

## I. REVIEW: STRUCTURE OF REVELATION IN 4 PARTS

- A. There are four parts in the structure of the book of Revelation, the fourth part (Rev. 6-22) being the largest and consisting of 5 chronological sections in which the events seem to occur in sequential order (7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 bowls = 21 events).
1. John's calling to prophesy about the end times (Revelation 1).
  2. Jesus gave seven letters to the churches (Revelation 2-3).
  3. Jesus takes the scroll from the Father's hand (Revelation 4-5).
  4. Jesus' plan to judge evil and transition to next age (Revelation 6-22). This includes the Great Tribulation judgments against the Antichrist and Satan to cleanse the earth of evil and His return to transition creation to the next age.
- B. Within the 21 events of the seals, trumpets and bowls, the text seems to add an explanation or viewpoint that interrupts the chronological story. Many refer to these as "Angelic Explanations" (some call them parenthetical sections). Example: between the sixth and seventh seal, there is an interruption in the flow, and again between the sixth and seventh trumpet.
1. I often think what a letter written to Israel many years before the Exodus out of Egypt would've been like. I ponder how the Israelites would've had lots of questions about the judgments (10 plagues) that were about to come upon the land they were living in. What would happen to them? Why so severe? "Explanations" outside of the chronological storyline would be helpful.
- C. It's important to know what has become known as the "Goshen Principle" when we think of God judging His enemies amongst His people in Egypt (Exodus 8:22-23, 9:4, 26; 10:21-23, 11:7, 12:13, Zephaniah 2:3). Israel was protected in Goshen while great judgments were poured out on Egypt. We'll make note of this principle when we get to Revelation 7.

## II. JESUS OPENS THE SEALS (REVELATION 6)

*Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals...  
Revelation 6:1 NKJV*

- A. We know from the previous chapter that Jesus takes the scroll and begins to open it when the bowls of prayer before God's throne are "full" (Revelation 5:8). I believe this is representing the Church in every nation, (Matthew 24:14) fully prepared and functioning as a people of prayer. This would be in our future.
- for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations...  
Isaiah 56:7 NKJV*
- B. The seven seals are opened by Jesus. Since He's the One opening the seals, which then transitions to the trumpets and ending with the bowls, we can gain a sense of peace because He is in control.
- C. The first four seals are brought about by the actions of men on the earth. God is taking some of His restraining hand off evil men, allowing them to sin in an unrestrained way and taste the fruit of its destruction. The last three seals are actions from heaven.

## III. SEALS: THE RISE OF THE ANTICHRIST, GLOBAL WAR AND HEAVEN'S RESPONSE (REVELATION 6)

**SEAL 1: The opening of the first seal speaks of the Antichrist's political aggression, quite possibly with little or no bloodshed (compare to 2nd seal). One of the clearest examples in modern history is Adolf Hitler, who gained the control of a number of nations through deceptive diplomacy before he engaged in military aggression.**

*I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying... "Come and see." I 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.  
Revelation 6:1-2 NKJV*

1. "Given to him", "he was given," "granted to him": speaks of the Antichrist going seemingly unchecked by God. Satan and sinful men give this man their power. We know from Daniel 2, 7, Revelation 13, 17 that the Antichrist will have a coalition of 10 nations or regions of power.

*...The dragon (Satan) gave him (Antichrist) his power, his throne and great authority...<sup>4</sup>So they (nations) worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"<sup>5</sup>And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months...<sup>7</sup>It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue and nation...<sup>10</sup>Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. Revelation 13:3-10 NKJV*

**SEAL 2: Peace is removed causing war and bloodshed in contrast to the first seal.**

*When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see."<sup>4</sup>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. Revelation 6:3-4 NKJV*

1. Take peace from the earth: the context for seal 2 could be what Paul mentions:  
*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 Thessalonians 5:3 NKJV*
2. The Antichrist will make a covenant with many nations (specifically Israel) that will only last for 3.5 years.  
*He (Antichrist) shall confirm a covenant (peace treaty) with many for one week (seven years); But in the middle of the week (3.5 years) he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate..." Daniel 9:27 NKJV*

**SEAL 3: There will be famine and economic pressure.**

*When 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. <sup>6</sup>And 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." Revelation 6:5-6 NKJV*

1. The pair of scales represents commerce in the marketplace. You weigh out wheat and then make your purchase. In these times, the marketplace and a pair of scales went hand in hand.
2. A denarius was equivalent to wages for one day of work. The economy at this time results in earning power reduced to working all day and affording food for one day.
3. The Antichrist will manipulate and take advantage of this context. *He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, <sup>17</sup>and than no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark...Revelation 13:16-17 NKJV*

#### SEAL 4: One-fourth of the earth is killed.

*When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see."<sup>8</sup>So 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. Revelation 6:7-8 NKJV*

1. This will by far be the deadliest timeframe in human history up to this point. WWII deaths witnessed a staggering 3% of the world's population, which neared 60 million from roughly 1935-1945. *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. <sup>22</sup>And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. Matthew 24:21-22 NKJV*

#### SEAL 5: Martyrdom and prayer increase.

*When 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 testimony which they held. <sup>10</sup>And 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?" <sup>11</sup>Then 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. Revelation 6:9-11 NKJV*

2. A point is made in their prayer that the ones who killed them are "on the earth." Thus the point can be made that this group of martyrs are ones that are killed during this timeframe (future) compared to the martyrs throughout all of Church history.
3. The blood of saints has a dynamic impact bringing forth fearless dedication to prayer and the Gospel going forth. Prayer (and sometimes Church growth) many times intensify in context to martyrdom and persecution historically as modeled specifically in the book of Acts.

4. The prayer, "How long..." is the most recorded prayer in Scripture (Zechariah 1:12; Psalms 6:3; 13:2; 74:10; 79:5; 80:4; 89:46; 90:13; 94:3; Daniel 8:13; 12:6-13). It is a prayer for justice on the Antichrist's cruelty, vindication of God's reputation, and deliverance of His people.

*"Will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night...<sup>8</sup>He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:7-8 NASB*

*The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a Man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies. <sup>14</sup>"I have held My peace a long time, I have been still and restrained Myself. Now I will cry like a woman in labor, I will pant and gasp at once." Isaiah 42:13-14 NKJV*

*For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her. Revelation 19:2 NKJV*

5. "Holy and true" are two aspects emphasized (3:7) in context to God's judgments. As the saints lean into God's sovereignty, they see that His judgments are holy for they do not violate love and they are true in judging the guilty with fairness. God's judgments are neither too severe, nor too lenient, neither too early nor too late, but are filled with holiness and truth.

#### SEAL 6: God shakes heaven and earth.

*He 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. <sup>13</sup>And the stars of heaven fell to the earth...<sup>14</sup>Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. <sup>15</sup>And 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, <sup>16</sup>and 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!" <sup>17</sup>For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" Revelation 6:12-17*

1. The opening of the sixth seal will release a great earthquake with signs in the heavens. 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) that is causing such turmoil and injustice on the earth.
2. The stars speak of asteroids and meteor showers hitting the earth. The 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.
3. World leaders here are in panic, yet later at Armageddon, they are bold and unite to make war against Jesus (Revelation 19:19).