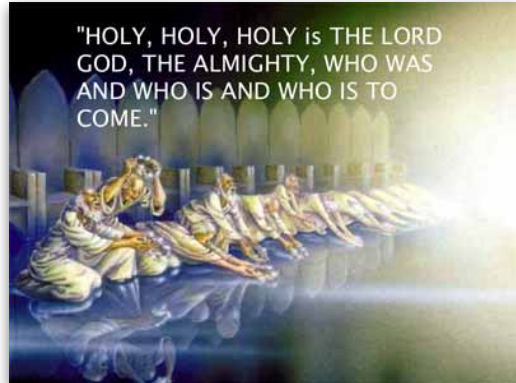


Revelation - Chapter 6 & 7

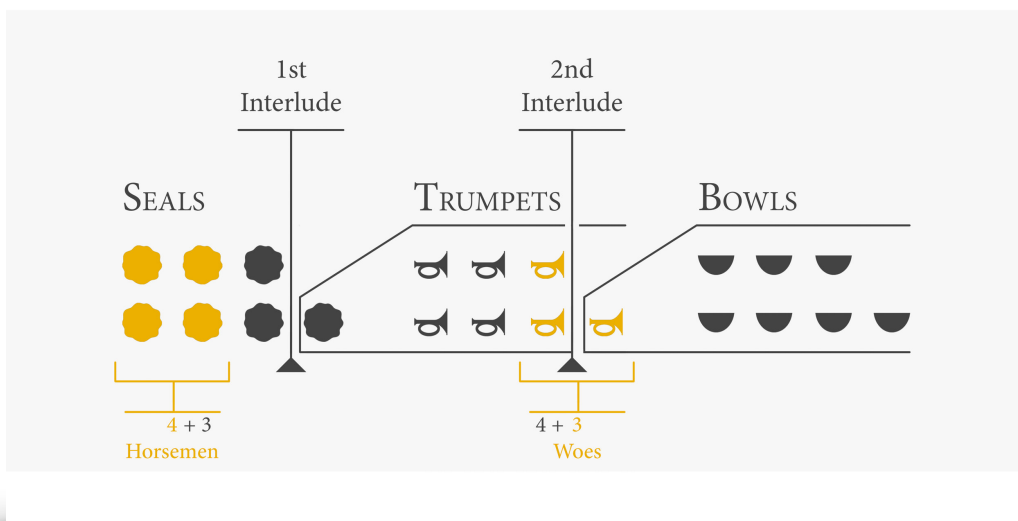
Judgements Begin & Worship in Heaven

John's incredible visit to the throne room of God continues. John has just witnessed all of God's creation including the 4 living creatures, the 24 elders, a myriad of angels and all created beings in the universe in a mighty chorus of praise to God. Their praises begin with a hymn of creation ending with a human of redemption anticipating paradise lost becoming paradise regained.



Jesus, the only One worthy to open the title deed to the Earth and finish the redemption of mankind and the fallen earth, begins to break open the seals of divine wrath that signal the terrible judgements of God on the world at the end of the age, climaxing in the second coming of Jesus.

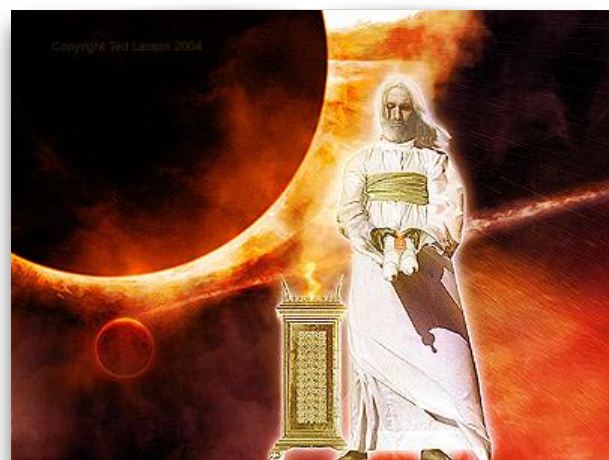
The seven seals on the title deed of the earth represent specific divine judgments that will be poured out sequentially on the earth. Although there are differences among commentators regarding when in the Tribulation Period the seals are opened, all agree that the opening of the seals is a future event that happens after the church is raptured (Rev 3:10), the opening of the seals occur during the Tribulation, severe judgement is coming and God has everything under control. Within the seven seals are also the trumpet and bowl judgements. The seventh of each series opens a new series of judgements as seen below.



The unfolding of the seven seals parallels Jesus' chronology of tribulation events found in His message in Matthew 24. Just as a mother's birth pains increase in frequency and intensity as the time to give birth approaches, so the judgments will intensify throughout the tribulation until the arrival of Christ in judgment glory. The first four seals cover the period Jesus described as "the beginning of birth pangs" (Matthew 24: 8). As terrible as those four judgments are, they are but the preliminary outpouring of God's final wrath in the last three seals.

The Seven Seal Judgments & Jesus' Message in Matthew 24

The Seals	Seal Contents	Jesus' Words in Matthew	Matthew
1st Seal	False Peace	Will be mislead	Matt 24:4-5
2nd Seal	Worldwide war	Wars & rumors of wars	Matt 24:6-7
3rd Seal	Famine	Famines	Matt 24:7
4th Seal	Death - Earthquakes	Earthquakes	Matt 24:7
5th Seal	Divine Judgment	Tribulation & will be killed	Matt 24:9
6th Seal	Physical Destruction - Terror Earthquake Sun black Moon like blood Stars fell to earth Sky split apart	Sun darkened Moon dark Stars fall from sky Powers of heaven shaken	Matt 24:29
7th Seal	Seven Trumpets Cataclysmic Events	Like days of Noah	Matt 24:37



John witnesses Jesus opening the first six seals, the heavenly praise ceases in anticipation of the coming judgements, and the seals are acted out rather than being read. The scene now shifts from heaven to earth through the return of Christ in Chapter 19.

Seven Seals

- Seal 1-4 - Horses and riders (the Four Horseman of the Apocalypse)
 - Seal 1 - Rider on White Horse - Peace
 - Seal 2 - War
 - Seal 3 - Famine
 - Seal 4 - Death
- Seal 5 - Divine judgement
- Seal 6 - Physical destruction



The power for the judgements is granted by God to carry out His judgement on an evil world.



First Seal - Rider on White Horse

The Rider on the white horse carries a bow without arrows, is given a victor's crown, and the ability to conquer. Because he carries a bow without arrows, his crown is not a crown of royalty, and he is on a white horse representing peace and security, this image represents a conquest that was freely given to him with bloodless victories.

The rider is not a real king and he has not conquered by military force, but by deceit (2 Thes 2:9-11). His conquest will be a peace won by agreement, not conflict (Daniel 9: 24–27). He will promise a golden age of peace and prosperity. In gratitude, the world will honor him and elevate him to the position of supreme leadership.

He will even appear to bring peace to the troubled Middle East. He will make a treaty with Israel, posing as their protector and defender. Soon afterwards, however, his desire for dominance will provoke rebellion. The Tribulation period will begin with a deceptive peace accompanied by a counterfeit spirituality and false religion (1 Thes 5:3). His promises and the peace will be short lived.



Second Seal - War

Jesus breaks the second Seal and John sees the worldwide false peace destroyed by the second Rider, war. He is granted to take away peace. The second horse is red symbolizing the fire and blood of war. Rather than an arrow-less bow the rider yields a sword (machaira) which is a dagger used in assassinations, uprising and warfare. This is unlike the sword (rhomphaia) of order and justice that comes from the mouth of Jesus (Rev 1:16). This corresponds to Jesus's reference to "wars and rumors of wars" in the end times (Matt 24:6-7).

When wars break out all over the world Antichrist will have no choice but to resort to war in order to preserve his power. He will be as skillful at war as he was at promoting false peace (Dan 8: 24). Among his victims will be many of God's people (Dan 6: 9; Matthew 24: 9). Antichrist's setting up of the abomination of desolation (Dan 11: 31; 12: 11; Matthew 24:15) will touch off a massive conflict (Dan 11: 36-45). Antichrist's attempts to crush his enemies will last throughout the remainder of the tribulation. Finally, when Jesus Christ, returns, Antichrist will be cast into the lake of fire forever (Rev 20: 10).

Third Seal - Famine

Jesus breaks the third Seal and a black horse gallops onto the scene. This is a symbol of the famine and poverty that results from warfare as food supplies are destroyed. Desolation and despair will flood the world. Jesus also predicted this future famine (Matt 24: 7). God has used famine as a means of judgment in the past, but this will be the most devastating famine in all of human history.



God Himself announces the level of rationing that will characterize the economic inflation and starvation. God speaks here as a reminder that the judgements are coming from Him. The famine's severity can be seen in the example given: a day's wages will only buy food for one person for one day. Those with families can buy enough food to feed their families for a day by buying barley which is lower in nutritional value and was often fed to the livestock.

God cautions people not to waste the oil and the wine. Used in the preparation and cooking of food as well as the purification of water they will need to be carefully protected. Basic food staples will become priceless luxuries.



Fourth Seal - Death

When Jesus breaks the fourth Seal, out rides an ashen horse with a rider called Death. Hades followed him and they were given authority to kill by sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts one fourth of those on earth.

Death slays the body while Hades swallows up the soul. These two figures symbolize the massive number of deaths that will follow in the wake of the first three Horseman. One quarter of those living on the earth will be lost in their rampage. By today's population figures approximately one billion individuals would be killed. This corresponds to Jesus' literal description of the death and destruction that characterizes the end times (Matt 24:7,9). No doubt The Great Tribulation has begun: an unprecedented time of trouble (Jer 30:7; Dan 12:1; Matt 24:21-22).

Fifth Seal - the Martyrs

When Jesus breaks the fifth seal, John sees martyrs underneath an altar: The martyrs are under the altar, which is also where the blood of the sacrifices during the OT was poured out (Ex 29:11).



The word used in the Scriptures for slain can also be interpreted as slaughtered.

The Martyrs seen here are slain (or slaughtered) during the Tribulation because of the Word of God & their testimony (Rom 11:25-26). The partial blindness of Israel will be removed during the Tribulation and many Jews will turn to God & reject Antichrist. The whole world will be worshipping Antichrist & those who don't will be considered blasphemers, persecuted and killed.

These souls under the altar testify to the awful suffering and persecution that will occur during the Tribulation (Rev 22:11). Those who come to faith in Christ during the

Tribulation period will face the greatest persecution the world has ever known (Matt 24:21).

Today a Christian dies for their faith every 4-5 minutes across the world:

- More Christians were martyred in the twentieth century than in all previous centuries combined.
- It is illegal to be a Christian in North Korea, and some fifty thousand Christians have been sent to labor camps there. Christians are persecuted in more than 65 of the world's 193 countries.
- In Nigeria, nearly 300 churches were destroyed, and 612 Christians were killed in 2013. Since 2010, the treatment of Christians has rapidly worsened in Iran. The regime monitors church services, bans Farsi-language services, and arrests converts.
- In India, anticonversion laws have been adopted in five states, and these laws are frequently used as a pretext to disrupt church services and harass Christians. Pastors are frequently beaten or killed, church buildings are destroyed, and converts are forced to flee their homes.
- More than one million of the 1.5 million Christians in Iraq have fled the country since the fall of Saddam Hussein, due to increasing persecution. In August 2013, thirty-eight churches were burned down and twenty-three others were damaged in an upsurge in violence against Coptic Christians in Egypt. ¹

The martyrs cry out in a loud voice, "How long until you judge and avenge our blood?" This is a well known cry of suffering Israel asking when will their pain end. The Jews have suffered at the hands of the Gentile world for centuries.

- The infamous Adolf Eichmann, expressing Nazi hatred for the Jews, said, "I shall leap laughing into my grave, for the thought that I have five million human lives on my conscience is to me a source of inordinate satisfaction."
- Zechariah spoke of the future day of Tribulation when two-thirds of the Jewish population would be killed. God promised to bring the one-third through the fire refined as silver and tested as gold (Zec 13:8-9).
- Jesus spoke of the suffering in Matthew (Matt 24:8-10). ²



God answers the martyrs with a spoken word and symbolic gift of a white robe signifying their worthiness purchased by the blood of Jesus. At this time God's judgement and vengeance is about 3.5 years ahead so God tells them to rest for awhile. They are given refuge, rest, retribution and then will receive their reward during the Millennium (Rev 20:4).

The fifth Seal depicts God's judgement and wrath on the evil of worshipping Antichrist and killing believers. The prayers of the saints under the altar are for God's judgement against the forces of evil that are sinful and dishonoring to God. The age of grace has passed; this is the day of judgement of Holy God.

Sixth Seal - Terror

As Jesus breaks open the sixth seal a great earthquake shakes the entire globe. Volcanic eruptions spew ash and gases into the atmosphere and the sun is veiled like a dark, rough burlap cloth. The moon appears dark red from the putrid air and the heavens rain down meteors. When people head for the mountains, they discover that their hiding places have collapsed. When they head for the islands to escape the mass hysteria, they quickly realize the islands have been submerged. ³



The prophet Joel warned about the terror that would strike the earth during the day of the Lord: The heavens tremble, the sun and the moon got dark and the stars lose their brightness (Joel 2:1, 10) Joel also issued a call for repentance and a reminder that the Lord your God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil (Joe 2:12-13). Isaiah also wrote about this phenomena in Isa 13:10.

God has often made His presence felt in human history by shaking the earth (Exodus 19:18; Psalm 68:8; 1 Kings 19:11–12; Matthew 27:51, 54). This terror stricken event is the most dramatic judgement so far. No doubt the Great Tribulation has started.

Following the devastating natural disasters, John records the complete and utter panic of the entire population of the world. All people of the world, heads of state throughout the world, high-ranking officials in government, military commanders, those who control commerce and business, and every unbelieving individual will panic and try to hide themselves like hunted animals in the cracks and crevices of the earth, the very places that are being shaken. There is no place of safety.

They will finally acknowledge that the disasters they have experienced are God's judgment. Rather than repenting before God, they will flee from Him in frenzied fear. They will cry out to the rocks and mountains to fall on them; they would rather die than face the wrath of holy God.

The “great day of their wrath” is another term for the day of the Lord often referred to in the Old Testament. These horrors precede the second coming of the Lord and anticipate the worst that is yet to come in the seventh seal which includes the trumpet and bowl judgments.

As to answering the question of “who is able to stand,” only those who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior before the time of judgement will be able to stand when God deals with the earth in this final period of great distress.

As we are given a rest from the judgements in chapter seven, John describes the two groups who will be saved in the Great Tribulation:

- Those who are sealed in Israel.
- The great multitude - those of all nations who are martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ.



The 144,000 Sealed Jews

One group of 144,000 Jews will be sealed symbolizing God’s protection and ownership and then given special protection during the remaining divine judgements. Just as the three young Hebrew men were kept alive in King Nebuchadnezzar’s fiery furnace, they survive the remaining seal, trumpet and bowl judgements, and the efforts of Antichrist to murder them. They will be

preserved through the seven years of the Tribulation and then enter the Millennium Kingdom and reign with Christ and His glorified church. This will fulfill God’s promise to His people through the prophets Ezekiel and Zephaniah (Zep 3:13).

John sees angels from the four quadrants of the compass on earth holding back the upcoming plagues associated with the trumpet judgments (Rev 8:5). Another angel arrives from the east (the direction of Israel) and instructs the angels to hold back the judgments until the 144,000 Jews receive their seal of protection (probably the Holy Spirit) from the living God.

They will be the most effective missionaries the world has ever seen. More people, both Jews and Gentiles, will come to know Christ during the Tribulation period than any other period in time.

This is not the first time that God has sealed His people:

- God sealed Noah and his family from the rest of the world so the flood waters would not hurt them (Gen 6-8)
- God told Lot and his family to get out of Sodom before the fire descended, thus sealing them from terrible judgment (Gen 19)
- God sealed the firstborn of all the Jewish families who applied sacrificial blood to the doorposts of their homes in Egypt (Ex 12)
- God sealed Rahab and her household by means of the scarlet cord when He destroyed Jericho (Josh 2, 6).
- God sealed 7,000 Israelites in Elijah's day who had not bowed their knee to Baal (1 Kings 19).

Joel also described the 144,000 who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, will speak prophecies, see visions, and participate in miracles during the Tribulation (Joel 2:28-32). We also learn from Rev 14:4-5 that they are unspotted by the world and pure in their thoughts and words.

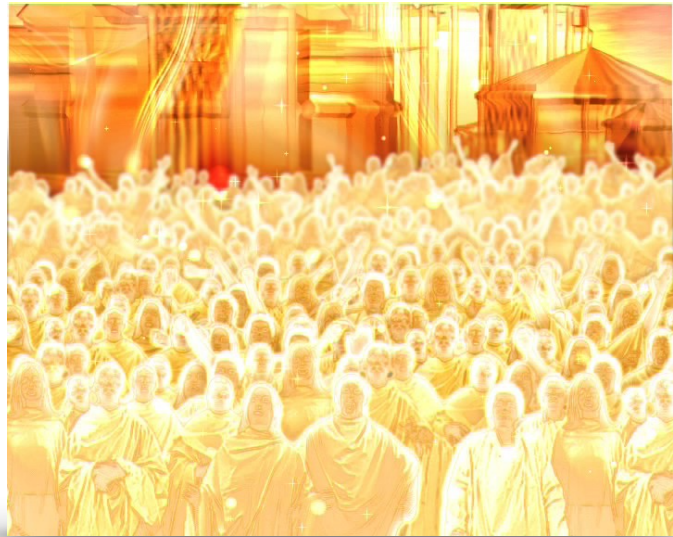
The tribal records for the Jews were lost when the Romans leveled Jerusalem in A.D. 70 but here God makes it known that He knows which tribe every Jewish person belongs to. Twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes will be sealed. Much speculation exists regarding the listing of the tribes. Here is a possible explanation regarding several of the most controversial issues:

- Judah is listed first rather than Reuben who was the firstborn because Reuben forfeited his birthright as punishment for his sexual misconduct with his father's concubine (1 Chr 5:1)
- The tribe of Dan is omitted in favor of the priestly tribe of Levi due to Dan's reputation for idolatry (Deu 29:18-21). Dan will share in the millennial blessings (Eze 48:1-2, 32) but will not be selected for this duty nor protected during the Tribulation.
- The name of Ephraim is omitted in favor of his father Joseph because Ephraim defected from the ruling house of Judah (Isa 7:17). Like Dan, Ephraim was consumed with idolatry (Hos 4:17). His brother Manasseh is included because he was the faithful son of Joseph. ⁴

The Great Multitude

The 144,000 are successful in their missionary work as John sees a “great multitude which no one could number, from all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb” (Rev 7:9).

These are the ones who receive Jesus as Lord and Savior during the Tribulation Period.



Since they are standing triumphantly before the throne of God and serving Him they have been martyred during the Tribulation Period. No longer under the altar, no doubt many have been added to their number since we last saw them in chapter 6. They have waited “a little longer” and have received their vengeance from God and their reward.

They are clothed in white robes symbolizing righteousness purchased by the blood of Christ and waving palm branches associated in Scripture with celebration, deliverance and joy. Palm branches were especially prominent during the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:40) being employed in the construction of the booths the people lived in during that feast (Neh 8:15-17).

During Jesus’ triumphal entry the joyous crowd waved palm branches as they welcomed Him into Jerusalem shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel” (John 12:13). Due to their faithfulness to Jesus during their horrible persecution they now have a special place of service in the throne room of God. God has given them His shekinah presence (tabernacle) in His heavenly sanctuary, the most secure place.

They will receive shelter from the terrors of the fallen world that are to come as God continues to unleash His devastating judgments. They will never experience hunger, thirst or scorching heat again as Jesus, the Lamb in the center of the throne will guide them to springs of the water of life. God will wipe every tear from their eyes (Rev 7:16-17).

The theme of their worship is salvation. They are not alone. An uncountable number of angels has joined them along with the elders and the four living creatures who are constantly before the throne of God. As we have seen throughout John’s vision, those before the throne of God faithfully fall on their faces in gratitude worshiping God.

Their prayer is that “blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be attributed to our God forever and ever” (Rev 7:12). This worship will continue throughout all of endless eternity.

Summary

As we study these judgements and the remaining ones it is easy to think that the world appears to be spinning out of control. Take heart; it is not. Our Sovereign, Almighty, and Holy God is in control. He has allowed evil to occur but is not the cause or source of it. He is not the author of sin.

Most of the judgements in Revelation come through the work of evil agents. Yet in His abundant grace, He limits the days of the Tribulation (Mark 13:20). If He did not everyone in the world would perish. Then Jesus returns to fulfill His promise of a Millennial Kingdom.

In this age when Christianity is under siege, it is comforting to be reassured of the ultimate triumph of God’s saving grace. The church will be delivered before the Tribulation and great multitudes of people will be saved in the midst of the terrors of divine judgment, both Gentiles and Jews (Rom 11:26).

Sadly, there will be a great “falling away from the faith” at the end of the Church Age (2 Thes 2:3). A massive revival will take place after the Rapture, during the Tribulation. The 144,000 sealed Jews will lead the revival. This vast revival will fulfill the words of Jesus in His Olivet discourse: “This gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come (Matt 24:14).

You too can escape the coming judgment during the Tribulation Period. God says in the Bible that He wants all to be saved. Confess with your mouth that you want Jesus to be your Lord and Savior and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead to die for your sins, you will be saved and spend eternity with God in heaven.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16, NASB95)