

REVELATION

The Seven Seals

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Lesson 6: Revelation 6:1 – 7:17

INTRODUCTION

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!” (Rev. 6:1)

In this study we witness the beginning of God’s judgment on earth. The book (scroll) that was at the right hand of God and was received by the Lamb was sealed with seven seals (something like a stamp). One by one, the Lamb opens the seals and, with each opening, a judgment from God is released. The opening of the first four seals result in the coming of **the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse**.

THE FIRST SEAL (6:1-2)

The first seal is opened and a **rider mounted on a white horse** appears. The horseman had a bow, “and a crown was given to him,” and he had already won some victories and went out to win some more.

Who is this character? The horse (war animal), the white color (peace and triumph), the crown (object of honor), and the air of victory initially leads us to think that this is Jesus Christ. In fact, that is how some interpret this passage. However, this rider is actually the Antichrist, a man who, supported and led by the forces of hell, will appear in the end times to oppose Christ and seek to take His place. Some of the tips we have that this person is not Christ are:

- 1) Jesus Christ, the Lamb, is the one opening the scroll
- 2) The true Christ appears in chapters 1:9-20 and 19:11-16
- 3) Jesus Christ uses a different weapon, the two-edge sword (1:16, 2:12, 19:15)
- 4) Jesus Christ wears a different crown (Greek *estefanos* vs. *diadema*)
- 5) Jesus Christ keeps better company

We will study the Antichrist in more detail in Revelation 13. For now, it is important to know that in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 he is identified as “the man of lawlessness... , the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.” (see also 1 John 2:18, 22, 4:3).

With the rapture of the church, the Antichrist will emerge as a political and military world leader. He will unify nations, dominate governments, and destroy the opposition. To do this, he will rely

on the spiritual power of satan (**the dragon**, Rev.12) and the support of a religious world leader (**the false prophet**, Rev.13:11-18).

THE SECOND SEAL (6:3-4)

When the second seal is opened and a **rider mounted on a red horse** appears. He was allowed to rob the world of peace and causes people to slaughter one another. He brings war!

THE THIRD SEAL (6:5-6)

The third seal is opened and a **rider mounted on a black horse** appears. This rider brings hunger and poverty upon the earth. The scale in his hand suggests rationing and control. *A quart of wheat* is the portion that would feed a person for a day; *a denarius* (a coin) is the wage for a day's work. *Barley* is a cheaper substitute for wheat. These prices indicate inflation of twelve times normal food prices. The phrase *do not harm olive oil and wine* probably means that the hunger will not be total and that there will be a greater disparity between the rich and the poor.

THE FOURTH SEAL (6:7-8)

The fourth seal is opened and a **rider mounted on a pale horse** appears. The name of this horseman is *Death*, and he is followed by Hell (Gr., *hades*; Heb., *Seol*), the place of the dead.

THE FIFTH SEAL (6:9-11)

The fifth seal is opened and John sees under the altar (in heaven) *the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne*. They call on God for justice, but God tells them to wait until the number of those who must be killed (like them) is complete.

Who are these martyrs? They are those who sought God and accepted Christ during the Great Tribulation (after the rapture of the Church) and therefore, they were killed by the Antichrist (13:15, 20:4).

THE SIXTH SEAL (6:12-17)

The sixth seal is open and worldwide catastrophes take place: great earthquake, darkness, meteors, tsunamis, etc. This seal brings destruction upon the Earth on a scale never seen before.

THE MARK OF GOD AND THE 144,000 WITNESSES (7:1-17)

During the Great Tribulation, God will raise 144,000 evangelists from among the tribes of Israel to preach the gospel to the world. These witnesses will receive a special anointing and protection for this work. They will have a seal (mark) from God on their foreheads.

What will be the result of this worldwide evangelism? *The salvation of 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... They are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* (7:9 and 14).