

BOOK OF REVELATION

11. The Seven Seals



Revelation 6 - 8

Introduction

In our last study we had a glimpse of the Throne Room in Heaven, with the Lamb standing in the center. The inhabitants of Heaven are overjoyed as the Lamb takes the scroll from the One who sits on the Throne. The vision then moves to earth and we begin to see what happens as the Lamb opens the seals on the scroll.

Scripture Reading: Revelation 6:1 - 8:5



What happens when the Lamb opens the first 4 seals?
V1-2, v3-4, v5-6, v7-8



When we study the meaning of visions in the Bible it is always good to refer to other passages that are similar. The imagery that is used of the 4 horsemen comes from Zechariah 1:8, 6:2-5, 8. What do you think each of these horsemen represent?

(The horsemen represent angelic spirits sent out from God's presence to bring judgments on the earth. Possibly the different colors of the horses correspond to the different characters of the riders. E.g. White = conquest, Red = bloodshed and war, Black = famine, Pale = death)

Some interpret these 4 horsemen as representing worldwide calamities throughout history, but others believe they are just prior to the Great Tribulation. There is a parallel with Jesus' words in Matthew 24:8, where it speaks of the 'beginning of the horrors to come'.



The 5th seal is not a judgment, but portrays the result of a great persecution that has taken place. This is described by Jesus in Matthew 24:21. What is the significance of the souls of these martyrs being 'under the altar'? 6:9 compare with Exodus 29:12.

(The place under the altar is the place where blood was poured out. The blood of these martyrs has been poured out because of their testimony. This place however, is a place of honor, in the presence of God.)



What happens during the 6th seal? V12-14
How do the people left on the earth react to this judgment? V15-17
Compare with Isaiah 2:12, 19; 34:2-4, Joel 2:30-31

Clearly the events that take place under the 6th seal describe a future scenario tied to the end of this present age. But what happens to believers during this time? Just as the destruction is about to begin a seal is placed on the foreheads of God's people. 7:1-2



Why are the believers sealed? 7:3-4, 9:4, 14:1, 22:4. Contrast this with the mark of the beast in 13:16-18, 14:9-11.

(Believers who are here at this time are sealed with the name of the Lord on their foreheads, so they will be preserved during the final judgment that is about to come on the earth. Those who receive the 'mark of the beast' may be safe during the reign of the antichrist but will face eternal separation from God.)

There are many different opinions as to who the 144,000 are. Some believe that they come from the nation of Israel only, while others believe they represent the complete number of all believers, both Jew and Gentile. Whoever they are, these 144,000 are sealed to protect them from the judgments that are about to come on the earth. Now another vision unfolds and we are back in the Throne Room again and the 7th seal is opened.



What impact do the prayers of God's people have in the implementation of God's judgments on the earth? 5:8, 6:10, 8:3-5, Deuteronomy 32:43

Conclusion

Although there may be differing interpretations regarding the things John saw in his visions, the most important thing is that we prepare our lives to be ready for what is to come. As we go through these chapters in the Book of Revelation that speak of the Seven Seals and the Seven Trumpets, always remember the wonderful promises Jesus has given to those who over-come.