

THE REVELATION

LESSON 14: THE SEVEN SEALS PART 1 (6)

Intro:

BIG IDEA: God is _____ in control of _____.

The First Seal

¹Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" ²And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

- This is a _____ revelation and not all the items are _____.
- Seven indicates a _____ revelation, from this perspective.
- The voice of one of the creatures sounds like thunder. He, not Jesus, calls forth a white horse.
- He also wears a "crown". Not *διαδεμα* representing _____, but *στεπηνανος* one given to a _____ or represent high _____.
- The rider is ready for _____ and he is able to _____.
- No one _____ (sphere of _____) apart from the will of God.

The First Horseman

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
The first seal, and rider, refer to the Roman imperialism under Domitian (A.D. 96) thru the reign of Commodus who made a treaty with the Germans (A.D. 180). This covered 5 emperors: Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antonius Pius & Marcus Antonius Aurelius. They extended the rule of Rome to include territory formerly ruled by Babylon and Greece. They seem to treat this positively as the Pax Romana	Most believe the seals refer to the progression of events culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The 4 horsemen do not represent successive ages, but different aspects of the judgment upon Jerusalem. This horseman indicates that war is breaking out- the Jewish War in particular. The war began in A.D. 67. God is sending these calamities upon apostate Israel thru Rome just as He	This refers to the beginning of the Tribulation. Some see the rider as Christ (Kuyper, Ladd, Morris), and this as the proclamation of the gospel. Most reject this. Some (Walvoord, Ryrie, Lindsey) think this represents the anti-christ who conquers the world. He's the head of the revived Roman empire. Some progressive dispensationalists see this as referring to the Fall of Jerusalem despite dating the	Many think the first rider is Christ and this is about the success of the gospel (Ps. 45:3-5; Rev. 19:11). Some wonder how Christ can be both the One who opens the scroll and the rider the scroll reveals. For others, this is "merely" the universal sequence which is often repeated in history.

THE REVELATION

<p>increases. The bow may refer to Nerva, who was a Cretan. They were famous for using bows. Some think it refers to mounted Parthian warriors who wore white known for their skills with a bow. A few have views similar to preterists. Pinkowski, a 7th Day Adventist, thinks the bow refers to the spread of the gospel since arrows could be used to carry messages.</p>	<p>judged Israel thru Assyria and Judah thru Babylon. The closer Scriptural parallel of the rest of this vision is the destruction of Jerusalem in Mt. 24.</p>	<p>book in the 90's.⁴¹</p>	
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Talk It Out: Which of these interpretations makes the most sense in the context?

“Our Lord Jesus is conquering now; that is, throughout this present dispensation His cause is going forward, for He is exercising both His spiritual and His universal Kingship.” **William Hendriksen**⁴²

“The rider on the white horse ‘bent on conquest’ represents the victorious Roman march toward Jerusalem to engage the Jewish war in the springs of A.D. 67.” **Kenneth Gentry**⁴³

“The gospel is like that. Christ, riding forth with the sword out of his mouth, means the gospel shall be conquering the nations after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temporary end of the old covenant with Judaism.” **Doug Kelly**⁴⁴

The Second Seal

³When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" ⁴And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.

- The 2nd living creature issues the summons to the 2nd horse and rider. This is the pattern.
- This horse is bright _____, or _____ red.
- The rider removes _____ from the land or earth so war breaks out.

⁴¹ Pate, C. Marvin, *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan. 1998. pp. 145-157.

⁴² Hendriksen, pp. 96.

⁴³ Pate, pp. 53.

⁴⁴ Kelly, pp. 117.

THE REVELATION

- War, the sphere of the _____, comes under the sovereignty of God.

The Second Horseman

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
From Commodus to Diocletian (284) which was marked by civil wars throughout the Roman empire.	Peace is removed from the land of Israel. The war with the Romans led to civil wars among themselves.	The time of war as the Tribulation progresses. Hal Lindsey identifies the rider with Russia who attacks Israel leading up to Armageddon. Ray Stedman thinks the large sword is a nuclear weapon. Henry Morris sees this as a time of civil wars and organized crime running rampant.	Represents war in general. Empires established by conquest often fall apart thru internal conflict. Others, like Hendriksen, see this as the persecution of the church after the progress of the gospel.

The Third Seal

⁵When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶And I heard what seemed to be 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 wine!"

- Jesus opens the 3rd seal so the 3rd living creature calls out to the 3rd horse.
- This horse is _____ and brings _____.
- The denarius is able to buy about 1/8th-1/16th of what it normally purchases.
- Times of famine, and _____, are under the providence of God, not natural disaster.

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
Often viewed as the economic oppression caused by taxes in the 3 rd century. They could be paid in produce, particularly wine, wheat, and oil. Many farmers destroyed their crops to avoid paying taxes.	It points to shortage and famine, as predicted in Leviticus 26:26. Black was associated with famine in Lamentations 5:10. A denarius, a day's wage, would only feed 1 person. The	This is a worldwide famine during the Tribulation. Some blame this on international capitalists who manipulate the market.	Famine is one of the 4 severe judgments God uses for corrupt societies (Ezekiel 5:16; 14:21). Hendriksen also applies this to the persecution of the church.

THE REVELATION

An edict forbid the destruction of olive trees & grapevines.	Jews in Jerusalem experienced horrible food shortages. Josephus records mothers eating their children. Some Jews stole the wine and oil from the Temple.		
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The Fourth Seal

⁷When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!"
⁸And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.

- After the 4th seal is opened the 4th living creature summons the 4th and last horse & rider.
- This time the identity is given to us- _____. Hades follows behind to claim the dead.
- A _____ of the earth, or land, is given to them to _____ in a variety of ways.
- God is in control of _____ & _____. They are not independent of Him.

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
Many locate this from A.D. 248-268 as Rome was overrun by barbarians, tyrants and more. Historian Gibbons notes 5,000 people a day died in Rome. Some estimate that half the population of the earth died at this time. Some translate it as "four parts of the earth" referring to the 4 divisions of the Empire.	The color denotes pale yellow or green, often associated with pestilence. Conditions in besieged Jerusalem produced pestilence similar to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians as recorded by Ezekiel (14:21). Josephus notes the horrible effects of the pestilence.	A quarter of the earth is destroyed. Due to the population of the earth now, this is called a tribulation of unprecedented magnitude to which they apply Mt. 24:21 (instead of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70). As part of the Great Tribulation this falls within the last half of the Tribulation. Some others place the beginning of the Great Tribulation in chapter 11.	This points to geographically limited judgments, not global catastrophe. These recur throughout history.

THE REVELATION

The Fifth Seal

⁹When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. ¹⁰They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

- There is an _____ in the throne room. The _____ are under the altar.
- They cry out for _____ against those who _____ them. Their blood cries out like Abel's.
- Now was not the time. There were still more martyrs who would die for the faith.
- These would be, in part, the same martyrs from chapters 2-3. They are _____, not _____.
- The time is _____, but _____. _____ is under His control. Judgment happens on His _____.

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
Most understand this to be the persecution under Diocletian beginning in A.D. 303. In A.D. 306 Constantine would become emperor, and eventually the protector of the church after his conversion in 312.	Just like sacrificial blood poured at the foot of the altar, the blood of the martyrs is there. This suggests their persecutors were still alive. Prior to A.D. 70 the church was primarily persecuted by the Jews. Jesus predicted that the generation alive before His death would be judged for all the martyrs (Mt. 23:35ff). The destruction of Jerusalem is coming! As those martyrs have been vindicated, so God will vindicate martyrs since that time.	Instead of referring to the persecuted saints in chapters 2-3, it oddly refers to persons martyred during the Tribulation (how's that?).	The suffering church sees the state of those killed for their faith. The altar points to the sacrificial nature of their lives & death. We are reminded that the dead in Christ live in the presence of God. All martyrs will be vindicated.

THE REVELATION

Talk it Out: Which interpretation makes the most sense and why?

“Martyred saints cry out for justice, not because of selfish desires, but in tune with the justice of God’s throne.” **Vern Poythress**⁴⁵

“In slaughtering them, the world has scorned Him!” **William Hendriksen**⁴⁶

The Sixth Seal

¹²When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, ¹³and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. ¹⁴ The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. ¹⁵Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, ¹⁷for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

- With the 6th seal the scene shifts to _____.
- The great physical signs are ones that usually point to a change in _____.
- It is as if _____ itself is _____.
- It is so terrifying that even the leaders of the earth/land are hiding in _____ (Hosea 10; Is. 2; Rev. 9:28ff).
- They are hiding from the _____ of the One on the throne & the Lamb.
- Who can stand? See Malachi 3:2.
- He expresses His anger _____ He wants to and _____ He wants to.

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
May refer to the fall of paganism to Christianity with Constantine’s Edict of Tolerance. Others refer this to the division of the Empire into East & West in 395. It anticipated the final fall of the Empire in 476.	This is the predicted day of God’s wrath against Jerusalem and apostate Israel (Mt. 24:29, 34). The Jewish state is destroyed. The physical aspects are symbolic representations of the end of a nation or	There are differences of opinion about how literal to take this section. Some like Ironsides and Gaebelien see them as mostly symbolic. The earthquake, as in other views, is literal but with symbolic meaning.	They are split as to whether this represents the 2 nd coming. Those who deny this see it as God’s judgment on those oppressing the Church (due to the late date Rome). Others see the 7 structures of creation

⁴⁵ Poythress, pp. 116.

⁴⁶ Hendriksen, pp. 107.

THE REVELATION

Barnes sees the invasions by Goths & Vandals (376-418).	king (Is. 13:10; 34:4; Ezekiel 32:7-8, 13). According to Josephus, the leaders of the rebellion against Rome were hiding in caves from God and Rome (<i>Wars</i> , 6:7:3)	Others like Bullinger, Ryrie and Walvoord emphasize the literal. The falling stars are similar to what we mean. Hal Lindsey argues that this is the first nuclear exchange with the falling stars as Russian bombs.	and 7 classes of men to symbolize the universality of the disasters. No one is too great or too small to avoid God's wrath.
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“Like Adam and Eve, they can only think of fleeing and hiding to avoid exposure and punishment.” **Vern Poythress**⁴⁷

Talk it Out:

Which views make the most sense of the text and why?

Conclusion:

⁴⁷ Poythress, pp. 117.