

# 6. Seven Seals

**E**nd-time events begin with the opening of a scroll locked with seven seals. Jesus alone can open these seals. The opening of the first four seals brings four angels riding horses; these are commonly referred to as the “four horsemen of the apocalypse.” People on earth cannot see these angels or their horses.

## **Four Horsemen**

SEAL #1: *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!” I looked and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest. (Revelation 6:1-2)*

The Spirit of CONQUEST comes into the world arena. This angel brings the desire for world domination. This Spirit works to establish a one-world government with the Antichrist in command. It approves of efforts to establish

an international monetary system to give Antichrist global economic power. This Spirit also backs efforts to forcefully conquer the earth in the name of religion, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS, ISIL). Antichrist will claim authority over all nations and institutions.

SEAL #2: *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 men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.* (Revelation 6:3-4)

The Spirit of WAR is the second angel entering the world scene. War is a common response to the aggression that accompanies a spirit of conquest—as seen coming from the first seal. This angel rides a red horse, with red symbolizing bloodshed. Jesus taught concerning this time, *"You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."* He then described the starvation that is depicted in the next Seal, *"There will be famines and earthquakes in various places."* (Matthew 24:6-7)

SEAL #3: *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. Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"* (Revelation 6:5-6)

The Spirit of FAMINE causes a catastrophic food shortage. Wheat and barley are basic food requirements; people are paying their entire salary to feed themselves.

SEAL #4: *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 6:7-8)*

The Spirit of DEATH, with *authority to kill ... over a fourth of the earth* comes forward. This fourth angel is "*Death.*" This angel rides a pale horse—the color attributed to a person near death. "*Hades*" is the unseen world of the dead. This place had two separate abodes, a place where God's people lived and another area for condemned persons. Jesus called the area of Hades where believers dwelt "*Abraham's side.*" (Luke 16:22; AKA "*Abraham's Bosom*") *That Hades was following close behind Death* meant that following death, people travel to the unseen world. In other words people die (Death), and then immediately travel to the unseen world (Hades).

Many people will die because of *plague* or *pestilence*, a possible reference to disease-causing microorganisms, which are increasingly resistant to antibiotic treatment. This also could be a reference to biological warfare. To *kill by wild beasts* is reminiscent of the days when the Roman Empire fed Christians to the lions. However, the application here points to soldiers on the battlefield. Ezekiel foresaw wild animals feasting on human flesh: *Son of Man*,

*this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Call out to every kind of bird and all the wild animals: 'Assemble and come together from all around to the sacrifice I am preparing for you, the great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel. There you will eat flesh and drink blood. You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the princes of the earth as if they were rams and lambs, goats and bulls. (Ezekiel 39:17-18)*

## **A Call for Justice**

SEAL #5: *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 number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed. (Revelation 6: 12-17)*

Those in heaven see the release of the four horsemen, and know this event signals the start of the end-times. The martyrs ask, "How long ... until you judge those who murdered us?" The martyrs are told to wait patiently *until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed*. In other words, there are still more believers to be martyred. Just as Israel poured the blood of sacrificed animal at the base of the altar (Exodus 29:12; Leviticus 4:7), in a similar manner, the souls of sacrificed martyrs were under the altar in heaven.

## The Visible Seal

SEAL #6: *I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"* (Revelation 6:12-17)

The spilling of innocent blood has stained the earth *blood red*. The people on earth soon see another planet that appears covered with blood, the moon. When the *sun* is blotted out (*turned* black) during a lunar eclipse, the moon really does turn a *blood red* color. The moon turns a metallic red resembling the color of iron in blood. At that time, the entire world, to include *every mountain and island*, shakes. (Revelation 6:14) This event is punctuated by a worldwide earthquake, likely caused by meteorites slamming into earth, one after another, similar to how *figs drop* to the ground *from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind*.

These events should shake the world to its senses. God wants people to confess sin—repent—and turn to him. Even unbelievers will know that

scripture foretold this event. People will also know that this event precedes the outpouring of God's wrath. They will say *the great day of wrath has come* and seek religious leaders to plot a course that might deter such wrath. However people do not say, "I repent of my sins." Instead, they believe the best option is to *hide*. This wrong attitude creates an opportunity for dishonest teachers and false prophets to say "follow me and find safety." Using this type of approach, the Antichrist and false prophet will lead most of the world astray.

Antichrist may proclaim that if people repent, then God will withhold disaster. For example, God showed mercy to ancient Nineveh. *When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.* (Jonah 3:10) *If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.* (Jeremiah 18:7) Yet it will be impossible to follow false prophets—and simultaneously repent.

## **Early Rapture**

*Next God protects selected believers, specifically those identified as being "the servants of our God." The seal placed upon these believers identifies them for participation in the impending rapture. After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the*

*living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: “Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.”* (Revelation 7:1-3)

At the time God provides his servants this protection, the earth will have remained unharmed by end-time events. The *land* and the *sea* are unharmed—even the *trees* have not been harmed.

*Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.* (Revelation 7:4) The early rapture of the Philadelphia Church includes 144,000 Jewish believers. These 144,000 Israelis are never again seen on earth, but are seen on “Mount Zion,” an ancient term for “heaven.” (Revelation 7:4-8, 14:1) Angels seal Philadelphia Church members around the world, identifying them for immediate rapture. Then this great multitude of raptured believers, all members of the Philadelphia Church, suddenly appears in heaven. *After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.* (Revelation 7:9)

A question is asked about the identity of those who suddenly appear in heaven—who are they?—and where they came from? *Then one of the elders asked me “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?” I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them*

*white in the blood of the Lamb.* (Revelation 7:13-14) The answer clearly states that this multitude was rescued from the great tribulation—they were just raptured from earth. That more than just the 144,000 Israeli believers are raptured is evident from the number being *a great multitude that no one could count*. Further evidence that more than just Jewish believers are raptured is that the multitude is *from every nation, tribe, people and language*.

An obscure event from Israel's history foreshadowed this early rapture. God has already protected passionate believers, *those who grieve and lament* over wicked behavior, from disaster. Those protected first received a *mark* on the forehead, matching the seal on the foreheads of the 144,000 Israelis who participate in the early Philadelphia rapture. Ezekiel wrote that the LORD had given an angel the following instructions. *“Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it.” As I listened, he said to the others, “Follow him through the city and kill, without showing pity or compassion. Slaughter old men, young men and maidens, women and children, but do not touch anyone who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were in front of the temple.* (Ezekiel 9:4-6)

This rapture must occur at this point—after the sun is blotted, the moon turns blood red, and a worldwide earthquake occurs—because this sequence of events matches what Jesus taught.

Jesus' commentary in the Gospels is consistent with events in Revelation.

Matthew 24:29-31	Mark 13: 24-27	Luke 21: 26-28	Revelation 6:12 – 7:14
<b>WORLDWIDE DISTRESS</b>			
<i>Immediately after the distress of those days...(v29)</i>	<i>But in those days, following that distress, ... (v24)</i>	<i>Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world ...(v26)</i>	
<b>SIGNS IN THE SKY AND EARTHQUAKES</b>			
<i>...“the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be <u>shaken</u>.” (v29)</i>	<i>...“the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be <u>shaken</u>. (v24,25)</i>	<i>...for the heavenly bodies will be <u>shaken</u>.(v26)</i>	<i>I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when <u>shaken</u> by a strong wind. (6:12-13) ... and every mountain and island was <u>removed from its place</u>. (v14)</i>
<b>JESUS IN THE CLOUDS</b>			
<i>At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man <u>coming on the clouds</u> of the sky, with power and great glory. (v30)</i>	<i>At that time men will see the Son of Man <u>coming in clouds</u> with great power and glory.(v26)</i>	<i>At that time they will see the Son of Man <u>coming in a cloud</u> with power and great glory. (v27)</i>	<i>The <u>sky</u> receded like a scroll, rolling up, (v14).</i>  [Note: this would unveil a view of Jesus, in the sky, coming in clouds]
<b>WORLDWIDE DISTRESS</b>			
			<i>Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the</i>

		<i>throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”(v15-17)</i>
<b>INSTRUCTIONS FOR BELIEVERS</b>		
		<i>When these things begin to take place, stand up and <u>lift up your heads</u>, because <u>your redemption is drawing near</u>. (v28)</i>
<b>PHILADELPHIA HARVESTED FROM EARTH</b>		
<i>And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the <u>four winds</u>, from one end of the heavens to the other. (v31)</i>	<i>And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the <u>four winds</u>, from the <u>ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens</u>. (v27)</i>	<i>After this I saw <u>four</u> angels standing at the <u>four</u> corners of the earth... (7:1)</i>
<b>PHILADELPHIA ARRIVES IN HEAVEN</b>		
		<i>After this I looked and <u>there before me</u> was a <u>great multitude</u> that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb ... (7:9)Then one of the elders asked me “<u>These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?</u>” I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “<u>These are they who have come out of the great tribulation</u>... (7:13-14)</i>

SEAL #7: *When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. (Revelation 8:1)*

After Jesus breaks the seventh seal, the scroll can be read and put into effect. However, excitement subsides with the realization that Israel and the Laodicea Church are left-behind. Global nuclear war arrives with the first three trumpets, which immediately follow. For such reasons, there is *silence in heaven for about half an hour*.

Seven Seal	Description	Seen on earth?
Seal #1 (Revelation 6:1-2)	Angel on a white horse (Spirit of Conquest)	no
Seal #2 (Revelation 6:3-4)	Angel on a red horse (Spirit of War)	no
Seal #3 (Revelation 6:5-6)	Angel on a black horse (Spirit of Famine)	no
Seal #4 (Revelation 6:7-8)	Angel on a pale horse (Spirit of Death)	no
Seal #5 (Revelation 6:9-11)	Martyrs ask God to avenge their blood.	no
Seal #6 (Revelation 6:12-17)	The moon appears covered with blood; people panic.	yes
The Early Rapture (Revelation 7)	Believers who endure with patient maturity are raptured.	yes
Seal #7 (Revelation 8:1)	Silence in heaven for about half an hour	no