opened**, and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever, and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.” (Rev. 15: 5-8)*

Notice the phrase “*tabernacle of witness in heaven was opened.*” Not only is Jesus ministering in the Most Holy Place, but the whole heavenly Sanctuary is a place where all are witnessing the scenes on earth.

