

Chapter 6: The Seven Seals

As we get started, it may occur to some as we read, this seems harsh and cruel and how could an all loving God punish people for sin? How could God be full of compassion and wrath at the same time? In short, God is love (1 John 4:9-16), and He is slow to anger abounding in love, (Psalm 103:8) and wishes that none should perish (2 Peter 3:9) BUT that is one side of the coin. The other side is judgement. As one theologian put it, "If we were to have a judgementless Gospel we would have a God, a one dimensional, sappy, sanitized deity easily managed. He would do nothing more than wink at our behavior much like an elderly man who is not to seriously invested in our lives. God is not a pandering papa!"

The truth is that, although many biblical prophecies predict disasters, wars, famines etc., their underlying purpose is merciful and loving. His ultimate purpose is for us to come to know Him as our Father through His Son Jesus as many as would before the Tribulation starts and after and during!

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The First Seal: (vs. 1-2) As the first seal is opened, we see appear the first of four riders or "Four Horsemen". He appears on a white horse, armed with a bow and no arrows set forth to conquer and is successful in doing so. This is the _____ (more on him in CH 13). It's not Jesus! He conquers with words of peace initiating a false covenant of peace and security.

The Second Seal: (vs. 3-4) As Jesus opens the second seal, another rider appears. The second rider sits atop a red horse and was given power to make war on the earth. This rider represents _____.

The Third Seal: (vs. 5-6) Christ opens the third seal and a third rider appears: this one riding a black horse with a pair measuring scales in his hand. This rider brings and represents _____ and _____. In terms of measuring the grains one measure is a quart of wheat for a days wage. In John's time a normal days wage would buy 12-15 times more! Barley was selling for three quarts (a measure) for a days wage only in John's day it would buy 24 measures!

The Fourth Seal: (vs. 7-8) Jesus opens the fourth seal and the last rider appears riding on a pale horse. Its rider was named "Death" and scripture tells us Hades followed close behind him. This rider represents _____.

At this point the riders were only given power over one-fourth of the earth to release their destruction and God's judgement-its not yet complete nor does God release them unlimited. With these judgements there is still time for people to turn to Christ. HE is both demonstrating His judgement and His merciful love in giving people more opportunity to turn to Him.

The Fifth Seal: (vs. 9-11) Jesus opens the fifth seal and John sees under the altar the souls of those who martyred during the Tribulation, those people who had died preaching the gospel. God singles them out for special honor called the "crown of the martyr", a crown reserved for those who gave their life in service preaching the gospel.

The Sixth Seal: (vs. 12-17) As Jesus opens the sixth seal, the earth begins to groan and tremble with earthquakes and the sun turns black, the moon turns red, and stars begin to fall to the earth. Great fear strikes the earth as people go into hiding realizing that God is real and His wrath is pouring out on the earth. Even in His wrath there is warning and repentance! Its not too late but its coming close.