

Session 6 The Seals of Judgment and God's Protection (Rev 6-7)

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN SEALS (REV. 5)

- A. Jesus took the scroll sealed with seven seals from the hand of the Father (5:7). It represents the *title deed* of the earth and the *action plan* required to cleanse the earth. One by one, Jesus will open each seal to release a terrifying judgment against the wicked.

⁷He [Jesus] came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him [Father]...⁹and they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals..." (Rev. 5:7-9)

Tonight is session six in our study of the Book of Revelation, and we are looking at Revelation 6 and 7. We are looking at the seal judgments of God as well as God's protection of His people in the midst of the seals. Just a quick review, in the last session, in Revelation 5, Jesus took the scroll out of the hand of the Father. When He took the scroll, the mandate was that He would open it. To open the scroll was to loose its seals, which we find out in chapter 6, the chapter we are on tonight, that release the judgments of God across the earth. When we say, "Worthy is the Lamb who opens the scroll," we are saying, "Worthy is the Lamb who releases His judgments to cleanse the earth."

- B. The seven seals are *literal* (not symbolic), *future* (their fulfillment is still in the future), *progressive* (increasing in intensity), and *numbered* (released in a sequential order).

First, the seven seals are literal. They are not symbolic. They are literal. Number two, the seven seals are future. Some commentators interpret these seals as symbolic and having happened in the past, somewhere in history in a way that is hard to figure out when, but just somewhere in the past. There are many different symbolic fulfillments that different commentators have presented.

I believe it is important that we understand these are yet future. They are real, they are literal, and they are future. The seven seals are progressive, which means they grow in intensity. The third seal is more intense than the second seal. The fourth seal is more intense than the second and third seal.

Next, they are numbered. They unfold in a sequential or a chronological order. The fourth one comes after the third one. The body of Christ will know that. After the third seal, they know the fourth one is next.

- C. One's view of the timing in which Jesus will open the seals is one interpretive key to Revelation. I believe Jesus has not yet opened the first seal—the bowls of prayer must be full.

⁸When He [Jesus] had taken the scroll...the twenty-four elders fell down...each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. (Rev. 5:8)

Our view of the timing of the opening of these seals is an interpretive key to the book of Revelation. Anyone's view, whatever your view, has to do with when Jesus breaks the seals. When does He release the first seal? Some people say He did it 2000 years ago. Some people say He does it over church history. The way we interpret the timing is how we interpret the book.

I believe one of the key phrases of interpretation is found out right here in chapter 5. It is a verse that is dear to us here at IHOPKC. When Jesus had taken the scroll, the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down. They each had a harp and a bowl. They had music, a harp in one hand, and they had a bowl full of incense in the other.

I believe that Jesus has not opened the seals yet. I believe the first seal has not been opened because the bowls of prayer must be full. Notice the bowls are full when He opens the seals. That would be the prayer movement

across the nations of the earth. The prayer movement is not yet mature. The bowls of prayer must be full before the first seal is opened. That is one hint, an indicator as to the seals being future. There are a number of them, but that is just one right now. This is just a really quick study of the book of Revelation in twelve sessions, just a snapshot of it. We do not have time to go into all the details of the whys of all the different points I will be making.

- D. In the generation in which the Lord returns, God will shake all nations to judge the kingdom of darkness, purify the Church, and bring in the great harvest including the salvation of Israel. This process will be seen in the beginning of birth pangs and in the release of the seals, trumpets, and bowls judgments, culminating in the kings dying at Armageddon (Rev. 19:19).

“...I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; ⁷and I will shake all nations, and they [unbelievers] shall come to the Desire of All Nations [Jesus]...” says the LORD. (Hag 2:6–7)

In the generation the Lord returns, God will shake all nations. He will shake all the nations. He says it in Haggai 2, and He says it in Hebrews 12. He says, “I will shake,” Haggai 2:6, “I will shake the heavens.” That is the sky. When it says, “I will shake the heavens,” say in your mind, “The sky.” “And I will shake the earth. I will shake the sea,” Boy, that is traumatic! Think of tsunamis in the sea and storms. “I will shake the dry land.” That would be earthquakes. “I will shake all nations.” That is the political institutions of all the nations. “And they,”—the nations, He is talking about the unbelievers in the nations—“they will come to the Desire of All Nations.”

That is one of the most dynamic, beautiful titles of the Messiah. He is called in Haggai 2 “the Desire of All the Nations.” Imagine God naming the Messiah, “The one the nations will totally delight in.” That is almost an oxymoron because He is the one shaking the nations. When they see the truth about Him, they actually will desire Him. Why would they desire the Man who is shaking the nations? Of course, He is fully God, fully Man.

God will shake all nations. He will do it to bring judgment to the kingdom of darkness. He will do it to purify the church. He will do it to bring the harvest of the nations to Himself. The shaking of the nations is progressively becoming more intense the closer we get to the return of the Lord. The seven seals are part of that shaking. The trumpets, the shaking is more intense. Then the bowls, the shaking is even more intense. They are all under the category of God shaking the nations.

- E. The seven seals will escalate the process of the Lord shaking all the nations by bringing judgment to the kingdom of darkness (the harlot Babylon Rev. 17) and purifying the Church, while creating the optimum context for many to be saved (the end-time harvest).

- F. The seven seals are released by Jesus, the Lamb of God (5:5; 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12; 8:1).

¹I saw when the Lamb [Jesus] opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.” (Rev. 6:1)

*The seven seals are released by Jesus. Most people who have read the book of Revelation know that technically. The implication of this is very, very significant. Jesus is the One opening the seals. The seven seals are released by Jesus. They are **not against** Him. He is actually opening and allowing these dimensions of pressure to happen because He wants to create an atmosphere where the harvest will come in, where the church will be purified, and where darkness will be judged.*

Jesus will not violate anyone’s free will. He is going to let righteousness and sin come to maturity. The environment where sin comes to maturity, and righteousness comes to maturity, and every person will get to choose fully what they want at any degree will be the most intensely righteous and the most intensely sinful

generation of history, and it will be the same generation in which He returns. It is His master plan to create an optimum environment for people to fully choose evil or fully choose good. It is His master plan.

- G. **Come and see:** Four times John was exhorted to “come and see” (6:1, 3, 5, 7). He was to **come**, or draw closer to God, to position his heart to understand and then to **see** or to pay attention. We must also “come and see” so that we have understanding to agree with Him in that day.

¹⁷Your eyes will see the King in His beauty...¹⁸Your heart will meditate on terror: “Where is the scribe? Where is he who weighs? Where is he who counts the towers?” (Isa. 33:17-18)

John said in verse 1, “I saw the Lamb.” The Lamb opened the seals. He says, “I heard one of the four living creatures. They said with a loud voice, ‘Come and see.’” This exhortation is given by the four living creatures to John. Four times they say, “Come and see.” When the first four seals happen, they invite John, “Come closer and look more carefully at what this means.” That is in itself an exhortation to pay very close attention to these first four seals. That the four living creatures tell John, “Pay special attention. Come near first. You have to be near to God to see clearly what these things mean.” There is a spiritual dimension, “Come near,” and there is a revelatory dimension or an insight, an understanding dimension, to see more clearly.

- H. **Principle of judgment:** God's end-time judgments will remove all that hinders love. He will use the least severe means to reach the greatest number at the deepest level of love without violating anyone's free will.

*Here is the principle of judgment. This is one of my simple, little statements that to me is a fundamental principle of God's judgment. God's end time judgments will remove all that hinders love. **God will remove all that hinders love.** That is the point of judgment. To remove everything from the planet that ultimately hinders love. He removes things from the church that hinder love. That is called divine discipline. He removes things from society that hinder love. That is His judgments. His judgments are progressive. I will continue on this principle of judgment.*

God will use the least severe means to reach the greatest number of people at the deepest level of love without violating anyone's free will. I want to read that again. It is a really simple, little sentence. Jesus will use the least severe means. Meaning when we look at these seven seals, we say, “These are the least severe?”

He would say, “I could not lessen them and get the job done.”

“You are kidding, because in the fourth seal, one fourth of the earth dies. One fourth of the earth is as least severe as possible?”

“I could not lessen it or it would not create the environment that I am after to reach the largest number of people at the deepest level of love without violating anyone's free will.”

- I. God's judgments against the wicked in the first four seals result from God taking His *restraining hand off* evil men, allowing them to sin in an unrestrained way against one another. The Antichrist will act violently against the nations including the harlot Babylon (Rev. 17:16).

God's judgment in the first four seals is actually God taking His restraining hand off evil men. That is really what they are. God's hand is restraining evil men. In the first four judgments He takes His hands off, not entirely, but He says, “I am going to let you do what you want to do, and I want you to see what the fruit is if you do what you want fully.” In the first four seals He lets wickedness, He lets immorality, He lets lawlessness have its way in society, to see where men will take it if given full liberty. He does not give them full liberty, but He gives them substantial liberty. He lifts His restraining hand off them to show what the human race actually wants. The way that men and women turn on each other is most remarkable. It is more severe than the days of

Noah. In the days of Noah in Genesis, men did such violence and evil in Genesis 6. Revelation 6 actually passes the Genesis 6 evil in the days of Noah when men were unrestrained.

1. The first four seals are brought about by the actions of sinful men.

The first four seals are brought about by the actions of sinful men. In the first four seals it is not like God had to do anything overtly. He just lifted His hand. He let men do it. They are the actions of sinful men. I am using the word “men” in the generic sense of male/female and old/young. Sinful humanity.

2. The fifth, sixth and seventh seals involve supernatural actions from heaven.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh seal involve supernatural actions from heaven. The fifth, sixth, and seventh have a different dimension than the first four. The first four—sinful men. The next three—supernatural action from heaven. There is an intervention from heaven that is very, very powerful.

- J. Each seal naturally leads to the unfolding of the next seal. For example, the release of the Antichrist in the first seal (Rev. 6:2) leads to a World War in the second seal, which in turn causes famine and economic crisis in the third seal, followed by death and disease, etc.

Each of the seals naturally leads to the unfolding of the next one. If you are not familiar with the seven seals, as you get a little familiar with it, you can read this a bit. The first seal is the releasing of the Antichrist. The second seal is the final world war. Then the next seal is famine and crisis. That comes after the war. Then death and disease comes after the famine and crisis. There is a natural progression, but the intensity of the trauma and of the pressure increases with each seal.

II. FIRST SEAL: ANTICHRIST’S POLITICAL AGGRESSION (6:1-2)

- A. The opening of the first seal speaks of the Antichrist’s political aggression (6:1-2).

¹I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying..., “Come and see.”²I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. (Rev. 6:1–2)

Let’s look at the first seal. We will look at each of these ever so quickly. My desire is just to familiarize you with Revelation 6. He said in verse 1, “I saw the Lamb open one of the seals.” Jesus opens the seal.

One of the four living creatures says, “John, come close. Come close to God.” You have to be in the posture of drawing close to God to see clearly. He goes, “I want you coming close.”

Verse 2, I came close and I looked. It is a white horse. He who sat upon it had a bow, and a crown was given to Him. He went out conquering and to conquer. The first seal, the white horse speaks of the release of the Antichrist, and his political aggression is what is being described here.

Most of those with a futurist view see this as the release of the Antichrist. There are two or three other interpretations that are possible. I believe this is the most common, widespread interpretation throughout church history related to those who have a futurist view of the book of Revelation. What I mean by futurist view is that we do not look at it just as symbolic, nor that it took place years ago so it does not really pertain to the future. Our leadership team holds a futurist view.

- B. **White:** The color white symbolizes righteousness because the Antichrist’s reign will initially appear righteous. He will be the counterfeit to Jesus who rides a white horse with truth (19:11).

It is a white horse and the Antichrist. The Antichrist is on a white horse because he will initially appear to be doing righteousness. He is a counterfeit to Jesus who is on the white horse at the end of the book. Jesus has a grand presentation of His glory in the book, not as one of the seals. These seals are harmful things that cause trouble to the earth. It is white because the Antichrist officially appears righteous. It is a counterfeit righteousness. It is a counterfeit presentation of Him.

- C. **Bow:** The Antichrist's rule will initially be gained by an "arrowless bow." This speaks of his bloodless victories or peaceful conquest using deceptive diplomacy. The rider is pictured as ready to go to war on a horse with a bow in hand. A bow speaks of *striking at a distance*. Since there are no arrows, it is commonly understood as a *threat of war*, without war breaking out yet.

The bow. His rule will initially be increased by an arrowless bow. An arrowless bow. There is a bow that has no arrow. It is an arrowless bow. Meaning it speaks of bloodless victories. It speaks of peaceful conquest through deceptive diplomacy. At first He goes forth with a bow, but he never shoots the bow. He never shows an arrow. He gives the threat of war, but he never, ever gets involved in war. I am talking about the early days. He is showing himself to be a man of peace. He is, in fact, a man of war. He shows himself first as a "prince of peace," but he is a man of war. He shows the bow, but really what it is talking about is bloodless victories. I think one of the clearest examples in modern history is Adolf Hitler who gained the control of a number of nations without firing a shot through deceptive diplomacy.

- D. **Crown:** the Antichrist wears a crown as a symbol of his political authority (13:1-2, 7).

1. The Antichrist will receive authority, or permission, to act from God. Jesus possesses all authority (Mt. 28:18). He will give the Antichrist a limited sphere to act for 3½ years.

⁷***And authority was given him [Antichrist] over every...nation. (Rev. 13:7)***

¹⁸***All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. (Mt. 28:18)***

¹***There is no authority except from God...the authorities that exist are appointed by God...⁴He is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. (Rom. 13:1, 4)***

2. Satan and sinful leaders will also give their authority to the Antichrist (13:2).

²***...The dragon [Satan] gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. (Rev 13:2)***

He has a crown. The Antichrist wears a crown as a symbol of his political authority. He is not just a victor, but he is actually a political leader. He is a king. It says that a number of times in the book of Daniel. He is a king. He is a king with a crown on. The Antichrist will receive permission to act from God. We know that Jesus possesses all authority. Jesus is actually the One giving the Antichrist the authority to act for three and a half years.

*That is a new idea to many people who are not familiar with God's sovereign acts in history of using evil leaders to discipline Israel. There are a number of examples in the Old Testament. I have a quite a bit of information on this in my **Book of Joel** series. For example, where He used Nebuchadnezzar, the demonized king of Babylon. He raised him up as His servant to discipline Israel. He used Sennacherib, the evil, demonized king of Assyria, "As my weapon, as my ax, to discipline My own nation, My own people." Then God turned around and destroyed those men. There are several others where God would raise up evil men to use in order to discipline His people and even to discipline and to judge sin in the nations. He uses a sinful man to judge sin in the nations. Then He destroys that sinful man.*

He has a history of that in the Old Testament. He is doing it with the Antichrist. So God is raising up the Antichrist. If you think about it, it has to be true. When I first say that to some people, they are just kind of confused. I say, "You think the devil overpowered God and raised up the Antichrist?" The devil is involved in the Antichrist. So are evil men. Even men are part of the Antichrist's ascension to power. Ultimately God is the one. Jesus releases the first seal, not the devil.

E. Through the Antichrist, God will judge the harlot Babylon for murdering the saints (17:6, 16).

III. SECOND SEAL: WORLD WAR (6:3-4)

A. The opening of the second seal speaks of the release of the final world war (6:3-4).

³*When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see."*

⁴*Another horse, fiery red, went out. It was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.*
(Rev. 6:3-4)

*The opening of the second seal speaks of the release of the final world war. It is the **final** world war. There might be one before the final. I do not think so. That would be a shock to everybody. I think there is one more great world war. At least I know there is one more. If the coming of the Lord is further down the road than we think, you never know, there might be one in-between that one. I do not think so. I think there is one more war. The global situation is being set up for that war to take place. It is the second seal.*

Verse 4, this one is a red horse, "He went out." He is released by Jesus. "It was granted to the one who sat on this horse to take peace from the earth. It was granted that the people of the nations would kill one another, and there was given to the rider of this red horse a great sword."

B. **Great sword:** This sword speaks of extreme forms of bloodshed coming from war and violence. The Antichrist will start by using an "arrowless bow" (6:2), and then he will use a "great sword."

The great sword—extreme bloodshed, or bloodshed from extreme violence is probably a better way to say it. Bloodshed coming from war and extreme violence.

C. **Take peace from the earth:** The context for the breaking of the seals is counterfeit world peace (1 Thes. 5:3), which will end with the opening of the second seal and the abomination of desolation. God will take peace from the nations made drunk by the great Harlot (17:6, 16).

³*For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. (1 Thes. 5:3)*

He will take peace from the earth. The context, the historical context for the breaking of the second seal is a counterfeit world peace. There will be a world peace that will come before the great world war. The world peace will be established by the first horse, by the Antichrist is what I mean. By what the first horse represents is a better way to say it. The first horse is the Antichrist. The second horse is world war. The second horse, the red one, the context for him being released is the counterfeit world peace.

Paul mentions this in 1 Thessalonians 5. He says, "When they say," and the "they" means the nations of the world. "They" meaning not the redeemed; he is talking about the whole class of the unredeemed here in the generic sense. When the nations are saying, "Peace and safety." There is a time yet in the future when the nations will say, "Peace and safety. Finally there is peace in the nations. Finally there is safety." The terrorism thing is going to be seemingly under control. The conflict in nations in the Middle East is going to be seemingly under control. That is because the man represented by the first seal, the Antichrist, is going to orchestrate

things by his deceptive diplomacy to bring world peace. Seemingly, for a moment at least. When the nations are saying, “Peace and safety,” Paul said, “sudden destruction.” Suddenly the second and third seal will break forth upon the earth. Suddenly the Antichrist will show his true colors. Suddenly the peace will be completely dissolved, and then sudden destruction, “And they will not escape.” The “they” are the unbelievers. The ones who are saying, “Peace and safety,” are the ones who do not escape. Those are unbelievers in the nations.

D. The Antichrist will make a peace treaty with many nations for seven years and then break it.

²⁷He [Antichrist] shall confirm a covenant [peace treaty] with many for one week [seven years]; But in the middle of the week [seven years] He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate...” (Dan. 9:27)

Daniel spoke about this peace. Daniel prophesied in Daniel 9 about the Antichrist making a peace treaty with many nations. He will make a peace treaty for seven years. He will break it. He will violate it, right in the middle of the seven-year treaty. But he will make one, and the nations will believe it. They will rejoice. Daniel 9:27, “He”—the Antichrist—“will confirm a covenant of peace with many.” Not just with Israel, but all the nations surrounding Israel. He will make this peace treaty for one week.

We know that in Daniel 9, very, very clearly, one week speaks of seven years. You would have to study Daniel 9. It is a very, very common piece of information. It is not a special play on words, for in the ancient world a week was either seven days or seven years. It was a week of days or a week of years. In the Old Testament there is a reference to a week of years.

Someone would say, “I will see you in a week.”

“Do you mean seven days or seven years?” It could mean either one. Obviously the context would make it pretty easy to know which one they were talking about. It is talking about a week of years here.

In the middle of the week, in the middle of the seven years, this man, “...shall bring an end to the sacrifice and the offering.” The implication is that he stops the offering in the Jerusalem temple that was foundational to the peace treaty. In other words he violates the peace treaty right in the middle. That is a little beyond our scope for tonight to talk about this prophecy in Daniel. Right in the middle he breaks one of the key tenants of the peace treaty, which is that there would be the offerings and sacrifices allowed for the Jewish people to have their temple services going. That was central to the peace treaty. He violates it. The whole treaty falls apart. War breaks out in the Middle East again, and war breaks out in the nations, etc.

IV. THIRD SEAL: FAMINE AND ECONOMIC CRISIS (6:5-6)

A. The opening of the third seal speaks of releasing famine and economic crisis (6:5-6). This famine and economic collapse will follow the world war seen in the second seal (6:4).

⁵When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come and see.” So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.” (Rev. 6:5-6)

The third seal. “When He,” verse 5, “Opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say ‘Come and see.’ That is, he was saying to John again, “Come, John, come close to the Lord. Be in that posture of coming close to see clearly.” I take that personally in my own life. I encourage you to do the same. Everybody. I want to come close to the Lord and see what these things mean by searching them out, by talking to the Holy Spirit, by reading the Word, talking with others in the body of Christ. I want to gain understanding. I do not want to

ignore these subjects. I want to come and see. If the four living creatures said this four times, it is something that matters. I do not believe it is only for John. I believe it is revealed to us so that the spirit of this exhortation is for the people reading the book of Revelation.

The third seal is a black horse. The black horse had a pair of scales in his hands. The pair of scales represents doing commerce in the marketplace with the scales. You buy the wheat. You buy the grain. You buy the food. You weigh it out in the marketplace, and you give the money, etc. In the ancient days the marketplace and a pair of scales went hand in hand.

Verse 6, "I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures." The voice of the Spirit, certainly inspired by the Spirit, if not the Holy Spirit, said this. Here is the definitive point of understanding. "A quart of wheat for a denarius and three quarts of barely for a denarius, but do not harm the oil and the wine." We will get to that in just a moment.

- B. **Pair of scales:** This speaks of an economic crisis. The greatest economic pressures and the most severe famine in history are yet to come against the nations who embrace the ways of the Harlot.

So this speaks of an economic crisis. This is a judgment. This is a shaking of the nations. It is a shaking of the nations. This speaks of economic crisis. The greatest economic pressures and the most severe famine in history are yet ahead of the human race. So are the greatest revival in history and the greatest manifestation of the power of God. So is the greatest demonstration of evil and sin and wickedness. All of those are yet in the future. All of them happen simultaneously. The greatest righteousness and the power of God in the church, the greatest sin and demonic activity in those that are saying no, and the greatest economic pressure and the most severe famine and the most violent hour of history, military violence are yet future.

The reason that matters is because if you buy this, if you come and see, if you lean into this and say, "Lord, I want this to mark me," you will begin to study to understand. Whether it happens in your day or in your children's day or in their day, whatever day it happens. We do not know when it is going to happen. Nobody knows the day or the hour, but there are a growing number of believers around the world—millions is what I mean. I do not mean a few here and there—who are sensing things are escalating. We are getting closer. Things are escalating on a global level. These things are really going to happen. Somebody has to be prepared to understand these and not be offended at God when they actually take place. We may not see them in the next few decades. We might. It may be a few decades after that. I do not know. It is not too early to begin to understand them so we can make sense of the good God who is behind these things. Many will be offended at God when these things unfold.

- C. **Denarius:** A denarius was equivalent to wages for one day's work.

1. A quart of wheat is the amount that one man would eat for one day on a minimal diet.

A denarius is equivalent to the wages for one day's work. If somebody makes \$50,000 a year, five days a week, they would make about \$200 a day. A denarius in that grid would be about \$200 if you are considering a salary of \$ 50,000 a year. Cut it in half, and it is \$100. Double it, and it is \$400. Whatever you are imagining as an average day's pay, a couple hundred dollars, say it that way. So it will be a quart of wheat for a couple hundred dollars. That gives you the feel of this. Or even a hundred dollars. A quart of wheat. A few couple handfuls of wheat for a couple hundred dollars.

2. The economic crisis will cause one's earning power to be reduced to working all day to afford food for one person for one day. This represents about 10 times less buying power than in the world today.

The crisis will be so great that the earning power will be reduced to where a couple handfuls of wheat will cost one or two or three hundred dollars, whatever that amount you figured out is. This represents about ten times less the buying power of today, about a ten-time reduction of the currency of the nations of the earth in the most general sense.

- D. **Wheat and barley:** Wheat is superior in taste and nutrition to barley. Barley, an inferior grain, will be three times cheaper than the price of wheat.

V. FOURTH SEAL: DEATH TO ONE-FOURTH OF THE EARTH’S PEOPLE (6:7-8)

- A. The opening of the fourth seal speaks of the death of one-fourth of the earth’s population (6:7-8).

⁷When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come and see.” ⁸So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth. (Rev. 6:7-8)

This is really intense. Every one of the seals gets more intense. The greatest famine in history is going to get worse. Verse 8, “I looked and behold, a pale horse. The name of him who sat on the horse was Death and Hades followed Death. Power was given over a fourth of the earth to kill the people on the earth, a fourth of the human race, with the sword, with hunger.” So the famine of the third seal is going to continue to escalate to the fourth seal and lead to Death, which includes martyrdom and death by the beasts of the earth.

- B. **Pale horse:** This is literally pale green or ashen. It is the color of death or the decay of a corpse.
- C. **Death and Hades:** Death is what happens to the physical body, which goes to the grave. Hades is the prison where the departed spirit of an unbeliever goes before going to the lake of fire after the Millennium.

*Death is what happens to the physical body when it goes to the grave. A person dies, and their body goes to the grave. Hades is the prison where the departed spirit of an unbeliever goes when it departs from their body. This is the departed spirit of an unbeliever. It is talking about physical death, and it is focused on the people who end up in Hades. Hades is a place of prison. An unbeliever dies and their spirit goes to Hades right now, then eventually that group is cast into the lake of fire at the end of the Millennium. A believer dies and their spirit goes to paradise; it goes to the presence of God. **This is telling us the focal point of the “fourth of the earth” is actually those whose destination is Hades.***

- D. **A fourth:** John saw one-fourth of the world’s population being killed by the sword, hunger, death (pestilence), and wild beasts. These are similar to the four judgments that Ezekiel referred to as “God’s four severe judgments” (Ezek. 5:17; 14:21).

²¹How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem—the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence—to cut off man and beast from it? (Ezek. 14:21)

- E. **Hunger:** the starvation seen in the third seal will continue to escalate in the fourth seal.
- F. **Death:** The second use of “death” in verse 8 is probably related to martyrdom, pestilence, or disease. Fatal diseases will increase greatly.
- G. **Wild beasts:** Hungry beasts will come out of the wild to the city looking for food. They will probably be seen roaming in the open seeking to devour people because of great hunger.

I think one of the reasons the wild beasts are killing so many people is that the beasts are starving because of famine and drought just like the people are. The wild beasts are coming out of the wild looking for food. They come out of the wild into the cities, the inhabited place of the earth, because they are starving. They actually devour multitudes of humans. They are one of the main sources of death. Wild beasts. There may be other reasons. There might be demonic reasons. There might be diseases as well. People are killed by the diseases the beasts carry, not just devoured by the beasts. Probably all of that is included.

- H. **One-fourth:** Some estimate that the population of the earth in 2050 will be 10 billion people. One-fourth of this 10 billion is about 2.5 billion. Thus it is possible that the number of deaths will exceed 2 billion people, which is 50 times greater than the death total seen in World War II.

VI. FIFTH SEAL: PRAYER RELEASING JUDGMENT (6:9-11)

- A. The opening of the fifth seal is related to the power of the prayer movement that will release great judgment on Antichrist’s empire as seen in the trumpet judgments (Rev. 8-9).

⁹When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar [altar of incense in heaven] the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God...¹⁰And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

¹¹Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed [martyred] as they were, was completed. (Rev. 6:9–11)

In verse 9, “He opened the fifth seal and I saw under the altar”—that is the altar of incense in heaven—“I saw the souls of the martyred ones.” Believers martyred in the end times. Verse 10, “They cried out with a loud voice, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, ‘til You judge the people, ‘til You avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’” You know this is in the end times and future because the people who killed them are still alive on the earth. They said, “Kill the people who killed us.” That does not mean just the martyrs through history. That is talking about the end-time martyrs who died. They are crying out, “Lord, pay back the people on the earth who are still alive right now for killing us recently,” is what it is talking about. It is not just talking about a generic sense of martyrs through history.

- B. The fifth, sixth, and seventh seals involve heavenly activity. The judgment of each seal increases in intensity. The fifth seal is more severe than the four that precede it. The shedding of the blood of the saints stirs up God’s vengeance (Rev. 19:2) and fuels the prayer movement. This is one of the main turning points in the story line seen in the book of Revelation.

²Righteous are His judgments...He avenged on her the blood of His servants... (Rev. 19:2)

The fifth, sixth, and seventh seals involved heavenly activity, because there is this heavenly escalation of prayer. Beloved, when the prayer begins to break forth in heaven in a new level, you know that it indicates action to come. When the Holy Spirit begins to anoint and energize prayer around the throne, and righteous blood is shed, and God’s vengeance is stirred, that heavenly prayer movement is indicative of the growth of the earthly prayer movement as well. I have read commentaries that say, “There is no judgment in this.”

I reply, “Are you kidding me? No judgment?” The prayer movement in heaven escalates and comes to a whole different level, with millions of martyred saints crying out under the anointing of the Spirit in heaven. You see, people do pray in heaven. You do not pray to people in heaven, but the people in heaven pray. Jesus is an eternal intercessor. He prays forever. You will have a prayer ministry a million years from now.

- C. **They cried:** The intensity of the prayer ministry in heaven at this time gives us insight into the intensity of the prayer ministry on earth. The Spirit who inspires intercession in heaven will inspire the same on earth with profound unity.
- D. **How long:** The prayer, “How long...” is the most recorded prayer in Scripture (Zech. 1:12; Ps. 6:3; 13:2; 74:10; 79:5; 80:4; 89:46; 90:13; 94:3; Dan. 8:13; 12:6-13). Here is prayer for justice on the Antichrist’s cruelty, vindication of God’s reputation, and deliverance of His people.

⁷”...will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night...⁸He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (Lk. 18:7-8; NAS)

They cry, “How long, O Lord?” This is the most recorded prayer in the whole Bible right here. It is the most recorded prayer—the prayer for God to stop the cruelty of oppression and to vindicate His own reputation, and to deliver His people. That is what the prayer, “How long?” is about. It is the most recorded prayer, with more examples of it than any others. It is a prayer that oppression would be stopped and cruelty. It is a prayer that God’s name would be vindicated, that His people would be delivered.

- E. **Vengeance:** This is not a cry for personal revenge, but that God would remove reprobates who oppress His people and hate His kingdom. They will long to see the Antichrist’s cruelty stop.

This is not a cry for personal revenge. That is not what it is talking about, but it is that God would remove the evil people on the earth who are oppressing His people, defying His honor, and resisting His purpose.

- F. **O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood:** Holy and true are two aspects emphasized (3:7) in context to God’s judgments. As the saints lean into God’s sovereignty with confidence in Jesus’ goodness, they see that His judgments are *holy* for they do not violate love and they are *true* in judging the guilty with accurate information. God’s judgments are neither too severe, nor too lenient, neither too early, nor too late, but are filled with holiness and truth.

- G. **Dwell on earth:** The saints will ask God to avenge their blood on those who *dwell on the earth*.

VII. THE SIXTH SEAL: COSMIC DISTURBANCES (6:12-17)

- A. The opening of the sixth seal will release a great earthquake with signs in the heavens (6:12-17). This seal begins God’s specific answer to this prayer of the martyrs in heaven. It is followed by the release of the trumpet and bowl judgments on the Antichrist’s empire (Rev. 8-9; 16).

¹²He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. ¹³And the stars of heaven fell to the earth...¹⁴Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!” ¹⁷For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” (Rev. 6:12–17)

The sixth seal will release a great earthquake, but with signs in the heavens as well. There is coming a great earthquake. I believe what is happening in the sixth seal is the fruit of the prayer movement of the fifth seal that we just looked at. This escalation of prayer around the throne of God by millions of believers who are martyred in heaven and just what righteous blood does even to the economy of heaven in the prayer activity of heaven—it

goes to a whole different level. That is good news for the church when that happens in heaven. That is bad news for the wicked.

The sixth seal will release a great earthquake with signs in the heavens. He opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun became black, the moon became like blood, and the stars fell to the earth. Verse 14, "The sky receded like a scroll rolled up." The sky splits. Every mountain and island is moved from its place. It does not mean they are destroyed or moved 100 miles. An earthquake shakes incredibly. I mean a big earthquake will shake hundreds and hundreds of miles and everything moves a little bit. Do not imagine every mountain is leveled because the mountains exist throughout the rest of the book of Revelation. There is movement in the mountains. It is an earthquake so big that everything moves somewhat. Every island has been shifted at least to some degree. We do not know the degree. Some read this and get confused thinking every mountain is destroyed and every island is completely gone. It shifted from its current location to whatever degree it is we do not know, but that is how big the earthquake is.

The kings of the earth and all the great people, the rich, and the military leaders hide themselves in caves. Because when the sky opens, they see the face or the presence of God. We do not know to what degree or how clearly, but it is clear to them that they are seeing God and He is angry. Can you imagine this kind of global—I mean we only assume it is global—but certainly widespread visionary encounter with the wrath of God for the unbelievers of the earth, at least these people here. We do not know how many, to what degree, or for how long, but there is a very powerful, terrifying encounter with the Lord that is the opening of the heavens and they see this. The book of Revelation story line is not over. It still continues.

They cry out. They hid themselves in the caves. They said to the rocks and mountains, "Fall on us and hide us." They want the rocks to fall down and hide them, in other words, barricade the entrance of the caves. Some people think they are crying out, "Crush us with rocks." They will really stand before God if they get crushed with rocks! Others say no. They are saying, "Completely barricade us and hide us from that evil presence or that terrifying presence that is going to bring harm to us." That is what they are fleeing from. It is hard to know exactly what this will look like, but that is what they are crying out for.

- B. **Great earthquake:** There will be a great earthquake or a worldwide geophysical upheaval (Hag. 2:6; Heb. 12:26-28). Every mountain will be moved, rather than destroyed. No one could hide in a mountain if they were all destroyed. Mountains continue to exist in the seventh bowl (16:20).
- C. **Sun:** What causes the sun to become darkened? This will be a supernatural sign sent by God as well as possibly including the natural effects of ash and debris from volcanic eruptions or smoke.

What causes the sun to be darkened? There will be a supernatural sign that darkens the sun. I do not know that it is completely supernatural. There may be natural effects of ash and debris from volcanic eruptions. Like when the World Trade Center was destroyed, there was smoke for how many days and they could not see the sun for how many hours or they could not see the light of the sky. There may be all kinds of elements from supernatural element to natural as well.

- D. **Stars:** The stars can speak of asteroids and meteor showers hitting the earth. The Greek word for stars used here is "aster" from which we get the word *asteroid*. An *aster* refers to any shining mass in the sky, including stars, meteors, asteroids, any flaming debris, etc.

The stars will fall. This speaks of asteroids or media showers. Something like this or more hitting the earth. The Greek word for star is **aster** from which we get the word **asteroid**. Asteroid does not mean just a star. It means a shining mass in the sky. It can be flaming debris. It can be a star. It can be a meteor or an asteroid. Many things could fit under that Greek word.

*The sun is a star. A big star cannot fall on the earth. The earth is too small. A big sun cannot fall on the earth. A star in the full sense of the word is not what this means. It is all kinds of particles and debris from the sky coming down. It is the word **aster** as well. We cannot quite picture it. If you think it is a star a thousand times bigger than the earth falling to the earth, a whole bunch of them, it does not make any sense. Therefore commentators make this symbolic. They say, "Certainly stars cannot fall on the earth. The earth is too small to contain stars all landing on it." I believe it is all kinds of shining mass in the sky, debris of one sort or the other.*

VIII. FIRST ANGELIC EXPLANATION: WHO CAN STAND? (7:1-17)

- A. The angelic explanations are like parenthetical sections that follow the chronological sections. They answer the tough questions such as *Why are God's judgments so severe?* and *What will happen to the saints?* They describe how God helps the saints and the Antichrist attacks them.

Chapter 7 is what I call the angelic explanation. The angel is sort of pausing the storyline and pulling John aside. It is like a parenthesis. He is describing what is happening behind the scenes.

- B. Angelic explanation #1: God's people sealed for protection—physical and spiritual (7:1-17). This angelic explanation answers the question, "Who can stand?" affirming the security of God's people. God answered this cry by revealing that 144,000 Jewish believers will stand in victory (7:1-8) and Gentile martyrs (7:9-17) shall stand strong without wavering in persecution.

In the angelic explanation, God's people are sealed for protection. They are being protected spiritually, and they are being protected physically. Those are the two things being highlighted in Revelation 7.

- C. John sees a divine sealing on His people that gives them physical and spiritual protection.

¹I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth...²I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels...³saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."⁴And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed... (Rev. 7:1-4)

I do not believe that only 144,000 are sealed. The 144,000 are emphasized for a particular reason, but it never says or indicates it the seal of God is limited to them. I believe the saints will be sealed and the judgments of God will not touch the saints. The saints will actually be in a place of power and partnership with God, not under the judgment of God during this time.

- D. The 144,000 servants of God give us a picture of victory. They receive a protective seal before God strikes the earth, sea, and trees (7:3). Israel received a protective mark on their doors that saved their firstborn. Others will be sealed for protection (9:4). The *Goshen principle* speaks of God protecting His people from judgment (Ex. 8:22-23; 9:4-6, 26 (Ps. 91; Ezek. 9:6; Zeph. 2:3).

⁴They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. (Rev 9:4)

The 144,000 give us a picture of victory. It is a picture of victory. I do not believe it is limited to the 144,000 that are emphasized in Revelation 7. There are a number of other verses that talks about how God seals His people or marks them, protects them, in the time of judgment. One of the most prominent, I call it the Goshen principle. Goshen was a geographic area in Egypt where the children of Israel lived. When the ten plagues of

Egypt with Moses came on the nation of Israel, it says a number of times that the judgment did not touch the Jews who lived in Goshen. It touched the people in Egypt. Goshen was in the land of Egypt, but it was protected from the judgment.

The strangest one of all to me, it says, "There was deep darkness. The light went out, but in Goshen that judgment did not happen." How does the light shine over there but not over here? I do not know how all that worked. I call it the Goshen principle. I believe the storyline of Exodus will unfold. We will see it again. God will protect His people like He did in the days of Moses.

- E. Gentile believers (7:9-17) will also stand strong spiritually without wavering in persecution. The weakest saints can be spiritually protected if they ask the Lord for help.

⁹Behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne...¹⁰saying, "Salvation belongs to our God..."¹³Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"¹⁴...he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes...in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:9-14)

Here we see the Gentile believers. They are protected spiritually. There are many martyrs. Here is the point. They will stand strong spiritually. Someone may say, "If they died, how are they protected?" They died by the Antichrist, not by the judgments of God. They are protected from the judgments of God, but they were protected spiritually from the Antichrist. The Antichrist kills a number of saints, but they do not yield to him. They do not give into him. They are actually victorious over him spiritually speaking and they live forever. They did not yield to compromise.

The message in that is even the weakest saints, which is all the saints, can be protected. It describes this host of believers around the throne. They did not compromise in the threat of persecution. They were all weak and broken people like us. There are no super saints out there. Multitudes from all the nations, they stand true throughout it and they are spiritually protected and they stay true to the end. Amen and amen.