

The Seven Seals

Lesson Fifty-Five

1. What was shown upon the opening of the first seal?

“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 _____: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.” Revelation 6:1, 2.

Note: As the number seven in the Scriptures denotes completion or perfection, it is safe to say that the seven seals embrace the whole of a certain class of events reaching down to the close probationary time. The seven trumpets are symbols of wars; but the seals denote events of the religious nature. The symbol of a rider on a white horse, going forth conquering into conquer, is a feeding emblem of the triumphs of the gospel in the first century of this dispensation.



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2. What went out upon the opening of the second seal?

“And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out _____: 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.” Revelation 6:3, 4.

Note: If the whiteness of the first horse denoted the purity of the gospel which its writer propagated, then the change of color in the second horse would show that corruption had began to creep in when this symbol applies. It is true that such a state of things did succeed that apostolic church. Worldliness came in. The church sought alliance with the secular power, and trouble commotion were the result. This symbol extends to the time of Constantine, when a complete union of church and state was effected.

3. What was the color of the symbol under the third seal?

“And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a _____; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.” Revelation 6:5.

Note: The "black horse" fitly represents the spiritual darkness that reigned in the church from the time of Constantine till the establishment of the papacy in A.D. 538. Of the vain notions and gross error that were imbibed by the church during that period, Mosheim says: "Those vain fictions, which an attachment to the Platonic philosophy and to popular opinions had engaged the greatest part of the Christian doctors to adopt before the time of Constantine, were not confirmed, enlarged, and embellished in various ways. Hence arose that extravagant veneration for departed saints, and those absurd notions of the certain fire destined to purify separate souls, that now prevailed, and of which the public marks were everywhere to be seen." Ecclesiastical History, cent. 4, part 2, chap. 3, para. 1.

4. What change was seen in the symbol of the fourth seal?

“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and _____: 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.” Revelation 6:7, 8.

Note: This is an unnatural color. The original denotes the pale or yellowish *color* seen in blighted plants. The symbol evidently refers to the work of persecution death by the Roman church upon the people everywhere. "And power was given into them." This extended from A.D. 538 to the time when the Reformers commenced their work of exposing the true character of the papacy.

5. On the opening of the fifth seal, what was seen under the altar?

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the _____ that were _____, and for the testimony which they held:” Revelation 6:9.

Note: That is, when the Reformers exposed the work of the papacy, it was then called to mind how many martyrs had been slain for their faith.

6. What were these martyrs represented as doing?

“And _____, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” Revelation 6:10.

Note: They cried for vengeance, just as Able's blood cried from the ground. Genesis 4:10. They were not heaven, but under the altar -- on which they had been slain. On this point Dr. A. Clarke says: "The altar is upon earth, not in heaven."

7. What was done for these martyrs because they thus cried?

“And _____ were given unto _____; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” Revelation 6:11.

Note: These had been slain during the hundreds of years covered by the preceding seal. Their persecutors had, most of them, at least, died. And if they had at death passed to their punishment, as is by some supposed, why should the martyred ones still for their punishment? In this, as in other parts of the Bible, the figure of personification is used, and things are not represented as though they did exist. See Romans 4:17. These martyrs had gone down under the darkness in superstition of the preceding seal, covered with ignomiy and shame, as heretics. Now in the light of the Reformation they are seen to have been righteous, in hence there said to have "white robes." "The fine linens (white robes) is a righteousness of Saints." Revelation 19:8. Righteousness is ascribed to them, and when they have rested a little longer were they are, under the altar, till all others who are to fall for their faith have followed them, then together they will be raised immortal glory.

8. What was first seen on the opening of the sixth seal?

“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a _____;...” Revelation 6:12.

Note: This unquestionably refers to the great earthquake of November 1, 1755, which covered 4 million square miles. Lisbon, Portugal, which had before contained one hundred fifty thousand

inhabitants, was almost entirely destroyed. It is said that 90,000 persons perished on that occasion. (See Encyclopedia Britannica.) As one writer has described it: The shock of the earthquake "was instantly followed by the fall of every church and convent, almost all the large public buildings, and one-fourth of the houses. In about two hours afterward, fires broke out in different quarters, and raged with such violence for the space of nearly three days that the city was completely desolated. The earthquake on a holy day, when the churches and convents were full of people, very few whom escaped." "The terror of the people was beyond description. Nobody wept: it was beyond tears. They ran hither and thither, delirious with horror and astonishment, beating their faces and breasts, crying, 'Misericordia! The world's at an end!' Mothers forgot their children, and ran to the churches for protection; but in vain was the sacrament exposed; in vain did the poor creatures embrace the altars; images, priests, in people were buried in one common ruin." "Ninety-thousand persons are supposed to have been lost on the fatal day."

9. What was to follow the great earthquake?

"...and the _____ as sackcloth of hair, and the _____;"
Revelation 6:12.

Note: This refers to the dark day and night of May 19, 1780, when the darkness and gloom were such as to give the general opinion that the day of judgment was at hand. See Pres. Dwight, in Connecticut Historical Collection, and other authors quoted in reading, "Our Lord's Great Prophecy," page 35.

10. What was the next event under this seal?

"And the _____ I unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." Revelation 6:13.

Note: This was filled in the wonderful meteoric shower of November 13, 1833. Describing the scene in the vicinity of Niagara Falls, one writer says: "No spectacle so terribly grand and sublime was ever before beheld by man as that of the firmament descending in fiery torrents over the dark and roaring cataract." Our First Century, p. 330.

Henry Dana Ward, writing for the Journal of Commerce, in regard to the falling stars of November 13, 1833, said (issue of November 15, 1833): "Were I to hunt through nature for a simile, I could not find one so apt to illustrate the appearance of the heavens, as that which St. John uses in the prophecy (Revelation 6:13). The falling stars did not come as if from several trees shaken, but as from *one*; those which appeared in the east, fell toward the east; those which appeared in the north, fell toward the north; those which appeared in the west, fell toward the west; those which appeared in the south, fell toward the south. In a fall not as a ripe fruit falls. Far from it; but they flew, they were cast, like the unripe fruit which a first refuses to leave the branch; and when, under a violent pressure, it does break its hold, it flies swiftly, straight off, descending; and in the multitude falling, some cross the track of others, as they are thrown with more or less force; but each one falls on its own side of the tree."

11. What was to follow the sign of falling stars?

"And the heaven _____ when it is rolled together; and every _____ and _____ out of _____." Revelation 6:14.

Note: We are now standing between the two – the last of the signs in the heavens, and the removal of the heavens and the solid earth out of their places. The signs that mark the approach

of the Saviour in the dissolution of earthly things are all the past, and the world awaits the sound of the last trump at the closing seen in the thrilling drama. Then the wicked of every class will fly to the caverns and fissures of the rocks, in a fruitless attempt to hide their guilt from him who sits on the throne.

12. After the sealing work brought to view in Revelation 7, which takes place under the sixth seal, how in the seventh seal introduced?

“And when he had opened the seventh seal, _____ about the space of half an hour.” Revelation 8:1.

Note: The sixth seal introduced events connected with the second coming of Christ. The seventh must refer to that event in its accompanying effect. When Christ comes, all the holy angels will accompany him. Matthew 25:31. If all these celestial harpers leave the heavenly courts, it follows that silence will reign having during the absence. A half-hour of prophetic time would be about seven days