

## The Seven Seals



The seven seals, as many Bible commentators agree, depicts seven periods in the Christian Church from the first century until the end of time. Let's see what the Word of God, the Bible, reveals.

**NOTE:** The vision presented in chs. 4 and 5 continues, but a new phase of action now begins. The seals of the book (ch. [5:1-5](#)) are being opened.

The pure white horse is a fitting symbol of the first century church, 31-100 AD. It went forth with power, preaching the gospel. These men "turned the world upside down" for Jesus. (see [Acts 17:6](#)). The early church carried the gospel truth into the entire world: "Have they not heard? Ye verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world," ([Rom. 10:18](#) cf [Col. 1:23](#)). A return to this type of witnessing is what the church and the world needs today!



### 1. What color was the first horse John saw?

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. 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." ([Rev. 6:1, 2](#))

### 2. What color was the second horse, what did he have power to do, and what was given unto him?

"And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse *that was* **RED**: and *power* was given to him that sat thereon to **TAKE PEACE FROM THE EARTH**, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great **SWORD**." ([Rev. 6:3, 4](#))

**NOTE:** The symbolism of the red horse describes the condition of the church in the second and third centuries, 100-313 AD (cf. on ch. [2:10](#)). Internally, rather than being pure as the first horse, it was red

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which can be regarded as a corruption of faith. It was during this time that various heresies were introduced. Externally, the church suffered violent persecutions at the hands of the Roman Caesars and countless numbers of Christians were killed by the edge of the Roman sword. Peace was taken from the earth for the Christians in the sense that they were driven underground and hunted. Externally, the color red is indicative of the blood the martyrs shed for the name of Jesus. They were ready to die rather than deny or disobey Jesus.



### 3. What color was the third horse that John saw and what was in his hand?

“And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a **BLACK** horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.” ([Rev. 6:5](#))

**NOTE:** Following the line that the color of the horse represents both the spirituality in the church and its success: if white represented purity and victory (v.1) and red tainted faith and beaten (v.4) then we can safely say that a black horse implies further spiritual corruption and defeat. This was the state during this period, 313-538 A.D., the 4<sup>th</sup> century when church and state were united which is a defeat for the church. (Anytime the church and state unite it is the church that has compromised.)

The **pair of balances** further showed the connection between church and state. The Greek word *zugos*, meaning “a yoke,” is the word for *balance*. How fitting. It correctly illustrated that the church was yoked to the secular government. We see the same thing happening today. The church is yoked to the laws and practices of the land, which has led to a further dearth of spirituality. Subsequently, no longer does the warfare by the church lead to victory (v.2), and its members are not willing to “contend for the faith,” ([Jude 1:3](#)) resisting unto blood ([Hebrews 12:4](#)) and now the dreaded result was a famine.

**4. What did a voice in the midst of the four beasts say?**  
“And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, a **MEASURE OF WHEAT FOR A PENNY**, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” ([Rev. 6:6](#))

**NOTE:** After the church was legalized in the fourth century spiritual poverty and famine came in, which is symbolized by the fact that it took a *measure*, a day’s work ([Matt. 20:2](#)), to buy barely sufficient food for a family. This makes sense because the false hearted believers could now join the secular church without having to be faithful. It was during this period that the fallen church, the “great harlot” was formed. (See [Rev. 17](#)).

The command to “hurt not the oil or the wine” indicates that the oil of the Holy Spirit and the wine of pure doctrine was still held by some during this time of spiritual darkness and popular Christianity! [Zechariah 4:2-6](#) uses oil to represent the Holy Spirit and the word of God, while [Revelation 17:2](#) uses wine to represent false doctrine and spiritual fornication!

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### 5. What color was the fourth horse and what was the name of its rider, and what followed after it?

"And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a **PALE** horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." ([Rev. 6:7, 8](#))

**NOTE:** This fourth pale horse represents the church in the latter part of the *Dark Ages*, about 538 to 1517. During this period an estimated 50 million believers were put to death by the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. What made this possible was the decree made in 533 A.D. by emperor Justinian, which was fully carried out in 538 A.D. Justinian defeated the Ostrogoths the last opposition to the Catholic's and installed the Bishop of the Rome as Pope.

**"The fourth part of the earth"** best depicts the fact that many of the nations of the earth quickly accepted the papal rule and this persecution extended to "heretics" of all nations! Subsequently, if you were branded a heretic by Rome, there was no place to hide. Most nations would cease you on behalf of Rome. A *"heretic" in the eyes of the Papal church of this period was anyone who refused to accept Rome's doctrines and decrees!*

### 6. When the fifth seal was opened, what was under the altar?

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the **SOULS OF THEM THAT WERE SLAIN** for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held," ([Rev. 6:9](#))

**NOTE:** Some attempt to interpret the "souls" as disembodied spirits of martyrs but that defies the rules of interpretation of symbolic prophecies. John is not here giving a view of heaven as it literally appears. Heaven does not have white, red, black, or pale horses with warlike riders. Jesus is not a lamb with a bleeding knife wound. The four beasts do not represent actual winged creatures as noted. Likewise, there are no "souls" jammed under the altar in heaven as some might think. The whole scene was a pictorial and symbolic representation designed to teach the spiritual lesson above noted.

These souls under the altar are symbolic of the many that were slain upon the earth for their faith. Further, the Bible teaches that a soul is a living being. You and I, as long as we have life in us, are "souls." Notice what the Bible says. "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul," ([Gen. 2:7](#)). Breath plus body equals a living soul. Further, the Bible says, that souls die: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" and "every living soul died in the sea." ([Eze. 18:4](#), [Rev. 16:3](#)).

### 7. What was the cry these souls made?

"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, **DOST THOU NOT JUDGE AND AVENGE OUR BLOOD** on them that dwell on the earth?" ([Rev. 6:10](#))

**NOTE:** The souls under the altar are crying out for vengeance symbolically like the blood of Abel cried out for justice in [Genesis 4:10](#). These faithful martyrs will be avenged when the great harlot that persecuted them is finally destroyed when Jesus returns! See [Revelation 19:1-2 & 11-16](#) which depicts the second coming of Jesus! Notice especially verse 2.



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### 8. What was given to them and what were they told?

"And **WHITE ROBES** were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should **REST YET FOR A LITTLE SEASON**, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." ([Rev. 6:11](#))

**NOTE:** The Greek word used for "robe" is (*stolē*). It is different that the word translated "raiment" in chs. [3:5](#); [4:4](#). The *stolē* was a long robe worn as a mark of distinction ([Mark 12:38](#)). John is observing the "souls" being clothed with distinction and honor. The representation seems to be designed to show that despite their dishonorable deaths, and their martyrdom they are already recognized by God as conquerors.

Those who die in the Lord are assured life evermore. Jesus said, "For the time is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life." (See [John 5:28, 29](#)). [Revelation 14:13](#) tells us that they are blessed and that they will rest from their labors. **Also, and important to note, those who die go to the grave.**

### 9. What did John see when the sixth seal was opened?

"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a **GREAT EARTHQUAKE**; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." ([Rev. 6:12, 13](#))

**NOTE:** The events depicted under the fifth and sixth seals are actual events that have already happened since the reformation period. In fact, these events not only correspond to what Jesus stated would happen ([Matthew 24:29, 30](#)), but they happened precisely in the order Jesus gave. They also happened in the time period covered by the fifth and sixth seal.

On November 1, 1755, the greatest earthquake ever written about occurred, the Great Lisbon Earthquake. You can google it or follow this link: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1755\\_Lisbon\\_earthquake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1755_Lisbon_earthquake).

Its epi-center was the city of Lisbon in Portugal and it was felt from North Africa to the West Indies.

This was followed twenty five years later by the "Great Dark Day" on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1780. A careful study of newspapers reports of the time reveals that an unusual darkness appeared in eastern New York and southwestern New England about ten o'clock that morning, and during the day made its way eastward across southern and central New England, and to some distance at sea. Each locality reported that the darkness lasted several hours. It was so dark witnesses said, that a piece of white paper held at arm's length could not be seen! This event also occurred in an area where great interest in Bible prophecy and the second coming of Jesus was to begin in the early 1800s!

Some attribute this darkness to thick smoke perhaps, but even if it were, it still would be a great fulfillment of the very words of Jesus, John, and Joel the prophet. Joel even mentioned "pillars of smoke"! ([Joel 2:30-32](#))

### 10. What did John see occur after the signs mentioned in verse 14?

"And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places." ([Rev. 6:14](#))

**NOTE:** We are living in the time between verses 13 and 14! The next great sign is to be the heavens rolling up as a scroll! We don't know what that means exactly. Could it be that we will see the stars in midday, or that the clouds and blueness of the sky will disappear for a time? We must wait for this fulfillment to know for sure! Jesus also mentioned that "the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" before His return! (See [Matthew 24:29](#)).

[Revelation 6:15-17](#) depict a world in complete utter upheaval. The entire gamut of social and political spectrum will be in disarray. Civil officials, great men of stature, the mighty, the bond and the free will all face "the wrath of the Lamb" ([Nahum 1:6](#); [Malachi 3:2](#)). There will be no place to hide. The righteous only will stand. Why not decide today to be among the righteous.