

The Seven Seals

(Revelation 4-8:1)

Introduction

This amazing prophecy has several parts. Each interlock to help understand the rest of the book of Revelation. These divisions:



1. Heaven's courtroom scene
2. Witnesses and courtiers around God's throne
3. Celebration of the end to the proceedings
4. Sealed judicial scroll
5. Breaking of seals begins final end of history
6. Following the breaking of the sixth Seal: the Time of Trouble and Second Coming
7. After the seventh Seal is broken, its judicial contents can be reviewed.
8. That is what the saints, with Christ, will be doing during the millennium.

The study of these Seals is extensive. Here, we will be looking at an overview of the key issues.

The Story Begins in Heaven's Throne Room

"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).



- The apostle John is having a vision, looking through an open door into the very throne room where God the Father sits.
- He hears the trumpet-like voice (Feast of Trumpets setting) of Jesus that he previously heard and saw in chapter 1 while Jesus was visiting planet earth.
- Jesus is calling him now from heaven to "Come up" through that door.

Amazing: What is he going to be shown?

- In chapter 1 Jesus said that he was going to show:
 1. Things which must shortly "*come to pass*" (1:1).

2. That the *“time is at hand”* (1:3).
 3. Then John saw the Second Coming (1:7).
 4. Here: *“things which must be hereafter”* is future to 80–90 A.D., when he had this vision.
- The “future” that Jesus now will unfold must relate to all these future time intimations!

“Immediately I was in the Spirit, and a throne was standing in heaven with someone seated on it!” (Revelation 4:2 – NET).

- When a *“throne”* is ***standing or set*** in place and someone ***sits or is sitting*** on it, it means that a courtroom scene is in session!
- The information in this chapter shows that this is God the Father acting as judge. He is distinguished from the Lamb (5:5, 7; 6:16; 7:10) and from the Spirit (1:4, 4:5).



The first prophecy of this Divine Being in judgment was in Daniel 7 around 553 B.C. There, it was a ***complete prophecy***, sweeping from the onset of the proceedings to the result of the sentencing.

“While I was watching, thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His attire was white like snow; the hair of his head was like lamb’s wool. His throne was ablaze with fire and its wheels were all aflame. A river of fire was streaming forth and proceeding from his presence. Many thousands were ministering to him; many tens of thousands stood ready to serve him. The court convened and the books were opened” (Daniel 7:9-10 – NET).

- This was followed by the wicked being destroyed by fire (Daniel 7:11).
- This was followed by Christ receiving the kingdom of the saints (vss 13-14).

If Daniel’s prophecy was complete, why are we having another look at the courtroom with God the Father on the throne?

- We won’t have time in this study to answer that entire question of “Why?”
- But Daniel 7 was the inauguration of the review process.
- **Here:** God is developing a “legal document,” like divorce papers, explaining ***why*** the wicked couldn’t be saved. ***And*** – it is the consummation of that judgment scene.
- When the scroll is opened during the millennium, the character of God will finally be vindicated! This process began in Daniel 9 and ends in Revelation 20!

We must recall that Isaiah had a vision of that throne hundreds of years before Daniel:



- “I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up” (Isaiah 6:1).
- This is the divine center of the universe.

If it is a courtroom in session, then there must be witnesses and courtiers. That is what John now sees:



“Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads” (Revelation 4:4 – NKJV).

These thrones were already set up in our look at Daniel 7:9-10.

- These twenty-four elders have white robes, which tie them to the saints (Revelation 7:13-15; cf. 3:5, 18).
- They have crowns (*stephanos*) of victory, which link them to similar crowns of the redeemed (Revelation 3:11 – Philadelphia Church; 6:2).
- They are redeemed individuals (Revelation 5:9).

Jesus hasn't yet come to earth the second time – so how did these people ever get to heaven? We know Enoch and Elijah were translated, but this is a group of saints!!!

- Many saints were resurrected when Jesus arose from the grave:
“And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose ... And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many” (Matthew 27:52-53).
- These were taken to heaven (Ephesians 4:8), and, likely (along with Enoch, Elijah and perhaps Moses), the twenty-four elders were from that vast group.



These twenty-four elders are on “jury duty” for the King of the universe.

“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” (Revelation 4:5).

This not only is a display of divine power – but:

- The voices and thundering mean that the decisions of the courtroom have been completed – the proceedings have come to an end.
- The imagery of the seven Spirits of God symbolize the latter rain.

Now four other beings surrounding the throne are identified. They are the special angels that carry messages from that divine center to beings on planet earth!

“In the middle of the throne and around the throne were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.” The first living creature was like a lion, the second creature like an ox, the third creature had a face like a man’s, and the fourth creature looked like an eagle flying (Revelation 4:6-7 – NET).

This is where our analysis becomes especially important:

These four creatures represent the *standards, flags* or *ensigns* of the four lead tribes of Israel!

Judah was a lion (Christ would come through this tribe and be called the “*lion of the tribe of Judah*”) – this tribe represents the 144,000 in Revelation.

Ephraim was a calf (he rebelled against God) – this tribe represents apostate Protestantism.

Reuben was a man. He had committed adultery but deeply repented and came back to God – thus, representing those who have repented and will come out of Babylon.

Dan was a serpent (later changed to an eagle) (Genesis 48–49, Numbers 2, Hosea 10:11 – and affirmed in Rabbinic tradition). This was one of the worst apostate tribes in Israel. This tribe represents Roman Catholicism.

The “faces” of these creatures, therefore, represent the tribal standards. Though they allude to those four lead tribes, they symbolize the four groups of people who will be involved with the final events of this world just before Jesus comes, noted in the Book of Revelation!

Also, the directional placement of those tribes around the ancient sanctuary had spiritual meaning!

Judah to the east – symbolic of deliverance

Ephraim to the west – symbolic of apostasy

Reuben to the south – represents those waiting to accept God’s call to come out of Babylon

Dan to the north – represents deception – evil



In Ezekiel 41:17-19 we are told that the people represented by the tribes of Ephraim and Dan will be eternally lost. That is another amazing study. They are not listed among the 144,000 in Revelation 7.

We now move to Revelation 5.

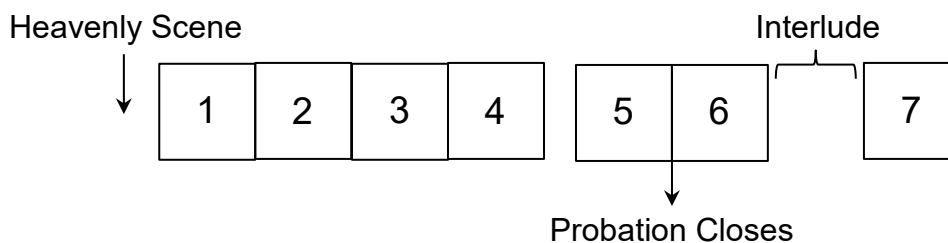
“Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals” (Revelation 5:1 – NIV).

- This is that completed document, reflecting that the courtroom proceeding has ended. Being written on both sides means that it’s finished – completed.
- It is legally sealed because only the right person can open and read its contents.
- Seven Seals on a document that has been written on both sides suggests a **divorce decree**.

Only one being in the universe could open it – the “worthy Lamb.”

- Since it contains “why” the wicked couldn’t be saved, only a *Human Being* who never sinned could open it.
- Since it represents the eternal destiny of the wicked, only a *Being* who made eternal life possible could open it. He would understand “why” they didn’t take advantage of that salvation!!!

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

Note:

1. The Seals are numbered and are, therefore, in a special sequence.
2. The book/scroll can’t be opened until all the Seals are broken.



3. The events that occur with each breaking of a Seal are sequenced occurrences that are ushering in the final months of earth's history.
4. When the Lamb takes the book, the choirs of heaven rejoice. Why? ***They know that the end of redemptive history is about to occur!!!*** A cue for each of us!!!
5. That the Lamb is still bleeding means that there is still time to repent when all this is occurring – His blood is still pleading for us.
6. This document is completed before human history ends! God is seeing into the future.

Though there is rich information within chapter 5, we move on to the actual “breaking” of the Seals in chapter 6.

Breaking the Seals

SEAL ONE: “I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, ‘Come!’” (Revelation 6:1 – NIV) (not “come and see” as in the KJV).

We have already seen that the first beast or creature is a lion, representing the tribe of Judah. In the previous chapter the Lamb Jesus is also called the “*Lion of the Tribe of Judah*.” This tribe was to the east, representing “deliverance.”



This Seal has a very special relationship to Jesus!

“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).



Horses in prophecy represent people, especially in battle imagery (Song of Solomon 1:9, Isaiah 63:13, Joel 2:1-4).

“Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats [in prophecy the wicked]: for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse [people in prophecy] in the battle” (Zechariah 10:3).

White represents purity (Psalm 51:7), the perfect righteousness of Jesus (Revelation 7:14, 19:8), victory (Isaiah 1:18), holiness (Revelation 7:13) or God's holy character (Revelation 2:17 – white stone).

What group of people will help finish the work who are holy and pure? The 144,000. This white horse represents them!

- **Nowhere in prophecy** is the color white related to evil!!!
- This group of people represents the saints, followers of Jesus, who will be saved!



The white horse represents this first group of individuals who eternally commit their lives to Jesus – the Lamb of God!

- All this must occur before the end comes.
- All this must occur before the last three-and-a-half years of history.

Then who might the rider be?

We have a clue in the 19th chapter of this book, when He is depicted as coming back to earth (Second Advent imagery) (Revelation 19:11-13).

- There, Jesus is on a white horse.
- Who else would lead such a pure people but Jesus?
- John further notes in Seal one: ***“and he that sat on him”*** (Revelation 6:2) has focused meaning. The ***“rider”*** is guiding that group of people. They are working together to finish a task!



John notes further: ***“Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown”*** (Revelation 6:2 – NIV).

- The ***“crown”*** (*stephanos* – G) that Jesus carries is one of victory. The military mission portrayed by this horse’s activity will be totally successful! We see that from this ***“crown”*** alone!
- What does that ***“bow”*** without arrows mean? In Jewish tradition it represents an arrow that has already left its bow and has hit its target! That is another symbol of victory!

“He rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest” (Revelation 6:2 – NIV).

SEAL TWO: *“When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, ‘Come!’ Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword”* (Revelation 6:3-5 – NIV).

This Seal identifies the second beast, the ox (Revelation 4:7), as representing the apostate people of the Tribe of Ephraim. These people are like him.



This group of people does not enter the scene until the 144,000 have gone out in an effective campaign to finish the gospel work.

All these groups of people claim to be Christian. Ephraim was a leader in Israel's apostasy. He made the molten calf at Mount Sinai (Psalm 106:19-20) and, when in Canaan, God said he became joined to his idols (Hosea 4:17). Jeroboam made two molten golden calves to worship as the northern ten tribes broke away. He was an Ephraimite.

What group of end-time people will be the leader in end-time apostasy? It is the "*lamb-like earth beast*" or "*false prophet*" of Revelation 13 that forces the world to have an "*image to the [antichrist] beast.*" The Protestant world is making strong overtures toward Rome.

- The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has stated that the Pope is the world's moral leader.
- Many U.S. Evangelical leaders have visited Pope Francis since he has been in office.
- There are numerous documents showing that they want to work with the Roman Catholic Church in areas of "common interest." What areas are of common interest?
 1. Social issues like the right to life, immigration, the poor and the environment
 2. Sunday sacredness – a major concern since Pope John II began power in 1978!

Protestants of the United States are moving away from the ideals of the Protestant Reformation. Many things are tainting their very "hearts." They are even adopting "religious techniques" from the Roman Catholic Church.

1. Marketing their religion – "selling" man's "product," called spiritual formation, minimizing the need of sanctification.
2. There is an increasing interest in an earthly kingdom and not the heavenly – called dominion theology.
3. The "emerging church" is a major blend of all faiths (including Islam, Buddhism and Christianity, which are tied to spiritual formation ideals established by the Jesuits.

This horse is red, symbolizing blood and persecution. The rider is Satan.

- His sword is a symbol of lethal power that takes peace from the world.
- The “*beast*” and its “church” will be “*drunk*” with the blood of the saints (Revelation 17:6) – Roman Catholicism.
- The “*false prophet*” will **join** Catholicism in its horror mission and prevent the saints from buying or selling, threatening to kill those who don’t have the “*mark of the beast*” or its “*image*.”

This is what Jesus predicted in His discourse on the Mount of Olives:

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me (Matthew 24:9 – NIV).



Pope Francis
Orthodox Church

Pope Francis
Anglican Church

Pope Francis
Non-Christians

Pope Francis
Evangelicals

Pope Francis
Jewish Leaders

SEAL THREE: “*When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, ‘Come!’ I looked and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand*” (Revelation 6:5 – NIV).

The third creature had the face of a man. This is the Tribe of Reuben. This introduces a unique group!

- Reuben was in apostasy – but accepted the invitation to repent.¹
- But that “*black horse*,” you say, appears to be **sin**, the opposite of the “*white horse*” of purity.



In Jeremiah 14:1-2 and Lamentations 5:10 blackness is associated with famine. Most scholars accept this as scarcity of food. But there is another profound meaning: Famine also represents a great dearth of understanding truth!!! (Amos 8:11).



This black horse represents a group of people in darkness, who are hungry for truth but are yet to be fully fed! They are waiting for the white-horse people to “call them out” of darkness! (Revelation 18:4-5).

¹ History from ancient Jewish writings: Pesik. 159b; Gen. R. lxxxii 12, lxxxiv. 18; comp. Shab. 55b; Test. Patr., Reuben.

- The angel told Zechariah that the black horses went “*forth*” to the “*north country*” (Zechariah 6:6). That is where *apostasy* went to be “*like God*” (Isaiah 14:1, 12-14). They need to be rescued – invited back!
- The white horses do just that: “*they go forth after them*” (Zechariah 6:6). That is the mission of the “*white horse*” people, the 144,000. The black horse has gone astray and is brought back “*out of the north*” country. The mission will succeed.

Here is the white horse cry:

*“With a mighty voice he shouted: “**Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!**” She has become a dwelling for demons and a haunt for every impure spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable animal.’ ‘For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries.’ ‘Then I heard another voice from heaven say: “**Come out of her, my people,**” so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues”’ (Revelation 18:2-4 – NIV).*

- Who is that “**Babylon**”? From Revelation 16 and 17, the false trinity. (1) Satan through Spiritualism, (2) Roman Catholicism and (3) Apostate Protestantism.
- This is earth’s last call before the wrath of God is poured out in the Vial Plagues.

What about the balances?

They represent judgment. They are empty! God is waiting to judge them as to how they will respond to the call to come out of apostasy!

“Then I heard something like a voice from among the four living creatures saying, ‘A quart of wheat will cost a day’s pay and three quarts of barley will cost a day’s pay. But do not damage the olive oil and the wine!’” (Revelation 6:6 – NET).

- This appears to be the voice of God from His throne.
- The issue is the **price** of the wheat and barley – not their **weight**. This is unrelated to the balances! It is costly (10–16 times the normal cost at the time John wrote this). These grains symbolize the “*bread of life*” – heavenly truth.
- This represents a time when truth is hard to find. It is precious and now very costly because of persecution.

We reflect: “*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).

What does it mean, “do not damage the oil and the wine!” (Revelation 6:6 – NIV).

- Oil represents the Holy Spirit, wine the blood of the Lamb (the Lamb is still bleeding as He opens Seals one through five).
- These “black horse people” have the Holy Spirit working with them. They have accepted the Cross of Jesus Christ and the blood of the Lamb – but they have limited understanding of the truth.



Be careful as you work with these people. Heavenly agencies are already convicting and working with them!

SEAL FOUR: “When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, ‘Come!’ ‘I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth’” (Revelation 6:8 – NIV).



This creature looks like a flying eagle (which had been a serpent). It represents the northern lead tribe of Dan. This is perhaps the most wicked tribe of the twelve. Dan had blood on his hands.

Whoever this group of end-time people are, they are given terrifying power over one fourth of the earth. This symbolically represents having power over God’s people!

“**Pale**” (*chloros* – G) – symbolizes disease and death. In Bible times it was also the color of a corpse.

What group of people, at the end of time, will especially be associated with harming God’s people?

What is to follow will be stunning information. Bury all prejudice. We’re going to look at an end-time reality! What really is!

The antichrist is introduced in Daniel as a “*little horn*,” a “*vile person*” and then as the “*king of the north*.” In Thessalonians he is described as the “*man of sin*”; in Revelation as a “*harlot*” and/or a “*beast*.” This satanic power has many characteristics – but two stand out:

1. He persecutes and kills God’s people (Daniel 8:10, 24-25; 11:33; cf. Revelation 17:6; 13:7, 15).

2. He magnifies himself as though he were God, enthroned in the “north country” (Daniel 8:11; cf. II Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 17:4; 13:4, 6).



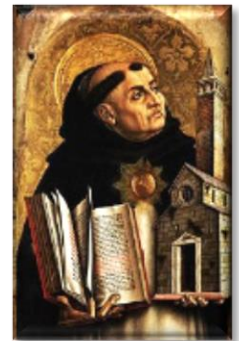
Revelation 17 makes it clear that in the center of this apostasy is a harlot, a religious body, located in Rome! Hippolytus of Rome (writer of the second and third centuries A.D.) said that the antichrist would come from the tribe of Dan.

“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).

Has the Roman Catholic Church been guilty of taking the lives of individuals? Yes – millions! ***But, here, it is in an end-time setting.***

- Many of its encyclicals and published dogma of the past, sentencing “heretics” (anyone who disagrees with this church) to death, remain in force. ***They just await the opportunity to be activated!***
- Example:

Thomas Aquinas: A brilliant Italian priest entered history as a theologian, philosopher, teacher, then “saint.” He never was a pope, but the Roman Catholic Church officially stated (Code of Canon Law, Can. 252, §3) that his writings (*Summa Theologica*) were to be the moral directives for all priests. In his Encyclical of August 4, 1879, Pope Leo XIII stated that Aquinas’ theology was a definitive exposition of Catholic doctrine.²



From Aquinas’ writings:

“Reply OBJ 3: ... if anyone were obstinately to deny them after they had been defined by the authority of the universal Church, he would be deemed a heretic.”
Aquin.: SMT SS Q[11] A[2] R.O. 3 Para. 1/1

“With regard to ... much more reason is there for heretics, as soon as they are convicted of heresy, to be not only excommunicated but even put to death.
Aquin.: SMT SS Q[11] A[3] Body Para. 1/2

The rider of this horse is named “Death,” meaning that it has charge of the ***loss of life*** through these “horse people.” Who might this rider be? Satan was leading the persecution charge on the red horse. Here, it can be none other than the devil – that old serpent – Satan. He is leading that papal power. **NOTE:** Their intent is to “kill” all of God’s people.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Aquinas

SEAL FIVE: *“When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?’ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been”* (Revelation 6:9-11 – NIV).

This opens up several important issues which occur shortly before Christ returns:

1. This is the altar of incense – a symbol that he hears us.
2. These individuals are symbolic of those martyred in this end-time setting.
3. The cry *“How long?”* is a frequent message in prophecy and means: “God, when will you vindicate your character and those who represent you?”
4. It is not a cry for revenge – it is a cry for justice that elevates holiness.
5. The *“white robes”* are the assurance that those who have been killed will receive God’s eternal reward of holiness.
6. The wait so that more can be killed is not a sadistic trait of God. The purpose of the martyrs is:
 - a. To reveal to the universe that there are those who stand for right –
 - b. Though they lose their lives –
 - c. To let that witness influence others also for good –
 - d. To make decisions for the Cross of Jesus Christ.
 - e. That is part of the final steps in redemptive history.
 - f. They will be saved.
7. They were killed because of the Word of God and the *“testimony”* they had. What is that *“testimony”*? This is mentioned several times in Revelation. It is summarized as a quality of the 144,000:
 - a. *“Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus”* (Revelation 14:12 – NKJV).
 - b. *“And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ”* (Revelation 12:17 – NKJV).
 - They are patient.
 - They adhere strictly to the Word of God.
 - They keep the commandments of God (the Decalogue).

- They have the faith of Jesus – which is the Spirit of prophecy (19:10).
- They have the testimony of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

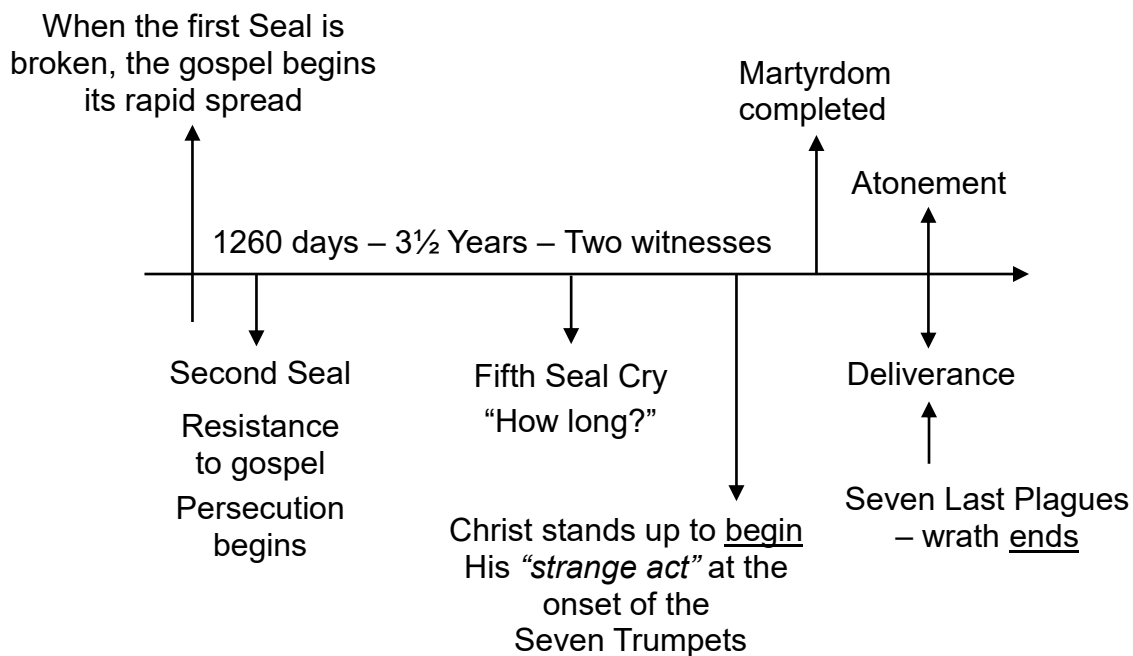
An angel talking to John in Revelation 19 states that those who have the testimony will have an understanding of prophecy **and** have a prophetic word. This will not be any *human* claim, but always *related* to some truth in the Word! (That is a special study.)

Doesn't that "cry" mean there is life after death?

- There is a unique analogy to this "cry" elsewhere in Scripture, such as when God sternly questioned Cain:
- *"And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground"* (Genesis 4:10).
- The "cry" of Abel's blood is a metaphor on behalf of the heart-rending "cry" from all those who have died for Jesus Christ!

*"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and **ye shall have tribulation ten days** [this refers to the 'complete time' allotted by God] be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"* (Revelation 2:10).

This all suggests that God's work is still dependent, to some degree, on the ultimate example of those who are martyred.



SEAL SIX (given in segments because of the length: “Then I looked when the Lamb opened the sixth seal, and a huge earthquake took place;” “The sky was split apart like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved from its place” (Revelation 6:12a, 14 – NET).

- John is an eyewitness not only to the opening of the sixth Seal, but of *when* this great earthquake began and then continued until Christ came.
- This occurs at the onset of the “**great tribulation**,” often called “The time of Jacob’s Trouble” (Matthew 24:21, Daniel 12:1, Jeremiah 30:7).
- This will fulfill Paul’s prophecy: “*Whose voice then shook the earth [from Mount Sinai]: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet **once more** I shake not the earth only, but also heaven*” (Hebrews 12:26).

Daniel tells us that this period will likely last 45 days (Daniel 12: 7-12). “We are at the end of human history” with the opening of this sixth Seal.³ **Desolation** now sweeps over the earth. [This is described in detail in *The Great Controversy*, pp. 636-638].

Numerous things occur during this time:

- Seven Vials/Plagues
- Date for a death decree against the saints
- Final Day of Atonement
- Beginning of a final Jubilee
- Deliverance of God’s people
- Voice from heaven
- Earthquakes – thunder – lightning
- Celestial signs
- Resurrection of the dead
- Coming of Jesus

“*Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven*” (Hebrews 12:26). This is the “once more.” It is the “*great*” earthquake of God’s summation wrath. It is the time of the seventh Vial Plague (Revelation 16:17-18).

“The sun became as black as sackcloth made of hair, and the full moon became blood red; and the stars in the sky fell to the earth like a fig tree dropping its unripe figs when shaken by a fierce wind” (Revelation 6:12b-13 – NET).

- Peter, in that great Pentecostal sermon, referred to the last days, referencing Joel 2:28-32:

³ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 399 (1999).

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God... “I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath. 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, 19-21).



Jesus said this is the last event before He returns (Matthew 24:29).

It is at this time the following prophecy is fulfilled: *“There came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, **It is done**” (Revelation 16:17).*

“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; 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: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Revelation 6:15).

- This is amazing! Not long before these wicked individuals cried:
*“So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘**Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?**’” (Revelation 13:4 – NKJV).*
- This ties to Revelation 17 – the kings of the earth.

Terror is a great equalizer. All are now in fear. Their helplessness is epitomized with the Scripture’s most fascinating apocalyptic **paradoxes**:

Paradox One:

1. They didn’t have trust in the living God.
2. Now they appeal to something God created to kill them – the mountains and rocks.
3. Living, intelligent beings beg for the inanimate, senseless, landscape to end their lives!



Paradox Two:

1. They hated the saints and wanted to kill them. Now they appeal to the earth to kill themselves:
“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 next chapter answers who is able to make war with the beast – the 144,000. They are victorious and will receive the seal of citizenship to heaven.

We now come to the last Seal:

SEAL SEVEN: *“When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour” (Revelation 8:1 – NKJV).*

The irony continues: The saints, the 144,000, ***“will see his face and his name will be on their foreheads”*** (Revelation 22:4). They are not afraid!

Why is there silence in heaven? They have been drawn up to Jesus (I Thessalonians 4:17) in the clouds. This is their first time of being with Him. ***They can’t “catch their breath” (an idiom) – so there is silence!***



Don't you want to be there?!