

Revelation 6:1-15. *Some, but not all seven seals are opened.* MEI. Wow—The Christ Lamb opens the first seal. As He did so, one of the four living creatures said as loud as thunder: “Come!” And there it was—a white horse with a rider holding a bow. The rider was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror ready to do his thing.

Q Who was/is the rider? A metaphor, and if so, for what? Where’s the arrow? What does the *given* crown signify? MEI. Mystery Evokes Interest.

With the second seal opened by Yeshua, again I was told to “Come!” A red horse arrived with a rider who had been given [ἐδόθη, actually granted or bestowed; [1325](#)] power to take peace [εἰρήνην] away and make (?) people [actually the text says people “will slaughter one another”]. And, the rider was given a large sword.

Q Watch your translation!

Q Why was peace destroyed? Was it necessary, and for what reason?

Q Just what was the sword? MEI.

The third seal revealed a black horse with the rider holding a set of scales. One of the four creatures cried out—“One half pound of oats for a day’s work, one and half pounds of barley for a day’s wage, but do not damage the oil and wine!”

Q For what will you work for an entire day? Why the special concern about the oil and wine?

Q Most characterize the black horse rider represents “famine.” On what basis would you agree with this characterization?

With the fourth seal’s opening, a “pale horse” arrived with a rider named “The Death,” and The Hades (capital H?) was following close behind. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill—by sword, illness, and plague, and by wild beasts.

Q Why would a Greek deity be following “The Death” rider?

REVELATION 6:1-15

I watched as the Lamb opened the **first** of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, “Come!” ²I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

³When the Lamb opened the **second** seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” ⁴Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was **given** [ἐδόθη] power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.

⁵When the Lamb opened the **third** seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, “A quart of wheat for a day’s wages, and three quarts of barley for a day’s wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!”

⁷When the Lamb opened the **fourth** seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” ⁸I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

⁹When he opened the **fifth** seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” ¹¹Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

¹²I watched as he opened the **sixth** seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, ¹³and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. ¹⁴The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

¹⁵Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.

¹⁶They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?” [SEVEN?]

Q Just what is ¼ of the earth? Significance? Includes the ill- or undeveloped earth? MEI.

The fifth seal opening allowed John to see under the “altar of souls” who had been martyred. The martyrs cried out—How long before we receive revenge? [How long justice?] They were told to wait a “little longer” and given a white robe. Wait until? A certain number of fellow martyrs were to be killed.

Q What was found under the altar? Why there?

Q Why do we want justice? Vengeance?

Q What do you suppose will constitute that “certain number?” MEI.

With the opening of the sixth seal came an earthquake. The sky turned black, and the moon red. Stars fell just like figs do, fall in a stiff wind. With the sky turned back, all the mountains and islands had been removed. Then it happened... Earthly kings, princes, generals, rich, mighty, and even every slave and free man hid. In the caves and rocks of the mountains. Calling on the rocks they cried out, “Fall on us. Hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne, and the anger of the Lamb!” In the great day of wrath, just who can stand up?

Q When do figs fall off the fig tree? What was the color of the sky?

Q If the people did not cry out, who would?

[See Luke 19:39-40—Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” “I tell you,” He replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”]

Q Why is there a great day of wrath coming? After all, John himself said elsewhere that “God is love.” MEI.

Q What happened to the seventh seal? MEI.

Revelation 7:1-17. *Multitudes beyond counting are sealed*. It is all there—the winds and directions of the winds; the four angels bordering the scene and holding back those winds. A fifth angel appears and declares that the other four, who were given power to destroy/harm the land & sea, were not to do so until the servants of the Lord God are protected, sealed from harm. Among them were most of the tribes of Israel, including the diaspora as well as Judea, Benjamin, and Levi.

A great multitude beyond counting from all peoples were standing before the throne enclosed by the iris, right in front of the slain Lamb. Wearing white robes and palm branches, they declared in a loud voice:

Welfare, prosperity, deliverance, preservation, salvation, safety belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the slain Lamb.

Similarly, all the angels, elders and the four living creatures were there as well, falling down on their faces, they worshiped and said,

Truly, so be it! Praise and glory, wisdom and thanks, honor and power, and strength comes from our God, the Lord God, forever and ever! Truly, make it so!

Oddly, an elder then asked John—“Who are these folk in white robes and from where did they come?” John reminded the elder: You know—they are survivors of the great strife & persecution [θλίψεως, thli-pseh-ohs; *persecution, affliction, distress*; [2347](#)]. Their robes are white because of the Lamb’s blood. Ergo, they are in the presence of the Lord God who shields them with His tabernacle/tent (see John 1:14). They will never be hungry again, nor thirst. The sun will be shaded, the heat modified. Remember, the Lamb at the center of the throne is their shepherd—He will lead them to springs of living water. The Lord God will himself wipe away every tear from their eyes!

Q What do you suppose is the purpose of this great meeting? Why gather what appears to be all the rescued in one place?

REVELATION 7:1-17

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.

²Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea:

³“Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.” ⁴Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel...

⁵From the tribe of **Judah** 12,000 were sealed, from the tribe of **Reuben** 12,000, from the tribe of **Gad** 12,000, ⁶from the tribe of **Asher** 12,000, from the tribe of **Naphtali** 12,000, from the tribe of **Manasseh** 12,000, ⁷from the tribe of **Simeon** 12,000, from the tribe of **Levi** 12,000, from the tribe of **Issachar** 12,000, ⁸from the tribe of **Zebulun** 12,000, from the tribe of **Joseph** 12,000, from the tribe of **Benjamin** 12,000.

⁹After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰And they cried out in a loud voice:

*“Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”*

¹¹All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²saying:

“Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen!”

¹³Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?” ¹⁴I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵Therefore, “they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.

¹⁶Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” [SEVEN?]

Q What tribe(s) of Israel is (are) not mentioned as part of the 144,000 sealed believers? Why not? Which is listed first by John? Last? Next to last? Deuteronomy 27:12–13 lists these twelve tribes:

- [Reuben](#) (Hebrew רְאוּבֵן *Rə'ūbēn*)
- [Simeon](#) (שִׁמְעוֹן *Šimā'ōn*)
- [Levi](#) (לֵוִי *Lēwī*)
- [Judah](#) (יְהוּדָה *Yəhūdā*)
- [Issachar](#) (יִשָּׂשכָר *Yīssākār*)
- [Zebulun](#) (זְבֻלֻן *Zəbūlun*)
- [Dan](#) (דָּן *Dān*)
- [Naphtali](#) (נַפְתָּלִי *Naphtālī*)
- [Gad](#) (גָּד *Gād*)
- [Asher](#) (אֲשֵׁר *'Āšēr*)
- [Benjamin](#) (בְּנֵימִן *Bīnyāmīn*)
- [Joseph](#) (יוֹסֵף *Yōsēp*), later split into 2 “half-tribes:”
 - [Ephraim](#) (אֶפְרַיִם *'Eprāyīm*)
 - [Manasseh](#) (מְנַשֶּׁה *Mənašše*)

Q What is the impact of transliterating “amen” instead of translating “amen?” (see verse 12)

Q How would you describe what’s is happening to an unbeliever, or a new believer in chapter 7? To what would you compare this event?

Q Why do we not describe the cost, the persecution, the hunger that comes from following the Christ to others, especially those who are thinking about following the Christ?

NOTE:

Numbers have a great symbolic significance in the Bible; John, the writer of Revelation uses them to communicate a variety of ideas. Foreign to many modern readers, the meaningfulness of numbers is often key to understanding the Scriptures. Yet, we still have the Roman idolatry of associating 13 with “bad things.” Commonly used symbolic numbers in Revelation are 4, 7, 12, and their multiples. The number 4 seems to stand for the created universe (four points of a compass, four directions of the winds of the earth), and perhaps the four living creatures (4:6) potentially represent all creation. In the Bible, the number 7 denotes perfection or completion, possibly because the Genesis creation account covers six days, plus a day of “rest.” The 12 tribes of Israel in the Hebrew Scriptures and 12 apostles in the Greek Bible could indicate the number 12 stands for the church, or the Lord God's redeemed people from both eras, before the Christ came to earth and afterwards. A number multiplied by 10's, such as 144,000 suggests an indefinite but very large figure. Therefore, 144,000 may represent the entire “called out” throughout history.¹⁹

¹⁹Adapted and corrected from *Compton's Interactive Bible NIV* © 1996.

Revelation 8:1-13. Now the Seventh Seal!

With opening of the final, completing seventh seal came silence in heaven—for half an hour [*half a region, district or boundary, ἡμιόριον, 2256, hay-mee-o-ran*].

- Q Who opened the seventh, final seal? So?
Q What does silence in heaven connote to you?

Seven messengers stood before the God (*theos*) holding seven trumpets. An eighth angel/messenger had a golden censer, and



stood at the altar. A lot of incense was offered to God, along with believer's prayers, right there at the golden altar. Then the censer

filled with fire, was hurled to the earth—thunder, rumblings, lightning and earthquake followed.

- Q Why is "God" prefaced with "the" in verse 2?
Q Why don't we use incense today to represent our prayers going to the LORD God?
Q Why was the burning censer hurled to the earth with such calamity?

Then remaining messengers sounded their trumpets. Hail mixed with blood, immense forest fires, no more green grass. A burning mountain sized object was tossed into the sea, 1/3 of the sea was turned to blood, 1/3 of the sea creatures died, 1/3 of ships on the sea were destroyed. A great blazing star fell on a third of fresh water sources. That star's name? Absinthium.²⁰ People died from this bitterness. Then the sun was struck; 1/3 of the moon was destroyed, and 1/3 of the stars. A third of the day was dark, as was the night (1/3 of moon gone?) As John watched all this, an eagle flying at "mid-heaven" level called out "Woe to the earth for there are three more trumpet blasts to be sounded!"

- Q Are these horrible things happening just to the earth/moon & sun, or the cosmos as well?
Q Why would an eagle be used to warn folk of even more impending danger? Are eagles good eating?
Q What could be worse than what has already been described?

REVELATION 8:1-13

When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

² And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

³ Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne.

⁴ The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

⁶ Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.

⁷ The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

⁸ The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, ⁹ a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

¹⁰ The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water—¹¹ the name of the star is Wormwood [*bitterness*]. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.

¹² The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.

¹³ As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!"

²⁰The English rendering "wormwood" additionally refers to the dark green oil produced by the plant, which was used to kill intestinal worms. It is indeed bitter.