

8 – THE SEALS ARE OPENED (REVELATION 6:1-7:17)

Review:

A. The key verse (1:19)

- The key to understanding the book is found in Revelation 1:19

B. A basic outline

1. What You Have Seen (Chapter 1)
2. What is Now (Chapters 2-3)
3. What will take place later (Chapters 4-22)

C. A Basic Mindset

1. Don't be dogmatic about your interpretations.
2. Biblical prophecy only gives us a partial picture.

The Jews of Jesus' day did not completely understand the prophecies of the Messiah. It was only after His death and resurrection did the prophecies make sense.

I. The Opening of the Seals (Revelation 6:1-17)

A. The first seal (6:1-2)

1. The seal is opened (6:1)
 - The Lamb is the only one to open the seals.
2. The white horse (6:2)

Biblical Note: The Four Riders of the Apocalypse
The first four seals on the scroll are four riders on horses. These riders are commonly known as the four riders of the apocalypse. The first rider on a white horse represents the Antichrist. The second rider on a red horse is war. The third rider on a black horse is famine and economic collapse. The fourth rider on a pale horse is death and Hades followed close behind him.

- The conqueror mentioned here is the future world ruler.

B. The second seal (6:3-4)

1. The seal is opened (6:3)

Hope for The Future: A Study in the Book of the Revelation

2. The red horse (6:4)

- The rider here represents war as he takes peace from the earth.

C. The third seal (6:5-6)

1. The seal is opened (6:5a)

2. The back horse (6:5b-6)

- The rider represents famine and economic collapse.
- It will take an entire day's wages to pay for a meal.

D. The fourth seal (6:7-8)

1. The seal is opened (6:7)

2. The pale horse (6:8)

- The rider represents death.
- Hell is the rider's companion.

Biblical Note: Hades (Hell)

The word "Hades" is the Greek word for the realm of the dead. It refers to Hell or a place of torment. It is the New Testament word for the Hebrew word "Sheol" that is used in the Old Testament describing the place of the dead. It is not the final punishment of the wicked. See: Matthew 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15, 16:23; Acts 2:27,31; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13,14.

- They were given the power to kill a fourth of the world's population.

E. The fifth seal (6:9-11)

1. John's vision of the martyrs (6:9)

- John sees the souls of Christian martyrs.

2. The martyrs' cry (6:10)

- The martyrs ask God to avenge their deaths on the wicked.

3. The call to rest (6:11)

- They are told to wait until the number of martyrs is completed.

F. The sixth seal (6:12-17)

Hope for The Future: A Study in the Book of the Revelation

1. Great natural disasters (6:12-14)
 - a. The great earthquake (6:12a)
 - There will be a great earthquake.
 - b. The transformation of the heavens (6:12b-14a)
 - The heavens are changed as the sun, moon and stars are affected.
 - c. The landscape shifts (6:14a)
 - The great earthquake causes both mountains and islands to shift.
2. The reaction of the world (6:15-17)
 - a. Men try to hide themselves (6:15)
 - People of all walks of life try to hide themselves from the calamity.
 - b. Their proclamation (6:16-17)
 - The people call out for death rather than to face the wrath of God.

II. Salvation in the Tribulation (Revelation 7:1-17)

A. The Sealing of the 144,000 of Israel (7:1-8)

1. John's vision of the four angels (7:1)
 - a. Their location
 - These angels are located from every point of the earth.
 - b. Their purpose
 - These angels are to insure that no wind blows on the earth and sea.
2. The angel from the east (7:2-3)
 - a. The angel described (7:2a)
 - An angel comes from the east with the seal of God.
 - The seal denotes ownership and protection.
 - b. The angel's statement to the four angels (7:2b-3)

Hope for The Future: A Study in the Book of the Revelation

(1) The four angels' task (7:2b)

- The four angels have been given the task to harm the earth and seas.

(2) The command (7:3)

- The angels are to withhold judgment until God's servants are sealed.

3. The sealing of the servants (7:4-8)

a. The number of sealed servants (7:4)

- John hears the number of Jewish believers who are sealed.

b. The listing of the sealed servants (7:5-8)

- The 144,000 servants come from the twelve tribes of Israel.

B. The Multitude of Martyrs (7:9-17)

1. John's vision of the Multitude (7:9)

- John sees a multitude of believers from every tribe and tongue.

2. The praise of the multitude (7:10)

- This multitude praises God and the Lamb for salvation.

3. The worship of the hosts of heaven (7:11-12)

- The angels and elders respond to their praises with worship.

4. The identity of the multitude (7:13-17)

a. The elder's question (7:13)

- The elder asks John who the multitude is.

b. John's response (7:14a)

- John responds that the elder knows the answer.

c. The multitude's identity (7:14)

- The elder identifies the multitude as the martyrs of the tribulation.

d. The multitude's function (7:15a)

Hope for The Future: A Study in the Book of the Revelation

- They serve God continually.
- e. The multitude's protection (7:15b)
 - God will dwell with them.
- f. The multitude's provision (7:16-17)
 - God will provide and protect them forever.