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## “STUDIES IN REVELATION – THE SEVEN SEALS”

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### LESSON #1 - INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

- General overview of the sanctuary in Revelation (Explain the chart: “*The Sanctuary in Revelation*”).
- A few remarks on the introductory summary verses of the book of Revelation (3:21; 8:3-5; 11:18).

#### Ellen White and the Seals

On the surface, Ellen White appears to have very little to say about the first four seals and the seventh seal. But don't be fooled. Though she does not have much to say in terms of quantity she does have some significant qualitative statements that give us clues about when the events of each of the first four seals and the seventh seal transpire. She clearly indicates that the introductory vision of Revelation 4-5 applies to Christ's inauguration as High Priest upon His ascension. This gives us the crucial starting point for the seven seals.

As we shall see, several times Ellen White applies the expression of the first seal “conquering and to conquer” to the gospel conquests of the church. With regard to the second seal, Ellen White has a clear statement on the meaning of the sword that takes away peace from the earth. And in the third seal Ellen White has a clear remark about the oil and the wine. As we shall see, Ellen White has several unmistakable remarks about the fifth and sixth seals. Regarding the seventh seal, she does not quote Revelation 8:1 but clearly alludes to it.

#### Two Points of Time in the Seals and the Two Thrones of Revelation 3:21

Revelation 3:21 clearly distinguishes between two thrones. The first is the Father's throne (Revelation 4:1, 2). Revelation 5:5 then describes the moment when Jesus ascended to heaven and joined His Father at this throne (cf. Revelation 12:5; Hebrews 4:16; Hebrews 8:1; 12:2; 4:2; Acts 7:56; Romans 8:34). The second throne will belong to Jesus alone when He comes in His glorious kingdom (Revelation 11:18; 8:3-5; Matthew 19:28; 25:31; 19:4, 5; 20:11; 21:5) .

The reason why Jesus is sometimes depicted as sitting and other times as standing after His ascension is because he **stands** as High Priest but He **sits** as king of the kingdom of grace. In

Hebrews the emphasis falls upon His role as priest. In Revelation the emphasis is upon Jesus as king. This two-fold role of Jesus was clearly predicted in Genesis 14:18 where Melchizedek is described as the king of Salem and the priest of the Most High God. Picking up on Genesis 14:18, Psalm 110:1-4 describes Jesus as sitting at the Father's right hand and also as a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Later Zechariah 6:12, 13 describes this dual role of Jesus as king and priest. Finally, in I Corinthians 15:24-28 the apostle Paul portrays the co-regency of Jesus with the Father until all His enemies are made His footstool.

The tense of the verbs in Revelation 3:21 is important:

*"To him who **overcomes** (present, active, participle) I **will grant** (future, active, indicative) to sit with me on my throne, even as I **overcame** (past, active, indicative), and **sat down** (past, active, indicative) with my Father on his throne."*

Clearly, Jesus overcame and sat with His father on His throne. If we overcome, we will sit with Jesus on His throne.

### **The Sequence of Events in Revelation 4:1-8:1**

**Revelation 4:** The father is seen by John sitting alone on the throne in the heavenly throne room (the holy place) as **heaven prepares** to receive Jesus when He returns victoriously from earth at His ascension (Acts 1:9-11).

**Revelation 5:** Jesus, who has overcome the devil, the flesh and the world now **joins His Father** at the throne (5:6; 3:21) and sits at the Father's right hand until all His enemies are made His footstool (Psalm 110:1; I Corinthians 15:24-28)

**Revelation 6:1-17; 8:1:** After the ascension, the **saints overcome** on earth even as Jesus overcame while He was on the earth. The events of the seven seals transpire between the time when Jesus sat on His Father's throne and the time when the saints will join Jesus on His own throne.

**Revelation 7:9-17; (also 19:1-8):** The saints will be delivered from death in the final tribulation and they will ascend to heaven and join **Jesus on His throne**.

### **Another way of looking at it:**

**Revelation 4, 5:** The Christian era **begins**

**Revelation 7:9-17; 19:1-9** The Christian Era **ends**

**Revelation 4, 5:** Jesus **has overcome** and sat on the throne

**Revelation 7:9-17; 19:1-9** Saints **will overcome** and will sit on the throne

**Revelation 4, 5:** Praise is offered by the heavenly beings to the Father because He is the **Creator** and to the Lamb because He is the **Redeemer**.

**Revelation 7:9-17; 19:1-9:** The redeemed will offer praise to God for **delivering His people** from the wrath of the end time harlot and her daughters.

### **The relationship between the scene in Revelation 4, 5 and Daniel 7:8-14**

It is obvious that the **encampment** and the **court** of the sanctuary symbolized the earthly work of Jesus. It is on earth where needy sinners reside and it was on earth where Jesus Christ lived a perfect life and was sacrificed for sin.

Chapter one of Revelation describes Jesus as the “firstborn from the dead”, the one who ‘washed us from our sins in His own blood’ and the one who “was dead and is alive forevermore” (verses 5, 18). All of these events transpired in the court on earth. The next stage must therefore transpire in the holy place.

Where did Jesus go upon His ascension? The Bible tells us that He sat down at the right hand of God (his role as king of the kingdom of grace) and that He was standing at the right hand of God (his role as ministering High Priest, because priests **stand** ministering before God) [Acts 7:55; Hebrews 1:3]. It is crystal clear that both the Father and the Son were located in the same place upon the ascension. But, where was that place? There can be no doubt that they were both in the holy place. And why is this? The geography of the Hebrew sanctuary dictates it. In the sanctuary, the court was followed by the holy place.

Those who believe that Jesus went directly into the most holy place upon His ascension are at a loss to explain why Jesus would leap from the court to the most holy place upon His ascension thus totally bypassing the holy place.

Both Peter and Paul clearly inform us that Jesus went to heaven with His blood to be our intercessor, a work which clearly belongs to the holy place (Hebrews 7:25-26; I Timothy 2:5; Romans 8:34; Acts 2:16-39). This is why Jesus, after His ascension, is depicted as one walking among the seven candlesticks and ministering before the golden altar of incense (Revelation 1:13-16; 8:3-5).

It doesn't take the brain of a rocket scientist to figure out that if the Father and the Son were in the holy place until 1798 and then moved for the judgment at some point thereafter, they must have moved to the most holy place. There are no other options because the work of judgment must be performed in the most holy place where the Ark of the Covenant and the Law of God are found!! (Study Revelation 11:15-19 where this is made crystal clear). Thus, we conclude that both the Father and the Son were in the holy place until the beginning of the judgment.

But sometime after 1798, the Father moved from the holy to the most holy place. This movement is highlighted by the fact that the Father's throne, as seen in the synonymous parallelism, has fiery wheels!! This is made clear in the NASB translation of Daniel 7:10 where we are told about the Father: “His **throne** was ablaze with flames, its **wheels** were a burning fire.” According to Ezekiel 1 the angels who are like flames of fire (Psalm 104:3, 4; Hebrews 1:7; 2 Kings 6:17; Ezekiel 1:12, 13; Acts 2:2, 3) actually move the wheels as the heavenly chariot moves the Father into the most holy place.

But notice in Daniel 7:10 that there is more than one throne. There are thrones. How many thrones are there and who sits upon them? Daniel 7 does not provide an answer to these two questions but one thing is certain, it is not the angels who sit on the thrones. And how do we know this? Simply because the Bible makes it clear that the angels are constantly on the move. They are ministering spirits sent out to minister to those who will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14). In the Bible the angels always **stand** (Zechariah 4:14) before God and are **sent** to minister throughout the universe. In fact, in Ezekiel 1 the angels are in constant movement like bolts of lightning, never having a restful moment! Notice the following awesome description given by Ellen G. White:

*“The Bible shows us God in His high and holy place, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy beings, all waiting to do His will. Through these messengers, He is in active communication with every part of His dominion. By His Spirit He is everywhere present. Through the agency of His Spirit and His angels He ministers to the children of men.” The Ministry of Healing, p. 417*

Revelation 5:11 describes God surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels. But the 24 elders sit on the thrones, not the angels (Revelation 4:4).

As we study Daniel 7 and Revelation 4-5 together, we discover that the thrones are **twenty-four in number** and that the **elders** sit upon them. Who these elders are and what their role is in the heavenly economy remains to be seen.

### **Daniel 7 and Ezekiel 1-11**

There is undoubtedly a very **close link between Daniel 7 and Revelation 4-5**. But before we examine this relationship we must make a few remarks about the relationship between Daniel 7 and Ezekiel 1-11.

Even a hasty glance at these two passages will reveal their close relationship. In both we have a chariot-throne, angels who guide the wheels, fire, clouds, and an awesome being who sits on the chariot-throne and a special man in the midst of the throne. And in both the idea of judgment is at the forefront.

It should not surprise us that Daniel and Ezekiel spoke in similar terms because they were contemporaries. A thorough study of Ezekiel 1 is far beyond the scope of this paper, but as William Shea has shown elsewhere, Ezekiel 1 describes the journey of God from heaven to earth to judge apostate Jerusalem in the year 592 B. C.

It is of critical importance to remember that in Ezekiel it was God’s **apostate people** who were in view. They were committing **abominations**, the greatest of which was sun worship (8:16), they were called a **harlot** (chapter 16), they were shedding **innocent blood**, the priests did violence to the **law**, and prophets and kings were corrupt.

But in their midst of Jerusalem was a **remnant** who sighed and cried because of the abominations which were being committed. These were to be **sealed** for salvation while the apostate ones would be marked for destruction (9:1-6).

After the sealing process concluded, the *Shekinah* glory departed from the temple (11:22-23), the city was left **desolate** and Nebuchadnezzar came and executed God's judgment upon it in 586.

It will be noticed that in common with Daniel, Ezekiel presented three steps in the judgment process: The **investigation** (9:1-4), the **sentence** when the *Shekinah* left, (11:22-23) and the **execution** of the sentence (9:5-6).

Upon close inspection, we discern that what happened with Jerusalem locally and historically (Ezekiel's view) was a type of what will take place universally and prophetically (Daniel's view). In other words, Ezekiel depicts the type while Daniel presents the antitype. In Ezekiel God came to judge **Jerusalem**, but in Daniel 7 God came to judge a **worldwide** apostate Christianity.

As we have already shown in another place, Daniel 7's little horn symbolizes an **apostate Christian power**. This power is committing **abominations** (Matthew 24:15; Revelation 17:5; Daniel 11:31), it is described as a **harlot** (Revelation 17:1), it sheds **innocent blood** (Revelation 17:6), it thinks it can change the **law** (Daniel 7:25), it persecutes a **remnant** who remain faithful to God (Daniel 7:21, 25).

As in Ezekiel 9, God's faithful ones will be **sealed** for salvation (Revelation 7:1-4) whereas the apostates will be marked for **destruction** (Revelation 14:9-11). The *Shekinah* will then depart the heavenly temple (Revelation 15:5-8) and then **desolation** and destruction will come upon the apostates in the form of the seven last plagues and the second coming of Jesus (Revelation 16-19).

The key point we should remember here is that both Daniel and Ezekiel portray a judgment process, which has God's **professed people** in view. Clearly, among those who claim to be God's people, there are genuine and counterfeit believers. The judgment process has the purpose of separating these two groups.

Now let us take a look at the relationship between Daniel 7 and Revelation 4-5. The striking similarities between these two passages have led some scholars to conclude that they are both describing the same historical event. But is this the case? Are both Daniel 7 and Revelation 4-5 describing the identical judgment that begins sometime after 1798? I believe the answer to this question is a resounding no!! Why, then, are there so many similarities? The answer is quite simple: The two passages are portraying two distinct historical events where the **same beings** are present.

It is clear from what we have studied so far that the scene of Revelation 4-5 is describing the inauguration of Christ's priesthood upon His ascension to heaven. We are told in Acts 1:9-11 that Jesus was taken to heaven in a cloud. Before Jesus arrived, the Father was seen sitting upon His throne by himself (Revelation 4:2). Surrounding Him were the elders on 24 thrones

(4:4). Contrary to Daniel 7, there is no evidence that the Father moved to this throne from somewhere else, He is simply there. Significantly, at this point Jesus had not yet arrived. But in 5:6 Jesus appeared on the scene, not as the **Son of man** of Daniel 7, but as a **lamb** “as if it had been slain.” A song was then sung extolling Jesus as the one who was slain to redeem mankind (5:9). Revelation 5:11 uses almost the same terminology as Daniel 7 to describe the angelic hosts.

As we have already seen, Jesus ascended to the Father in the holy place for His inauguration. Upon His arrival, the Father was waiting for Him as were the 24 elders, and the seraphim and cherubim to celebrate His work of redemption as the Lamb of God. This is the glorious event which Peter described in his eloquent sermon in Acts chapter 2. Ellen G. White makes this clear in her book, The Desire of Ages, pp. 831-835. It will be noticed that the very same beings that were present for His inauguration in the holy place would later be present for the beginning of the judgment in the most holy place. This is why the two scenes appear so similar.

In Daniel 7 the entire heavenly entourage moved from the holy to the most holy place. Notice that when this happened, a different song was sung extolling God as judge and king! (Revelation 11:15-19). Ellen White describes this glorious movement in Early Writings, pp. 54-56 where she is clearly making reference to the vision of Daniel 7.

In short, Revelation 4-5 describes Jesus going from **earth to heaven** on a **cloud** to His **Father** in the **holy place** upon His **ascension** to be invested as **High Priest**. On the other hand, in Daniel 7, Jesus is portrayed as coming on **clouds** from the **holy** to the most **holy place** to His **Father** in **1844** to be invested as **Judge** and ultimately as **King**. The same beings are present on both occasions and this is why the scenes are so similar.

### **The relationship between Revelation Chapters 4, 5 and 7, 19**

**Notice the following chiastic structure:**

- **Church militant** in Revelation 2, 3 becomes the church triumphant in Revelation 21, 22
- **The seals** in Revelation 4:1-8:1 reach their climax in Revelation 19, 20
- **The trumpets** in Revelation 8:2-11:19 reach their climax in Revelation 16-18

**Comments on Revelation Chapter 4: The throne room is prepared for the arrival of the war hero. The focus on this chapter is upon God the Father as Creator.**

**Verse 1:**

*“After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, ‘Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.’”*

John sees a door in heaven which **stands open**. There is no evidence that the one who is sitting on the **throne has moved** there from another place. He is simply there. The location of this door in heaven remains to be seen. The door obviously leads into a **building**—the heavenly



sanctuary. But the heavenly sanctuary/temple has **two doors**—the one that leads to the holy place and the one that leads to the most holy place.

## Verse 2:

*“Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.”*

John is invited to come up to heaven. And immediately John is “**in the Spirit**”. This expression means that the angel took John to heaven in his thinking processes. See also Revelation 17:1, 3; 21:9, 10; II Corinthians 12:2-4 where John and Paul had a similar experience. **Ellen White** also had a similar experience:

*“I saw an angel flying swiftly to me. He quickly **carried me from the earth to the holy city**. In the city I saw a temple, which I entered. I passed through a door before I came to the first veil. This veil was raised, and I passed into the holy place. Here I saw the altar of incense, the candlestick with seven lamps, and the table on which was the showbread. After viewing the glory of the holy, Jesus raised the second veil, and I passed into the holy of holies. Christian Experience and Teaching of Mrs. Ellen G. White, p. 91*

*“The Lord has given me a view of other worlds. **Wings were given me and an angel** attended me from the city to a place that was bright and glorious. The grass of the place was living green, and the birds there warbled a sweet song. The inhabitants of the place were of all sizes; they were noble, majestic, and lovely. They bore the express image of Jesus, and their countenances beamed with holy joy, expressive of the freedom and happiness of the place. I asked one of them why they were so much more lovely than those on the earth. The reply was, “We have lived in strict obedience to the commandments of God, and have not fallen by disobedience, like those on the earth.” . . . I begged of my attending angel to let me remain in that place. I could not bear the thought of coming back to this dark world again.” The Adventist Home, p. 543*

## Verses 3 and 4:

*“And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.”*

A throne is set in heaven inside the door and **one is sitting** on it. The one who is sitting on the throne is never identified by name but the context clearly indicates that it is God the Father.

The **glory of God** appears like a **jasper** (a reddish stone with black veins) and **sardius** (also reddish but with white veins) stone. What John is beholding is not actually God but rather the glory which surrounds God. **Ellen White** had a similar experience:

*“The Father's person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered Him. I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like Himself. He said He had, but I could not behold it, for said He, “If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist.” Early Writings, p. 54*

*“On page 55, I stated that a cloud of glorious light covered the Father and that His person could not be seen. I also stated that I saw the Father rise from the throne. The Father was enshrouded with a body of light and glory, so that His person could not be seen; yet I knew that it was the Father and that from His person emanated this light and glory. When I saw this body of light and glory rise from the throne, I knew it was because the Father moved, therefore said, I saw the Father rise. The glory, or excellency, of His form I never saw; no one could behold it and live; yet the body of light and glory that enshrouded His person could be seen.” Early Writings, p. 92*

The **rainbow**: is a symbol of God’s mercy and justice (Genesis 9:16 Ezekiel 1:28). The same word is used in the Old Testament to describe the bow of a warrior and the rainbow in the sky.

Well does the Illustrated Bible, volume 3, p. 1318 affirm:

*“Against the black storm clouds God’s war bow is transformed into a rainbow by the sunlight of his mercy and grace.”*

Ellen White has much to say about the meaning of the rainbow. Here are a few statements:

*“Angels, cherubim, and seraphim bow in holy reverence before God. ‘Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands’ of angels are round about the throne, and are sent to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. The ruling principles of God’s throne are **justice and mercy**. It is called the throne of grace. Would you have divine enlightenment? Go to the throne of grace. You will be answered from the mercy seat. A covenant has been entered into by the Father and by the Son to save the world through Christ. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” No power save that of Omnipotence could make such a covenant. The rainbow above the throne is a token that God through Christ binds himself to save all who believe in him. The covenant is as sure as the throne, and his throne is established in righteousness. Then why are we so unbelieving, so distrustful? Why doubt so frequently, and trust God so fitfully? **Whenever we come to the throne of God to ask his mercy, we may look up, and behold the rainbow of promise, and find in it assurance that our prayers shall be answered.”** Signs of the Times, October 10, 1892*

*“As the bow in the cloud results from the union of sunshine and shower, so the bow above God’s throne represents the **union of His mercy and His justice**. To the sinful but repentant soul God says: Live thou; “I have found a ransom.” Job 33:24. Education, p. 115*

*“As the bow in the cloud is formed by the union of the sunlight and the shower, so the rainbow encircling the throne represents **the combined power of mercy and justice**. It is not justice alone that is to be maintained; for this would eclipse the glory of the rainbow of promise above the throne; man could see only the penalty of the law. Were there no justice, no penalty, there would be no stability to the government of God.” God’s Amazing Grace, p. 70*

*“The One who has stood as our Intercessor; who hears all penitential prayers and confessions; who is represented with a rainbow, the symbol of **grace and love**, encircling His head, is soon to cease His work in the heavenly sanctuary. **Grace and mercy will then descend from the throne,***

**and justice will take their place.** He for whom His people have looked will assume His right--the office of Supreme Judge.--RH Jan. 1, 1889. Last Day Events, p. 240

#### Verse 4:

*“Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.”*

#### The Twenty Four Elders

#### The Morning Stars and the Sons of God

#### Job 38:4-7:

*“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the **morning stars** sang together, and all the **sons of God** shouted for joy?”*

**Conclusions:** Two groups of beings already existed when God created this world, the morning stars and the sons of God.

#### The Morning Stars

**Revelation 12:3, 9** identifies the stars as **angels**. But who are the sons of God?

#### The Sons of God

#### Job 1:6, 7:

*“Now there was a day when the sons of God **came** to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan **came** also **among** them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence **comest** thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said: From going to and fro in the **earth**, and from walking up and down in it.”*

Some very **interesting details** emerge from these verses:

- The sons of God **do not always dwell** in the presence of God. They **came** to present themselves on a **certain day**. This contrasts with the previous verse where we are told that Job offered sacrifices **always** (Job 1:7).
- Satan came **among** the sons of God. Evidently, Satan claimed the right to belong to this select group. What made him feel like **he had the right** to appear among this select group?
- Satan came representing a **planet**, the earth. Where, then, must the other sons of God have come from? Is it just possible that they also came from other planets?

## Job 2:1, 2:

*“Again there was a day when the sons of God **came** to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan **came** also among them to present himself before the LORD. <sup>2</sup> And the LORD said to Satan, “From **where** do you **come**?” So Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the **earth**, and from walking back and forth on it.”*

**Note:** The same remarks about Job 1:6, 7 apply to Job 2:1, 2. The word “again” is important. If the sons of God came **again**, then they must have left the presence of God and gone back to where they came from for the first meeting.

## Why Was Satan Among the Sons of God?

Why did Satan think he had the right to appear among this select group? The answer is found in **Luke 4:5, 6** where Jesus was tempted by the devil:

*“And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the **kingdoms** of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him: All this power **will I give** thee, and the glory of them: for that is **delivered unto me**; and to whomsoever **I will I give it.**”*

**Conclusion:** Satan stole the position which rightfully belonged to Adam. He usurped **Adam’s rightful throne**. This is the reason why Jesus called Satan “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31). When Adam **chose to obey Satan**, he became **Satan’s subject** for we are subjects of the master whom we choose to obey (**Romans 6:16**).

For additional evidence that the universe is governed by a heavenly council see **2 Chronicles 18:18-22**.

## Adam: The Original Son of God

### Luke 3:38: The Son of God

*“... the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the **son of God.**”*

Regarding Adam’s status as the son of God, we have this from **Ellen White**:

*“The genealogy of our race, as given by inspiration, traces back its origin, not to a line of developing germs, mollusks, and quadrupeds, but to the great Creator. Though formed from the dust, Adam was **“the son of God.”** He was placed, as God’s representative, over the lower orders of being.” PP, p. 45.*

**Conclusion:** The original “son of God” was Adam. But he was the **son of God** in a special and different sense than we are—he was the son of God by creation, not **procreation**.

**Psalm 8:3-8:** At creation Adam was **crowned** and given his **realm of dominion** (see also Genesis 1:26-28).

*“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have **crowned him** with glory and honor. You have made him to have **dominion** over the works of Your hands; You have put **all things under his feet**, all sheep and oxen--even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas.”*

Ellen White amplifies this thought:

*“Adam was **crowned as king** in Eden. To him was given **dominion** over every living thing that God had created. The Lord blessed Adam and Eve with intelligence such as he had not given to the animal creation. He made Adam the **rightful sovereign** over all the works of his hands.”*  
*Review and Herald, February 24, 1874.*

**Conclusion:** Adam was **crowned as king** and the **realm** of his kingdom was planet earth.

### **Adam and Eve’s Garments**

**Genesis 2:25** explains that Adam and Eve were naked and were not ashamed. A closer look reveals that they were covered with glorious **garments of light**.

**Psalms 104:1-2:** *“Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty, Who cover Yourself with **light as with a garment**, Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.”*

In **Revelation 12: 1** the true church is garbed with the glorious light of the sun. In **Matthew 17** the raiment of Jesus is spoken of as being **white** as the **light**.

Notice the following incisive comment by Ellen G. White:

*“The sinless pair wore no artificial garments; they were clothed with a **covering of light and glory**, such as the angels wear. So long as they lived in obedience to God, this **robe of light** continued to enshroud them.”* *PP*, p. 45.

**Conclusion:** Adam and Eve were clothed with white **garments of light**.

### **Adam was the Father and Representative of Planet Earth**

*“In Eden, God set up the memorial of His work of creation, in placing His blessing upon the seventh day. The Sabbath was committed to Adam, the **father and representative of the whole human family**.”* *PP*, p. 48.

## The Context of Revelation Four and Five

Revelation 4 describes **four orders of beings**: One who is seated on the throne, God the Father (4:2); the seven Spirits before the throne (4:5); the four living creatures or seraphim (4:6-8; Isaiah 6:1-3); and the 24 elders (4:4). **Missing** in chapter four are the angelic hosts and Christ. It is important to realize that the twenty-four elders were around the throne before the arrival of Jesus in chapter 5.

Revelation 5 depicts two other additional orders of being: The **angels** who arrived with the **Lamb** who had just been slain and resurrected.

### Who are the Twenty-four Elders?

Ellen White in *The Great Controversy* gives the impression that the sons of God in Job were angels. But we need to understand that the angels were there as well as the representatives of the worlds:

*“The Scriptures declare that upon one occasion, when the angels of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them (Job 1:6), not to bow before the Eternal King, but to further his own malicious designs against the righteous. With the same object he is in attendance when men assemble for the worship of God.”* GC, p. 518

### Revelation 4:4

*“And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders **sitting**, clothed in **white raiment**; and they had on their heads **crowns of gold**.”*

- They are seated on **thrones**, therefore they are **rulers**. But where are they rulers?
- They have **crowns** on their heads, they are **kings** (Though generally the word *stefanos* is used to describe the crown one who has gained a victory, there are exceptions. See for example Matthew 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2; Revelation 14:14).
- They are **robed in white** garments of **light**.
- They are **creatures** (Revelation 4:10, 11).

### Ellen White Identifies the 24 Elders

*“All heaven was waiting to welcome the Savior to the celestial courts. As **He ascended**, He led the way, and the **multitude of captives** [notice that these arrive in heaven with Jesus] set free at His resurrection followed. The **heavenly host**, with shouts and acclamations of praise and celestial song, attended the joyous train.*

As they drew near to the city of God, the challenge is given by the escorting angels:

*"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;  
And the King of glory shall come in."*

Joyfully the waiting sentinels respond:

*"Who is this King of glory?"*

*This they say, not because they know not who He is, but because they would hear the answer of exalted praise:*

*"The Lord strong and mighty,  
The Lord mighty in battle!  
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;  
And the King of glory shall come in."*

*Again is heard the challenge, "Who is this King of glory?" for the angels never weary of hearing His name exalted. The escorting angels make reply:*

*"The Lord of hosts;  
He is the King of glory." Ps. 24:7-10.*

*Then the portals of the city of God are opened wide, and the **angelic throng sweep through the gates** amid a burst of rapturous music.*

*There is the **throne** [4:2], and around it the **rainbow** of promise [4:3]. There are **cherubim and seraphim** [4:6-8]. The commanders of the angel hosts, **the sons of God**, the **representatives of the unfallen worlds** [4:4], are assembled. The **heavenly council** before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the **representatives** of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,--all are there to **welcome** the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King.*

*But He waves them back. Not yet; He cannot now receive the coronet of glory and the royal robe. He enters into the presence of His Father [the one seated on the throne]. He points to His wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet; He lifts His hands, bearing the print of nails [the lamb as though it had been slain]. He points to the tokens of His triumph; He presents to God the wave sheaf, those raised with Him as representatives of that great multitude who shall come forth from the grave at His second coming. He approaches the Father [the one seated on the throne], with whom there is joy over one sinner that repents; who rejoices over one with singing. Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled. When upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished," He addressed the Father. The*

*compact had been fully carried out. Now He declares: Father, it is finished. I have done Thy will, O My God. I have completed the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." [the sealed book will reveal who will inherit with Jesus] John 19:30; 17:24.*

*The voice of God is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ's toiling, struggling ones on earth are "accepted in the Beloved." Eph. 1:6. Before the heavenly angels and the representatives of unfallen worlds, they are declared justified. Where He is, there His church shall be. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Ps. 85:10. The Father's arms encircle His Son, and the word is given, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Heb. 1:6.*

*With joy unutterable, rulers and principalities and powers acknowledge the supremacy of the Prince of life. The angel host prostrate themselves before Him, while the glad shout fills all the courts of heaven, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Rev. 5:12.*

*Songs of triumph mingle with the music from angel harps, till heaven seems to overflow with joy and praise. Love has conquered. The lost is found. Heaven rings with voices in lofty strains proclaiming: "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Rev. 5:13. The Desire of Ages, pp. 833-835*

### **Satan Missing in Heaven**

But there is one who is **missing** in this heavenly celebration: Satan. Normally Satan would be there representing planet earth. Why wasn't Satan present there? In **John 12:31-33** Jesus predicted that the ruler of this world would be cast out at the cross:

*"Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." This He said, signifying by what death He would die."*

And the inhabitants of heaven, many years latter described the victory celebration that took place in heaven when Jesus died on the cross:

*"Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been **cast down**.<sup>11</sup> And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.<sup>12</sup> Therefore rejoice O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has **come down to you**, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.'"*

Satan was cast out of heaven at the cross as the representative of this world. His place was taken by the second Adam who defeated him on the battlefield where Adam lost. Jesus recovered what the first Adam lost.



## Jesus is the Son of God

**Luke 1:35:** Jesus is the Son of God

*“And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the **Son of God.**”*

## Jesus is the Last Adam

**1 Corinthians 15:22:** Jesus took the place of the first Adam.

*“For as in **Adam** all die, even so in **Christ** shall all be made alive.”*

**1 Corinthians 15:45**

*“And so it is written: The **first man Adam** was made a living soul; the **last Adam** was made a quickening spirit.”*

**Romans 5:18**

*“Therefore as by the offence of **one** judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of **one** the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”*

## Jesus is the King and Representative of Planet Earth

**Hebrews 2:5-9: Psalm 8:3-5** in its original context is referring to the first Adam. But **Hebrews 2:5-9** applies this Psalm to Jesus who took the place of the original Adam.

*“For He has not put the world to come of which we speak, in subjection to angels. <sup>6</sup> But one testified in a certain place, saying: “What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? <sup>7</sup> You have made him a little lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. <sup>8</sup> You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. <sup>9</sup> But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste **death for everyone.** “*

*“The human race does not stand in the righteousness of character which Adam possessed at his creation. Although neglect to keep the requirements of God is sin, and the wages of sin is death, yet there is no claim made that man may have eternal life except through the obedience and righteousness of Jesus Christ, who is the **representative and head** of all humanity.” Signs of the Times, June 11, 1894.*

*“Jesus humbled himself, clothing his divinity with humanity, in order that he might stand as the **head and representative** of the human family, and by both precept and example condemn sin in the flesh, and give the lie to Satan's charges.” Signs of the Times, January 16, 1896.*

*“As representative of the fallen race, Christ passed over the same ground on which Adam stumbled and fell. By a life of perfect obedience to God's law, Christ redeemed man from the penalty of Adam's disgraceful fall.” Manuscript 126, 1901.*

*“Christ was to suffer in our behalf, standing at the head of humanity as representative of the race. He was to work out the character which every follower of His is to work out, through the provision He has made,--His infinite sacrifice, His life and death on earth.” The Gospel Herald, March 1, 1901.*

### **Will Adam Ever be placed on the Throne Again?**

*“As the ransomed ones are welcomed to the City of God, there rings out upon the air an exultant cry of adoration. The two Adams are about to meet. The Son of God is standing with outstretched arms to receive the father of our race--the being whom He created, who sinned against his Maker, and for whose sin the marks of the crucifixion are borne upon the Savior's form. As Adam discerns the prints of the cruel nails, he does not fall upon the bosom of his Lord, but in humiliation casts himself at His feet, crying: "Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain!" Tenderly the Savior lifts him up and bids him look once more upon the Eden home from which he has so long been exiled*

*After his expulsion from Eden, Adam's life on earth was filled with sorrow. Every dying leaf, every victim of sacrifice, every blight upon the fair face of nature, every stain upon man's purity, was a fresh reminder of his sin. Terrible was the agony of remorse as he beheld iniquity abounding, and, in answer to his warnings, met the reproaches cast upon himself as the cause of sin. With patient humility he bore, for nearly a thousand years, the penalty of transgression. Faithfully did he repent of his sin and trust in the merits of the promised Savior, and he died in the hope of a resurrection. The Son of God redeemed man's failure and fall; and now, through the work of the atonement, **Adam is reinstated in his first dominion.**” GC, p. 647.*

### **A Process of Elimination (who the 24 elders are not)**

- The 24 elders are not **cherubim** nor **seraphim** because these two groups are distinguished from the 24 elders (Revelation 4:4, 10).
- They are not part of the **angelic hosts** because the angelic hosts are clearly distinguished from them (5:12). As we have seen, the 24 elders were present in heaven (Revelation 4:4) before the angelic hosts arrived with Jesus.
- They are not members of the **unnumbered host of the redeemed**. This is made evident by the fact that one of the elders asked John about the identity of the great multitude that no man could number ‘from every nation, kindred, people and tongue’ (Revelation

7:13). It is rather obvious that the elder would not ask about the identity of the great multitude if he belonged to it.

Revelation 5:9, 10 seems to indicate that the elders sing the song of their redemption *“from every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”* But Revelation 7:13 distinguishes one of the elders from the great multitude that was redeemed from *“all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues.”* (Revelation 7:9). This clearly proves that the translation of Revelation 5:9, 10 in the King James Version is incorrect.

- The 24 elders are not part of the **144,000** because the 144,000 are distinguished from them (Revelation 14:3).
- The 24 elders are not those who will resurrect in the **special resurrection** (Daniel 12:2) just before the second coming because the 24 elders were already in heaven when Jesus ascended (Revelation 4:4).
- The 24 elders are not those who will resurrect in the **general resurrection** because they were in heaven when Jesus ascended (I Thessalonians 4:15-17).
- The 24 elders are not those who **resurrected with Jesus** because the 24 elders were already there before Jesus arrived (Revelation 4:4).

**Conclusion:** They are neither **angelic** nor **human**. They must be some other order of being.

### **A Problem in Translation**

How, then, do we explain Revelation 5:8-10 where the 24 elders (in the KJV and NKJV) appear to be singing the song of their redemption from *“every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation?”* Let’s take a look at the passage as it appears in the King James Version:

#### **Revelation 5:8-10:**

*“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts **and** four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed **us** to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made **us** unto our God kings and priests: and **we** shall reign on the earth.”*

Doesn’t this passage explicitly state that the elders were redeemed **from the earth**, that they were made kings and priests and that they shall rule upon the earth? How then could they be representatives from other worlds?

Before I answer this question, I would like to share a word about the King James Version. I personally believe that the KJV is an excellent translation. It is a reverent version which is written in beautiful Victorian English. Having said this however, some people revere the KJV so

much that they practically give the impression that it was verbally dictated by God! Anyone attempting to amend or change anything in the King James Version is accused of being an agent of the Jesuits. But the KJV is by no means perfect. For example, the much maligned NIV is much more accurate than the KJV when it translates texts that deal with the state of the dead.

The simple fact is that the King James Version has mistranslated Revelation 5:9, 10 and every modern translation has corrected the error. Notice the following translations:

**This mistranslation is corrected in all reputable modern versions:**

Revelation 5:9-10 (***New International Version***):

*“And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased **men** for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made **them** to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and **they** will reign on the earth.””*

Revelation 5:9-10 (***New American Standard***):

*“And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood **men** from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.’ ‘You have made **them** to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and **they** will reign upon the earth.””*

Revelation 5:9-10 (***Revised Standard Version***):

*“. . . and they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom **men** for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made **them** a kingdom and priests to our God, and **they** shall reign on earth.””*

Revelation 5:9-10 (***New English Bible***):

*“. . . and they were singing a new song: ‘Thou art worthy to take the scroll and to break its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst purchase for God **men** of every tribe and language, people and nation; thou hast made of **them** a royal house, to serve our God as priests; and **they** shall reign upon earth.”*

Revelation 5:9, 10 (***Weymouth Bible***):

*“And now they sing a new song, saying, ‘Worthy art Thou to take the book and break its seals; because Thou hast been slain, and hast purchased for God with Thine own blood **men** out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast formed **them** into a kingdom to be priests to our God, and **they** shall reign over the earth.”*

Revelation 5:9, 10 (**Phillips translation**):

*“They sang a new song and these are the words they sang: ‘Worthy art thou to take the book and break its seals, for thou hast been slain and by thy blood hast purchased for God **men** from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation! Thou hast made **them** a kingdom of priests for our God, and **they** shall reign as kings upon the earth.”*

Revelation 5:9, 10 (**Jerusalem Bible, Catholic**):

*“They sang a new hymn: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and break the seals of it, because you were sacrificed, and with your blood you bought **men** for God of every race, language, people and nation and made **them** a line of kings and priests, to serve our God and to rule the world.”*

Revelation 5:9, 10 (**The New American Bible, Catholic**):

*“This is the new hymn they sang: ‘Worthy are you to receive the scroll and break open its seals, for you were slain. With your blood you purchased for God **men** of every race and tongue, of every people and nation, you made of **them** a kingdom, and priests to serve our God, and **they** shall reign upon the earth.”*

Revelation 5:9, 10 (**The Jewish New Testament**):

*“. . . and they sang a new song, ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals; because you were slaughtered; at the cost of blood you ransomed for God **persons** from every tribe, language, people and nation. You made **them** into a kingdom for God to rule, cohanim [priests] to serve him; and **they** will rule over the earth.”*

### **Why the elders cannot be human:**

- First, the elders were **already present** in the Father’s heavenly throne room before Jesus arrived so they cannot be those who resurrected with Him.
- Second, this song was sung by **both** the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders (Revelation 4:8). It is absolutely clear that the four living creatures (which we will shortly identify as seraphim) **were not redeemed** from among men and **will not reign** upon the earth.
- Finally, the same group who were redeemed by the Lamb from every nation, tribe, tongue and people is **distinguished** from the elder who asked about their identity (Revelation 7:9, 11, 12)

### **The Elders in the Rest of Revelation**

**Revelation 5:12, 13** points to a **future celebration** in heaven when the redeemed will be present because every creature on earth was not present there when the song was first sung.

The 24 elders are mentioned in four other passages in the book of Revelation. In each of these, with the exception of 11:16, the redeemed are present.

- **Revelation 7:13:** The elders in the context of future victory (throne [7:9], Lamb [7:9], four living creatures [7:11], 24 elders [7:11], angels [7:11] the redeemed [7:9]).
- **Revelation 11:16:** The elders in the context of future victory (Lord [11:15], Christ [11:15], elders [11:16], angelic hosts [11:15]).
- **Revelation 14:3:** The elders in the context of future victory (throne [14:3], Lamb [14:1], four living creatures [14:3], 24 elders [14:3], 144, 000 redeemed from the earth [14:1]).
- **Revelation 19:1, 2:** The elders in the context of future victory (throne [19:4], Christ [Lamb [19:9], four living creatures [19:4], 24 elders [19:4], angels [19:1], multitude of the redeemed [19:6]).

Notice the following chart that describes the beings that are present in Revelation 4, 5, 7 and 19:

### Parallels between Revelation 4, 5, 7, 19

Revelation 4	Revelation 5	Revelation 7	Revelation 19
Father (4:2)	Father (5:1)	Father (7:10)	God (19:4)
24 Elders (4:4)	24 Elders (5:6)	24 Elders (7:11)	Elders (19:4)
4 Living Creatures (4:6-7)	4 Living Creatures (5:6)	4 Living Creatures (7:11)	Creatures (19:4)
Seven Spirits (4:5)	Seven Spirits (5:6)	Work finished	Work finished
	Lamb (5:6)	Lamb (7:10, 17)	Lamb (19:7, 9)
	Angelic Hosts (5:11)	Angels (7:11)	Angels (19:6)
		Great multitude (7:9)	Great Multitude (19:1, 6)

#### Words of Explanation:

It will be noticed that in Revelation 4 the Father, the elders, the four living creatures and the seven Spirits are present. In Revelation 5 the angelic hosts and the Lamb are added but the seven Spirits are sent to the earth. Finally, in Revelation 7 and 19 the great multitude of the redeemed join the scene. A careful analysis of the hymns reveals that in chapter 4 the motivation for singing is creation. In chapter 5 the motivation is redemption. But in chapters 7 and 19 the motivation is deliverance in the final crisis. This can be seen in Revelation 7:10 where salvation from annihilation in the great tribulation is the motivation and in Revelation 19:1, 2 where God's people have been delivered from the great harlot and are rejoicing because the marriage of the Lamb has come. Songs by the elders, the four living creatures have faded from view and now the redeemed are the singers.

## The Final Celebration

**Luke 15:4-7: The final celebration spoken of in Revelation 5:12, 13 is described in the parable of the lost sheep:**

*“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them [this sinful world], does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness [the sinless worlds], and go after [Jesus coming down to this earth] the one which is lost until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup> And when he comes home [the final celebration in heaven], he calls together his friends and neighbors [the angels and the representatives of the sinless worlds], saying to them, ‘**Rejoice with me**, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ <sup>7</sup> I say to you that likewise there **will be more joy** in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”*

**Ellen White has made it crystal clear that this parable has a broader meaning than is generally understood:**

*“By the lost sheep Christ represents not only the individual sinner but the one world that has apostatized and has been ruined by sin. **This world** is but an atom in the vast dominions over which God presides, yet **this little fallen world--the one lost sheep**--is more precious in His sight than are the ninety and nine that went not astray from the fold. Christ, the loved Commander in the heavenly courts, stooped from His high estate, laid aside the glory that He had with the Father, in order to save the one lost world. For this He left the sinless worlds on high, the ninety and nine that loved Him, and came to this earth, to be “wounded for our transgressions” and “bruised for our iniquities.” (Isa. 53:5.) God gave Himself in His Son that He **might have the joy of receiving back the sheep that was lost.** Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 190, 191*

### Verse 5: The Location of the Throne in heaven

*“And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”*

This throne (Revelation 4:2) is in the **holy place** for the following reasons:

- The **seven lamps** of fire were burning **before** the throne. The word for lamps here is *lampades*, which is the very word that is used for the seven-branched candlestick in the Septuagint. This strongly hints that this scene is taking place in the holy place. The seven lamps that are before the throne are interpreted as the seven Spirits of God.
- But notice that in chapter 4 the seven spirits have **not yet been sent out into the earth**. They are not sent until Jesus arrives and is installed as the high priest and sends the Holy Spirit on the **Day of Pentecost (5:6)**. The number seven would indicate that the Holy Spirit **spoke to the seven churches** because each church ends by saying “he who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

*“The holy places of the sanctuary in heaven are represented by the two apartments in the sanctuary on earth. As in vision the apostle John was granted a view of the temple of God in heaven, he beheld there “seven lamps of fire burning before the throne.” Rev. 4:5. He saw an angel “having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.” Rev. 8:3. Here the prophet was permitted to behold the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven; and he saw there the “seven lamps of fire” and the “golden altar,” represented by the golden candlestick and the altar of incense in the sanctuary on earth.” The Faith I Live By, p. 202*

- What is right **in front of** the candlestick? It is the **Table of Showbread**. The table of showbread was at the north of the holy place and God’s throne is in the sides of the north (Isaiah 14:12-14).
- There were **two stacks** of six cakes of bread on the table. This would hint at the idea that there were two people sitting on the throne because the Father and the Son share the throne (Revelation 3:21). The Manna was a symbol of the provision made by the Father and the Son to their people (see John 6:32, 33).
- The name **lahem panim** (showbread; I Samuel 21:6) is important. The word *panim* literally means “face” or “countenance”. In Lamentations 4:16 and Proverbs 7:15 *panim* is translated “the face of the Lord.” The same word is translated “person” in 2 Samuel 17:11. Thus the Showbread is “the bread of the presence.”
- The table of showbread was the only article of furniture in the sanctuary which had **two crowns** surrounding the top side (Exodus 25:23-25; 37:11, 12). Its height was identical to the Ark of the Covenant and it is described immediately after the Ark is described. The Ark of the Covenant had one crown (Exodus 25:11) and the Golden Altar also had one (Exodus 37:26).
- Revelation 5:8 refers to the **altar of incense** being **before** the throne. The altar of incense was in the holy place (Revelation 8:3-5).
- **Revelation 6:6** speaks of a **scarcity of bread** because the wheat and barley are extremely expensive. A denarius was the daily wage of a common laborer. Thus he made only enough for one quart of wheat. According to Cicero the price that John mentioned would have been 8 to 16 times higher than normal. It is clear that there was famine for bread in the land during the period of the third horse. Barley was used to feed the very poor and the animals. Interestingly, the next horse is the yellow one: After famine comes death.

The **lightning** (Revelation 4:5; Ezekiel 1:13, 14) represents **the speed** with which the **angels** perform God’s work:

*“As God’s messengers they go forth, like “the appearance of a flash of lightning,” (Ezekiel 1:14), so dazzling their glory, and so swift their flight.” GC, p. 512*



*“The bright light going among the **living creatures** with the swiftness of lightning represents the speed with which this work will finally go forward to completion.” 5T, p. 754*

The **thundering and voices** are those of the 4 living creatures who surround the throne of God. They are preparing the banquet room for the reception of the war hero and are praising the one who is on the throne (Ezekiel 1:13, 14, 24; 3:12, 13; Psalm 104:7; Revelation 14:2; John 12:28, 29; Revelation 19:6).

### **Verses 6 and 7: The Sea of Glass and the Four Living Creatures**

*“Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. <sup>7</sup> The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.”*

The Sea of glass is reminiscent of **Ezekiel 1:26-28**. This is also picked up in **Revelation 15:2** when the redeemed finally stand victorious before God’s throne.

The four living creatures are in the **midst of the throne** and around the throne. A comparison with **Isaiah 6:1-3** indicates that they are **Seraphim**. This passage in Isaiah is the **only place** in the Bible where Seraphim are mentioned by name. However, both in Isaiah 6:1-3 and in **Revelation 4** the living beings have **six wings** and sing **“holy, holy, holy.”**

### **What do we know about the Seraphim?**

The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy give us some **clues** as to **who** they are and what their **functions** entail. This is what we know about them:

- **First**, the word ‘seraphim’ comes from the Hebrew *saraph* which means **“to burn.”** Thus, the Seraphim are associated with **fire**. This becomes clear when we are told in **Isaiah 6:4** that the temple was filled with smoke. After all, where there is smoke there is fire.
- **Second**, they are **reverent** in the presence of God and instantly **put into effect** His commands:

*“Each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet [in token of reverence and humility], and with twain he did fly,” representing an **instant execution** of the Lord's bidding. Heavenly beings stood around the throne of Omnipotence, **waiting His commands**, and **swift in the performance** of their service to the inhabitants of earth.” The Bible Echo, September 9, 1895*

- **Third**, they are a class of angels **distinct** from the angels, the archangels, the covering cherubs and the Cherubim. This is made clear by the fact that the Cherubim have **four wings** and the Seraphim have **six**. Ellen White states:

*“Listen to their voices as they sing loud hosannas and as they wave the palm branches of victory. Rich music fills heaven as their voices sing forth these words: “Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain and rose again forevermore. Salvation unto our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” And the angelic host, **angels and archangels, covering cherub and glorious seraph**, echo back the refrain of that joyous, triumphant song saying, “Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever” (Rev. 7:12).” In Heavenly Places, p. 371*

*“It is essential that every subject of the kingdom of God should be obedient to the law of Jehovah. . . . The fact that the law is holy, just, and good is to be testified before all **nations, tongues, and peoples, to worlds unfallen, to angels, seraphim, and cherubim.**” God’s Amazing Grace, p. 58*

- **Fourth**, they seem to be the **highest angels** in the heavenly hierarchy:

*“From the **highest seraph** to the **humblest animate being**, all are replenished from the Source of life.” DA, p. 785*

- **Fifth**, Lucifer was **both** a covering cherub and a seraph before he sinned.

This seems to be the emphasis in **Ezekiel 28** where we are told that Lucifer was created to be a **heavenly musician**. He was a Covering Cherub but he was also a seraph as seen by the fact that he led the heavenly choirs:

*“Satan seems paralyzed as he beholds the glory and majesty of Christ. He who was once **a covering cherub** remembers whence he has fallen. **A shining seraph**, “son of the morning;” how changed, how degraded! From the council where once he was honored, he is forever excluded. He sees another now **standing near to the Father, veiling His glory**. He has seen the crown placed upon the head of Christ by an angel of lofty stature and majestic presence, and he knows that the exalted position of this angel might have been his. GC, p. 669*

- **Sixth**, at least some of the angels who **fell from heaven** with Lucifer were Seraphim:

*“The principalities and powers of darkness were assembled around the cross, casting the hellish shadow of unbelief into the hearts of men. When the Lord created these beings to stand before His throne, they were beautiful and glorious. Their loveliness and holiness were in accordance with their exalted station. They were enriched with the wisdom of God, and girded with the panoply of heaven. They were Jehovah’s ministers. **But who could recognize in the fallen angels the glorious seraphim that once ministered in the heavenly courts?**” DA, p. 760*

- **Seventh**, they Seraphim lead out in the **praise music** of heaven—sometimes in an antiphonal style.

This is made clear in Isaiah 6 where one group of angels sings and then the other group responds. It is also clear from Revelation 4:8; 5:5-8 that they are constantly singing in God's presence.

- **Eighth**, they carry on an **intercessory role** between God and man.

This is made clear in **Isaiah 6** where we are told that a Seraph took a coal and touched the lips of Isaiah and **cleansed him from sin** and then **empowered** him to fulfill his mission. It is also made clear in **Revelation 5:8** where we are told that the living creatures are the ones who bear the **bowls with the incense** which are the prayers of the saints. Ellen White, speaking about the call of Isaiah, adds this interesting remark:

*"But a seraph came to him to **fit him for his great mission**. A living coal from the altar was laid upon **his lips** with the words: "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." And when the voice of God was heard saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah with holy confidence responded, "Here am I; send me." . . . The prophet was nerved for the work before him." Conflict and Courage, p. 232*

- **Ninth**, they are the **four guardians** of God's throne:

*"Four heavenly angels always accompanied the ark of God in all its journeying's, to guard it from all danger, and to fulfill any mission required of them in connection with the ark. Jesus the Son of God, followed by heavenly angels, went before the ark as it came to Jordan; and the waters were cut off before his presence. Christ and angels stood by the ark and the priests in the bed of the river, until all Israel had passed over Jordan. Christ and angels attended the circuit of the ark around Jericho, and finally cast down the massive walls of the city, and delivered Jericho into the hands of Israel." Spirit of Prophecy, volume 1, p. 399*

*"Four companies of Serving Angels give praise before God. The first company under Michael at His right, the second company under Gabriel at His left, the third company under Uriel before Him, and the fourth company under Raphael behind Him and the divine presence in the middle." Pirqa Rabbi Eliezer IV; see Yigael Yadin, The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness [Oxford, 1962], p. 240. On the four angels as Michael, Uriel, Raphael and Gabriel, see the Book of Enoch 9:1-4 (R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudoepigrapha [Oxford, 1913, 1969], pp. 192, 193*

*"Around the throne were seraphim, as **guards about the great King**, and they **reflected the glory** that surrounded them. As their **songs of praise** resounded in deep notes of adoration, the pillars of the gate trembled, as if shaken by an earthquake." God's Amazing Grace, p. 72*

*“The revelation given to Isaiah was of the King, the Lord of hosts, a being greater than any earthly potentate. He was seated on a throne, high and lifted up, with **bright-winged seraphim** on either side as a **royal guard**.” Bible Echo, September 9, 1895*

*“The abiding-place of the King of kings where thousand thousands minister unto him and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him, [DAN. 7:10.] that temple, filled with the glory of the **eternal throne**, where seraphim, its **shining guardians**, veil their faces in adoration, could find, in the most magnificent structure ever reared by human hands, but a faint reflection of its vastness and glory.” GC, p. 414*

*“The revelation given to Isaiah was of the King, the Lord of hosts, a being greater than any earthly potentate. He was seated on a throne, high and lifted up, with **bright-winged seraphim** on either side as a **royal guard**.” The Bible Echo, September 9, 1895*

- **Tenth**, we shall **walk between them** when we ascend to heaven:

*“When they awake the pain is all gone. “O grave, where is thy victory?” here they stand and the finishing touch of immortality is put upon them and they go up to meet their Lord in the air. The gates of the city of God swing back upon their hinges, and the nations that have kept the truth enter in.*

*There are the **columns of angels on either side**, and the ransomed of God **walk in through the cherubim and seraphim**. Christ bids them welcome and puts upon them His benediction: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matt. 25:21). What is that joy? He sees of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied. That is what we labor for.” Selected Messages, volume 3, p. 431*

- **Eleventh**, the living creatures have four faces.

The first is like a **Lion** (Matthew, Jesus as king), the second like an **Ox** (Mark, Jesus as servant), the third like a **man** (Luke, Jesus as the Son of man) and the fourth like an **eagle** (John, Jesus as God).

They have the **strength** of a lion (Psalm 103:20), they render **service** like an ox (Hebrews 1:14), **intelligence** like a man (Luke 15:10) and the **swiftness** of an eagle (Daniel 9:21).

They are all **full of eyes** which represent the wisdom with which they carry out God’s will. The description of the seraphim here and the cherubim in Ezekiel 1 and 10 is very similar.

Here the hymn is in honor of the Father because He is the **Creator**. Explain why some texts say the Father is the creator and why some say it is the Son. The same is said about the judgment.

## The doxologies and their singers

- **4:8:** A hymn by the **4 living creatures** in honor of the **Father** because He is the **Creator**
- **4:11:** A hymn by the **24 elders** in honor of the **Father** because He is the **Creator**
- **5:9-10:** A hymn by the living creatures and the elders to **Christ** as **Redeemer**
- **5:12:** A hymn by the angels to **Christ** the **Redeemer**
- **5:13-14:** **All creation** sings to the **Father** and to the **Son**

### Thus, the anthem order is as follows:

- Father (Creator)
- Father (Creator)
- Son (Redeemer)
- Son (Redeemer)
- Both

The **last song** is not sung (Revelation 5:12, 13) in its fullness until the very end of the millennium (GC, pp. 671, 678). The song in Philippians 2:6-11 follows the same sequence and order of events as this final hymn. First there is Jesus who came to this earth and lived as a servant and died the death of the cross as the Lamb (Philippians 2:6-8). Then we have Him being highly exalted and given a name which is above every name (Philippians 2:9). Then every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth bows before Him and praise His name (Philippians 2:10, 11). This sequence is identical to the hymn of Revelation 5:13. See also Isaiah 45:23 and Romans 14:11. Those under the earth are the ones who died and resurrected.

## Summary of Chapter 4

The central focus of chapters 4 and 5 is upon Jesus who came to this world, overcame the devil and ascended victoriously to heaven. In the seals, God's people go through the same experience of Jesus. They suffer, they overcome and they will finally stand victorious in heaven.

The key word in chapters 4, 5, 7 and 19 is "throne." The word is used **19 times** in chapters 4-5, **seven times** in Revelation 7:9-17 and **two times** in 19:1-10.

In chapter 4 there are four living creatures, twenty-four elders, God the Father and the Holy Spirit (the seven Spirits). The seven lamps of fire and the altar of incense are there. But orders of being are missing: **Jesus Christ and the angelic hosts**. Where is the Son in chapter 4? And where is the angelic host? Ellen White provides the clear answer. My own comments are in brackets:

*"All heaven was **waiting to welcome** the Savior to the celestial courts. As He ascended, He led the way, and the multitude of captives set free at His resurrection followed. The **heavenly host**, with shouts and acclamations of praise and celestial song, **attended the joyous train**."*

As they drew near to the city of God, the challenge is given by the **escorting angels**:

*"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;  
And the King of glory shall come in."*

Joyfully the **waiting sentinels** respond:

*"Who is this King of glory?"*

*This they say, not because they know not who He is, but because they would hear the answer of exalted praise:*

*"The Lord strong and mighty,  
The Lord **mighty in battle!**  
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;  
And the King of glory shall come in."*

*Again is heard the challenge, "Who is this King of glory?" for the angels never weary of hearing His name exalted. The escorting angels make reply:*

*"The Lord of hosts;  
He is the King of glory." Ps. 24:7-10.*

*Then the portals of the city of God are opened wide, and the **angelic throng sweep through the gates** amid a burst of rapturous music.*

*There is the throne [with God the Father on it], and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim [the four living creatures]. The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds [the twenty-four elders], are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,--all are there to **welcome the Redeemer**. They are **eager to celebrate His triumph** and to glorify their King.*

*But He waves them back. Not yet; He cannot now receive the coronet of glory and the royal robe. He enters into the presence of His Father [now we know who was seated on the throne]. He points to His wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet; He lifts His hands, bearing the print of nails [He presents Himself as the Lamb as though He had been slain]. He points to the tokens of His triumph; He presents to God the wave sheaf, those raised with Him as representatives [the down payment] of that great multitude who shall come forth from the grave at His second coming. He approaches the Father [Revelation 5:7], with whom there is joy over one sinner that repents; who rejoices over one with singing. Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety [He would redeem the lost possession] for the human race. This pledge Christ has*

*fulfilled. When upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished," He addressed the Father. The compact had been fully carried out. Now He declares: Father, it is finished. I have done Thy will, O My God. I have completed the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." John 19:30; 17:24*

*The voice of God is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ's toiling, struggling ones on earth are "accepted in the Beloved." Eph. 1:6. Before the heavenly angels and the representatives of unfallen worlds, they are declared justified. Where He is, there His church shall be [this is what the scroll reveals, who will inherit with Jesus]. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Ps. 85:10. The Father's arms encircle His Son, and the word is given, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Heb. 1:6.*

*With joy unutterable, rulers and principalities and powers acknowledge the supremacy of the Prince of life. The angel host prostrate themselves before Him, while the glad shout fills all the courts of heaven, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Rev. 5:12.*

*Songs of triumph mingle with the music from angel harps, till heaven seems to overflow with joy and praise. Love has conquered. The lost is found. Heaven [notice that she does not say that heaven, earth and under the earth at this point in time] rings with voices in lofty strains proclaiming, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Rev. 5:13." DA, pp. 833-835*

## **Revelation 5: The War Hero arrives from the Battlefield (The focus in this chapter is upon Jesus Christ as Redeemer)**

### **No Judgment Language in Revelation 5**

As we have seen, Revelation 4-5 bears a close resemblance with Daniel 7. But there are also **significant differences**. In Daniel 7:9 thrones are set in place while in Revelation 4:2 the thrones are simply there. In Daniel 7:10 **books** (plural) are opened while in Revelation 5:1 a **book** is sealed. In Daniel 7 Jesus is presented as the **Son of Man** (7:13) while in Revelation 5:6 he is presented as the **Lamb** as though He had been slain. He is not portrayed as the Lion until he has finished breaking the seals and opens the scroll.

Some have thought that Revelation 4 and 5 are describing the beginning of the investigative judgment in 1844. The problem with this idea is that there is no judgment language in chapters 4 and 5. The language in Revelation 4 deals with God as Creator and in Revelation 5 with Jesus as Redeemer. The final judgment song will only be sung in Revelation 19:1, 2 after the harlot has been judged.

Never in judgment scenes do you find jubilatory singing such as we find in these chapters. During judgment scenes there is generally silence in heaven. For example, in Daniel 7 there is no singing when the judgment is set and the books are opened. Also in Revelation 20:11-15 the judgment scene is witnessed in silence. Furthermore there is only a mention of one book in

Revelation 5 and not books and this book is not opened until all of the seven seals have been broken. The opening of the books does not take place until Revelation 20:11-15.

Under the fifth seal, the judgment has not yet taken place. We know this because the souls under the altar are crying out for their blood to be judged and avenged. This means that the judgment must transpire after the fifth seal. We will see that the judgment process does not begin until the after the signs in the sun, moon and stars in Revelation 6:12, 13. And the judgment execution will not take place until we get to chapter 19:1, 2.

In Revelation 5 Jesus is portrayed as a lamb as though he had been slain. He comes fresh from the battlefield. The tense of the verb “had been slain” is an action which began in the past but whose results remain in the present.

*“Christ is our mediator and officiating high priest in the presence of the Father. He was shown to John as a lamb that had been slain, as in the very act of pouring out his blood in the sinner's behalf.” Gospel Workers, p. 13*

But in Revelation 6:16, 17 and 14:14-20 and Daniel 7:13, 14 Jesus is portrayed as the Lion or Son of Man who comes to claim His kingdom. Thus Daniel 7 and Revelation 4, 5 describe different historical contexts but the same beings are present.

### **Revelation 5, verses 1, 2:**

*“And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll [biblion] written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. <sup>2</sup> Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”*

**Comments:** The word “worthy” means “qualified.” Certain **conditions must be met** in order for a person to be qualified to break the seals and open the scroll. Notice the use of the word ‘worthy’ elsewhere in the New Testament:

- Matthew 10:10: The worker is worthy of his salary.
- Luke 12:48: Did not commit things worthy of stripes.
- Luke 15:19: The prodigal son acted in an unworthy manner.
- Revelation 16:6: The wicked who drink blood have earned the right to do so.
- Acts 26:31: Paul committed nothing worthy of death.

### **Verse 3**

*“And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.”*

**Comments:** The book cannot be opened until all the seals have been broken. This crisis of universal proportions is the most decisive moment in human history. John is not so much concerned with the seals but rather with the contents of the scroll. His are not tears of curiosity; they are tears of desperation and supreme agony. Obviously, the book contains



something of life and death importance yet no one is worthy to open the book. Not Moses, not Elijah, not Enoch, not beings from other worlds, not the cherubim and seraphim, nor can the angels break the seals and open the scroll.

#### Verses 4, 5:

*“So I wept [klaio; Luke 8:52; Mark 5:38] much, because no one [not even God the Father] was found worthy [qualified] to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.”<sup>5</sup> But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed [past, “overcome” John 16:33 speaks about the overcoming of Jesus] to open [future] the scroll and to loose [future] its seven seals.”*

**Comments:** Kings came from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:9, 10) and Jesus is the root and offspring of David (Revelation 22:16). Jesus, the Lamb, will open the scroll when he **becomes the lion**. In this context Revelation 6:16, 17 is significant. Here the Lamb is spoken of as being filled with wrath. That is to say, the Lamb has taken over the characteristics of the lion. The Lamb now comes on the clouds as the Son of Man.

Notice that Jesus will open the scroll when He takes over the kingship. The following statements from Ellen White are significant:

*“The Savior is presented before John under the symbols of “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” and of “a Lamb as it had been slain.” (Revelation 5:5, 6) These symbols represent the union of omnipotent power and self-sacrificing love. The Lion of Judah, so terrible to the rejectors of His grace, will be the Lamb of God to the obedient and faithful. The pillar of fire that speaks terror and wrath to the transgressor of God’s law is a token of light and mercy and deliverance to those who have kept His commandments. The arm strong to smite the rebellious will be strong to deliver the loyal. Everyone who is faithful will be saved.” AA, p. 589*

*“As the Lion of Judah, Christ will defend his chosen ones and bring them off victorious, because they accepted him as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” The Home Missionary, November 1, 1893*

Hebrews emphasizes the priestly role of Jesus while Revelation emphasizes His kingly role.

Revelation 5:5 needs to be connected to 3:21. This verse amplifies the last part of verse 21. Jesus is there in the midst (*en mesoo*) of the throne after he overcame and now he has the right to open the scroll because of this fact.

#### Verse 6

*“And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood [“standing”: Kings and priests were standing when they were anointed] a Lamb as though it had been slain [perfect: “having been slain”. **When John sees him, the Lamb’s wounds are till fresh**], having seven horns [Habakkuk 3:4, rays of the sun on the crown] and seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God; [II Chronicles 16:9; Proverbs 15:3;*

*Zachariah 4:10: The seven angels are the eyes of the Lord sent [perfect: “having been sent”] out into all the earth [The Holy Spirit is called the seven spirits of God in 4:5 but is only sent out to the earth in 5:6. Connect with Acts 2 where the Holy Spirit is sent—John 14:26; 15:26; also Zechariah 4:2-6].*

**Comments:** The key question is: **Who** is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll and **why**? The answer is that the Lamb can do it because he overcame and shed his blood to redeem or buy back the inheritance. The word “redeem” in 5:9 means to buy something by paying a price. It translates the Greek word *agorazoo* (Matthew 13:46; I Corinthians 6:20; II Peter 2:1). Another word, *lutroo* (I Peter 1:19), has a similar meaning and is the precise equivalent of *go’el* in the Old Testament (Leviticus 25:48). It is like buying an item back from a pawn shop.

*“When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was **enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels**. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the **Holy Spirit descended** upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven’s communication that the Redeemer’s inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise **He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers**, as a token that He had, as Priest and King, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people.” AA, p. 38.*

*“Christ’s ascension to heaven was the signal that His followers were to receive the promised blessing. For this they were to wait before they entered upon their work. When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven’s communication that the Redeemer’s inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers as a token that He had, as priest and king, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people. AA, pp. 38, 39*

## **Verse 7**

*“Then He **came** and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.”*

**Comments:** Notice that Jesus “came” to God the Father so He must not have been there before. Up to this point there have been no songs in chapter 5. All the beings that are present are in suspense to see if anyone is found who is worthy or qualified to break the seals and open the scroll.

## **Verse 8**

*“Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures [the cherubim and seraphim] and the twenty-four elders [the representatives of the sinless worlds of the universe] fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”*

**Comments:** Notice that the seraphim and the 24 elders play an intercessory role.

*“Angels offer the smoke of the fragrant incense for the praying saints.” Counsels to Teachers, p. 110*

### Verses 9-14

*“And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy [qualified] to take the scroll and to open its seals; for You were [past] slain, and have redeemed [past] us [people] to God by Your blood [I Peter 1:18-20] out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,<sup>10</sup> And have [past] made us [them] kings and priests [see the comments on Revelation 1:4, 5] to our God; and we [they] shall [future] reign on the earth.”<sup>11</sup> Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders [they stand on the outer circle of the throne, the creatures and the elders]; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,<sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was [past] slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!”<sup>13</sup> And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!”<sup>14</sup> Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.*

**Comments:** This passage explains the reason why Jesus, and only Jesus, was qualified to break the seals and open the scroll: He shed his blood. The book of Hebrews, instead of using the word “worthy” to explain why Jesus is qualified, employs the expression “and having been made perfect.” (Hebrews 2:10; 5:8, 9)

Up to this point the angelic host has been absent from the scene but now John sees ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of them. The question is: Where were they before and where did they come from? The answer is that they arrived with Jesus at His ascension. You will also notice that the central theme of the hymn is not creation but redemption.

### The Sealed Book

The question begs to be asked: What is contained in the sealed book? Why would it be so catastrophic for the book to remain sealed?

It bears noting that while the book is sealed, it cannot be opened and read. An analogous case is the sealed book of Daniel 12:4 where the little book is sealed until the time of the end. In other words, its contents cannot be understood until the book is unsealed.

Some valuable background information can be obtained from Jeremiah where a title deed is described. The picture is thus: Adam forfeited the title deed to the world, Satan claimed it, and only the Redeemer (*go’el*) could redeem it (buy it back). The scroll contains the history of

salvation. When the book is finally opened, the universe will see that only Jesus and His followers have the right to the lost possession.

Several scholars have weighed in on the contents of the scroll:

*“In order to protect the contents of legal documents (such as deeds of sale, contracts, wills, and letters), a seal impression was normally made with a signet or ring at the end of the written document. The sealing thus functioned in place of a signature, indicating authenticity, validity, authority, ratification, or protection of the document. In order to protect the contents against an inappropriate disclosure, the document would be tied with threads, and then the seal was impressed at the knots on bullae (a blob of clay, wax, or some other soft material) which kept the papyrus scroll folded (Job 38:14). An unbroken impression would indicate that the sealed document had not been opened. Only the owner could break the seals and disclose the contents.” Ranko Stefanovic, Revelation of Jesus Christ, p. 197*

*“Archeologists have brought to light many documents sealed with two to seven or more seals. For instance, Roman law dictated that a will or testament had to be sealed with a minimum of seven seals of witnesses in order to render its contents valid, although some evidence shows that more than seven seals were used on occasion. . . Like any sealed scroll of the time, the scroll of Revelation 5 appears rolled up, tied with a cord, and sealed along the outside edge with seals of wax affixed at the knots. As such, it could not be opened and its contents disclosed until all of the seven seals were broken. The breaking of all seven seals is preliminary and preparatory to the actual opening of the scroll and the disclosure of its contents.” Ranko Stefanovic, Revelation of Jesus Christ, p. 197, 198*

*“A will, according to the Praetorian Testament, in Roman Law bore the seven seals of the seven witnesses on the threads that secured the tablets or parchment (see Smith, Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, p. 1117). Such a Testament could not be carried into execution till all the seven seals were loosed.” R. H. Charles, International Critical Commentary, volume 1, p. 137*

*“The central item, the seven-sealed scroll, portrays a will or testament, for that is precisely what such a seven-sealed document was in Roman law in John’s day. We find, then, that the picture we have in the subdivision of Revelation from 4:1 to 8:1 is a court scene in which a will or testament is to be opened. In the context of Revelation, this will or testament would be a title-deed, as it were, to man’s lost inheritance—an inheritance which has been repurchased by Christ, the Lamb. Thus the scroll is a book of destiny. The opening of it means inheritance in God’s kingdom; its remaining closed means forfeiture. No wonder John wept when he thought no one could open the scroll.” Kenneth Strand, Interpreting the Book of Revelation, p. 55*

Ellen White concurs with these scholars but she adds some very telling information:

*“There in His open hand lay the book, the roll of the history of God’s providences, the prophetic history of nations and the church. Herein was contained the divine utterances, His authority, His commandments, His laws, the whole symbolic counsel of the Eternal, and the history of all ruling powers in the nations. In symbolic language was contained in that roll the influence of every*

*nation, tongue, and people from the beginning of earth's history to its close.” Manuscript Releases, volume 9, p. 7*

*“Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 294*

Several things emerge from this last statement: Ellen White is writing this around the year 1900. It is very clear that the scroll had **not yet been opened** at that time. Furthermore, in order for those who cried out: “release unto us Barabbas” to see the consequences of the decision they made in the past, they must resurrect. This means that the scroll will not be opened before them until they resurrect in the second resurrection after the millennium.

On the opening of the scroll after the millennium, Ellen White gives this vivid description:

*“Above the throne is revealed the cross; and like a **panoramic view [in high definition]** appear the scenes of Adam's temptation and fall, and the **successive steps in the great plan of redemption**. The Savior's lowly birth; His early life of simplicity and obedience; His baptism in Jordan; the fast and temptation in the wilderness; His public ministry, unfolding to men heaven's most precious blessings; the days crowded with deeds of love and mercy, the nights of prayer and watching in the solitude of the mountains; the plottings of envy, hate, and malice which repaid His benefits; the awful, mysterious agony in Gethsemane beneath the crushing weight of the sins of the whole world; His betrayal into the hands of the murderous mob; the fearful events of that night of horror--the unresisting prisoner, forsaken by His best-loved disciples, rudely hurried through the streets of Jerusalem; the Son of God exultingly displayed before **Annas**, arraigned in the high priest's palace, in the judgment hall of **Pilate**, before the cowardly and cruel **Herod**, mocked, insulted, tortured, and condemned to die--all are vividly portrayed. And now before the swaying multitude are revealed the final scenes--the patient Sufferer treading the path to Calvary; the Prince of heaven hanging upon the cross; the haughty priests and the jeering rabble deriding His expiring agony; the supernatural darkness; the heaving earth, the rent rocks, the open graves, marking the moment when the world's Redeemer yielded up His life.*

*The awful spectacle appears just as it was. Satan, his angels, and his subjects have no power to turn from the picture of their own work. **Each actor** recalls the part which he performed. **Herod**, who slew the innocent children of Bethlehem that he might destroy the King of Israel; the base **Herodias**, upon whose guilty soul rests the blood of John the Baptist; the weak, timeserving **Pilate**; the **mocking soldiers**; the **priests and rulers** and the maddened throng who cried, "His blood be on us, and on our children!"--all behold the enormity of their guilt. They vainly seek to hide from the divine majesty of His countenance, outshining the glory of the sun, while the redeemed cast their crowns at the Savior's feet, exclaiming: "He died for me!"*

*Amid the ransomed throng are the apostles of Christ, the heroic Paul, the ardent Peter, the loved and loving John, and their truehearted brethren, and with them the vast host of martyrs; while outside the walls, with every vile and abominable thing, are those by whom they were*

*persecuted, imprisoned, and slain. There is **Nero**, that monster of cruelty and vice, beholding the joy and exaltation of those whom he once tortured, and in whose extremest anguish he found satanic delight. His mother is there to witness the result of her own work; to see how the evil stamp of character transmitted to her son, the passions encouraged and developed by her influence and example, have borne fruit in crimes that caused the world to shudder.*

*There are **papist priests and prelates**, who claimed to be Christ's ambassadors, yet employed the rack, the dungeon, and the stake to control the consciences of His people. There are the **proud pontiffs** who exalted themselves above God and presumed to change the law of the Most High. Those **pretended fathers** of the church have an account to render to God from which they would fain be excused. Too late they are made to see that the Omniscient One is jealous of His law and that He will in no wise clear the guilty. They learn now that Christ identifies His interest with that of His suffering people; and they feel the force of His own words: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Matthew 25:40.*

*The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them." GC, pp. 666-669*

## **Overview of the Seals**

The seals are parallel in many ways to **Matthew 24**. This seems to indicate that the seals are covering the period of the **Christian era** (see the chart on the next page).

## **The Bible and Ellen G. White on the "flow" of the seven seals**

As we shall see, the best commentary on the seals is Ellen G. White's book The Great Controversy. There she expounds upon the seven seals in their proper order.

## **Summary of the Introductory Vision and the First Seal**

- **The Ascension of the War Hero:** Acts 1:9-11; DA, pp. 830-833; AA, pp. 30-34.
- **The Arrival of the War Hero in heaven is anointed as priest/king. This event is announced by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on earth:** Revelation 5; Acts 2; AA pp. 35-46 (especially pages 38, 39).
- **The conquests of the Apostolic church in the first seal:** AA, pp. 47-602.

## “STUDIES IN REVELATION – THE SEVEN SEALS”

by Pastor Stephen P. Bohr

### LESSON#2 - FIRST SEAL: THE WHITE HORSE

**Meaning:** The first seal is parallel to the first church, **Ephesus**. The white horse represents the conquests of the Apostolic Church and its rider symbolizes Jesus.

*“Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.”<sup>2</sup> And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.” (Revelation 6:1, 2)*

#### The symbols

- A **white horse** with its rider
- A **crown**
- A **bow**
- **Conquering and to conquer**

#### The White Horse

In Zechariah 10:3-6, Judah is compared to a **conquering horse**:

*“My anger is kindled against the shepherds, and I will punish the goatherds. For the LORD of hosts will visit His flock, the house of Judah, and **will make them as His royal horse in the battle**.<sup>4</sup> From him comes the cornerstone, from him the tent peg, from him the **battle bow**, from him every ruler together.<sup>5</sup> They shall be **like mighty men**, who **tread down their enemies** in the mire of the streets in the battle. They shall fight because **the LORD is with them**, and the riders on horses shall be put to shame.<sup>6</sup> I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph. I will bring them back, because I have mercy on them. They shall be as though I had not cast them aside; for I am the LORD their God, and I will hear them.”*

Concerning God’s plan for ancient Israel Ellen White explains that *“He [God] desired **his people** to go forth conquering and to conquer.” Review and Herald, July 10, 1900*

Regarding the end time church Ellen White explains:

*“Clad in the armor of Christ’s righteousness, **the church** is to enter upon her final conflict. ‘Fair as the moon, clear as the sun [Revelation 12:1] and terrible as an army with banners’ [Song of Solomon 6:10], **she** [the church] is to go forth into all the world **conquering and to conquer** [Revelation 6:1, 2].” PK, p. 725*

Ellen White also describes **Jesus** as the **rider** of the white horse. That is, the rider of the horse symbolizes Jesus and the horse itself represents His people (**Revelation 19** describes the time when the **church militant** will become the **church triumphant**, when the **spiritual victories** of Christ through the church become the **literal victory** of Jesus and His church:

*“The issue of the battle does not rest upon the strength of mortal man. “The **Lord** shall go forth as a **mighty man**, he shall stir up jealousy like a **man of war**: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall **prevail** against his enemies.” **In the power** of Him **who rides** forth **conquering and to conquer**, weak, finite man may gain the victory.” 4BC, p. 1146*

**Jesus** accomplishes His work through **His people**:

*“**God’s workers** must gain a far deeper experience. If they will surrender all to Him, **He will work** mightily for them. They will plant the standard of truth upon fortresses till then held by Satan, and with shouts of victory take possession of them. They bear the scars of battle, but there comes to them the comforting message that the **Lord will lead them on, conquering and to conquer**. Colporteur Ministry, p. 155*

*“Christ **identifies** His interests with the interests of His faithful people; He suffers in the person of His saints; and whoever touches His chosen ones, touches Him.” Christian Service, p. 166*

*“The world today is in crying need of a revelation of Christ Jesus **in the person of His saints**. God desires that His people shall stand before the world a **holy** people [purity]. Why? Because there is a world to be saved by the **light** [white] of gospel truth; and as the message of truth that is to call men **out of darkness** [black] into God’s marvelous **light** [white] **is given by the church**, the lives of its members, sanctified by the Spirit of truth, are to **bear witness** to the verity of the messages proclaimed. . . ” In Heavenly Places, p. 313*

**Different symbols** are employed in Scripture to illustrate the intimate connection between Jesus and His people. He is the **head** and the church is His body. He is the **Shepherd** and his people are the sheep, He is the **husband** and his church is the bride (and they are one!!), He is the sovereign **Commander** and His people are His armies.

## The Color White

Futurists/Dispensationalists believe that the white horse symbolizes a future antichrist that will pass himself off as Christ. But there is no evidence in the text to this effect.



George Eldon Ladd says the following about the meaning of the color white in the book of Revelation:

*“. . . in the Revelation, white is always a symbol of Christ, or of something associated with Christ, or of spiritual victory. Thus the exalted Christ has white hair white as wool (1:14); the faithful will receive a white stone with a new name written on it (2:17); they are to wear white garments (3:4, 5, 18); the twenty-four elders are clad in white (4:4); the martyrs are given white robes (6:11) as is the great numberless throng (7:9-13); the son of man is seen on a white cloud (14:14); he returns on a white horse accompanied by the armies of heaven who are clad in white and ride white horses (19:11, 14); in the final judgment, God is seen seated on a white throne (20:11).”*

White is a symbol of **purity** (Psalm 51:7; Psalm 45:3-5; Isaiah 1:18; Daniel 7:9; 12:10) and the apostolic church was a pure church both in **doctrine** and in **lifestyle**.

But white is also the color of **light** and light is a symbol of the **Word of God** (Matthew 17:2 [white as the light]; Psalm 119:105; compare Revelation 12:1 with Revelation 19:8 where the **white raiment** is the **glory of the sun**). This is the period when the church is the **light of the world** (Matthew 5:16).

The earliest church witnessed in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria and unto the uttermost ends of the earth (Acts 1:7, 8). This is made clear in Revelation 12:11 where we are told that they overcame (the very word “conquering” that is used in connection with the first seal) *“by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony and they did not love their lives even unto death.”* This horse is to be seen in **contrast** to the **black horse of darkness** where the word of God is barely giving its light during the dark ages.

Notice the following comment of Ellen White about the apostolic church:

*“The early Christians were indeed a **peculiar people**. Their **blameless deportment** and unswerving faith were a continual reproof that disturbed the sinner's peace. Though few in numbers, without wealth, position, or honorary titles, they were a terror to evildoers wherever their **character** and **doctrines** were known. Therefore, they were hated by the wicked, even as Abel was hated by the ungodly Cain. For the same reason that Cain slew Abel, did those who sought to throw off the restraint of the Holy Spirit, put to death God's people. It was for the same reason that the Jews rejected and crucified the Savior--because the **purity** and **holiness** of His character was a constant rebuke to their selfishness and corruption. From the days of Christ until now His faithful disciples have excited the hatred and opposition of those who love and follow the ways of sin.” GC, p. 46*

## **The Bow**

II Kings 13:17 emphasizes that the bow and arrow represent God's **deliverance in battle**.

*“The arguments of the apostles alone, though clear and convincing, would not have removed the prejudice that had withstood so much evidence. But the **Holy Spirit** sent the arguments*

home to hearts with divine power. The **words of the apostles** [now that the seven spirits had been sent into all the earth (Revelation 5:6), the apostles shoot the arrows and the Spirit through the ministration of the angels guides them to the heart] were as **sharp arrows** of the Almighty, convicting men of their terrible guilt in rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory." AA, p. 45

"God does not send messengers to flatter the sinner. He delivers no message of peace to lull the unsanctified into fatal security. He lays heavy burdens upon the conscience of the wrongdoer, and pierces the soul with **arrows of conviction**." DA, p. 104

"The **words of Christ** were **as sharp arrows**, which went to the mark and wounded the hearts of His hearers. Every time He addressed the people, whether His audience was large or small, His words took saving effect upon the soul of some one." GW, pp. 150, 151

"The Pharisee felt no conviction of sin. The **Holy Spirit** could not work with him. His soul was encased in a self-righteous armor which the **arrows** of God, barbed and true-aimed by **angel hands**, failed to penetrate." Christ Object Lessons, p. 158

## The Crown

The word for crown here is *stephanos*. With few exceptions, the *stephanos* is the crown that is given to one who has gained the victory after a struggle (Revelation 2:10; James 1:12; II Timothy 4:8; I Corinthians 9:24-27)

## Conquering and to conquer

This expression could be translated "overcoming in order that he might overcome." This expression must be connected with the seven churches where at the end of each message you have the dictum: "to him that overcomes." It also must be connected with Revelation 5:5 where we are told that Jesus overcame.

The word *nikoon* in Revelation 6:2 and in the context of the seven churches is the same. Thus the white horse represents the **God's faithful people in the churches who overcome**. This seems to indicate that the white horse represents the **faithful in the churches**.

The white horse symbolizes the apostolic church which went out under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to **defeat the kingdom of Satan** and to extend the kingdom of Jesus. **Acts 2:41; 4:4** describes these remarkable conquests.

**Colossians 1:6, 23; Romans 1:8; Acts 17:6** tell us that the gospel was taken to the whole world (the word "world" (*oikoumene*) describes the inhabited world) in that generation.

Concerning this conquest, Ellen White states:

"The commission that Christ gave to the disciples, they fulfilled. As these messengers of the cross went forth to proclaim the gospel, there was such a revelation of the glory of God as had

*never before been witnessed by mortal man. By the co-operation of the divine Spirit, the apostles did a work that **shook the world**. To **every nation** was the gospel carried in a single generation.” AA, p. 593*

This was a **spiritual war**, a spiritual conquest of **human hearts** in the spiritual **enemy’s territory** with a **spiritual armor** and **spiritual weapons** (Ephesians 6:10-18; Romans 13:11-14; II Corinthians 10:1-6; I Timothy 6:12; II Timothy 4:7, 8). This war has the purpose of conquering the territory of the devil. It involves God’s people attempting to convince the devil’s soldiers to desert his army by letting them know that he is a loser. God’s people announce “If you want to be a winner, come over to the Lord’s side.”

**Revelation 19** depicts a **literal war**. After the latter rain has fallen and the whole world has been **polarized** into two groups by the final **preaching** of the gospel (Revelation 14:14-20), a **literal death decree** will be proclaimed against God’s people. Jesus will then **literally take the battlefield** for his people and will **literally destroy their enemies** (Revelation 19:11-14). Revelation 19:11 again brings to view a **white horse and a rider who makes war against Satan and his armies**. The rider no longer has the *stephanos* but rather a *diademata* (19:12). The crown of the victor has become the **crown of the king**.





## “STUDIES IN REVELATION – THE SEVEN SEALS”

*by Pastor Stephen P. Bohr*

### LESSON #3 - SECOND SEAL: THE RED HORSE

**Meaning:** The Red Horse represents the persecutions against the church by **Imperial Rome**. It is parallel to the second church, Smyrna.

*“When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come and see.”  
⁴Another horse, **fiery red**, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to **take peace**  
from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great  
**sword.**” (Revelation 6:3, 4)*

This is the period of the church of **Smyrna** where much death language is employed. The name Smyrna means “bittersweet myrrh”. Myrrh was used to embalm the dead. Jesus presents Himself to this church as “the one who **was dead** and is alive forevermore (Revelation 2:8). Jesus encourages the members of Smyrna to be **faithful unto death** (Revelation 2:10) and promises that the faithful will not be hurt by the **second death** (Revelation 2:11). The ten days of Smyrna are the ten years of Diocletian’s persecution from (303-313).

Ellen White’s comments on the second seal are found in the chapter titled: “*Persecution in the first centuries*” GC, pp. 39-48.

#### **Symbols:**

##### **Color Red**

Represents **bloodshed** because the sword takes away peace from the earth and the result is **war and bloodshed** (Isaiah 63:2; Nahum 2:3; Revelation 17:1-6).

##### **Sword**

The sword represents **the Bible** (Hebrews 4:12, 13; Ephesians 6:17; Isaiah 49:2; Revelation 19:13, 15, 21). But the sword also represents the **civil power** (Romans 13:1-4). How do these swords relate to one another?

Time and again the Bible emphasizes that the preaching of the gospel brings **peace in its train** (Isaiah 9:6; Romans 10:15; Ephesians 6:15) If the sword here is the Bible, why does it take away peace rather than giving peace?

The conquests of the first horse lead to persecution under the second horse. The devil was **worried** by the many defections from his army and **now he kills** those who are conquering the subjects of his kingdom.

The gospel brings peace but it also takes away peace when people rise against it. The Sword of the Spirit (Hebrews 4:12, 13) brings in its train the sword of persecution. How are we to understand this?

The key text is in **Matthew 10:34-39**. In this passage, we have three key words that are found in the second seal: **earth, peace** and **sword**. The sword is here used against God's faithful people because they have preached the gospel of the Bible.

*"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; 36 and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' 37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."*

*"The gospel is a message of peace. Christianity is a system which, received and obeyed, would spread **peace [key word in the second seal]**, harmony, and happiness throughout the earth. . . The gospel presents to them principles of life which are wholly at variance with their habits and desires, and they rise in rebellion against it. They hate the **purity [first seal]** which reveals and condemns their sins, and they persecute and destroy those who would urge upon them its just and holy claims. It is in this sense--because the exalted truths it brings occasion hatred and strife--that the gospel is called a **sword [key word in the second seal]**. GC, p. 46*

*"The powers of earth and hell **arrayed themselves [war language]** against Christ in the person of His followers. Paganism foresaw that should the **gospel triumph [White horse war language]**, her temples and altars would be swept away; therefore she summoned her **forces [war language]** to destroy Christianity. The **fires of persecution [second seal]** were kindled. Christians were stripped of their possessions and driven from their homes. They "endured a great fight of afflictions." Hebrews 10:32. They "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment." Hebrews 11:36. Great numbers sealed their testimony with their **blood [red]**. Noble and slave, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, were alike **slain without mercy.**" GC, p. 39, 40; see also GC, p. 42 where the blood of Christians is spoken of as seed.*

*"In vain were Satan's efforts to destroy the church of Christ by violence [**red horse**]. The great controversy [**war language**] in which the disciples of Jesus yielded up their lives did not cease when these faithful **standard-bearers [war terminology]** fell at their **post [war language]**. By*

defeat they **conquered** [same word as in the white horse]. God's workmen were slain, but His work went steadily forward. The gospel continued to spread and the number of its adherents to increase [**the church went out conquering and to conquer**]." GC, p. 41

"Thousands were imprisoned and slain, but others sprang up to fill their places. And those who were martyred for their faith were secured to Christ and accounted of Him as **conquerors** [**white horse language**]. They had fought the good fight, and they were to receive the **crown of glory** [**the victor's crown of the first seal**] when Christ should come." GC, p. 42

"The early Christians were indeed a **peculiar** people. Their **blameless** deportment and unswerving faith were a continual **reproof** that **disturbed** the sinner's peace. Though few in numbers, without wealth, position, or honorary titles, they were a **terror** to evildoers wherever their **character** and **doctrines** were known. Therefore they were **hated** by the wicked, even as Abel was hated by the ungodly Cain. For the same reason that Cain slew Abel, did those who sought to throw off the restraint of the Holy Spirit, **put to death** God's people. It was for the same reason that the Jews rejected and crucified the Savior--because the **purity** and **holiness** of His character was a constant **rebuke** to their selfishness and corruption. From the days of Christ until now His faithful disciples have excited the **hatred** and **opposition** of those who love and follow the ways of sin." GC, p. 46

There are several instances in Scripture that illustrate this **pattern** of preaching the gospel followed by persecution.

### Example #1

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2), Peter and John brought healing to a paralytic (3:1-11). After healing him, Peter presented a sermon from God's word at Solomon's Portico (3:12-26). This grieved the religious leaders but brought in five thousand souls for the kingdom (4:1-4). Further preaching by Peter led to additional threats (4:5-22). In Acts 5:12 further preaching led to imprisonment threats (Acts 5:17-20). Peter and John were called to trial again and spoke boldly (Acts 5:28-32) and as a result the leaders wanted to kill them (Acts 5:33). Then Gamaliel spoke some very wise words where he used warfare terminology:

"And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; <sup>39</sup> but if it is of God, you cannot **overthrow** it--lest you even be found to **fight** against God." (Acts 5:28-30) After this the Peter and John were beaten (Acts 5:40).

### Example #2

The story of Stephen is similar. In **Acts 7** Stephen preached a powerful sermon about the history of Israel culminating with the arrival of Jesus. When he finished his sermon, the listeners were **enraged** (Acts 7:51-60). His enemies could not silence his message with arguments so they **stoned him**. It is interesting to notice that Stephen was sustained by keeping His eyes on Jesus at the right hand of God. He died an overcomer (Acts 7:55, 56).

### Example #3

**Ezekiel 36, 37** describe a powerful revival and reformation in Israel. Immediately following this revival, Gog and Magog come against Israel in chapters **38 and 39**.

### Example #4

Immediately after the three angels' messages have been proclaimed (**Revelation 14:6-12**) the wicked are arrayed against God's people around the Holy City (**Revelation 14:19, 20**).

### Example #5

After revival and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in **Joel 2:28-32** we have the gathering of the wicked for war in **chapter 3**. There is a pattern here. The preaching of the gospel brings persecution in its train.

It is significant that the **Roman Empire wielded the sword** (Romans 13:1-5). The Roman Empire killed **Peter** by crucifixion, **Paul** by decapitation and **James** with the **sword** (Acts 12:1, 2). It is important to note that the slaying of James with the sword come immediately after a description of the **great growth** of the church (Acts 11:21, 24).

Each one of the apostles was martyred except for John who was exiled to Patmos. When the church reached the end of this period, it was weary from persecution. It longed for a respite. Satan knew that the church was persecution weary and he had a strategy in place. The danger of compromise lurked around the corner.



## “STUDIES IN REVELATION – THE SEVEN SEALS”

*by Pastor Stephen P. Bohr*

### LESSON #4 - THIRD SEAL: THE BLACK HORSE

*“When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come and see.” So I looked, and behold, a **black** horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of **scales** in his hand. <sup>6</sup> And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of **wheat** for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the **oil** and the **wine**.” (Revelation 6:5, 6)*

#### Historical Context

- The **White Horse**: The victories of the early church
- The **Red Horse**: The imperial persecutions
- The **Black Horse**: Infiltration of the church by the world

Satan’s **two methods** against God’s people: (Abel and the flood story are examples) persecution and infiltration.

#### The Parallel Church: Pergamum

##### The Historical Context:

- **Ephesus**: The Apostolic church
- **Smyrna**: The persecuted Church
- **Pergamum**: The compromising church

This is the period of the church of **Pergamum**. **Satan’s throne** was in Pergamum. This is the transition period when **Constantine**, the emperor of pagan Rome, gives his throne, power and authority to the papacy Pergamum is the **connecting link** between the **Roman Empire** and **Papal Rome** (Revelation 13:2). The restrainer is removed (study Romans 13:1-5 where the neuter and masculine are used) this is the period where the doctrine of **Balaam enters the church**. Balaam could not curse the church from **outside** so he infiltrated it with **idolatry** and **fornication**. These **two sins** were the very ones that the church embraced when persecution ceased (Numbers 23:8-10, 21-23; 25:1, 2).

## Ellen White's Comments in The Great Controversy

Ellen White describes this period with the chapter titled: "*An Era of Spiritual Darkness*" (GC, pp. 49-60; see especially pp. 55, 57, 60) Notice The Great Controversy and the war on the Bible (pp. 61, 62, 63).

**Jesus is the Word** (John 1:1-3) and where the Word is present there is **light and life** (John 1:4, 5; I John 1:5-7). The **color white** is identified with **light** (Psalm 104:1, 2 with Daniel 7:9; Matthew 17:2). The **written word** of God is **light** (Psalm 119:105). Actually the **white horse** represents **God's people** proclaiming the Word of God which is light to the world (**John 9:5; Matthew 5:16**). God's people are light and the word of God is light.

Where the **Word of God is absent there is darkness (black)**. The way of the righteous is light and the way of the wicked is darkness:

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble." (Proverbs 4:18, 19)

In the Bible, **black is used synonymously with darkness**

**Isaiah 50:3**: "I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering."

**Jude 12-13** [this verse uses blackness and darkness in the same verse] <sup>12</sup> "These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; <sup>13</sup> raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

**Proverbs 7:9** [this verse uses blackness and darkness in the same verse]. "*In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night*".

**Jeremiah 4:28**: "*For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black because I have spoken. I have purposed and will not relent, nor will I turn back from it.*"

**Creatures of darkness** roam and thrive in the darkness: **bats, rats, roaches, germs**. This horse is to be seen in **contrast** to the white horse. The white horse represents the light of God's word radiated by God's people. The black horse represents darkness which comes from a **waning** of God's word. Where God's word is not there is darkness. Black represents **sin, apostasy, error, heresy, human traditions**. During this seal there is a scarcity of the **showbread** in the holy place. In fact wheat and barley are extremely expensive.

When the word of God is suppressed there is darkness (**black**) as a result and finally hunger, pestilence and death (**fourth horse**).

Besides light, **bread** also symbolizes the Word of God (Matthew 4:4; Isaiah 55:2, 3, 10, 11; John 6:48-58, 63. Where there is no light and no bread there is death. **Amos 8:11, 12** predicts a time when there will be famine in the land, not for bread but for the word of God.

The **scales** have the purpose of **weighing grain**. This is not the scale of judgment. Wheat and barley were the **staple crops** from which bread was made in Israel. These are **very scarce** under this horse. There is **gathering famine which will intensify and bring death under the fourth horse**.

Revelation 6:6 speaks of a **scarcity of bread** because the wheat is extremely expensive. A denarius was the daily wage of a common laborer. Thus, he made only enough for one quart of wheat. According to **Cicero** the price mentioned by John would have been **8 to 16 times higher** than normal. It is clear that there is famine for bread in the land. Barley was used to feed the very **poor and the animals**. Interestingly, the next horse is the yellow one. After **famine comes death**.

*"In ordinary times, a denarius would buy twenty-four choenixes of barley; but here a denarius will buy but three-the scanty allowance for a day's subsistence for a slave. The arrival of things at such a pass, accordingly argues a severity of hard times, distress, and want, almost beyond the power of imagination to depict." J. A. Seiss, The Apocalypse: Exposition of the Book of Revelation, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1998 by Biblesoft.*

The **wine or libation** was a symbol of the blood of Jesus and the **oil** is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Ellen White makes the following important statement:

*"In order to secure man to Himself and ensure his eternal salvation, Christ left the royal courts of heaven and came to this earth, endured the agonies of sin and shame in man's stead, and died to make him free. In view of the infinite price paid for man's redemption, how dare any professing the name of Christ treat with indifference one of His little ones? How carefully should brethren and sisters in the church guard every word and action lest they hurt the oil and the wine! How patiently, kindly, and affectionately should they deal with the purchase of the blood of Christ!" 5T, p. 614*

To hurt God's people is to hurt Jesus and the Holy Spirit (Zachariah 2:8; Matthew 25:40; Mark 9:41; Acts 9:4, 5).

### **Ellen White calls this an era of spiritual darkness**

*"The accession of the Roman Church to power marked the beginning of the **Dark Ages**. As her power increased, the **darkness** deepened." GC, p. 55*

*"The **darkness** seemed to grow more dense." GC, p. 57*

*"But 'the noon of the papacy was the **midnight** of the world.'"--J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, b. 1, ch. 4. The **Holy Scriptures** were almost unknown, not only to the people, but to the priests." GC, p. 60*

*“The world had passed its **midnight** [because of Wycliffe]. The hours of **darkness** were wearing away, and in many lands appeared tokens of the coming dawn.” GC, p. 79*

It is significant that Ellen White dedicates three pages to the issue of the change of the Sabbath during this era of spiritual darkness (GC, pp. 52-54).

I John 2:8-11 explains that those who are in darkness hate their brother and want to kill him. The darkness of the third horse leads to death under the fourth horse.

Ellen White compares the church during this period with what happened at the time of Balaam:

*“Satan therefore laid his plans to war more successfully against the government of God by planting his banner in the Christian church. If the followers of Christ could be deceived and led to displease God, then their strength, fortitude, and firmness would fail, and they would fall an easy prey.” GC, p. 42*

*“The great adversary now endeavored to gain by **artifice** what he had failed to secure by **force [under the second seal]**. **Persecution** ceased [under the second seal], and in its stead were substituted the **dangerous allurements** of temporal prosperity and worldly honor. Idolaters were led to receive a part of the Christian faith, while they rejected other essential truths. They professed to accept Jesus as the Son of God and to believe in His death and resurrection, but they had no conviction of sin and felt no need of repentance or of a change of heart. With some **concessions** on their part they proposed that Christians should make **concessions**, that all might unite on the platform of belief in Christ.” GC, p. 42*

*“Others were in favor of **yielding** or **modifying** some features of their faith and uniting with those who had accepted a part of Christianity [**a very real danger today**], urging that this might be the means of their full conversion. That was a time of deep anguish to the faithful followers of Christ. Under a **cloak** of pretended Christianity, Satan was insinuating himself into the church, to corrupt their faith and turn their minds from the **word of truth**.” GC, p. 43*

*“But there is no union between the Prince of **light** and the prince of **darkness**, and there can be no union between their followers. When Christians consented to unite with those who were but half converted from paganism, they entered upon a path which led **further and further from the truth**.” GC, p. 45*

*“The spirit of **compromise** and **conformity** was restrained for a time by the **fierce persecutions [red horse]** which the church endured under paganism. But as persecution [red horse] ceased, and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and His apostles for the pomp and pride of pagan priests and rulers; and in place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions. The nominal conversion of Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, caused great rejoicing; and the world, **cloaked** with a form of righteousness, walked into the church. Now the work of **corruption** rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be **vanquished [language of the first seal]**, became the **conqueror [language of the first seal]**. Her spirit controlled the church. Her*

*doctrines, ceremonies, and superstitions were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ. GC, pp. 49, 50*

*“In order for Satan to maintain his sway over men, and establish the authority of the papal usurper, he must keep them in ignorance of the Scriptures. The Bible would exalt God and place finite men in their true position; therefore its sacred truths must be concealed and suppressed. This logic was adopted by the Roman Church. For hundreds of years the circulation of the Bible was prohibited. The people were forbidden to read it or to have it in their houses and unprincipled priests and prelates interpreted its teachings to sustain their pretensions.” GC, p. 51*

**Why is there no persecution today? Because we do not have the spirit and power of the early church:**

*“There is another and more important question that should engage the attention of the churches of today. The apostle Paul declares that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12. Why is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber? The only reason is that the church has conformed to the world's standard and therefore awakens no opposition. The religion which is current in our day is not of the pure and holy character that marked the Christian faith in the days of Christ and His apostles. It is only because of the spirit of compromise with sin, because the great truths of the word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a **revival** of the faith and power of the **early church**, and the spirit of **persecution** will be **revived**, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled. GC, p. 48*



## “STUDIES IN REVELATION – THE SEVEN SEALS”

*by Pastor Stephen P. Bohr*

### LESSON #5 - FOURTH SEAL: THE PALE HORSE

*“When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come and see.”<sup>8</sup> So I looked, and behold, a **pale** horse. And the name of him who sat on it was **Death**, and **Hades** followed with him. And power was given to them over a **fourth** of the earth, to kill with **sword**, with **hunger**, with **death** [pestilence], and by the **beasts** of the earth.” (Revelation 6:7, 8)*

#### Symbols and Expressions

- Color **pale** (*chloros*: The color of this horse is really a greenish pale as when a young shoot comes out of a tree. This paleness is the color of death).
- **Death** and **Hades** (the grave ultimately follows death).
- **Fourth part** of the earth (at this time the devastating power of the fourth horse and its rider is not universal).
- **Famine** (scarcity of God’s word).
- **Pestilence** (in New Testament Greek the word *thanatos* technically means ‘death’. But in 30 of the 50 times it appears in the Greek Old Testament (LXX) the Hebrew word *deber* is translated “pestilence”. To say that the fourth horse kills with death would be redundant. Death by the sword and famine brings pestilence or disease in its train and ultimately leads to death and the grave.
- **Wild beasts** (wicked leaders and nations who were inimical to God’s people and behaved like wild beasts).

## The Old Testament Background

In Old Testament times, when Israel **broke the covenant** and **apostatized** from the truth, God would send the very same **four judgments** that are mentioned in connection with the fourth horse: **sword, famine, pestilence** and **wild beasts** (see Leviticus 26:21-26; Ezekiel 14:21).

Because Israel was God's **literal people** in the **literal land** of Canaan, these judgments were literal. But under the fourth seal (as well as in the others) we are dealing with **spiritual Israel** in a **spiritual land** (the Christian church) and therefore we need to interpret these things in a **symbolic manner** (see Daniel 11:28, 30, 32 where we are told that the Papacy trampled on God's holy covenant during the 1260 years).

## Interpreting the Symbols

### Death and Hades

The immediate aftermath of death is the place where the dead go, the grave. The word *hades* is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word *sheol* and it should consistently be translated "the grave" (the link between the Hebrew and Greek words is found in I Corinthians 15:54, 55 [quoting Hosea 13:14] and Acts 2:25-27, 31 [quoting Psalm 16:8-10]). Unfortunately, the Hebrew word *sheol* is mistranslated 31 times in the KJV as "hell".

In the Old Testament the concepts of death and the grave are regularly linked in synonymous parallelism (see Psalm 6: 5; 49:14, 15; 89:48; 116:3; Proverbs 5:25; 7:27; 15:25; Isaiah 38:18; 28:15; Amos 9:2; Hosea 13:14).

In the New Testament the word *hades* is used 12 times (Matthew 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; Acts 2:25-27, 31; Revelation 1:17, 18; 6:8; 20:13-15; and should be translated "grave" in eleven of the twelve instances (with the exception of the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16:23 where Jesus is using their beliefs about *hades* to make a point).

The key question at this point is: What caused this church to die and go to the grave?

### The Sword

The key verses are found in Romans 13:1-4 and Revelation 13:10, 14. More often than not when the sword of the Spirit convicts of sin (Hebrews 4:12, 13) the result is that the sword of persecution is used to suppress it (see for example Matthew 10:34-37).

Besides representing the Word of God, the sword is also linked with the **civil power** (Romans 13:1-4). It is no coincidence that the sword of Revelation 13:10, 14 was in the hands of the Papacy during the 1260 years.

In Revelation 6:8 we are told that power [a better translation would be 'authority'] **was given** to this horse to kill with the sword. Notably, we are told that the little horn **was given** power to make war against the saints and to overcome them (Daniel 7:25) Likewise Revelation 13: 7 tells



us that the beast **was given** power to make war against the saints and to overcome them. This connects the fourth rider with the Papal church.

## **Famine and Pestilence**

In **symbolic terms** famine exists because the Holy Spirit, speaking through the Word of God is scarce. During the middle Ages there was no rain (Revelation 11:6; no Holy Spirit), therefore bread (the Word of God) was scarce and the result was famine (spiritual hunger). Famine in turn led to malnutrition and malnutrition led to pestilence and ultimately to spiritual death.

*"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD, "That I will send a **famine** on the land, not a **famine** of bread, nor a thirst for **water**, but of hearing the words of the LORD. <sup>12</sup> They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the **word of the LORD**, but shall not find it."* Amos 8:11, 12

*"For as the **rain** comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but **water** the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, <sup>11</sup> so shall My **word** be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."* Isaiah 55:10-11

*"Let my **teaching** drop as the **rain**, my **speech** distill as the **dew**, as raindrops on the tender herb, and as showers on the grass."* Deuteronomy 32:2

*"Let us know, let us pursue the **knowledge** of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning; he will come to us like the **rain**, like the latter and former **rain** to the earth."* Hosea 6:3

## **The Wild Beasts**

The wild beasts represent the hatred of the wicked for Christ and His people. Notice the following biblical examples:

### **Psalm 74:18, 19:**

*"Remember this, that the **enemy** has reproached, O LORD, and that a foolish people has blasphemed Your name. <sup>19</sup> Oh, do not deliver the life of Your turtledove to the **wild beast!** Do not forget the life of Your poor forever."*

### **Psalm 7:1, 2:**

*"LORD my God, in You I put my trust; save me from all those who persecute me; and deliver me, <sup>2</sup> lest they tear me like a **lion**, **rending me in pieces**, while there is none to deliver."*

**Psalm 10:9-11:**

*“He lies in wait secretly, **as a lion** in his den; he lies in wait to catch the poor; he catches the poor when he draws him into his net. <sup>10</sup> So he crouches, he lies low, that the helpless may fall by his strength. <sup>11</sup> He has said in his heart, “God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see.”*

**Psalm 17:9-12:**

*“From the wicked who oppress me, from my deadly enemies who surround me. <sup>10</sup> They have closed up their fat hearts; with their mouths they speak proudly. <sup>11</sup> They have now surrounded us in our steps; they have set their eyes, crouching down to the earth, <sup>12</sup> **as a lion** is eager to tear his prey, and like a young lion lurking in secret places.”*

**Psalm 22:12, 13:**

*“Many bulls have surrounded Me; **strong bulls** of Bashan have encircled Me. <sup>13</sup> They gape at Me with their mouths, **like a raging and roaring lion.**”*

**Proverbs 28:15:**

*“Like a **roaring lion** and a **charging bear** is a wicked ruler over poor people.”*

**Zachariah 10:3:**

*“My anger is kindled against the **shepherds**, and I will punish the **goatherds** [literally the ‘he-goats’ but meaning ‘the leaders’ such as in the NIV]. For the LORD of hosts will visit His flock, the house of Judah, and will make them as His royal horse in the battle.”*

**Acts 20:29:**

*“For I know this, that after my departure **savage wolves** will come in among you, not sparing the flock.”*

**Matthew 7:15:**

*“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are **ravenous wolves.**”*

**Ellen White** also understood that the wild beasts symbolize those who are inimical to Christ and His people.

*“From some hiding place among the tombs two madmen rush upon them as if to **tear them in pieces.** Hanging about these men are parts of chains which they have broken in escaping from confinement. Their flesh is torn and bleeding, their eyes glare out from their long and matted*

hair, the very likeness of humanity seems to have been blotted out. They look more like **wild beasts** than like men.” The Ministry of Healing, p. 95

“No sooner were these words spoken than a rush was made for Christ. Like **wild beasts**, the crowd darted upon their **prey**. Jesus was dragged this way and that, Herod joining the mob in seeking to humiliate the Son of God. Had not the Roman soldiers interposed, and forced back the maddened throng, the Savior would have been **torn in pieces**.” DA, p. 731

“When the condemnation of Jesus was pronounced by the judges, a satanic fury took possession of the people. The **roar** of voices was like that of **wild beasts**. They made a rush toward Jesus, crying, He is guilty, put him to death! And had it not been for the Roman soldiers, Jesus would not have lived to be hanged upon the cross of Calvary. He would have been **torn in pieces** before his judges, had not Roman authority interfered, and by force of arms withheld the violence of the mob.” Spirit of Prophecy, volume 3, p. 122

“The symbols of earthly governments are **wild beasts**, but in the kingdom of Christ, men are called upon to behold, not a ferocious beast, but the Lamb of God.” Review and Herald, August 18, 1896

“As the **ravenous beast** is rendered more furious by the taste of blood, so the rage of the **papists** was kindled to greater intensity by the sufferings of their victims.” GC, p. 76

“At this the priests and rulers were beside themselves with anger. They were more like **wild beasts of prey** than like human beings. They rushed upon Stephen, gnashing their teeth.” Sketches from the Life of Paul, p. 19

On the death of Jerome: “Their **thirst for blood**, whetted by the death of Huss, clamored for **fresh victims**. Only by an unreserved surrender of the truth could Jerome preserve his life. But he had determined to avow his faith and follow his brother martyr to the flames.” GC, p. 112

In I Corinthians 15:32 Paul explained that he had fought wild beasts at Ephesus. Ellen White explains what Paul meant:

“Paul informed the Corinthians of his trouble in Asia, where, he says, ‘We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life.’ In his first epistle he speaks of fighting with **beasts** at Ephesus. He thus refers to the **fanatical mob** that clamored for his life. They were indeed more like **furious wild beasts** than men.” Sketches from the Life of Paul, p. 78

## **The Period of the Church of Thyatira**

The period of the **fourth horse** is parallel to the period of the **fourth church** of Revelation, Thyatira. Jezebel was the central protagonist during this period. The Old Testament background to the church of Thyatira is found in the story of Elijah.

In the Old Testament story we are told that Jezebel employed the power of King Ahab (the sword) to extend her apostate syncretistic religion (I Kings 16:30-33). As a result, Israel

apostatized from the covenant of God. This led to a severe drought where there was no rain for three and a half years (II Chronicles 7:13, 14; James 5:17). This drought led to famine and pestilence (I Kings 18:5) and the famine and pestilence in turn led to death and the grave.

For a time span of three and a half years Jezebel slaughtered the prophets of the Lord (I Kings 18:4) for not embracing her apostate syncretistic religion. She taught God's servants to fornicate and practice idolatry. Therefore the blood of God's servants and prophets cried out for justice (II Kings 9:7).

Prophetically this story of Jezebel was fulfilled during the period of the dominion of the little horn and the beast who massacred the saints of God for three and a half prophetic years (Daniel 7:21, 25; Revelation 13:7).

During this period the apostate church employed the sword of the state to kill dissenters and therefore the church was forced to flee to the wilderness where she was nourished in exile. This was the period when the two witnesses [the Old and New Testaments] prophesied in sackcloth [sackcloth is black] (Revelation 12:6; 13-15; 11:2).

For 1260 prophetic years the heavens were shut up and there was no rain (Revelation 11:6) and as a result there was spiritual famine and pestilence. The famine and pestilence ultimately led to death and to the grave.

This horse brought death and the grave for two reasons. First, because God's people died of **spiritual starvation** and **pestilence** (see Amos 8:11, 12) and second because they died by the **sword** (Revelation 13:10).

During this period the man of sin suppressed the Bible and forbade the lay people from reading it under pain of death. It was a capital crime even to have one in one's possession. As a result there was famine for the word of God. This famine led to spiritual pestilence and pestilence led to death and the grave.

Concerning this time of famine Ellen White states:

*"For hundreds of years the circulation of the **Bible was prohibited**. The people were **forbidden to read it** or to have it in their houses and unprincipled priests and prelates interpreted its teachings to sustain their pretensions." GC, p. 51*

*"From earliest childhood the youth [the Waldenses] were instructed in the Scriptures and taught to regard sacredly the claims of the law of God. **Copies of the Bible were rare** [the bread was scarce]; therefore its precious words were committed to memory. Many were able to repeat large portions of both the Old and the New Testament." GC, p. 76*

*"The work which the papacy had begun [during the 1260 years], atheism completed. The one [the papacy] **withheld from the people the truths of the Bible**; the other [the French Revolution] taught them to reject both the Bible and its Author. The seed sown by priests and prelates was yielding its evil fruit. 4SP, p. 192*

The **Inquisition** (the sword of the state) was also established during this period to slay those who studied and obeyed the word of God. During this time the papal leaders **behaved as wild beasts** toward God's people.

Concerning the violence of this period, Ellen White remarks:

*"In the sixth century the papacy had become firmly established. Its seat of power was fixed in the imperial city, and the bishop of Rome was declared to be the head over the entire church. Paganism had given place to the papacy. The dragon had given to the beast "his power, and his seat, and great authority." Revelation 13:2. And now began the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5-7. Christians were forced to choose either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship or to wear away their lives in dungeons or **suffer death** by the rack, the fagot, or the headsman's ax. . . Persecution opened upon the faithful with greater fury than ever before, and **the world became a vast battlefield.**" GC, pp. 54, 55*

*"In the thirteenth century was established that most terrible of all the engines of the papacy-- **the Inquisition**. The prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the papal hierarchy. In their secret councils Satan and his angels controlled the minds of evil men, while unseen in the midst stood an angel of God, taking the fearful record of their iniquitous decrees and writing the history of deeds too horrible to appear to human eyes. "Babylon the great" was 'drunken with the blood of the saints.' The mangled forms of millions of martyrs **cried to God for vengeance** [notice the allusion to the fifth seal] upon that apostate power. GC, pp. 59, 60*

*"The **persecutions** visited for many centuries upon this God-fearing people [the Waldenses] were endured by them with a patience and constancy that honored their Redeemer. Notwithstanding the crusades against them, and the **inhuman butchery** to which they were subjected, they continued to send out their missionaries to scatter the precious truth. They were **hunted to death**; yet their blood watered the seed sown, and it failed not of yielding fruit." GC, p. 78*

### **The Relationship between the Third, Fourth and Fifth Seals**

The darkness and scarcity of bread under the third seal intensified under the fourth seal and led to death and the grave. Concerning this period, Ellen White explained: *"The accession of the Roman Church to power marked the beginning of the Dark Ages. As her power increased, **the darkness deepened.**" GC, p. 55*

When the church dies spiritually because she does not feed on the word of God, she begins to destroy those who do not share her lack of spirituality. Those who cannot defend their doctrines with the spiritual sword (the Bible); will do so with the literal sword.

The martyrs who were slain under the period of the fourth horse cry out for God to judge and avenge their death. This is the period of the fifth seal which we shall study next time.



## “STUDIES IN REVELATION – THE SEVEN SEALS”

*by Pastor Stephen P. Bohr*

### LESSON#6 - FIFTH SEAL: THE CRY OF THE MARTYRS

*“When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the **altar** the **souls** of those who **had been slain** for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You **judge** and **avenge** our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” Then a **white robe** was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should **rest** a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who **would be killed** as they were, was completed.” Revelation 6:9-11*

#### Important Questions about this Passage

- What does the word ‘**souls**’ mean and in what sense did the ‘souls’ **cry out**?
- **Which altar** were these souls under?
- **Why were they killed** and what does the word ‘**martyr**’ mean?
- **What period** of church history is this scene describing?
- What do the **white robes** represent?
- Why were the martyrs told to **rest for a season**?
- Is there **more than one group** of martyrs?
- When and how is their **plea answered**?

#### The Souls under the Altar

How can these souls be crying out **if they were killed**? Isn’t this text clear proof that the soul lives independently from the body after death? Every commentator (except Seventh-day Adventists) I consulted on this passage used it to try and prove that the soul lives on after the body is dead. But is this what the text is really saying?

## ***The Old Testament Background: The Story of Cain and Abel***

**Genesis 4:3, 4:** *““And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the **fruit** of the ground an offering unto the LORD. <sup>4</sup> Abel, he also brought of the **firstlings** of his flock and of the **fat** thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering.”*

Both Cain and Abel brought an **offering** to place on the **altar of sacrifice**. Abel offered an animal sacrifice and thus **obeyed** God and **worshiped** as God had commanded. He was righteous. The central issue of the story was obedience and worship.

**Hebrews 11:4:** *““By faith Abel offered unto God a **more excellent sacrifice** than Cain, by which he obtained **witness** (marturia) that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being **dead** yet **speaketh**.”*

Abel's sacrifice gave witness that he was righteous and even after his death the sacrifice speaks.

**Genesis 4:8:** *“And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and **slew him**.”*

Satan was the **ultimate cause** of Abel's death (1 John 3:12). A **great travesty** in justice had been committed. The blood of Abel was shed **at the foot of the altar** and **cried out for vindication** and justice. It appeared like the unrighteous **won** and righteous **lost**. At some point the record needed to be **rectified**.

**Genesis 4:10:** *“And he said: What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's **blood crieth unto me** from the ground.”*

According to **Hebrews 12:24** the blood of Jesus **speaks** more powerfully than that of Abel. Thus, it is the blood that speaks: “And [we have come] to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that **speaketh** better things than that of Abel.”

The blood of Abel **cried out** for Justice while the blood of Jesus **provided** that justice.

The cries of the righteous martyrs can be better understood by reading **Psalm 79** where God's people are crying out for justice.

## ***Further Old Testament Background: The Blood under the Altar of Sacrifice***

There were **two altars** in the sanctuary: The altar of **sacrifice** (in the court) and the altar of **incense** (in the holy place). Which of these is here referred to? Let's take a closer look at the **Old Testament sacrificial service** to answer this question.

**Leviticus 4:7:** *““And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation: and shall **pour** all the blood of the bullock **at the bottom of the altar** of the burnt offering, which is **at the door** of the tabernacle of the congregation.”* (cf. Leviticus 4:18, 25, 30, 34; 5:9)



- The blood of the sacrifice was poured out at the **base of the altar** of sacrifice.
- At the altar of **incense no blood** was offered, only incense was placed there.
- The expression “**poured out**” is used to describe what the wicked did with the blood of the righteous (Revelation 16:6).
- The word “**slain**” is identical to the one used in Revelation 5:6 to describe the sacrifice of Jesus as a lamb on the cross.
- The altar of sacrifice represents **Christ’s sacrifice on earth** so these souls must be crying out on earth, not in heaven.

In the Old Testament the words ‘**soul**’ and ‘**blood**’ are very closely linked. When innocent blood (the life) is shed, it cries out for justice.

**Leviticus 17:11:** *“For the **life** [nephesh] of the flesh is in the **blood**: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”* (see also Genesis 9:4)

**Deuteronomy 12:23:** *“Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the **blood** is the **life** [nephesh]; and thou mayest not eat the **life** [nephesh] with the flesh.”*

The Bible describes the death of the righteous at the hands of the wicked as an oblation or offering. In **John 16:2** Jesus explained that those who would slay His followers would actually believe that they were offering God an act of worship. The word “service” in this text is *latrein* (where we get the word **idolatry** from) which is generally translated ‘service’ in the KJV but actually means ‘worship’.

In **Revelation 16:6** we are told that the wicked **poured out** the blood of God’s people. Once again, this is sacrificial terminology (see Leviticus 8:15; Matthew 23:35; 26:28; 22:20 where the word ‘shed’ is used of sacrifices).

Significantly Paul refers to his death as a **pouring out** of sacrifice (II Timothy 4:6-8). The death of the righteous at the hands of the wicked was a sweet savor unto God because it revealed the faithfulness of His people (cf. Ephesians 5:2) and won many souls to the kingdom. People thought: “If this truth is worth dying for, then it must be worth living for.”

### **The Reason for their Martyrdom**

We are told that the martyrs were slain for the **word of God** and for the **testimony which they held**. The word of God refers to their **teachings** and the testimony which they held describes their practical **life witness** that revealed the character of Jesus. The word ‘**martyr**’ means ‘one who gives witness or testimony.’ The meaning of this word can be clearly discerned in **Revelation 12:11** where we are told that the faithful of God overcame the devil by the **word of their testimony** and they did not love their lives even unto death.

The word ‘testimony’ is translated ‘martyr’ in three New Testament texts. Paul speaks of Stephen as God’s martyr (witness) in **Acts 22:20**. Stephen was killed because he revealed Jesus Christ in his sermon and in his demeanor (cf. Acts 6:15 and chapter 7). In **Revelation 2:13** Jesus spoke of Antipas as “my faithful martyr (witness), who was slain among you.” **Revelation 17:6** speaks of the harlot who was filled with the blood of the ‘martyrs’ of Jesus.

Ellen White described **Paul’s words and demeanor** as He spoke the word of God before kings and rulers:

*“When before kings and dignitaries of the earth, who held his life in their hands, he quailed not; for he had given his life to God, and it was hid in Christ. He **softened**, by his **courtesy**, the hearts of these men in power, men of fierce temper, wicked and corrupt though they were in heart and life. He did not forget his position, or the importance of the occasion. He was **zealous for the truth, bold in advocating Christ**; but propriety of deportment, the **grace of true politeness**, marked all his conduct. When he stretched out his hand, as was his custom in speaking, the clanking chains caused him no shame or embarrassment. He looked upon them as tokens of honor, and rejoiced that he could suffer for the **word of God** and the **testimony of Jesus Christ**. Surrounded by philosophers, kings, and critics, he was God’s ambassador. His reasoning was so clear and convincing that it made the profligate king tremble as Paul dwelt upon his experience, showing what had wrought the change in his religious views which aroused the malice of the Jews. **He exalted Jesus Christ** as the world’s Redeemer. **Grace**, like an angel of mercy, makes his voice heard **sweet and clear**, repeating the story of the cross, the matchless love of Jesus.”*  
*Review and Herald, September 8, 1885*

These meaning of these two expressions (‘Word of God’ and ‘testimony of Jesus’) can best be understood when we look at the experience of the **apostle John**. We are told in **Revelation 1:2, and 9** that John was a prisoner on Patmos **because** of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. Regarding this, Ellen White comments:

*“John answered for himself in a clear and convincing manner, and with such simplicity and candor that his words had a powerful effect. His hearers were astonished at his wisdom and eloquence. But the **more convincing his testimony**, the deeper was the hatred of his opposers. The emperor Domitian was filled with rage. He could neither dispute the **reasoning** of Christ’s faithful advocate, nor match the **power** that attended his **utterance of truth**; yet he determined that he would silence his voice. AA, p. 569*

Ellen White then explains that John was cast by Domitian into a **cauldron of scalding oil** but his life was preserved by the Lord and the emperor then sent him into exile on the Isle of Patmos. He was thus on **Patmos** for the Word of God and the testimony that he held. Clearly the martyrs were slain because they revealed Jesus in their words and in the lives.

## **The Fifth Seal and the Little Book of Revelation 5**

The martyrs who were slain by the inquisition during the **fourth** seal cry out for justice under the **fifth** seal. Let’s read once again an Ellen White statement that links the fourth and fifth seals:

*“In the thirteenth century was established that most terrible of all the engines of the papacy— **the Inquisition**. The prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the papal hierarchy. In their secret councils Satan and his angels controlled the minds of evil men, while unseen in the midst stood an angel of God, **taking the fearful record** of their iniquitous decrees and **writing the history of deeds** too horrible to appear to human eyes. “Babylon the great” was “drunken with the blood of the saints.” The mangled forms of millions of martyrs **cried to God for vengeance** [notice the allusion to the fifth seal] upon that apostate power. GC, pp. 59, 60*

It will be noticed that the angels kept a **careful record** of the wrongful decisions of earthly courts against God’s people. Notice two other statements where Ellen White writes about the **heavenly record keeping**:

*“The history of God’s people during the ages of darkness that followed upon Rome’s supremacy **is written in heaven**, but they have **little place in human records**. Few traces of their existence can be found, except in the accusations of their persecutors. It was the policy of Rome to obliterate every trace of dissent from her doctrines or decrees. **Everything heretical, whether persons or writings, she sought to destroy**. Expressions of doubt, or questions as to the authority of papal dogmas, were enough to forfeit the life of rich or poor, high or low. **Rome endeavored also to destroy every record of her cruelty toward dissenters**. Papal councils decreed that books and writings containing such records should be committed to the flames. Before the invention of printing, books were few in number, and in a form not favorable for preservation; therefore there was little to prevent the Romanists from carrying out their purpose. GC, p. 61, 62*

*“When Rome at one time determined to exterminate the hated sect [the Waldenses], a bull was issued by the pope, condemning them as heretics, and delivering them to slaughter. They were not accused as idlers, or dishonest, or disorderly; but it was declared that they had an appearance of piety and sanctity that seduced “the sheep of the true fold.” Therefore the pope ordered “that malicious and abominable sect of malignants,” if they “refuse to abjure, to be crushed like venomous snakes.”—Wylie, b. 16, ch. 1. Did this haughty potentate expect **to meet those words again**? Did he know that **they were registered in the books of heaven, to confront him at the judgment**?” GC, p. 77*

The question is, **when** will these church leaders have to face the records that were written by the angels during the Middle Ages? The answer is in the following statement:

*“There [outside the New Jerusalem after the millennium] are **papist priests** and **prelates**, who claimed to be Christ’s ambassadors, yet employed the rack, the dungeon, and the stake to control the consciences of His people. There are the **proud pontiffs** who exalted themselves above God and presumed to change the law of the Most High. Those **pretended fathers of the church** have an **account to render to God** from which they would fain be excused. Too late they are made to see that the Omniscient One is jealous of His law and that He will in no wise clear the guilty. They learn now that **Christ identifies His interest with that of His suffering people**; and they feel the force of His own words: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.” Matthew 25:40. GC, p. 668*

All the iniquitous acts that were committed against God's people during the middle Ages were written in the **books of heaven**. One day this record will be opened before the universe and God will judge and avenge the blood of those who died unjustly. That is to say, God will rectify the erroneous judgments made in earthly courts. The Supreme Court of the universe will reverse the decisions of the lower courts on earth. The wicked priests, prelates and popes will see the book opened and they will remember everything they did to God's people. Then they will confess before the universe that they were wrong and God's people were right.

These records are found in the book of **Revelation 5:1, 2**. Jesus, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah will open the book after the millennium and the wicked will be reminded of their evil deeds toward the righteous.

The book also contains the record of what the **Jewish leaders did to Jesus**:

*"Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness **this decision will appear before them** in the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah." Christ Object Lessons, p. 294*

This decision will appear before the Jewish leaders after the millennium when they are outside the Holy City:

*"The awful spectacle appears **just as it was**. Satan, his angels, and his subjects have no power to turn from the picture of their own work. **Each actor recalls the part** which he performed. **Herod**, who slew the innocent children of Bethlehem that he might destroy the King of Israel; the base **Herodias**, upon whose guilty soul rests the blood of John the Baptist; the weak, timeserving **Pilate**; the **mocking soldiers**; the **priests and rulers** and the **maddened throng** who cried, "His blood be on us, and on our children!"—**all behold the enormity of their guilt**. They vainly seek to hide from the divine majesty of His countenance, outshining the glory of the sun, while the redeemed cast their crowns at the Savior's feet, exclaiming: "He died for me!" GC, p. 667*

## **The Two Stages of the Fifth Seal**

The text makes it clear that the crying out of the martyrs has **two distinct historical stages**. That is to say, there are two groups of martyrs—one from the past and the other from the future. When was the first group slaughtered?

### ***The First Stage of the Martyrs***

The first stage of the martyrs is described in **Daniel 7:25**. We are told there that the little horn wore out the saints of the Most High for three and a half times:

*"And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall **wear out the saints of the most High**, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a **time and times and the dividing of time**."*

This same time period is described in **Revelation 13:5, 7** as forty-two months during which the beast (the same power as the little horn), made war with the saints and overcame them:

*“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue **forty and two months**. And it was given unto him to make **war with the saints, and to overcome them**: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.”*

### ***The First Stage during the middle Ages***

The **first four churches** are parallel to the first four seals:

- **White Horse**: The apostolic church (Ephesus).
- **Red Horse**: The church persecuted by the Roman emperors (Smyrna).
- **Black Horse**: The compromising church during the time of Constantine the Great (Pergamum).
- **Pale Horse**: The church of the middle Ages (Thyatira).

### ***The Fourth Seal and the Church of Thyatira***

*“Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman **Jezebel** [the harlot], which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit **fornication** [with the kings of the earth], and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her **space** [three and a half times or 42 months] to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a **bed** [the deadly wound], and them that **commit adultery** with her into **great tribulation** [the French Revolution], except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her **children** [apostate Protestantism] with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts [the investigative judgment]: and I will give [the reward] unto every one of you **according to your works**.” Revelation 2:20-23*

**II Kings 9:22**: *“And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered: What peace, so long as the **whoredoms** of thy mother Jezebel and her **witchcrafts** are so many?”*

**I Kings 18:4**: *“For it was so, when Jezebel **cut off** the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.”*

**James 5:17**: *“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for **three years and six months**.”*

**II Kings 9:7**: *“And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may **avenge the blood** of my servants the prophets, and **the blood** of all the servants of the LORD, **at the hand** of Jezebel.”*

In contrast to the white robes Jesus promised to the faithful, notice what was placed on **John Huss** just before his martyrdom. This travesty in justice will be rectified when the case of Hus is evaluated in the heavenly court. A verdict will be pronounced in his favor and against his wicked oppressors:

*“The vestments were removed one by one, each bishop pronouncing a curse as he performed his part of the ceremony. Finally “they put on his head a cap or pyramidal-shaped miter of paper, on which were painted frightful figures of demons, with the word ‘Archheretic’ conspicuous in front. ‘Most joyfully,’ said Huss, ‘will I wear this crown of shame for Thy sake, O Jesus, who for me didst wear a crown of thorns.’” GC, p. 108*

### ***The Deadly Wound Concluded the First Stage of the Martyrs***

**Revelation 13:10:** *“He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.” (cf. Revelation 13:14)*

Romans 13:1-4 explains that the sword symbolizes the civil power of Rome. During the three and a half times or forty-two months the little horn (the beast) used the sword of the state to slay God’s people. But the same sword of the state wounded the little horn (the beast) at the end of this time period.

### ***The First Group of Martyrs Rested before 1798***

The martyrs are told to rest. The word ‘rest’ here refers to the sleep of death. In fact, our word ‘cemetery’ comes from the Greek word *coimaterion* which means “a place to sleep.” By the way, we get the word ‘comatose’ from *coimaterion*.

**Revelation 6:11:** *“And white robes were given unto every one of them; 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 [complete].”*

**Revelation 14:13:** *“Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Write: ‘Blessed are the **dead** who **die** in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may **rest** from their labors, and their works follow them.’”*

**Matthew 26:45:** *“Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and **resting**? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.”*

### ***The Second Stage of the Martyrs***

**Revelation 13:3** tells us that the deadly wound of the beast will be healed and then the beast will behave as it did in the past.

*“We have no time to lose. Troublous times are before us. The world is stirred with the spirit of war. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place. **The prophecy in the***

**eleventh of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Much of the history that has taken place in fulfillment of this prophecy will be repeated.** In the thirtieth verse a power is spoken of that "shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant." [Verses 31-36, quoted.] **Scenes similar to those** described in these words will take place." Manuscript Releases, volume 13, p. 394 (Letter 103, 1904)

"The influence of Rome in the countries that once acknowledged her dominion is still far from being destroyed. And prophecy foretells a **restoration of her power**. "I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." Verse 3. GC, p. 579

"When our nation shall so abjure the principles of its government as to enact a Sunday law, Protestantism will in this act join hands with popery; it will be nothing else that **giving life** [which means that it must have been dead] to the tyranny which has long been eagerly watching its opportunity to **spring again** [which means that the active despotism must have existed before] into active despotism." 5T, p. 712

"When the land which the Lord provided as an asylum for his people, that they might worship him according to the dictates of their own consciences, the land over which for long years the shield of Omnipotence has been spread, the land which God has favored by making it the depository of the pure religion of Christ,—when that land shall, through its legislators, abjure the principles of Protestantism, and give countenance to Romish apostasy in tampering with God's law,—it is then that the final work of the man of sin will be revealed. Protestants will throw their whole influence and strength on the side of the Papacy; by a national act enforcing the false Sabbath, they will **give life and vigor** [which means that the corrupt faith of Rome must have been dead for a period] to the corrupt faith of Rome, **reviving** [which means that her tyranny and oppression of conscience were dead for a while] her tyranny and oppression of conscience. Then it will be time for God to work in mighty power for the vindication of his truth." Signs of the Times, June 12, 1893

**Revelation 13:11, 12, 15:** "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the **first beast before him** and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to **worship the first beast** whose deadly wound was healed. . . And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the **image of the beast should be killed.**"

**Revelation 17:1, 6:** "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the **great whore** [just like Jezebel] that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication [just like with Jezebel]. . . <sup>6</sup> And I saw the woman drunken with the **blood of the saints** [just like Jezebel], and with the **blood of the martyrs of Jesus**: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

**Revelation 18:23:** “The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your **sorcery** [translated ‘witchcraft’ in Galatians 5:20] all the nations were deceived.”

**Revelation 19:1, 2:** “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God for **true and righteous** are his **judgments**: for he **hath judged** the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and **hath avenged the blood** of his **servants at her hand**.” (cf. Revelation 18:20, 24)

**Revelation 20:4:** “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I **saw the souls** of them that were **beheaded** for the **witness of Jesus**, and for the **word of God** and which had not **worshipped the beast**, neither his **image**, neither had received **his mark** upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and **they lived** and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

### **The White Robes: What are they and when were they given?**

The conferral of the white robe is another way of expressing that the martyrs **formed a character fit for heaven**. In the investigative judgment the martyrs who were faithful to Jesus and died for him will be vindicated before the universe. It will be revealed that they had the white robes of Christ’s righteousness when they died. The investigative pre-advent judgment will not confer the robe but will rather reveal that the martyrs had it when they died. When Jesus returns He will then literally clothe the martyrs in white robes of light.

**Matthew 22:11, 12** explains that the robe is assigned to the faithful **before** the investigative judgment. The purpose of the investigative judgment is to ascertain whether people had the white robe of Christ’s righteousness. In other words, the robe is given *in absentia*. **Revelation 3:5** assures those who overcome that they will literally be robed in literal white garments.

When the judgment is finished the awesome pronouncement will be made: “He who is unjust, let him be unjust [continue to act unjustly] still; he who is filthy [notice the laundry analogy], let him be filthy [continue to act filthily] still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous [continue to act righteously] still; he who is holy, let him be holy [continue to behave in a holy manner] still.” (Revelation 22:11). There will no longer be the opportunity to wash the robes of character.

**Revelation 7:13:** “And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes [**stole**], and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

“When Christ shall come, he will not change the character of any individual. Precious, probationary time is given to be improved in washing our **robes of character**, and making them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Counsels on Education, p. 237



*“The resurrection and ascension of our Lord is a sure evidence of the triumph of the saints of God over death and the grave, and a pledge that heaven is open to those who wash their **robes of character** and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Jesus ascended to the Father as a representative of the human race, and God will bring those who **reflect His image** to behold and share with Him His glory.” The Faith I Live By, p. 51*

*“The provision has been made for us to wash. The fountain has been prepared at infinite expense, and the burden of **washing rests upon us**, who are imperfect before God. The Lord does not propose to remove these spots of defilement **without our doing anything** on our part. **We must wash our robes** in the blood of the Lamb. We may lay hold of the merits of the blood of Christ by faith, and through His grace and power we may have strength to overcome our errors, our sins, our imperfections of character, and come off victorious, having washed our robes in the blood of the Lamb. 3T, p. 183*

*“The assaults of Satan are strong, his delusions are subtle; but the Lord's eye is upon His people. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but Jesus will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. Their earthliness will be removed, that through them the image of Christ may be perfectly revealed.” PK, p. 589*

After the judgment process is over and God's people have been vindicated then the church will be seen in the white robes:

**Revelation 19:6-8:** *“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.. <sup>7</sup> Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. <sup>8</sup> And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” (cf. Ephesians 5:25-27)*

### **Daniel 7 and 8 and the Two Stages of the Martyrs**

According to Daniel seven and eight, during the three and one half times the little horn cast down the place of the sanctuary, arose against the Prince of the host, took away the daily and threw down the stars/saints. And we are informed that the little horn **prospered**.

In **Daniel 8:13** the question is asked [the same question as Revelation 6:9-11]: **“Until when** will the sanctuary and the host be trampled?” In other words, when will things be reversed? In 1844 God would begin to reverse the erroneous decisions of earthly courts. The judgment would begin with the dead (including the martyrs of the middle Ages) and those who were slain would be given a white robe and told to rest until the rest of the martyrs die as they did. Then both groups will be rewarded together at the same time when the harlot is punished.

The words ‘judge’ and ‘avenge’ do not refer to the same event. Judging implies the **trial** while avenging refers to the **punishment** after the sentence is announced. In the judgment the verdict is given in favor of the saints and against their oppressors. When Jesus comes the verdict will actually be enforced by rewarding the saints and punishing their wicked oppressors.

The entire argument of Daniel 7 is based on this idea. The little horn wore out the saints but the judgment set, the books were opened, the verdict was given in favor of the saints and the time came when they received the kingdom. That is to say, the little horn did its will “until” (Daniel 7:21, 22) the judge came. The little horn persecuted (7:25), the ancient of days came (7:26) and then the kingdom will be given to the saints of the Most High (Daniel 7:27) The persecution under the fifth seal thus parallels the great tribulation of Matthew 24 the period of the church of Thyatira, and the war that the little horn and the beast waged upon the saints of God during the three and one half times (Daniel 7:21, 25; Revelation 13:7)

In short, the chronological sequence of the fifth and sixth seals is as follows:

The martyrs of the middle Ages were slain and their innocent blood cried out for justice and vindication. Beginning in 1844 as the case of each one of them was examined, they were assigned white robes (vindicated in the judgment) and told to rest (sleep during death) until the number of the rest of the martyrs is complete. The rest of the martyrs will be slain when the Roman Catholic papacy returns to power because they refuse to worship the beast and his image and to receive the mark. The end-time martyrs will then be judged and assigned white robes. Finally at the coming of Jesus both groups of martyrs will be avenged and rewarded with eternal life while their wicked oppressors will be punished with death by the plagues (Revelation 19:1, 2; 20:4; 11:18)

### **The Relationship between the Fifth and Sixth Seals**

The first part of the sixth seal (Revelation 6:12, 13) is the judging part of the fifth seal and the second part of the sixth seal (Revelation 6:14-17) is the avenging part of the fifth seal. In between we have the parenthesis of Revelation 7:1-8, the sealing of the righteous living. The martyrs and the 144,000 are two distinct groups. The martyrs are judged first and then the 144,000 living saints will be judged last.

The answer to plea of both groups of martyrs is found in Revelation 19:1, 2. The avenging took place during the period of the seven last plagues, particularly when the wicked had to drink blood (Revelation 16:5-7) In Revelation 20:4 this same group is given the right to judge their wicked oppressors. At this point they must have received their reward.

The persecution of the little horn during the middle Ages (Daniel 8:11-13) leads to the question: “Until when”. Signs in the heavens announce the beginning of the judgment process (Revelation 6:12-13) Daniel 8:14 begins the process of judging to answer the pleas of the martyrs of the past.

Daniel 11:44 describes the end time martyrs when the papacy resurrects from its deadly wound. In Daniel 12:1 the judgment ends, signs are seen in the heavens revealing that the judgment has ended (Matthew 24:30), Babylon comes to its end (Daniel 11:45) and God’s people are delivered and rewarded (Daniel 12:2)

## Ellen White and the Timing of the Fifth Seal

Some are troubled by the fact that Ellen White seems to place the fulfillment of the fifth seal in the future from her day. Though most of her statements refer to the future it is not by any means true that she exclusively puts this seal in the future. As we have noticed, in GC 59, 60 she applied the cries of the martyrs to the past. The majority of her statements will be quoted here and then an explanation will be provided.

### ***The Cries of the Martyrs from the Past***

*"In the thirteenth century was established that most terrible of all the engines of the papacy-- **the Inquisition**. The prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the papal hierarchy. In their secret councils Satan and his angels controlled the minds of evil men, while unseen in the midst stood an angel of God, taking the fearful record of their iniquitous decrees and writing the history of deeds too horrible to appear to human eyes. "Babylon the great" was "drunken with the blood of the saints." **The mangled forms of millions of martyrs cried to God for vengeance upon that apostate power.**" GC, p. 59*

### ***The Cry of the Future Martyrs***

*"When the defiance of God's law is almost universal, when his people are pressed in affliction by their fellow men, God will interpose. **Then will the voice be heard from the graves of martyrs, represented by the souls that John saw slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, which they held,**--then the prayer will ascend from every true child of God: "It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law." The fervent prayers of his people will be answered; for God loves to have his people seek him with all the heart, and depend upon him as their deliverer. He will be sought unto to do these things for his people, and he will arise as their protector and avenger. "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?" The Review and Herald, December 21, 1897*

*"Roman Catholic principles will be taken under the care and protection of the state. This national apostasy will speedily be followed by national ruin. The protest of Bible truth will be no longer tolerated by those who have not made the law of God their rule of life. **Then will the voice be heard from the graves of martyrs, represented by the souls that John saw slain for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ which they held;** then the prayer will ascend from every true child of God, "It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law." Review and Herald, June 15, 1897*

*"Millions have gone down to the grave loaded with infamy because they refused to yield to the deceptive claims of Satan. By **human tribunals** the children of God have been adjudged the vilest criminals. But the day is near when "God is judge Himself." (Ps. 50:6). **Then the decisions of earth shall be reversed.** "The rebuke of His people shall He take away." Isa. 25:8. **White robes will be given to every one of them.** (Rev. 6:11.)" Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 179, 180*

*"When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as*

*a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near. As the approach of the Roman armies was a sign to the disciples of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, so may this apostasy be a sign to us that the limit of God's forbearance is reached, that the measure of our nation's iniquity is full, and that the angel of mercy is about to take her flight, never to return. The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress which prophets have described as the time of Jacob's trouble. **The cries of the faithful, persecuted ones ascend to heaven.** And as the blood of Abel cried from the ground, there are voices also crying to God from martyrs' graves, from the sepulchers of the sea, from mountain caverns, from convent vaults: "**How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?**" Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, p. 451*

Why does Ellen White place the fulfillment of the fifth seal in the future? The simple reason is that the fifth seal has both a **past** and a **future** fulfillment just like the Roman Catholic Papacy has two stages of dominion, one past (the 1260 years) and the other future (when the deadly wound is healed). The past fulfillment was when the martyrs died during the middle ages and the future fulfillment is when persecutions of the past are revived.

### ***Daniel 11 and the Cry of the Martyrs***

Ellen White refers to two stages of persecution in the experience of God's people:

*"It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who shall be alive upon the earth when celestial glory and a **repetition of the persecutions of the past** are blended."* 9T, p. 16.

Remarkably this statement is presented in the context of the prophecy of Daniel 11 which also has two stages for the persecutions of God's people. Daniel 11:31-39 highlights the persecution of God's people during the middle ages and verses 40-45 focus on the persecution of the end-time martyrs when the loud cry is announced.

## “STUDIES IN REVELATION – THE SEVEN SEALS”

by Pastor Stephen P. Bohr

# LESSON #7 - SIXTH SEAL: SIGNS OF THE JUDGMENT

### Revelation 6:12-17

*“I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great **earthquake**; and the **sun** became black as sackcloth of hair, and the **moon** became like blood [not darkened]. <sup>13</sup> And the **stars** of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late [unripe] figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.” <sup>14</sup> **Then** the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and **every** mountain and island was moved out of its place. <sup>15</sup> And the kings of the earth [rulers who occupy thrones], the great men [high officers of the state], the rich men [socially wealthy], the commanders [commanders of armies], the mighty men [great men in battle], every slave and every free man [regular citizens], hid themselves [they are found naked according to Genesis 3:8; Revelation 16:15] in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, <sup>16</sup> and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us [Hosea 10:8; Luke 23:30] from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! <sup>17</sup> For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand [Ephesians 6:14; I Peter 5:12; Luke 11:18]?”*

### Are the Signs Literal or Symbolic?

As Adventists we take much of what Revelation says symbolically. Why, then, do we understand the earthquake and the signs in the sun, the moon and the stars to be literal? The answer is found in the meaning of a Greek word that is used four times in Revelation 6:12, 13, the word “as” (*hos*).

Ranko Stefanovic says about the meaning of this word:

*“. . . the repeated usage of the word ‘as’ or ‘like’ (Gr. hos) in the text appears to be very significant. The sun becomes black as sackcloth, the moon as blood, the stars of the sky fall as do the figs of the fig tree, and heaven splits as the papyrus scroll. In Greek, this word ‘introduces a figurative analogy to an actual event’ which is compared with something figurative. This suggests that these heavenly signs are intended to be taken literally.” (Ranko Stefanovic, Revelation of Jesus Christ, p. 244)*

## The Link between the Fifth and Sixth Seals

The plea of the martyrs of the middle ages (“how long until you judge?”) in Revelation 6:10 is answered in Daniel 7:8-10; 8:13, 14 where the process of judgment begins. According to these passages in Daniel, the trampling of the sanctuary and of God’s people would last until the conclusion of the 2300 days where the process of vindicating the sanctuary and its worshipers would begin. The signs in Revelation 6:12, 13 are the announcement that the vindicating judgment is about to begin.

It is noteworthy that the **sixth church** (open door to the most holy place), **sixth seal** (sealing the 144,000) and **sixth trumpet** (the vision of the Ark of the Covenant) all point to the events connected with the investigative judgment in the most holy place of the sanctuary.

There are two earthquakes in the sixth seal. One is at the beginning of the sixth seal and the other is at its end. The one at the beginning is described in verse 12 and the one at the end is described in verse 14. This second earthquake is further amplified in Revelation 16:18, 20 where it is described as of cataclysmic proportions. In other words, the earthquake in Revelation 6:14 is the same one as in Revelation 16:18, 20 where the context is the seventh plague. The earthquake in 6:12 is not the greatest in the history of the world like the one in 16:18. Only the greatest earthquake in history could remove mountains and islands from their places on a global scale.

### Purposes of the Signs

The signs of Revelation 6:12, 13 play several specific functions. **First**, they announce that the great tribulation is about to end (Matthew 24:29). **Second**, they serve as an omen of the fall of the papal power. **Third**, they serve to draw attention to the approaching judgment in 1844. **Fourth**, they serve as indicators of the beginning of the time of the end. **Finally**, they announce the soon coming of Jesus.

Some critics within and without the church argue thus: “How can you believe that events that took place 252, 227 and 174 years ago are signs of the soon coming of Jesus? Isn’t this stretching credulity to its limit?” On the surface this argument seems persuasive until we look at the number of these years from a broader perspective.

Let us suppose for the sake of argument that I am going to take a six thousand mile trip. When I start the trip we would all agree that my destination is far off. When I am halfway there, the destination is still far off. But would you agree that when I am 252 miles from my destination, or 227 miles from my destination or 174 miles from my destination I am near?

C. Mervyn Maxwell in his excellent book, Magnificent Disappointment, pp. 91, 92 puts 1844 and the nearness of the second coming in perspective:

*“We need a change of perspective. Instead of looking back to 1844 and finding it around 150 years in the past, let us go back to the beginning of human history and view 1844 as almost six*

*thousand years in the future. . . From the perspective of Eden at the beginning of earth's six thousand years, the remaining distance between 1844 and the 1990s is hardly discernible. These 150 years between 1844 and the 1990s represent only one-fortieth, 2.5 percent, of human history. More than 97 percent of human history took place prior to 1844. Yes, we are indeed in the end time. The final judgment began only yesterday, as it were. Christ's second advent is coming soon."*

The enemies of Adventism and of Ellen White have frequently pointed out that there have been other great earthquakes, dark days and star showers in history. What makes the Lisbon earthquake, the Dark Day of 1780 and the Leonid Star Shower of 1833 unique? The answer is fourfold: **Location, order, time** and **intensity**.

- With regards to **location** it is not coincidental that these signs appeared in **Europe** and in the **United States**. Europe, because there the deadly wound would be given to the papacy and this would mark the end of the tribulation of 1260 days. The United States, (especially New England) because there the message of the judgment would be proclaimed powerfully by the Millerites beginning in the 1830s. C. Mervyn Maxwell well states:

*"The location of the classic signs was highly significant. They happened in Europe and America primarily, where people were studying the Bible and pondering the prophecies. A dark day in the Sahara Desert or a star shower over New Guinea would have said little in those days about the second coming of Christ to cannibal headhunters or Muslim nomads. Events need not be universal to deliver a global message. A few square miles at Hiroshima and Nagasaki were sufficient to announce the atomic age. A stable in Bethlehem ushered in the Christian era. Only a few hundred people saw Jesus after His resurrection—but they told others." Magnificent Disappointment, pp. 93, 94.*

- With respect to **order**, these phenomena occurred in history in the precise chronological order in which they are described in Revelation 6. The Lisbon earthquake occurred in 1755, the Dark Day and moon like blood occurred in 1780 and the star shower took place in 1833. Show me one other instance in human history where these phenomena have taken place in this precise order within a period of less than one hundred years!
- These signs also occurred precisely at the right **time**, precisely before the tribulation of the 1260 years came to an end and immediately before the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the fall of the papacy (1798) and the beginning of the judgment (1844).
- Concerning the **intensity** of these signs C. Mervyn Maxwell has well stated:

*"As recently as 1980, the widely respected seismologist, G. A. Eiby, in chapter 11 of his Earthquakes, ranked the Lisbon earthquake as 'the largest shock ever' and reckoned that it may well have reached an almost incredible 9.0 on the Richter scale, seven times stronger than the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. . . The dark day of May 19, 1780 has not been equaled in North America in the two hundred years that have since come and gone. The Leonid shower of November 13, 1833 gave birth to a new branch of*

*astronomy. . . Like the Lisbon earthquake and the famous dark day, it too has not been matched, in spite of the scientific expectations that it would be.” Magnificent Disappointment, p. 93*

## Ellen White and the Sixth Seal

The first part of the sixth seal is in The Great Controversy, pp. 304, 333. On page 304 Ellen White quotes Revelation 6:12 and on page 333 she quotes Revelation 6:13. She does not quote Revelation 6:14-17 (the second part of the sixth seal) until pages 641, 642. In order to comprehend this long parenthesis between the first and last part of the sixth seal, we must remember some things we studied under the fifth seal:

- The **papacy** has **two stages of power—one past** (during the 1260 years) **and one future** (at the very end of time).
- Therefore the **tribulation** also has **two stages—one past and one future**. The past stage is the greatest in history with regards to length. The future stage is the greatest with regards to intensity. Regarding the first period of persecution Ellen White remarks:

*“For more than a thousand years such persecution as the world had never before known was to come upon Christ's followers. Millions upon millions of His faithful witnesses were to be slain.” DA, p. 631*

- The **signs in the heavens also** have **two stages**. The first group of cosmic signs announces the end of the first period of tribulation and the soon-to-begin “judging” portion of the fifth seal. The second set of cosmic signs announces the end of the second tribulation period and the “avenging” portion of the fifth seal. In between these two points of time, you have the vindicating judgment of the martyrs and the sealing of the 144,000 living saints.
- The first stage of the signs took place in **1755, 1780** and **1833**. These signs showed that the **first stage** of persecution by the papacy was **coming to an end**, and that the vindicating **judgment** was about to begin. These signs are referred to in Revelation 6:12, 13 and Joel 2:31
- The second stage of the signs will take place immediately before the second coming of Jesus and will mark the deliverance of the saints from the **second stage** of persecution by the papacy. These signs are described in Revelation 6:14-17.

## Two Sets of Signs

Will the signs of Revelation 6:12, 13 have another fulfillment in the future? Absolutely not! In Joel 2:31 and in Revelation 6:12, 13 we have two important details that distinguish these signs from the ones in the future: **First**, according to Joel 2:31 the signs of Revelation 6:12, 13 occur “**before**” the great and terrible day of the Lord. **Second**, in the signs of Revelation 6:12, 13 the



moon is turned into **blood** and the **stars fall** from heaven while in the signs of Revelation 6:14-17 the moon and the stars do not give their light.

There is a **second** set of signs in the heavenly bodies which will be fulfilled when Jesus comes and they are found in Joel 2:10, 11; 3:15, 16 and in Matthew 24:30: These signs take place as Jesus is preparing to leave heaven for earth. His coming is announced by the sun and moon being darkened and the stars not giving their light. There will also be a cosmic, global earthquake in heaven and on earth to announce His departure from heaven. The two sets of signs are different.

- **Revelation 6:12-13.** In these verses we are told that the moon became **like blood**, not that it was darkened. We are also told that the stars fell from heaven. These are not the same signs as those in Matthew 24 where the sun, moon and stars are moved out of their places.
- The signs in Revelation 6:12, 13 are **similar to those in Joel 2:31** (also Acts 2:20). Notice that the sun is darkened and the moon is turned into blood, **before** the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.
- **Joel 2:10, 11** depicts **different signs** than those in Revelation 6:12, 13 and Joel 2:31: In the Joel passage the earth and the heavens tremble, the sun and the moon grow dark and the stars do not shine. These signs **immediately** precede the second coming of Jesus.
- **Joel 3:15, 16:** Once again we notice that these are not the signs spoken of in Revelation 6:12, 13. Once again we are told that the heavens and the earth will **shake** and the sun and moon will be **dark** and the stars will **not shine**. The stars sure did shine on November 13, 1833!
- **Isaiah 13:10-13:** This passage is not parallel to Revelation 6:12, 13. Here the sun, the moon and the stars are **darkened**. These things did not happen in 1755, 1780 and 1833. Notice that the heavens and the earth will be removed from their places.
- Notice that Revelation 6 presents the signs in the **very order** in which they occurred: An **earthquake** (1755), the darkening of the **sun** (1780), the **moon** becoming like **blood** (1780), and the **stars falling** from heaven (1833)
- **Inevitable conclusion:** The signs in Joel 2:31; Acts 2:20 and Revelation 6:12, 13 are different than those in Matthew 24:30; Joel 2:10, 11; Joel 3:15, 16 and Isaiah 13:10ff.
- There is a difference between the expression "**the time of the end**" and "**the end of time.**" Whereas the signs in Revelation 6:12, 13 announce that we are entering upon the **time of the end**, the signs in Matthew 24:30 reveal that we have reached the **end of time**. Notice the entire passage of Matthew 24:29-31:

*"Immediately **after the tribulation** of those days the **sun will be darkened**, and the **moon will not give its light**; the **stars will fall from heaven**, and the **powers of the***

*heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”*

- Who are the powers of the heavens in Matthew 24:29? **Genesis 1:16** tells us that the sun was made to **rule** the day and the moon and the stars were made to **rule** the night. Early Writings, p. 41 explains very well what will happen with the heavenly bodies when Jesus comes:

*“The powers of heaven are the sun, moon, and stars. They rule in the heavens. The powers of earth are those that rule on the earth. The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places. They will not pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God.” Early Writings, p. 41*

The reason why the earth will be **without form** and **void** during the millennium is because of the global earthquake and the reason why the heavens will have **no light** is because the sun, the moon and the stars will be moved out of their orbits.

### Ellen G. White and the Signs

- As we have stated before, Ellen White quotes Revelation 6:12, 13 in The Great Controversy, p. **304, 333** and applies them to the signs that took place in 1755, 1870 and 1833.
- She does not quote Revelation 6:14-17 until **pages 641, 642**:

*“The **heavens are rolled together as a scroll**, the earth trembles before Him, and every **mountain and island** is moved out of its place.”* (And then she quotes verses 15-17)

- Why does she **separate verses 12, 13 from verses 14-17** by over three hundred pages? Simply because she knew there was a long **parenthesis** of time between the events that are depicted in these passages.
- The principle is that there are **signs which mark the end of the two stages of the tribulation**. In both cases the signs indicate that God has intervened to **deliver his people and to bring the tribulation to an end**—in the first instance from the oppression of the 1260 years and in the second instance from the oppression of the Time of Jacob’s Trouble.
- This must be understood in the context of the fifth seal. In the fifth seal there are **two groups of martyrs**, one past and one future. The **signs in the sixth seal** (6:12, 13) are an announcement that the **oppression of the first group of martyrs is about to come to an end**. The signs of 6:14-17 are an announcement that the **oppression of the second**

**group of martyrs is about to come to an end** because God's people are going to be delivered by the voice of God which causes the cosmic, global earthquake and moves the sun, the moon and the stars out of their places.

Let's take a careful look at how Ellen White explains the signs of 1755, 1780 and 1833:

*"Prophecy not only foretells the manner and object of Christ's coming, but presents tokens by which men are to know when it is near. Said Jesus: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars." Luke 21:25. "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." Mark 13:24-26. The revelator thus describes the **first of the signs to precede** the second advent: "There was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood." Revelation 6:12." GC, p. 304*

### **The Meaning of Luke 21:25, 26**

What about the signs in Luke 21:25, 26? Let's quote the verses in question:

*"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the **sea and the waves roaring**; 26 men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the **powers of heaven will be shaken.**"*

- These verses are frequently used by evangelists to describe the present turmoil in the world. But a close look at the context indicates that these verses are describing what will occur at the very end of human history immediately before the second coming of Jesus.
- We must be careful not to take these verses out of their context. They are not referring to **simple distress** among the nations today. They are actually referring to the **distress which comes as a result of the sun, moon and stars being moved out of their places.**
- GC 613-634: Ellen White describes **the Time of Trouble** such as never was in the history of the world. This is parallel to **Matthew 24:29.**
- In GC 635-637 she describes the signs in the sun, moon and stars in the chapter titled **God's People Delivered.** This is parallel to **Matthew 24:30.** She is following the **same order** as Matthew 24:29-31 where we have the great tribulation and the signs in the sun, the moon and the stars.
- **God's voice shakes** the heavens and the earth.

*"The **mountains shake** like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The **sea is lashed into fury.** There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The*

*whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness are swallowed up by the angry waters."*

Here Ellen White is using the language of **Luke 21:25, 26** to describe what will take place when God's people will be delivered at the second coming. One is reminded of the **tsunami that hit Lisbon after the great earthquake.**

*There are troublous times before us; the judgments of God are coming upon our world. The nations of the earth are to tremble. There will be trials and perplexities on every hand; men's hearts will fail them for fear. And what shall we do in that day? Though the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and be removed like a cottage, if we have made God our trust, He will deliver us." Sons and Daughters of God, p. 354*

- A few pages later Ellen White describes the arrival of Jesus and the sending of His angels to gather His elect (GC 645). This is the very next event in **Matthew 24:31**.

### **The Great Lisbon Earthquake**

Great Lisbon earthquake occurred on November 1, 1755 at about 9:40 in the morning. The five cathedrals were full of worshipers who were celebrating All Saints' Day. The initial shock lasted about 2 minutes and is estimated to have reached an intensity of 9.0 on the Richter scale. There were actually three shocks over a ten-minute period, the second of which was the strongest. The second shock lasted about three and a half minutes. The initial shock demolished most of the city and killed thousands. People who escaped the collapsing buildings fled to the open waterfront thinking it safer only to be engulfed forty minutes later by a 60-foot tsunami.

Sir Charles Lyell reported that gigantic fissures tore through the center of Lisbon some of which were as wide as 15 feet. Fire mysteriously leaped out of cracks in the ground. It is estimated that some 90,000 persons perished in Lisbon alone. But in North Africa the cities of Fes and Meknes were also leveled with a high loss of life. The quake was felt as far away as Strasbourg (1100 miles away). Rivers and lakes were disturbed all the way to Scandinavia some 1500 to 2000 miles away. At about 6 p.m. a tsunami hit the island of Barbados in the Caribbean, some 4000 miles away.

The earthquake destroyed 85% of the buildings in Lisbon and about 90,000 persons died. There were two major aftershocks on December 11 and 23 causing additional death and suffering. The cataclysm was felt over a region of 1.3 million miles in Europe and Africa. Thousands died in Morocco and Algeria.

### **Ellen G. White describes the Lisbon earthquake**

*"Prophecy not only foretells the manner and object of Christ's coming, but presents tokens by which men are to know when it is near. Said Jesus: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars." Luke 21:25. "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her*

light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." Mark 13:24-26. The revelator thus describes **the first of the signs to precede** the Second Advent: "There was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood." Revelation 6:12.

*These signs were witnessed before the opening of the nineteenth century. In fulfillment of this prophecy there occurred, in the year 1755, the most terrible earthquake that has ever been recorded. Though commonly known as the earthquake of Lisbon, it extended to the greater part of Europe, Africa, and America. It was felt in Greenland, in the West Indies, in the island of Madeira, in Norway and Sweden, Great Britain and Ireland. It pervaded an extent of not less than four million square miles. In Africa the shock was almost as severe as in Europe. A great part of Algiers was destroyed; and a short distance from Morocco, a village containing eight or ten thousand inhabitants was swallowed up. A vast wave swept over the coast of Spain and Africa engulfing cities and causing great destruction.*

*It was in Spain and Portugal that the shock manifested its extreme violence. At Cadiz the inflowing wave was said to be sixty feet high. Mountains, "some of the largest in Portugal, were impetuously shaken, as it were, from their very foundations, and some of them opened at their summits, which were split and rent in a wonderful manner, huge masses of them being thrown down into the adjacent valleys. Flames are related to have issued from these mountains."-- Sir Charles Lyell, Principles of Geology, page 495.*

*At Lisbon "a sound of thunder was heard underground, and immediately afterwards a violent shock threw down the greater part of that city. In the course of about six minutes sixty thousand persons perished. The sea first retired, and laid the bar dry; it then rolled in, rising fifty feet or more above its ordinary level." "Among other extraordinary events related to have occurred at Lisbon during the catastrophe, was the subsidence of a new quay, built entirely of marble, at an immense expense. A great concourse of people had collected there for safety, as a spot where they might be beyond the reach of falling ruins; but suddenly the quay sank down with all the people on it, and not one of the dead bodies ever floated to the surface." Charles Lyell, Principles of Geology., page 495.*

*"The shock" of the earthquake "was instantly followed by the fall of every church and convent, almost all the large public buildings, and more than one fourth of the houses. In about two hours after the shock, 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 happened on a holyday, when the churches and convents were full of people, very few of whom escaped." Encyclopedia Americana, article, "Lisbon," note (ed. 1831). "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 about loaded with crucifixes. Unfortunately, many ran to the churches for protection; but in vain was the sacrament exposed; in vain did the poor creatures embrace the altars; images, priests, and people were buried in one common ruin." It has been estimated that ninety thousand persons lost their lives on that fatal day." GC, pp. 304, 305*

## The Testimony of other Authors

*"The Lisbon earthquake of Nov. 1, 1755, appears to have put both the theologians and philosophers on the defensive ... At twenty minutes to ten that morning, Lisbon was firm and magnificent, on one of the most picturesque and commanding sites in the world, - a city of superb approach, placed precisely where every circumstance had concurred to say to the founders: Build here! In six minutes the city was in ruins ... Half the world felt the convulsion ... For many weeks, as we see in the letters and memoirs of that time, people in distant parts of Europe went to bed in alarm, relieved in the morning to find that they had escaped the fate of Lisbon one more night." James Parton, Life of Voltaire, volume 2, pp. 208, 209*

*"The effects were distributed over very nearly four millions of square English miles of the earth's surface, and greatly surpassed anything of the kind ever recorded in history." J. Nourse in The History and Philosophy of Earthquakes, London, (1757), p. 334*

*"Almost all the palaces and large churches were rent down, or part fallen, and scarce one house of this vast city is left habitable. Everybody that was not crushed to death ran out into the large places, and those near the river ran down to save themselves by boats, or any other floating convenience, running, crying, and calling to the ships for assistance; but whilst the multitude were gathered near the riverside, the water rose to such height that it overflowed the lower part of the city, which so terrified the miserable and already dismayed inhabitants, who ran to and fro with dreadful cries, which we heard plainly on board, that it made them believe the dissolution of the world was at hand; everyone falling on his knees and entreating the Almighty for His assistance ... By two o'clock the ships' boats began to ply, and took multitudes on board ... The fear, the sorrow, the cries and lamentations of the poor inhabitants are inexpressible; every one begging pardon, and embracing each other, crying. Forgive me, friend, sister! Oh! What will become of us! Neither water nor land will protect us, and the third element, fire, seems now to threaten our total destruction! As in effect it happened. The conflagration lasted a whole week." Letter of a ship's captain to a ships owner in, Thomas Hunter, Historical Account of Earthquakes, (1756) pp. 72-74*

*"The shock (of the earthquake) was instantly followed by the fall of every church and convent, almost all the large public buildings, and more than one fourth of the houses. In about two hours after the shock, 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 happened on a holiday, when the churches and convents were full of people, very few of them 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?'" Encyclopedia Americana, article, "Lisbon" (1831 edition)*

*"In Africa, this earthquake was felt almost as severely as it had been in Europe. A great part of the city of Algiers was destroyed. Many houses were thrown down at Fez and Mequinez, and multitudes were buried beneath their ruins. Similar effects were realized in Morocco. Its effects were likewise felt at Tangier, at Tetuan, at Funchal in the Island of Madeira; ... it is probable ...*

*that all Africa was shaken by this tremendous convulsion. At the North, it extended to Norway and Sweden; Germany, Holland, France, Great Britain, and Ireland were all more or less agitated by the same great and terrible commotion of the elements." Robert Sears, Wonders of the World, p. 58.*

Sir Charles Lyell wrote the following graphic description of the event:

*"In no part of the volcanic region of Southern Europe has so tremendous an earthquake occurred in modern times as that which began on the 1st of November, 1755, at Lisbon. A sound of thunder was heard under ground, and immediately afterwards a violent shock threw down the greater part of that city. In the course of about six minutes, sixty thousand persons perished. The sea retired, and laid the bar dry; it then rolled in, rising fifty feet above ordinary level. ... Among other extraordinary events related to have occurred at Lisbon during the catastrophe was the subsidence of a new quay, built entirely of marble, at an immense expense. A great concourse of people had collected there for safety, at a spot where they might be beyond the reach of falling ruins; but suddenly the quay sank down with all the people on it, and not one of the dead bodies ever floated to the surface. Sir Charles Lyell, Principles of Geology, p. 495*

*"The mountains of Arrabida, Estrella, Julio, Marvan, and Cintra, being some of the largest in Portugal, were impetuously shaken, as it were, from their very foundations; and some of them opened at their summits, which were split and rent in a wonderful manner, huge masses of them being thrown down into the subjacent valleys. Flames are related to have issued from these mountains, which are supposed to have been electric; they are also said to have smoked; but vast clouds of dust may have given rise to this appearance... The great area over which this Lisbon earthquake extended is very remarkable. The movement was most violent in Spain, Portugal, and the north of Africa; but nearly the whole of Europe, and even the West Indies, felt the shock on the same day. A seaport called St. Ubes, about twenty miles south of Lisbon, was engulfed. At Algiers and Fez, in Africa, the agitation of the earth was equally violent, and at the distance of eight leagues from Morocco, a village, with the inhabitants to the number of about eight or ten thousand persons, together with all their cattle, were [was] swallowed up. Soon after, the earth closed again over them. The shock was felt at sea, on the deck of a ship to the west of Lisbon, and produced very much the same sensation as on dry land. Off St. Lucar [s], the captain of the ship 'Nancy' felt his vessel shaken so violently that he thought she had struck the ground, but, on heaving the lead, found a great depth of water. Captain Clark, from Denia, in latitude 36° 24' N., between nine and ten in the morning, had his ship shaken and strained as if she had struck upon a rock. Another ship, forty leagues west of St. Vincent, experienced so violent a concussion that the men were thrown a foot and a half perpendicularly up from the deck. In Antigua and Barbados, as also in Norway, Sweden, Germany, Holland, Corsica, Switzerland, and Italy, tremors and slight oscillations of the ground were felt.*

*The agitation of lakes, rivers, and springs in Great Britain was remarkable. At Loch Lemmond, in Scotland, for example, the water, without the least apparent cause, rose against its banks, and then subsided below its usual level. The greatest perpendicular height of this swell was two feet four inches. It is said that the movement of this earthquake was undulatory, and that it traveled at the rate of twenty miles a minute. A great wave swept over the coast of Spain, and is said to have been sixty feet at Cadiz. At Tangier, in Africa, it rose and fell eighteen times on the coast;*

at Funchal, in Madeira, it rose full fifteen feet perpendicular above high-water mark, although the tide, which ebbs and flows there seven feet, was then at half ebb. Besides entering the city and committing great havoc, it overflowed other seaports in the island. At Kinsale, in Ireland, a body of water rushed into the harbor, whirled round several vessels, and poured into the market-place." A.R. Spofford and Charles Gibbon, The Library of Choice Literature, Vol. VII, pp. 162, 163

## The Dark Day

Ellen White's Description:

*"Twenty-five years later appeared the next sign mentioned in the prophecy--the darkening of the sun and moon. What rendered this more striking was the fact that the time of its fulfillment had been definitely pointed out. In the Savior's conversation with His disciples upon Olivet, after describing the long period of trial for the church--the 1260 years of papal persecution, concerning which He had promised that the tribulation should be shortened--He thus mentioned certain events to **precede** His coming, and **fixed the time** when the **first of these** should be witnessed: "In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." Mark 13:24. The 1260 days, or years, terminated in 1798. A quarter of a century earlier, persecution had almost wholly ceased. Following this persecution, according to the words of Christ, the sun was to be darkened. On the 19th of May, 1780, this prophecy was fulfilled.*

*"Almost, if not altogether alone, as the most mysterious and as yet unexplained phenomenon of its kind, . . . stands the dark day of May 19, 1780,--a most unaccountable darkening of the whole visible heavens and atmosphere in New England." R. M. Devens, Our First Century, page 89.*

*An eyewitness living in Massachusetts describes the event as follows: "In the morning the sun rose clear, but was soon overcast. The clouds became lowery, and from them, black and ominous, as they soon appeared, lightning flashed, thunder rolled, and a little rain fell. Toward nine o'clock, the clouds became thinner, and assumed a brassy or coppery appearance, and earth, rocks, trees, buildings, water, and persons were changed by this strange, unearthly light. A few minutes later, a heavy black cloud spread over the entire sky except a narrow rim at the horizon, and it was as dark as it usually is at nine o'clock on a summer evening. . . .*

*"Fear, anxiety, and awe gradually filled the minds of the people. Women stood at the door, looking out upon the dark landscape; men returned from their labor in the fields; the carpenter left his tools, the blacksmith his forge, the tradesman his counter. Schools were dismissed, and tremblingly the children fled homeward. Travelers put up at the nearest farmhouse. 'What is coming?' queried every lip and heart. It seemed as if a hurricane was about to dash across the land, or as if it was the day of the consummation of all things.*

*"Candles were used; and hearth fires shone as brightly as on a moonless evening in autumn. . . . Fowls retired to their roosts and went to sleep, cattle gathered at the pasture bars and lowed,*



*frogs peeped, birds sang their evening songs, and bats flew about. But the human knew that night had not come. . . .*

*"Dr. Nathanael Whittaker, pastor of the Tabernacle church in Salem, held religious services in the meeting-house, and preached a sermon in which he maintained that the darkness was supernatural. Congregations came together in many other places. The texts for the extemporaneous sermons were invariably those that seemed to indicate that the darkness was consonant with Scriptural prophecy. . . . The darkness was most dense shortly after eleven o'clock." The Essex Antiquarian, April, 1899, vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 53, 54. "In most parts of the country it was so great in the daytime, that the people could not tell the hour by either watch or clock, nor dine, nor manage their domestic business, without the light of candles. . . ."*

*"The extent of this darkness was extraordinary. It was observed as far east as Falmouth. To the westward it reached to the farthest part of Connecticut, and to Albany. To the southward, it was observed along the seacoasts; and to the north as far as the American settlements extend."--William Gordon, History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the U.S.A., vol. 3, p. 57.*

*The intense darkness of the day was succeeded, an hour or two before evening, by a partially clear sky, and the sun appeared, though it was still obscured by the black, heavy mist. "After sundown, the clouds came again overhead, and it grew dark very fast." "Nor was the darkness of the night less uncommon and terrifying than that of the day; notwithstanding there was almost a full moon, no object was discernible but by the help of some artificial light, which, when seen from the neighboring houses and other places at a distance, appeared through a kind of Egyptian darkness which seemed almost impervious to the rays."--Isaiah Thomas, Massachusetts Spy; or, American Oracle of Liberty, vol. 10, No. 472 (May 25, 1780). Said an eyewitness of the scene: "I could not help conceiving at the time, that if every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in impenetrable shades, or struck out of existence, the darkness could not have been more complete."--Letter by Dr. Samuel Tenney, of Exeter, New Hampshire, December, 1785 (in Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, 1792, 1st series, vol. 1, p. 97). Though at nine o'clock that night the moon rose to the full, "it had not the least effect to dispel the deathlike shadows." After midnight the darkness disappeared, and the moon, when first visible, had the appearance of blood.*

*May 19, 1780, stands in history as "The Dark Day." Since the time of Moses no period of darkness of equal density, extent, and duration, has ever been recorded. The description of this event, as given by eyewitnesses, is but an echo of the words of the Lord, recorded by the prophet Joel, twenty-five hundred years previous to their fulfillment: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, **before** the great and terrible day of the Lord come." Joel 2:31*

*Christ had bidden His people watch for the signs of His advent and rejoice as they should behold the tokens of their coming King. "When these things begin to come to pass," He said, "then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." He pointed His followers to the budding trees of spring, and said: "When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own*

selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." Luke 21:28, 30, 31." GC, pp. 306-309

### **Other Authors Weigh In**

The great astronomer **Hershel** states: *"The dark day of North America was one of those wonderful phenomena of nature which will always be read with interest, but which philosophy is at a loss to explain."*

**Samuel Williams** who did extensive scientific research of the dark day had this to say:

*"The **time** of this extraordinary darkness was May 19, 1780. It came on between the hours of ten and eleven A. M., and continued until the middle of the next night, but with different appearances at different places. . .*

*The **degree** to which the darkness arose was different in different places. In most parts of the country it was so great that people were unable to read common print, determine the time of day by their clocks or watches, dine, or manage their domestic business, without the light of candles. In some places the darkness was so great that persons could not see to read common print in the open air, for several hours together; but I believe this was not generally the case.*

*The **extent** of this darkness was very remarkable. Our intelligence in this respect is not so particular as I could wish; but from the accounts that have been received, it seems to have extended all over the New England States. It was observed as far east as Falmouth [Portland, Maine]. To the westward we hear of its reaching to the furthest parts of Connecticut, and Albany. To the southward it was observed all along the seacoasts, and to the north as far as our settlements extend. It is probable it extended much beyond these limits in some directions, but the exact boundaries cannot be ascertained by any observations that I have been able to collect.*

*With regard to its **duration**, it continued in this place at least fourteen hours; but it is probable this was not exactly the same in different parts of the country.*

*The **appearance** and **effects** were such as tended to make the prospect extremely dull and gloomy. Candles were lighted up in the houses; the birds, having sung their evening songs, disappeared, and became silent; the fowls retired to roost; the cocks were crowing around, as at break of day; objects could not be distinguished but at a very little distance; and everything bore the appearance and gloom of night." Samuel Williams, Hollis Professor of Mathematics and Philosophy at the University of Cambridge, Massachusetts, in Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences to the End of the Year 1783, (1785)volume 1, pp. 234, 235*

*"The darkness of the following evening was probably as gross as ever has been observed since the Almighty fiat gave birth to light. . . I could not help conceiving at the time, that if every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in impenetrable shades, or struck out of existence, the darkness could not have been more complete. A sheet of white paper held within a few inches of the eyes, was equally invisible with the blackest velvet." Samuel Tenney, in Collections of Massachusetts Historical Society for the year 1792, volume 1, pp. 97, 98*

*"The extent of the darkness was very remarkable ... From the accounts that have been received it seems to have extended all over the New England States. It was observed as far east as Falmouth [Portland, Maine]. To the westward, we hear of its reaching to the furthest parts of Connecticut, and Albany. To the southward, it was observed all along the seacoasts. And to the north as far as our settlements extend." William Gordon, History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the U.S.A., Vol. III, p. 57*

*"With regard to its duration, it continued in this place at least fourteen hours: but it is probable this was not exactly the same in different parts of the country. The appearance and effects were such as tended to make the prospect extremely dull and gloomy. Candles were lighted up in the houses; the birds having sung their evening songs, disappeared, and became silent; the fowls retired to roost; the cocks were crowing all around as at break of day; objects could not be distinguished but at a very little distance; and everything bore the appearance and gloom of night." Samuel Williams, An Account of a Very Uncommon Darkness in the States of New England, May 19, 1780 in Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Boston, 1785, pp. 234-246*

*"The Dark Day, May 19, 1780 -- so-called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day extending over all New England ... The obscuration began about ten o'clock in the morning, and continued till the middle of the next night, but with difference and duration in different places ... The true cause of this remarkable phenomena is not known." Noah Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, Vocabulary of the Names of Noted ... Persons and Places, ed. 1869, 1882 & 1883*

*"About eleven o'clock the darkness was such as to demand our attention, and put us upon making observations. At half past eleven, in a room with three windows, twenty-four panes each, all open toward the southeast and south, large print could not be read by persons of good eyes." Samuel Tenney, in Collections of the Massachusetts's Historical Society for the Year 1792, Vol. I, pp. 97-98*

*"About one o'clock a glint of light which had continued to this time in the east, shut in, and the darkness was greater than it had been for any time before ... We dined about two, the windows all open, and two candles burning on the table. In the time of the greatest darkness some of the ... fowls went to their roost. Cocks crowed in answer to one another as they commonly do in the night. Woodcocks, which are night birds, whistled as they do only in the dark. Frogs peeped. In short, there was the appearance of midnight at noonday." Correspondent's report from Ipswich Hamlet, Massachusetts, Boston's Gazette and Country Journal, May 29, 1780*

*"Perhaps it never was darker since the children of Israel left the house of bondage. This gross darkness held till about one o'clock, although the moon had full'd but the day before." Report from Salem, Boston's Gazette and Country Journal, May 30, 1780*

*"During the whole time a sickly, melancholy gloom overcast the face of nature. Nor was the darkness of the night less uncommon and terrifying than that of the day; notwithstanding there was almost a full moon, no object was discernible, but by the help of some artificial light, which when seen from the neighboring house and other places at a distance, appeared through a kind*

of Egyptian darkness, which seemed almost impervious to rays." Isaiah Thomas, Massachusetts Spy; or American Oracle of Liberty, Vol. 10, No. 472, May 25, 1780

"This unusual phenomenon excited the fears and apprehensions of many people. Some considered it as a portentous omen of the wrath of Heaven in vengeance denounced against the land, others as the immediate harbinger of the last day, when 'the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.' The Boston Independent Chronicle of June 8, 1780 quoted from Thomas's Massachusetts Spy. See also 'Some Memorials of Edward Lee' in The Publications of the American Tract Society, Vol. XI, p. 376

"Various have been the sentiments of people concerning the designs of Providence in spreading the unusual darkness over us. Some suppose it portentous of the last scene. I wish it may have some good effect on the minds of the wicked, and that they may be excited to prepare for that solemn day." The Boston Independent Chronicle of June 8, 1780 quoted from Thomas's Massachusetts Spy. See also 'Some Memorials of Edward Lee' in The Publications of the American Tract Society, Vol. XI, p. 376

"That the darkness was not caused by an eclipse is manifest by the various positions of our system at that time; for the moon was more than one hundred fifty degrees from the sun all that day." Dr. Samuel Stearns, who had been appealed to because of his knowledge in "philosophy and astronomy", in a letter printed in the Independent Chronicle, June 22, 1780.

Dr. Stearns continues in good King James English:

"The primary cause must be imputed to Him that walketh through the circuit of heaven, who stretcheth out the heaven like a curtain, who maketh the clouds his chariot, who walketh upon the wings of the wind. It was He, at whose voice the stormy winds are obedient, that commanded these exhalations to be collected and condensed together, that with them He might darken both the day and the night; which darkness was, perhaps, not only a token of His indignation against the crying iniquities and abominations of the people, but an omen of some future destruction." Dr. Samuel Stearns, who had been appealed to because of his knowledge in "philosophy and astronomy", in a letter printed in the Independent Chronicle, June 22, 1780

"The legislature of Connecticut was then in session in Hartford. A very general opinion prevailed that the Day of Judgment was at hand. The House of Representatives, being unable to transact their business, adjourned. A proposal to adjourn the council [a second legislative body called the Governor's Council] was under consideration. When the opinion of Colonel Davenport was asked, he answered, 'I am against an adjournment. The day of judgment is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for an adjournment; if it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish therefore that candles may be brought.'" Timothy Dwight of Yale College, contemporary, wrote this account according to John W. Barber, Connecticut Historical Collections, p. 403

"The Dark Day, May 19, 1780 - so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day extending over all New England ... The true cause of this phenomenon is not known. ... The dark day in Northern America was one of those wonderful phenomena of nature which will always be

*read of with interest, but which philosophy is at a loss to explain." Gage's History of Rowley, Massachusetts*

## **The Falling of the Stars**

It began between two and four o'clock in the morning and continued until daybreak. It extended all over North America and as far south as Mexico and the Island of Jamaica.

Lucy Reese lived in Lookout Georgia on November 13, 1833. She says: *"I was fourteen years old at the time the stars fell. It seemed to me like a shower of rain. The people were greatly frightened, and there was much reading of the Bible because they thought the judgment had come."*

Rose Grace was living in Marion, Alabama: *"I was seventeen years old when the stars fell. I watched them a long time. They appeared to go out when they were about ten feet from the ground. Everybody thought that the judgment day had come. I told them if that was so it was too late to pray."*

Henry Lewis, a slave of Harrisburg, Kentucky was nineteen years old at the time: *"It seemed as if the starry heavens were coming down. I was about twelve miles from home with a horse I had stolen from my master, but when I returned they were all so excited and engaged in prayer that I slipped the house into the stable and escaped detection."*

Caroline Walker of Vicksburg Mississippi: *"The world looked like it was all in a light blaze, and continued so until the day began to dawn. From every direction on the plantation I could hear screams, and cries tat the judgment day had come. It was an awful night."*

Richmond Smith of Vicksburg, Mississippi: *"I was living at that time in Putnam County, Georgia. Was nineteen years old. Was awakened by the voice of one crying, 'The time is come.' Everybody felt that it was the judgment and that the end of the world had come."*

Sanford Williams was living in Louisville, Kentucky: *"I was playing the violin for a dance at the time. One of the ladies went to the door, and screamed, 'the judgment, the judgment day is come,' and fainted. Another ran to the door, and said about the same words and fell lifeless. Then I went to the door, playing my violin as I went. When I saw the stars all falling, I threw down my violin and cried, 'O Lord, O Lord, have mercy on me and save me this night and I will serve you until I die.' In every direction I could hear men, women, and children screaming 'The judgment day is come.'"*

Professor Olmstead, of Yale College says: *"The meteors did not fly at random over all parts of the sky, but appeared to emanate from a point in the constellation of Leo, near a star called Gamma Leonis, in the bend of the sickle.*

*"After collecting and collating the accounts given in all the periodicals of the country, and also in numerous letters addressed either to my scientific friends or to myself, the following appeared to be the leading facts attending the phenomenon. The shower pervaded nearly the whole of*

North America, having appeared in nearly equal splendor from the British possessions on the north, to the West India Islands and Mexico on the south, and from sixty one degrees of longitude east of the American coast, quite to the Pacific Ocean on the west. Throughout this immense region, the duration was nearly the same. The meteors began to attract attention by their unusual frequency and brilliancy, from nine to twelve o'clock in the evening; were most striking in their appearance from two to five; arrived at their maximum, in many places, about four o'clock; and continued until rendered invisible by the light of day." Denison Olmstead, The Mechanism of the Heavens, p. 328

Thomas Milner, the English Scientist, who called the 'Falling of the Stars' the most splendid on record (p. 139):

*"In many districts, the mass of the population were terror-struck, and the more enlightened were awed at contemplating so vivid a picture of the apocalyptic image - that of the stars of heaven falling to earth, even as a fig tree casting her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."* Thomas Milner, *The Gallery of Nature*, London, 1852, p. 140. See also "The Old Countryman", in *Portland's Evening Advertiser*, November 26, 1833

*"On the night of November 12-13, 1833, a tempest of falling stars broke over the earth. North America bore the brunt of its pelting. From the Gulf of Mexico to Halifax, until daylight with some difficulty put an end to the display, the sky was scored in every direction with shining tracks and illuminated with majestic fireballs."* Agnes M. Clerke, *History of Astronomy in the Nineteenth Century*, (1902) p. 328, 329

*"Once for all, then, as the result of the star fall of 1833, the study of luminous meteors became an integral part of astronomy."* Agnes M. Clerke, *History of Astronomy in the Nineteenth Century*, (1902) p. 329

*"In many districts, the mass of the population were terror-struck, and the more enlightened were awed at contemplating so vivid a picture of the apocalyptic image—that of the stars of heaven falling to the earth, even as a fig tree casting her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."* Rev. Thomas Milner, *The Gallery of Nature*, (1852), p. 140

*"Though there was no moon, when we first beheld them their brilliancy was so great that we could, at times, read common-sized print without much difficulty, and the light which they afforded was much whiter than that of the moon, in the clearest and coldest night, when the ground is covered with snow. The air itself, the face of the earth, as far as we could behold it,—all the surrounding objects, and the very countenances of men, wore the aspect and hue of death, occasioned by the continued, pallid glare of these countless meteors, which in all their grandeur flamed 'lawless through the sky.'* Letter from Bowling Green, Missouri, to Professor Silliman, in *American Journal of Science and the Arts*, volume XXV (1834), p. 382

*"In any direction, the scene could not be compared more aptly to anything than a distant shower of fire, whose particles were falling sparsely to the earth. Frequently one larger and more luminous than the rest would shoot across the heavens producing a flash like vivid lighting. Towards the approach of daylight the sky began to be obscured with clouds, and these*

*substances appeared less frequent, but did not disappear till long after the light of the morning had arisen, and were seen as long as stars were visible.” New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette (semiweekly), volume 1, number 104, Concord, Saturday, November 16, 1833.*

*“Probably the most remarkable of all the meteoric showers that have ever occurred was that of the Leonids, on the night [night following] November 12, 1833. The number at some stations was estimated as high as 200,000 an hour for five or six hours. ‘The sky was as full of them as it ever is of snowflakes in a storm,’ and, as an old lady described it, looked ‘like a gigantic umbrella.’ [Page 469]. . .*

*In 1864 Professor Newton of New Haven showed by an examination of the old records that there had been a number of great meteoric showers in November, at intervals of thirty-three or thirty-four years, and he predicted confidently a repetition of the shower on November 13 or 14, 1866. The shower occurred as predicted, and was observed in Europe; and it was followed by another in 1867, which was visible in America, the meteoric swarm being extended in so long a procession as to require more than two years to cross the earth’s orbit. Neither of these showers, however, was equal to the shower of 1833. The researches of Newton, supplemented by those of Adams, the discoverer of Neptune, showed that the swarm moves in a long ellipse with a thirty-three-year period.*

*A return of the shower was expected in 1899 or 1900, but failed to appear, though on November 14-15, 1898, a considerable number of meteors were seen, and in the early morning of November 14-15, 1901, a well-marked shower occurred, visible over the whole extent of the United States, but best seen west of the Mississippi, and especially on the Pacific Coast. At a number of stations several hundred Leonids were observed by the eye or by photography, and the total number that fell must be estimated by tens of thousands. The display, however, seems to have nowhere rivaled the showers of 1866-1867, and these were not to be compared with that of 1833.” Charles A. Young, Ph. D. (Professor of Astronomy at Princeton University) Manual of Astronomy, (1902), pp. 471, 472*

*“Scientific study of the orbits of shooting stars began after the occurrence of the most brilliant meteoric shower on record,—that of November 13, 1833. This spectacle which excited the greatest interest among all beholders, and was looked upon with consternation by the ignorant, many of whom thought that the end of the world had come, was witnessed generally throughout North America, which happened to be the part of the earth facing the meteoric storm. Hundreds of thousands of shooting stars fell in the course of two or three hours. Some observers compared their number to the flakes of a snowstorm, or to the raindrops in a shower.” The Encyclopedia Americana, article: “Meteors or Shooting Stars.”*

*“I witnessed this gorgeous spectacle, and was awe-struck. The air seemed filled with bright descending messengers from the sky. It was about daybreak when I saw this sublime scene. It was not without the suggestion at that moment that it might be the harbinger of the coming Son of man; and in my state of mind I was prepared to hail him as my friend and deliverer. I had read that the stars should fall from heaven, and they were now falling: I was suffering much in my mind, and I was beginning to look away to heaven from the rest denied me on earth.”*

Testimony of a slave: Frederick A. Douglass. Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book, p. 164

"Everybody felt that it was the judgment, and that the end of the world had come." and "In every direction I could hear men, women, and children screaming, 'The judgment day is come!'" "The attention of astronomers in Europe, and all over the world, was, as may be imagined, strongly roused by intelligence of this celestial display on the Western continent." Rev. Thomas Milner, The Gallery of Nature, London, (1852), p. 141.

"The morning of November 13, 1833, was rendered memorable by an exhibition of the phenomenon called shooting stars, which was probably more extensive and magnificent than any similar one hitherto recorded. ... Probably no celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country, since its first settlement, which was viewed with so much admiration and delight by one class of spectators, or with so much astonishment and fear by another class. For some time after the occurrence, the 'meteoric phenomenon' was the principal topic of conversation in every circle." Denison Olmsted, Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at Yale College, in the American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. XXV, (1834), pp. 363-364.

The astronomer, Professor Simon Newcomb declared this phenomenal exhibition of 'falling stars' to have been *"the most remarkable one ever observed."* Simon Newcomb, Astronomy for Everybody, p. 280

"The stars fell 'even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.' Here is the exactness of the prophet. The falling stars did not come as if from several trees shaken, but 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; and those which appeared in the south (for I went out of my residence into the park) fell toward the south; and they fell not as ripe fruit falls; far from it; but they flew, they were cast, like the unripe fig, which at first refuses to leave the branch, and when it does break its hold, 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. Such was the appearance of the above phenomenon to the inmates of my house. I walked to the park with two gentlemen of Pearl Street, feeling and confessing that this scene had never been figured to our minds by any book or mortal, save only by the prophet. Henry Dana Ward, correspondent for the New York Journal of Commerce, November 14, 1833, volume 8, No. 534, p. 2

### Ellen White on the Falling of the Stars

"In 1833, two years after Miller began to present in public the evidences of Christ's soon coming, the last of the signs appeared which were promised by the Savior as tokens of His second advent. Said Jesus: "The stars shall fall from heaven." Matthew 24:29. And John in the Revelation declared, as he beheld in vision the scenes that should herald the day of God: "The stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." Revelation 6:13. This prophecy received a **striking and impressive fulfillment** in the great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833. That was the most extensive



*and wonderful display of falling stars which has ever been recorded; "the whole firmament, over all the United States, being then, for hours, in fiery commotion! No celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country, since its first settlement, which was viewed with such intense admiration by one class in the community, or with so much dread and alarm by another." "Its sublimity and awful beauty still linger in many minds. . . . Never did rain fall much thicker than the meteors fell toward the earth; east, west, north, and south, it was the same. In a word, the whole heavens seemed in motion. . . . The display, as described in Professor Silliman's Journal, was seen all over North America. . . . From two o'clock until broad daylight, the sky being perfectly serene and cloudless, an incessant play of dazzlingly brilliant luminosities was kept up in the whole heavens." R. M. Devens, American Progress; or, The Great Events of the Greatest Century, ch. 28, pars. 1-5*

*"No language, indeed, can come up to the splendor of that magnificent display; . . . no one who did not witness it can form an adequate conception of its glory. It seemed as if the whole starry heavens had congregated at one point near the zenith, and were simultaneously shooting forth, with the velocity of lightning, to every part of the horizon; and yet they were not exhausted--thousands swiftly followed in the tracks of thousands, as if created for the occasion."--F. Reed, in the Christian Advocate and Journal, Dec. 13, 1833. "A more correct picture of a fig tree casting its figs when blown by a mighty wind, it was not possible to behold."--"The Old Countryman," in Portland Evening Advertiser, Nov. 26, 1833.*

*In the New York Journal of Commerce of November 14, 1833, appeared a long article regarding this wonderful phenomenon, containing this statement: "No philosopher or scholar has told or recorded an event, I suppose, like that of yesterday morning. A prophet eighteen hundred years ago foretold it exactly, if we will be at the trouble of understanding stars falling to mean falling stars. . . in the only sense in which it is possible to be literally true." Thus was displayed the last of those signs of His coming, concerning which Jesus bade His disciples: "When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Matthew 24:33. **After these signs, John beheld, as the great event next impending, the heavens departing as a scroll, while the earth quaked, mountains and islands removed out of their places, and the wicked in terror sought to flee from the presence of the Son of man. Revelation 6:12-17.***

*Many, who witnessed the falling of the stars, looked upon it as a herald of the coming judgment, "an awful type, a sure forerunner, a merciful sign, of that great and dreadful day." -- "The Old Countryman," in Portland Evening Advertiser, Nov. 26, 1833. Thus the attention of the people was directed to the fulfillment of prophecy, and many were led to give heed to the warning of the second advent." GC, pp. 333, 334*

## **The Second Stage of the Sixth Seal**

It will be remembered that the question of the martyrs in the fifth seal has to do with two things: "judging and avenging". The first part of the sixth seal answers the first part of this plea in heaven by the judgment. That is to say, the little horn would be judged after it trampled on the saints for three and a half times. Part one of the sixth seal (6:12, 13) deals with the "judge" aspect. This part was announced by the great earthquake and the signs in the heavens (6:12, 13).

The second part of the sixth seal (6:14-17) deals with the second part of the martyrs' plea, that is, the "avenge" aspect. This is discerned clearly in Revelation 6:17. The wrath of the Lamb will be poured out upon those who oppressed His people during the second stage of persecution.

In between these two stages of the sixth seal we have the judgment. First, we have the vindication of the martyrs who were slain and then at the very end we have the sealing of the 144,000 living saints. For the living saints the sealing of the 144,000 is the judging phase (Revelation 7:1-8) and the reward given to the great multitude is the avenging stage (Revelation 7:9-17)

The second part of the sixth seal (the "avenging" part) is picked up in The Great Controversy, pp. 641, 642. On these pages Ellen White quotes Revelation 6:14-17. (See also Hebrews 12:25-27; Joel 3:16; Jeremiah 25:30-33; Isaiah 2:19-21; Isaiah 34:4; Psalm 2:2-4) Revelation 19:1-10 presents a great multitude standing victoriously in heaven. Revelation 19:1, 2 clearly indicates that at this point the avenging has already taken place. The harlot has been judged and God's people have been avenged. Revelation 19:18 refers to the same groups of people as in Revelation 6:15, 16. And Revelation 19:18-20 reaches the same climax again.

Notice the following quotation from the chapter *God's People Delivered* in the book The Great Controversy:

*"Before His presence "all faces are turned into paleness;" upon the rejecters of God's mercy falls the terror of eternal despair."The heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and the faces of them all gather blackness." Jeremiah 30:6; Nahum 2:10. The righteous cry with trembling: "**Who shall be able to stand?" The angels' song is hushed, and there is a period of awful silence** [this would be the half hour of silence of the seventh seal]. Then the voice of Jesus is heard, saying: "My grace is sufficient for you." The faces of the righteous are lighted up, and joy fills every heart. And the angels strike a note higher and sing again as they draw still nearer to the earth.*

*The King of kings descends upon the cloud, wrapped in flaming fire. The heavens are rolled together as a scroll, the earth trembles before Him, and **every mountain and island is moved out of its place** [the second part of the sixth seal in Revelation 6:14]. "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people." Psalm 50:3, 4.*

*"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" **Revelation 6:15-17** [the second part of the sixth seal].*

*The derisive jests have ceased. Lying lips are hushed into silence. The clash of arms, the tumult of battle, "with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood" (Isaiah 9:5), is stilled. Nought now*

is heard but the voice of prayer and the sound of weeping and lamentation. The cry bursts forth from lips so lately scoffing: "**The great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?**" [The last words of the sixth seal] The wicked pray to be **buried beneath the rocks of the mountains** [language of the sixth seal] rather than meet the face of Him whom they have despised and rejected." GC, pp. 641, 642

(See also Nahum 1:6, 7; Psalm 15; Joel 2:11; Rev. 6:17; Malachi 3:1 where the same question as in Revelation 6:17 is asked. Isaiah 54:10 and Psalm 46 contain beautiful promises for God's people during this period when the islands and mountains are being moved out of their places).

### Comments on Revelation 6:17

We usually think of a lamb as a tame and harmless creature. We think of the death of Jesus as the Lamb of God as an act of salvation. How then are we to understand the wrath of the Lamb? Actually in the introductory vision to the seals Jesus was presented first of all as the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5) and then as the Lamb as though He had been slain (Revelation 5:6). How are we to understand this paradoxical description of Jesus as the Lamb and the Lion?

Notice the following statement from Ellen G. White:

*"The Lion of Judah, so terrible to the rejectors of His grace, will be the Lamb of God to the obedient and faithful. The pillar of fire that speaks terror and wrath to the transgressor of God's Law, is a token of light and mercy and deliverance to those who have kept His commandments. The arm strong to smite the rebellious will be strong to deliver the loyal."* Sons and Daughters of God, p. 358

In another place Ellen White explains that the death of Christ brings salvation and judgment:

*"The death of Christ brings to the rejecter of His mercy the wrath and judgments of God unmixed with mercy. This is the wrath of the Lamb."* Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 5, p. 1107

In the Garden and on the Cross Jesus drank the cup of the wrath of God without mixture (Matthew 26:39-42; John 18:11) for every human being who has ever drawn breath. Those who accept Jesus as personal Savior will not have to drink the cup because He drank it for them. However, those who reject the Cross of Jesus will have to drink their own cup of wrath without mixture of mercy (Revelation 14:10; 16:19).

Now, if Ellen White quotes Revelation 6:12, 13 in GC 304, 333 and then quotes Revelation 6:14-17 in GC, pp. 641-642, then the sealing (judgment) must take place in between and this is exactly the case. It is interesting to study the sequence of chapters between page 304 and 641 of The Great Controversy. In GC, pp. 304-634 Ellen White portrays William Miller, the three angels' messages, Jesus' work in the most holy place, the sealing, the close of probation and the time of trouble. Then she expounds upon the last part of the sixth seal in GC, pp. 641, 642.

Thus the fifth and sixth seals are to be understood together. The sixth seal answers the two pleas of the martyrs in the fifth. From 538-1798 God's martyrs are crying out for justice. They are given white robes and told to rest a while until the rest of the martyrs are slain in the future. In 1844, the process of judging the little horn is begins and the process of reversing the verdicts of human courts begins. The dead (including the martyrs) are judged first and vindicated. Then, at the very end of the judgment, the living are judged. After the court sits, then the little horn will be destroyed at the second coming. In this way the little horn will have been judged and God's people avenged!

### **Joining Jesus at His Throne**

Revelation 7:9-17 and 14:1-5 are quoted in GC 648, 649, 665. On page 646 those who overcame receive from Jesus the crown, the name and the harp. At this point God's people have joined Him on the throne as was promised in Revelation 3:21. They are now on the sea of glass mentioned in Revelation 4:6 (cf. Revelation 15:2-4). At this point God's people have been avenged because they are judging their oppressors in Revelation 20:4.



## “STUDIES IN REVELATION – THE SEVEN SEALS”

by Pastor Stephen P. Bohr

# LESSON #8 - SEVENTH SEAL: SILENCE IN HEAVEN

The seventh seal mentions a period of **silence** in Heaven for about **half an hour**. A half hour in prophetic time would be seven and a half days so about a half hour would be **seven days**. This silence will mark an event that takes place as Jesus comes on the clouds to avenge the blood of His people.

Ellen White assures us that the second coming will take **several days**:

*“And I saw a flaming cloud come where Jesus stood. Then Jesus . . . took His place on the cloud which carried Him to the East, where it first appeared to the saints on earth--a small black cloud which was the sign of the Son of man. While the cloud was passing from the **Holiest to the East**, which took **a number of days**, the synagogue of Satan worshipped at the saint's feet.”*  
*Maranatha, p. 287*

The **seventh seal** involves a question that is asked as Jesus begins His second coming to the earth, an event that will take several days: (see Habakkuk 2:20; Zephaniah 1:7; Zechariah 2:13)

*“Before His presence “all faces are turned into paleness;” upon the rejecters of God's mercy falls the terror of eternal despair.”The heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and the faces of them all gather blackness.” Jeremiah 30:6; Nahum 2:10. The righteous cry with trembling: “**Who shall be able to stand?**” **The angels' song is hushed, and there is a period of awful silence** [this would be the half hour of silence of the seventh seal]. Then the voice of Jesus is heard, saying: “My grace is sufficient for you.” The faces of the righteous are lighted up, and joy fills every heart. And the angels strike a note higher and sing again as they draw still nearer to the earth.”*  
*GC, p. 641*

Notice that the question, “who shall be able to stand?” is followed immediately by silence in heaven just like Revelation 6:17 asks the question and then the seventh seal is a period of silence. We must include here Psalm 15 where the question is asked in verse 1, then the answer is given and then at the end we are told that those who do these things shall never be moved.

This is identical to Revelation 6. We also must include Joel 2:11 where the question is asked and then the preparation in the succeeding verses.

### **The Unfurling of the Scroll**

The **unfurling of the scroll** has to do with post-millennial events. At this stage the scroll will be opened to reveal the doom of the wicked:

The Great Controversy, pp. 666ff describes the white throne judgment. As all nations are before the judgment bar of God, the scroll is finally opened before the whole universe and every tongue will confess and every knee will bow to the supremacy of Jesus (GC 668, 669; see Philippians 2:5-11 and the relationship to the great panorama. Isaiah 45:23 from where Philippians 2:9-11 comes underlines a context of the judgment, a contrast between the one true God and the pretenders.

In GC, p. 671 Revelation 5:12 is sung by the white robed throng before the throne. In GC, p. 678 the final song of the whole created universe is sung giving honor and glory to the lamb (Revelation 5:13). This is the moment toward which Revelation 5:12, 13 pointed. Here I Corinthians 15:24-28 will finally be consummated.

While the book is sealed, it cannot be opened and read. An analogous case is the sealed book of Daniel 12:4. The little book is sealed until the time of the end. In other words, its contents cannot be understood until the book is unsealed.

Must take a look at Jeremiah where you have a title deed. Adam lost the title deed to the world, Satan claimed it and only the Redeemer (*go'el*) can redeem it (buy it back). The scroll contains the story of salvation. When the book is opened, the universe will see that only Jesus and His followers have a right to the lost possession.

*"In order to protect the contents of legal documents (such as deeds of sale, contracts, wills, and letters), a seal impression was normally made with a signet or ring at the end of the written document. The sealing thus functioned in place of a signature, indicating authenticity, validity, authority, ratification, or protection of the document. In order to protect the contents against an inappropriate disclosure, the document would be tied with threads, and then the seal was impressed at the knots on bullae (a blob of clay, wax, or some other soft material) which kept the papyrus scroll folded (Job 38:14). An unbroken impression would indicate that the sealed document had not been opened. Only the owner could break the seals and disclose the contents." Ranko Stefanovic, Revelation of Jesus Christ, p. 197*

*"Archeologists have brought to light many documents sealed with two to seven or more seals. For instance, Roman law dictated that a will or testament had to be sealed with a minimum of seven seals of witnesses in order to render its contents valid, although some evidence shows that more than seven seals were used on occasion. . . Like any sealed scroll of the time, the scroll of Revelation 5 appears rolled up, tied with a cord, and sealed along the outside edge with seals of wax affixed at the knots. As such, it could not be opened and its contents disclosed until all of the seven seals were broken. The breaking of all seven seals is preliminary and preparatory to*

*the actual opening of the scroll and the disclosure of its contents.” Ranko Stefanovic, Revelation of Jesus Christ, p. 197, 198*

*“A will, according to the Praetorian Testament, in Roman Law bore the seven seals of the seven witnesses on the threads that secured the tablets or parchment (see Smith, Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, p. 1117). Such a Testament could not be carried into execution till all the seven seals were loosed.” R. H. Charles, International Critical Commentary, volume 1, p. 137*

*“The central item, the seven-sealed scroll, portrays a will or testament, for that is precisely what such a seven-sealed document was in Roman law in John’s day. We find, then, that the picture we have in the subdivision of Revelation from 4:1 to 8:1 is a court scene in which a will or testament is to be opened. In the context of Revelation, this will or testament would be a title-deed, as it were, to man’s lost inheritance—an inheritance which has been repurchased by Christ, the Lamb. Thus the scroll is a book of destiny. The opening of it means inheritance in God’s kingdom; its remaining closed means forfeiture. No wonder John wept when he thought no one could open the scroll.” Kenneth Strand, Interpreting the Book of Revelation, p. 55*

Ellen White concurs with these scholars but she adds some very telling information:

*“There in His open hand lay the book, the roll of the history of God’s providences, the prophetic history of nations and the church. Herein was contained the divine utterances, His authority, His commandments, His laws, the whole symbolic counsel of the Eternal, and the history of all ruling powers in the nations. In symbolic language was contained in that roll the influence of every nation, tongue, and people from the beginning of earth’s history to its close.” Manuscript Releases, volume 9, p. 7*

*“Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 294*

Several things emerge from this last statement: Ellen White is writing this around the year 1900. It is very clear that the scroll had not yet been opened at that time. Furthermore, in order for those who cried out: “release unto us Barabbas” to see the consequences of the decision they made in the past, they must resurrect. This means that the scroll will not be opened before them until they resurrect in the second resurrection after the millennium.

On the opening of the scroll after the millennium, Ellen White gives this vivid description:

*“Above the throne is revealed the cross; and like a **panoramic view [in high definition]** appear the scenes of Adam’s temptation and fall, and the **successive steps in the great plan of redemption**. The Savior’s lowly birth; His early life of simplicity and obedience; His baptism in Jordan; the fast and temptation in the wilderness; His public ministry, unfolding to men heaven’s most precious blessings; the days crowded with deeds of love and mercy, the nights of prayer and watching in the solitude of the mountains; the plottings of envy, hate, and malice which repaid His benefits; the awful, mysterious agony in Gethsemane beneath the crushing weight of*

*the sins of the whole world; His betrayal into the hands of the murderous mob; the fearful events of that night of horror--the unresisting prisoner, forsaken by His best-loved disciples, rudely hurried through the streets of Jerusalem; the Son of God exultingly displayed before **Annas**, arraigned in the high priest's palace, in the judgment hall of **Pilate**, before the cowardly and cruel **Herod**, mocked, insulted, tortured, and condemned to die--all are vividly portrayed.*

*And now before the swaying multitude are revealed the final scenes--the patient Sufferer treading the path to Calvary; the Prince of heaven hanging upon the cross; the haughty priests and the jeering rabble deriding His expiring agony; the supernatural darkness; the heaving earth, the rent rocks, the open graves, marking the moment when the world's Redeemer yielded up His life.*

*The awful spectacle appears just as it was. Satan, his angels, and his subjects have no power to turn from the picture of their own work. **Each actor** recalls the part which he performed. **Herod**, who slew the innocent children of Bethlehem that he might destroy the King of Israel; the base **Herodias**, upon whose guilty soul rests the blood of John the Baptist; the weak, timeserving **Pilate**; the **mocking soldiers**; the **priests and rulers** and the maddened throng who cried, "His blood be on us, and on our children!"--all behold the enormity of their guilt. They vainly seek to hide from the divine majesty of His countenance, outshining the glory of the sun, while the redeemed cast their crowns at the Savior's feet, exclaiming: "He died for me!"*

*Amid the ransomed throng are the apostles of Christ, the heroic Paul, the ardent Peter, the loved and loving John, and their truehearted brethren, and with them the vast host of martyrs; while outside the walls, with every vile and abominable thing, are those by whom they were persecuted, imprisoned, and slain. There is **Nero**, that monster of cruelty and vice, beholding the joy and exaltation of those whom he once tortured, and in whose extremest anguish he found satanic delight. His mother is there to witness the result of her own work; to see how the evil stamp of character transmitted to her son, the passions encouraged and developed by her influence and example, have borne fruit in crimes that caused the world to shudder.*

*There are **papist priests and prelates**, who claimed to be Christ's ambassadors, yet employed the rack, the dungeon, and the stake to control the consciences of His people. There are the **proud pontiffs** who exalted themselves above God and presumed to change the law of the Most High. Those **pretended fathers** of the church have an account to render to God from which they would fain be excused. Too late they are made to see that the Omniscient One is jealous of His law and that He will in no wise clear the guilty. They learn now that Christ identifies His interest with that of His suffering people; and they feel the force of His own words: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Matthew 25:40.*

*The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them." GC, pp. 666-669*



## The Sequence of Events in Revelation 4:1-8:1

**Revelation 4:** The father is alone on the throne as heaven prepares to receive Jesus who is returning victoriously from earth at His ascension (Acts 1:9-11).

**Revelation 5:** Jesus, who has overcome the devil, the flesh and the world joins His Father on His throne (3:21). Jesus now sits at the Father's right hand until His enemies are made His footstool (Psalm 110; I Corinthians 15:24-28).

**Revelation 6:** The saints now overcome on earth even as Jesus overcame on earth. The events of the seven seals transpire between the time when Jesus sat on His Father's throne and the time when the saints will join Him on His own throne.

**Revelation 7:9-17; 19:1-8:** The saints were delivered from death in the final tribulation and they now ascend to heaven and join Jesus on His throne.

### Another way of looking at it:

Revelation 4, 5: The Christian Era begins

Revelation 7, 19: The Christian Era ends

Revelation 4, 5: Jesus has overcome and sat on the throne

Revelation 7, 19: Saints overcome and sit on the throne

Revelation 4, 5: Praise to the Father and to the Lamb because of creation and redemption

Revelation 7, 19: Praise to God for delivering His people from the wrath of the end time harlot and her daughters

### Revelation 19 and the Seven Seals

- **White Horse:** Jesus rides a white horse "conquering and to conquer" (Revelation 19:11) In The Great Controversy, p. 641: Jesus rides as a mighty conqueror, victor. He has subdued His enemies: "Jesus rides forth as a mighty conqueror. Not now a "Man of Sorrows," to drink the bitter cup of shame and woe, He comes, victor in heaven and earth, to judge the living and the dead." Notice the crown on his head: "No crown of thorns now mars that sacred head; but a diadem of glory rests on His holy brow." The *stephanos* of Revelation 6:2 has become the *diademata*.
- **Red Horse:** Next we see a **sword** which comes out of Jesus' mouth. The sword takes away peace from the earth and as a result there is war and bloodshed: "The swords which were to slay God's people are now employed to destroy their enemies. Everywhere there is strife and bloodshed." (GC, pp. 655; 19:11, 15, 21)
- **Black Horse:** You have a **supernatural darkness** (16:10). Ellen White calls describes this darkness as a "dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night" (GC, p. 636).

- **Yellow Horse:** The Word of God now slays the oppressors of His people (19:13-15). God's people died for the written Word of God and now the Word of God in person slays their oppressors (20:4-6).
- **Fifth Seal:** The number of the **martyrs is now complete**. They have been accounted worthy of life in the judgment. The harlot has been **judged** and now they are **avenged** and resurrected (Revelation 19:1, 2) and they now become the judges of their oppressors (Revelation 20:4-6). The martyrs come forth from their graves. Their cries have finally been vindicated by the justice of God. Until this point they were resting from their labors until the number of all the martyrs was complete (Revelation 14:13).
- **Sixth Seal:** Next we have the signs in the sun, the moon and the stars (Joel 2:10; Isaiah 13:9, 10; Matthew 24:29, 30; GC 637, 641-642; EW 41). An earthquake also takes place at this time (GC 636, 637; Rev. 6:17). All of these signs were seen in the sixth seal. The results of the judgment are now seen and shown. The righteous are saved and the wicked are condemned. God has judged and avenged. Revelation 19:11 explains that Jesus comes to judge and avenge. Jesus comes executes judgment against the wicked for what they have done to His people. The tables are now turned on the wicked. History is reversed. The lamb now becomes a lion. When John saw him in Revelation 5 he saw a lamb but when he takes over the kingdom, John sees a lion. So Revelation 6 is the period between the lamb and the lion. Revelation 6:16, 17 portrays this moment when the lamb roars like a lion. Have you ever seen a roaring lamb like in this verse? This is amplified in Jeremiah 25:30-38 (especially verse 38 where the Lord roars).
- **Seventh Seal:** The half hour of silence in heaven: (Habakkuk 2:20—in context immediately before chapter 3 where Jesus comes from heaven at His second coming.
- Jesus now takes His people to heaven (GC, pp. 645-657) and gives them the insignia of their royal state (the crown of glory, the victors, crown and the shining harp (GC, p. 646; Rev. 7:9; Rev. 2:10; 2 Timothy 4:7, 8; Revelation 14:2; 15:2; GC, pp. 648, 649)

Notice the following passage from Ellen White where the various elements above come together:

*“By this time the 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads was written, God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious Star containing Jesus' new name. [REV. 3:12.] At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us in prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and the wicked would fall helpless to the ground. Then it was that the synagogue of Satan knew that God had loved us who could wash one another's feet, and salute the holy brethren with a holy kiss, and they worshipped at our feet. [REV. 3:9.] Soon our eyes were drawn to the East, for a small black cloud had appeared about half as large as a man's hand, which we all knew was the Sign of the Son of Man. [MAT. 24:30.] We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer, lighter, and brighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. [REV. 14:14.] The bottom appeared like fire, a rainbow was over it, around the cloud were ten thousand angels singing a most lovely song. And on it sat the Son of Man, [LUKE 21:27.] on his head were*

*crowns, [REV. 19:12.] his hair was white and curly and lay on his shoulders. [REV. 1:14.] His feet had the appearance of fire, [REV. 1:15.] in his right hand was a sharp sickle, [REV. 14:14.] in his left a silver trumpet. [THESS. 4:16.] His eyes were as a flame of fire, [REV. 1:14.] which searched his children through and through. Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then we all cried out, who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless? Then the angels ceased to sing, and there was some time of awful silence, [REV. 8:1.] when Jesus spoke. Those who have clean hands and a pure heart shall be able to stand, my grace is sufficient for you. At this, our faces lighted up, and joy filled every heart. And the angels struck a note higher and sung again while the cloud drew still nearer the earth. Then Jesus' silver trumpet sounded, as he descended on the cloud, wrapped in flames of fire [2 THESS. 1:7,8] He gazed on the graves of the sleeping saints, then raised his eyes and hands to heaven and cried out, [JOHN 5:25.] Awake! Awake! Awake! ye that sleep in the dust, and arise. Then there was a mighty earthquake. The graves opened, and the dead came up clothed with immortality. The 144,000 shouted, Hallelujah! as they recognized their friends who had been torn from them by death, and in the same moment we were changed and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. [THESS. 4:17.] We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought along the crowns and with his own right hand placed them on our heads. [2 ESDRAS 2:43.] He gave us harps of gold and palms of victory. [REV. 15:2. REV. 7:9.]” A Word to the Little Flock pp. 14, 15; also contained in Testimonies for the Church, volume 1, pp. 59-61*

## **Synopsis and Overview of the Seven Seals**

The seals are a portrayal of sacred history, not secular history. They describe a succession of historical events between the inauguration of Christ as priest/king in heaven and His final coming to take over the absolute kingship of the world. The seals have a certain “flow”. That is to say, they are not a description of individual, isolated and disconnected events of church history but rather a sequential and interconnected description of Satan’s battle strategy as he attempts to take over complete dominion of the world. On the other hand, the true church filled with the Holy Spirit is Christ’s chosen method to gain the victory in the struggle for world dominion. This battle is exemplified in the imagery of the building of God’s spiritual temple in Acts of the Apostles, pp. 596-602.

Under the first seal the Apostolic Church goes out conquering and to conquer. These conquests of the enemy’s territory infuriate the hosts of wickedness who bring about persecution under the Roman emperors (red horse), doctrines of darkness under Constantine (black horse) and death during the middle Ages (yellow horse).

The fifth seal opens to view the fact that the battle is far from over when the persecutions of the middle Ages come to an end. There will be a final struggle, no holds barred, for world dominion. An even greater number of martyrs will lose their lives in this battle for the word of God and the testimony which they held. This battle is described in Revelation 12, 13; 14:18-20; 16:4-7; 17:6; 18:20, 24; 19:2. The fifth seal shows that the battle for world dominion will have a great final struggle.

The two stages of martyrs of the fifth seal must be understood in the context of the two periods of dominion of the Roman Catholic papacy. In between the two periods of persecution is the deadly wound (Revelation 13:3). This perspective is also found in Daniel 11 where the scenes of verses 30-39 will be repeated in verses 40-45. The fifth seal itself indicates that the historical events of the first four seals will transpire once more but on an accentuated and global scale. It is not that the first four seals will be fulfilled again but rather that the historical events which fulfilled them will occur once more in **similar fashion**. If the injustices of the first four seals in church history led the martyrs to cry out in the fifth seal, then we would expect the cry in the future to come as a result of injustices similar to those in the first four seals in the future. As the little horn thought it could change the Sabbath during the 1260 years, so the beast will impose Sunday observance on pain of death in the future

The future will look something like this: As at Pentecost, God's people will receive the power of the latter rain as the disciples received the power of the early rain. The church will go out with power to preach the light and truth of God's word—conquering and to conquer (PK, p. 725: **White horse**). This will awaken persecution (**red horse**) as the doctrines of darkness and superstition (**black horse**) overwhelm the world (Revelation 18:2, 3). Eventually God's people will be condemned to death (**pale horse**). These will be the second group of martyrs that are mentioned in Revelation 6:9-11. When the martyrs were slain it looked like the enemies of Christ had triumphed (AA, p. 581). At the end of human history once again the martyrs will cry out (**fifth seal**). Again it will appear that Satan's kingdom is about to take over the whole world and that the lone dissenting voices will be forever silenced. If Satan could blot the remnant from the earth, his triumph would be complete (GC 618). The battle will rage between the remnant of God and the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. The martyrs will cry out to God for justice from their graves (Ellen White makes this clear in her quotations about the martyrs in the fifth seal). Finally Jesus will take the battlefield and finish the work and take over kingship of the world. Jesus rides forth as a mighty conqueror. Signs in the sun, the moon and the stars (**sixth seal**) announce the coming of the victorious king. He comes as King of kings and Lord of lords and as the lion of the tribe of Judah.

Thus the final scenes will repeat the general principles of the seven seals. At the end the church will once again be pure and will go out **conquering and to conquer**. As a result **persecution** will come. **Darkness** will come into the church because Babylon will be full of demons. As a result **death** will be decreed upon God's people and the martyrs will cry out for justice. Then the category of the **martyrs will be complete**.

Many internet sites are critical of what they **perceive** to be Ellen White's view of the sixth seal. Unfortunately they have not studied carefully what Ellen White has said about this seal. They have read her comments superficially. They have not taken into account the order of the signs or the historical context in which they took place.

Here is an example of an internet site and the "unanswered" questions it brings up (but as we have seen, each one of these questions has been answered in the material above:

## Unanswered Questions

If the events of 1755, 1780, and 1833 were indeed fulfillments of prophecy, several questions are raised:

### 1. Why didn't the signs produce the effect described in the Bible?

Revelation 6:15-16 describes the people who witness the signs as being panic-stricken. These people, including kings and leaders of nations, are described as running to the mountains, hiding in dens, and asking for the mountains to fall on them. There is no evidence that the signs of 1755, 1780, and 1833 produced this effect.

### 2. Why were the signs localized when the Bible seems to indicate a global scale?

While the signs described in the Bible appear to be global events, the three signs pointed out by Ellen White were on a seemingly smaller, localized scale. The Lisbon earthquake was limited to the Iberian peninsula and Northern Africa. The dark day was seen primarily in the north-eastern United States. The Leonid meteor shower was perhaps the most widespread event, yet even it was seen only in the Western Hemisphere.

### 3. Why didn't those who witnessed the signs see the return of Christ?

Mark 13:24-26 seems to indicate that those who see the signs of Christ's return will also witness His return:

**Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.** Mark 13:26

None of those who witnessed any of the signs mentioned by Ellen White are alive today. The 1755 earthquake occurred over 250 years ago. How could it be a sign of Christ's *imminent* return? Furthermore, Revelation 6:12-14 seems to indicate the signs will follow each other in fairly rapid succession. It appears that the same people who witness the earthquake, also witness the darkness and the stars falling. Given the life expectancies of the era, it is unlikely that anyone old enough to have witnessed and remembered the Lisbon earthquake in Portugal in 1755 was still alive 78 years later in 1833 to witness the Leonid meteor shower in North America. Furthermore, everyone who witnessed these "signs" died long ago. What good are "signs of the end" if those signs are not witnessed by the people living in the last generation?

These unanswered questions lead to the conclusion that the events of 1755, 1780, and 1833 could not possibly be the signs of the end described in Revelation 6:12-14.





## **“STUDIES IN REVELATION – THE SEVEN SEALS”**

*by Pastor Stephen P. Bohr*

# **LESSON #9 - THE 144,000 AND THE GREAT MULTITUDE**

### **Is this an important subject to study?**

“It is not His will that they shall get into controversy over questions which will not help them spiritually, such as: Who is to compose the hundred and forty-four thousand? This those who are the elect of God will in a short time know without question.” Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 174

“Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand. And let us do all that we can to help others to gain heaven.” Review and Herald, March 9, 1905

### **Issues to be addressed:**

- What are the Biblical sources for the 144,000?
- What is the relationship between the 144,000 and the great multitude?
- Who are they and at what stage of world history will they live?
- In what context do they appear in the book of Revelation?
- Are they natural Israelites who live in the Middle East?
- Will Ellen G. White and Mrs. Hastings belong to this group?
- Is the number literal or symbolic?
- What is the seal that the 144,000 will receive?
- What kind of character will they possess and how did they develop such a character?
- Why are Dan and Ephraim missing from the list?

## The Biblical Sources

The **actual number** 144,000 appears only twice in the Bible—Revelation 7:1-8 and Revelation 14:1-5 but the concept appears in several other places in Revelation and elsewhere in Scripture.

Revelation seems to have **four portraits** of the 144,000 each with its own emphasis:

Revelation 7:1-8: Emphasis on the **sealing** of the 144,000 for their **protection** during the time of trouble and at the second coming followed by the jubilatory singing after victory has been gained (Revelation 7:9-17).

Revelation 14:1-5: Emphasis on the **character** of the 144,000.

Revelation 15:2-4: Emphasis on the **victory** of the 144,000 over the beast, his image and his mark.

Revelation 19:1-8: Emphasis on the **jubilatory singing** of the 144,000 because the harlot has been judged and God's people have been avenged.

There are also many other places in Scripture where this group is described although the specific number is not used:

- The biography of Enoch
- The biography of Elijah
- Ezekiel 9:1-6 (forms the backdrop for Revelation 7:1-8)
- Joel 2:1-8 and chapter 3
- Psalm 15
- Psalm 24:3-6
- Daniel 3
- Daniel 6
- Exodus 14-15
- Exodus 34:28-35 with Hebrews 12:14-29
- Zechariah 3
- Malachi 3:1-5
- Isaiah 33:12-17

At first sight it might appear incongruous or even contradictory to say that the 144,000 and the great multitude are the same group. How can this be possible when the number 144,000 can be counted and the great multitude cannot be numbered? The answer lies in the fact that in the book of Revelation the juxtaposition between seeing and hearing is common.

In Revelation 1:10 John heard a voice that sounded like a trumpet and this voice named the seven churches in their proper order. But then John was shown the seven churches under the



illustration of a seven branched candelabrum (Revelation 1:12). So what John hears in verse 10 he is shown in verse 12.

Notice as another example the introductory vision to the seals in Revelation 5. Here John first **heard** one of the elders say that the lion of the tribe of Judah would be able to break the seals and to open the scroll (Revelation 5:5). But then John looked and he **saw** a Lamb as though it had been slain who had overcome and therefore was qualified to break the seals and open the scroll (Revelation 5:6). As we have seen, the Lamb represents Jesus at His inauguration as Priest/King of the kingdom of grace. The Lion represents Jesus at the end of His sanctuary ministration when the Lamb pours out his wrath (Revelation 6:17). In other words, the Lamb will then roar as a lion. Thus the Lamb and the Lion represent Jesus at two different stages of His saving work.

The same can be said about Revelation 19. In verses 1-9 the emphasis falls on John's **hearing** the songs of the great multitude. But in verses 11-21 John **saw** Jesus coming with his angel hosts to rescue that multitude from destruction at the hands of Babylon.

A similar phenomenon takes place with the 144,000 and the great multitude. In Revelation 7:1-8 John **heard** about the 144,000. He did not see them but only **heard** their number (Revelation 7:4-8). But then John **saw** a great multitude that no one can number (Revelation 7:9). It seems likely that the 144,000 in Revelation 7:1-8 were sealed in order to survive the tribulation while the great multitude portrays the same group when they have already come out victoriously from the tribulation.

Take a look at the chart on the following page and you will see the chiasmic relationship between the great multitude (Revelation 7:9) and the 144,000 (Revelation 7:4). You will notice that each phrase that refers to the 144,000 in Revelation 7:4 has its counterpart in the description of the great multitude in Revelation 7:9. There can be little doubt that the great tribulation is the time of trouble spoken of in Daniel 12:1 and Matthew 24:29. Some have said that the tribulation spoken of here is referring to the trials and troubles that God's people have gone through in all ages. But this is not possible. The Greek does not say merely say that the great multitude came out of "tribulation" but rather out of 'the tribulation, the great one!' This is the same tribulation described in Matthew 24:22

Beatrice Neall explains the relationship between the 144,000 and the great multitude as exhibited in the above chart:

*"If this reasoning is correct, we can put 'equals' signs between all the items on the list. Israel is the faithful of all nations. The tribes of Israel represent all tribes, peoples, and tongues. The 12,000 from each tribe indicate a full complement of redeemed from each ethnic group. The four winds symbolize the great tribulation [Rev. 7:14], and the 'seal of the living God' (verse 2) corresponds to the robes made white in the blood of the Lamb (verse 14). Best of all, the 144,000 are not a limited group that we have scant hope of belonging to, but a vast multitude who cannot be numbered." (Beatrice Neall, "Good News about the 144,000," Adventist Review, April 2, 1987, pp. 14-15*

## The Sealing and the Winds

“When He **leaves the sanctuary**, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God **without an intercessor**. The **restraint** which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have **no protection** from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God **cease to hold** in check the **fierce winds** of human passion, all the elements of **strife will be let loose**. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old.” The Great Controversy, p. 614

### Revelation 7:1-8: John “hears” The Church Militant

1. “I heard” (verse 4)
2. “the number” (verse 4)
3. “one hundred and forty four thousand” (verse 4)
4. “of the sons of Israel” (verse 4)
5. “out of every tribe” (verse 4)
6. “sealed” (verse 4)

### Revelation 7:9-17: John “sees” The Church Triumphant

1. “I looked” (verse 9)
2. “no man could number” (verse 9)
3. “a great multitude” (verse 9)
4. “from every nation (verse 9)
5. “from all tribes and peoples and tongues” (verse 9)
6. “clothed in white robes” (verse 9)

**Explanatory Note:** In Revelation 7:1, 2 the four angels are holding the four winds so that no harm will come upon the earth, the sea or the trees until the 144,000 are sealed in their foreheads. In Revelation 7:3-8 we are told that the 144,000 are sealed before the winds are released in order for them to be able to stand during the great tribulation (Revelation 6:17). In Revelation 7:9ff the 144,000 have already passed victoriously through the great tribulation (verse 14). This great tribulation is clearly a reference to the final time of trouble that will come upon the earth (Daniel 12:1; Jeremiah 30:6-10; Matthew 24:21, 22, 29).

It is crystal clear that Ellen G. White **mingles** the Biblical description of the 144,000 (Revelation 14:1-5) and the great multitude (Revelation 7:9-17). It seems like she understands both to refer

to the **same group**. Notice how she **blends** the description of the two groups in The Great Controversy, pp. 648, 649. I have included the Biblical texts she quotes or alludes to in brackets for easy reference:

“Upon the crystal sea before the throne, that sea of glass as it were mingled with fire,—so resplendent is it with the glory of God,—are gathered the company that have "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name." [Revelation 15:2] With the Lamb upon Mount Zion [Revelation 14:1], "having the harps of God," [Revelation 15:2] they stand, the hundred and forty and four thousand that were redeemed from among men [Revelation 14:4]; and there is heard, as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of a great thunder, "the voice of harpers harping with their harps." [Revelation 14:2] And they sing "a new song" before the throne, a song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand [Revelation 14:3]. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb—a song of deliverance [Revelation 15:3]. None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song [Revelation 14:3]; for it is the song of their experience—an experience such as no other company have ever had. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." [Revelation 14:1] These, having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as "the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb." [Revelation 14:4] "These are they which came out of great tribulation;" [Revelation 7:14] they have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob's trouble; they have stood without an intercessor [after the close of probation] through the final outpouring of God's judgments [the seven last plagues]. But they have been delivered, for they have "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." [Revelation 7:14] "In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault" [Revelation 14:5] before God. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." [Revelation 7:15] They have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat [Revelation 16:8, 9], and they themselves have endured suffering, hunger, and thirst. But "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." [Revelation 7:16, 17]. GC, pp. 648, 649

Ellen White is explicit in stating that only the 144,000 will enter the heavenly temple:

*“And as we were about to enter the **holy temple**, Jesus raised His lovely voice and said, ‘**Only the 144,000 enter this place**’ and we shouted, ‘Alleluia.’” Early Writings, p. 19.*

But in Revelation 7:15 we are told that those who belong to the **great multitude** ‘serve God day and night **in His temple**. The conclusion is inevitable: The 144,000 (the only ones who are allowed to enter the temple) must be the same group as the unnumbered multitude (who serve God in His temple day and night).

According to the testimony of Revelation 14:3, 5 the 144,000 stand before the throne of God. In Revelation 7:9, 11, 15 the great multitude stands before the throne.

In Early Writings, p. 16 Ellen White describes the 144,000 standing in a perfect square upon the sea of glass before the throne while in The Great Controversy, p. 645 she describes a “unnumbered host of the redeemed” with ranks “drawn up in the form of a hollow square. The conclusion is inevitable: The 144,000 are the same group as the unnumbered multitude.

Revelation 7:16 makes it crystal clear that the great multitude was alive during the third and fourth plagues after the close of probation. We know this because in the third plague, the fresh fountains of water were turned into blood and in the fourth plague, the sun scorched all the vegetation. This caused thirst and hunger for God’s people. But at the end of the tribulation, God’s people are delivered and they shall suffer no more hunger or thirst (Revelation 7:16, 17)

Ellen White well understood that the 144,000 sealed ones from the twelve tribes of Israel are not literal Jews. Notice the following clear statement where Ellen White once again blends the texts that speak of the 144,000 and the great numberless multitude and states that the sealed ones will be from every nation, kindred, tongue and people:

“The message of the renewing power of God’s grace will be carried to every country and clime, until the truth shall belt the world. Of the **number of them that shall be sealed** [Revelation 14:1] will be those who have come from **every nation and kindred and tongue and people**. From **every country** will be gathered men and women who will stand before the throne of God and before the Lamb, crying, “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” [Revelation 7:10]. But before this work can be accomplished, we must experience here in our own country the work of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts.” Counsels to Teachers, p. 532

It will be noticed that although Revelation 7:4 states that the sealed ones are “of the tribes of the children of Israel,” Ellen White perceptibly understands that these sealed ones are from every nation, kindred tongue and people [Revelation 7:9]. Therefore the sealed ones cannot be literal Jews. They must be numbered with spiritual Israel.

The three angels’ messages are God’s final warning to ‘every nation, kindred, tongue and people’ (Revelation 14:6). The third angel warns the world about the dangers of worshipping the beast and his image and against receiving his mark. It is obvious that people from every nation, kindred, tongue and people are warned not to receive the mark of the beast.

In contrast to those from every nation, kindred, tongue and people who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark on their foreheads or in the right hand, are those from every nation, kindred, tongue and people who have the Seal of God in their foreheads. It is obvious that those who have the Seal of God are not only literal Jews.

Let’s follow the sequence of events portrayed by Ellen White in chapters 38-40 of The Great Controversy:

## CHAPTER 38: THE FINAL WARNING

This chapter presents the final loud cry message (Revelation 18:1-5) accompanied by the power of the latter rain. It also brings to view the final test over the mark of the beast and the seal of God. This is Ellen White's commentary on Revelation 7:1-8:

"The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear **upon men**, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who **serve God** and those who **serve Him not**. While the observance of the false Sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in **opposition to God**, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of **loyalty to the Creator**. While **one class**, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the **mark of the beast**, the **other** choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the **seal of God**." GC, p. 605

"The **restraining Spirit of God** is even now being **withdrawn** from the world. Hurricanes, storms, tempests, fire and flood, disasters by sea and land, follow each other in quick succession. Science seeks to explain all these [by the theory of global warming?]. The signs thickening around us, telling of the near approach of the Son of God, are attributed to any other than the true cause. Men cannot discern the sentinel angels restraining the four winds that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed; but when God shall bid **His angels loose the winds**, there shall be such a scene of strife as **no pen can picture**." 6I, vol. 6, p. 408.

"**Angels are belting the world**, refusing Satan his claims to supremacy, made because of the vast multitude of his adherents. We hear not the voices, we see not with the natural sight the work of these angels, but their hands are linked about the world, and with sleepless vigilance they are **keeping the armies of Satan at bay** till the sealing of God's people shall be accomplished. Maranatha, p. 266.

"John sees the **elements of nature**--earthquake, tempest, and political strife--represented as being **held by four angels**. These **winds** are under control until God gives the word to let them go. There is the safety of God's church. The **angels of God** do His bidding, **holding back the winds** of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree, until the servants of God should be **sealed in their foreheads**." Maranatha, p. 266

## CHAPTER 39: THE TIME OF TROUBLE

The seal of God has been given before the time of trouble (p. 613). The four angels then release the **winds of strife** (p. 614). There is thus a contrast between Satan who **numbers** the world as his subjects (p. 618) and 'the **little company** who keep the commandments of God' (p. 618). While God's people hunger and thirst they do not die (p. 629). Notice how Ellen White links thirst with the waters turned into blood and hunger with the sun that scorches the vegetation (pp. 628, 629). This is the period of the great tribulation (pp. 614, 616). Revelation 7:14 states literally in the Greek that the unnumbered multitude go 'through the tribulation, the great one'

(see Daniel 12:1). Those who go through this tribulation will not die; they will be alive when Jesus comes (p. 634).

## CHAPTER 40: GOD'S PEOPLE DELIVERED

After the first four plagues (pp. 627, 628) God's sealed ones are still in danger (p. 635) but at the outpouring of the fifth plague of darkness (p. 636) they are delivered by the voice of God (p. 636). The wicked multitudes are arrested (the drying up of the River Euphrates) in the sixth plague. The seventh plague (p. 636) brings about the final fall of Babylon (pp. 636, 637). The special resurrection then occurs and those who died in the faith of the third angel stand with the 144,000 (p. 637). This all happens before the day and hour of Jesus' coming (p. 640). Jesus descends from heaven (pp. 640-642) and the wicked ask the question of Revelation 6:17 (p. 642). Now the general resurrection of the righteous takes place (p. 644). The 144,000 are now seen in heaven (pp. 648, 649). It is a significant fact that Ellen White never quotes Revelation 7:1-8 in the chapter titled "God's People Delivered." She only quotes verses from Revelation 14:1-5; 15:2-4 and 7:9-17 (the passage about the great multitude). Why doesn't Ellen White quote Revelation 7:1-8? Simply because she spoke about the sealing in the chapter, "The Final Warning." Now she is concerned, not with the sealing of the 144,000 but with their deliverance and final victory. In all three passages she quotes, the 144,000 stand victoriously upon the heavenly hill of Zion.

All the 144,000 passages have a basic order:

Wrath (6:17; 13:11-18; 15:1; 19:2)

Seal (7:1-8; 14:1-5; 15:2, 3; 19:7, 8)

Deliverance (7:9-17; 14:19, 20; 15:2, 3; 19:11-21)

Notice the following statements on the identity of the Israel of God today:

"That which God purposed to do for the world through Israel, the chosen nation, He will finally accomplish through His church on earth today. . . Never has the Lord been without true representatives on this earth who have made His interests their own. These witnesses for God are numbered among the spiritual Israel, and to them will be fulfilled all the covenant promises made by Jehovah to His ancient people. . . To spiritual Israel have been restored the privileges accorded the people of God at the time of their deliverance from Babylon." PK, pp. 713-715

"To Isaiah it was given to make very plain to Judah the truth that among the Israel of God were to be numbered many who were not descendants of Abraham after the flesh." PK, p. 367

"The Spirit of God was to be poured out upon all flesh. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness were to be numbered among the Israel of God." PK, p. 371

"I was shown that those who are trying to obey God and purify their souls through obedience to the truth are God's chosen people, His modern Israel." 2T, p. 109

“The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The observance of the false sabbath will be urged upon us. The contest will be between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. Those who have yielded step by step to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will then yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. At that time, the gold will be separated from the dross. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliance will then go out in darkness. Those who have assumed the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will then appear in the shame of their own nakedness.

Among earth's inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. In heathen Africa, in the Catholic lands of Europe and of South America, in China, in India, in the islands of the sea, and in all the dark corners of the earth, God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness, revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law. Even now they are appearing in every nation, among every tongue and people; and in the hour of deepest apostasy, when Satan's supreme effort is made to cause "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond," to receive, under penalty of death, the sign of allegiance to a false rest day, these faithful ones, "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke," will "shine as lights in the world." Revelation 13:16; Philippians 2:15. The darker the night, the more brilliantly will they shine.

What strange work Elijah would have done in numbering Israel at the time when God's judgments were falling upon the backsliding people! He could count only one on the Lord's side. But when he said, "I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life," the word of the Lord surprised him, "Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal." 1 Kings 19:14, 18.

Then let no man attempt to number Israel today, but let everyone have a heart of flesh, a heart of tender sympathy, a heart that, like the heart of Christ, reaches out for the salvation of a lost world. PK, pp. 188, 189

“Many of these converts from **heathenism** would wish to unite themselves fully with the Israelites and accompany them on the return journey to Judea. None of these were to say, "The Lord hath utterly separated me from His people" (Isaiah 56:3), for the word of God through His prophet to those who should yield themselves to Him and observe His law was that they should thenceforth be numbered among **spiritual Israel--His church on earth.**” PK, p. 371

“Then it is that the redeemed from among men will receive their promised inheritance. Thus God's purpose for Israel will meet with literal fulfillment. That which God purposes, man is powerless to disannul. Even amid the working of evil, God's purposes have been moving steadily forward to their accomplishment. It was thus with the house of Israel throughout the history of the divided monarchy; it is thus with **spiritual Israel today.**

The seer of Patmos, looking down through the ages to the time of this **restoration of Israel** in the earth made new, testified:

"I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all **nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues** [notice that these are defined as Israel], stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

"And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts ["living creatures," R.V.], and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever."

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him." "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Revelation 7:9-12; 19:6, 7; 17:14." PK, pp. 720, 721

"In this our day, we see the **Gentiles** beginning to rejoice with the Jews. There are converted Jews who are now laboring in ---- and in various other cities, in behalf of their own people. The **Jews** are coming into the ranks of God's chosen followers, and are being **numbered with the Israel of God** in these closing days. Thus some of the Jews will once more be **reinstated with the people of God**, and the blessing of the Lord will rest upon them richly, if they will come into the position of rejoicing that is represented in the Scripture, "And again He saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people."-- Manuscript 95, 1906. Evangelism, pp. 577, 578

"Among earth's inhabitants, scattered in **every land**, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. In heathen **Africa**, in the Catholic lands of **Europe** and of **South America**, in **China**, in **India**, in the **islands** of the sea, and in **all the dark corners** of the earth, God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness, revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law. Even now they are appearing in **every nation**, among **every tongue and people**; and in the hour of deepest apostasy, when Satan's supreme effort is made to cause "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond," to receive, under penalty of death, the sign of allegiance to a false rest day, these faithful ones, "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke," will "shine as lights in the world." Revelation 13:16; Philippians 2:15. The darker the night, the more brilliantly will they shine.

What strange work Elijah would have done in **numbering Israel** at the time when God's judgments were falling upon the backsliding people! He could count only one on the Lord's side. But when he said, "I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life," the word of the Lord surprised him, "Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal." 1 Kings 19:14, 18.



Then let no man attempt to **number Israel today**, but let everyone have a heart of flesh, a heart of tender sympathy, a heart that, like the heart of Christ, reaches out for the salvation of a lost world. PK, pp. 189, 190

“I was shown that those who are trying to obey God and purify their souls through obedience to the truth are God's chosen people, **His modern Israel.**” 2T, p. 109

“Wherein they were weak, even to the point of failure, the **Israel of God** today, the representatives of heaven that make up the **true church of Christ**, must be strong; for upon them devolves the task of finishing the work that has been committed to man, and of ushering in the day of final awards.” PK, p. 74

“Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness were to be numbered among the **Israel of God.**” PK, p. 371

### **Literal or Symbolic Number?**

If the Seal of God is given only to literal Jews, then why would God warn every nation, kindred tongue and people about the dangers of worshiping the beast and his image and receiving his mark? The fact that nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples are warned about the Seal of God and the mark of the beast clearly indicates that it is possible for people from every nation, kindred, tongue and people to receive the Seal of God or the mark of the beast. Clearly, then, the sealed ones from the twelve tribes of Israel cannot be literal Jews only!

Are we to understand that all who are faithful and receive the Seal of God will be literal Jews? Are we to understand that there will be only 144,000 living saints when Jesus comes? Are we to understand that there will be exactly 12,000 from each tribe of Israel? Are we to understand that they are literal Jews? Why would the tribes be symbolic and the number literal? Why would Ellen White say that there will be people from every nation, kindred, tongue and people in that group?

Revelation 7 and 14 are saturated with symbolic language: four winds, four angels, seal from the east, Lamb, virgins, etc. Why is the number to be taken literally?

The contrast is between a small number and the numberless hosts of the wicked represented by two hundred million.

The idea that the unnumbered multitude is composed of the redeemed of all ages and that they were won to the Lord by the 144,000 is an assumption. Revelation 7 is related to the events of the sixth seal and the sixth seal began with the great earthquake (1755), and continues with the dark day and the moon looking like blood (1780) and the falling of the stars from heaven (1833). Bringing in the redeemed of all ages into view in the sixth seal is incongruous with the literary context as well as with the events depicted in the sixth seal.

Look into the fact that God holds the four winds of strife until the sealing is finished. The seal is placed on the foreheads of God's people at the four angles of the earth and then Jesus at His

coming will pick up his elect from the four winds of heaven (Matthew 24:30). This shows that God's people were in the whole world and not literally in Israel.

Talk about Nathanael and the meaning of Israel in the New Testament. You cannot sever the book of Revelation from the rest of the New Testament without being a dispensationalist. The meaning of Israel as God's people from all nations must be carried out throughout the New Testament. Do a study of all the key texts here: Romans 2, 9; Galatians 3, John 8; James 1:1; I Peter 2:9, 10 where Peter uses Exodus 19 to apply it to the Gentiles; Galatians 6:16

Talk about Enoch when I deal with the 144,000. Also we have to deal with the story of Elijah because Ellen White has said that "Elijah was a type of the saints who will be living on the earth at the time of the second advent of Christ and who will be "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," without tasting of death. 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52. It was as a representative of those who shall be thus translated that Elijah, near the close of Christ's earthly ministry, was permitted to stand with Moses by the side of the Savior on the mount of transfiguration. In these glorified ones, the disciples saw in miniature a representation of the kingdom of the redeemed." PK, p. 227

"God's people will separate themselves from the unrighteous practices of those around them and will seek for purity of thought and holy conformity to His will until His divine image will be reflected in them. Like Enoch, they will be fitting for translation to heaven. While they endeavor to instruct and warn the world, they will not conform to the spirit and customs of unbelievers but will condemn them by their holy conversation and godly example. Enoch's translation to heaven just before the destruction of the world by a flood represents the translation of all the living righteous from the earth previous to its destruction by fire. The saints will be glorified in the presence of those who have hated them for their loyal obedience to God's righteous commandments." SR, p. 61

"Enoch had temptations as well as we. He was surrounded with society no more friendly to righteousness than is that which surrounds us. The atmosphere he breathed was tainted with sin and corruption, the same as ours; yet he lived a life of holiness. He was unsullied with the prevailing sins of the age in which he lived. So may we remain pure and uncorrupted. He was a representative of the saints who live amid the perils and corruptions of the last days. For his faithful obedience to God he was translated. So, also, the faithful, who are alive and remain, will be translated." Maranatha, p. 65

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." For three hundred years Enoch had been seeking purity of heart that he might be in harmony with heaven. For three centuries he had walked with God. Day by day he had longed for a closer union; nearer and nearer had grown the communion, until God took him to Himself. He had stood at the threshold of the eternal world, only a step between him and the land of the blest; and now the portals opened, the walk with God, so long pursued on earth, continued, and he passed through the gates of the holy city, the first from among men to enter there. . . . Maranatha, p. 65

The order of events that Ellen White presents in the book The Great Controversy clearly shows her understanding of the relationship between the 144,000 sealed ones and the unnumbered multitude. Please note:

Possible titles:

Who are they and when will the 144,000 live? Notice that she uses the word “among” here while in other places she uses the word “with”.

- A Literal or Symbolic Number?
- The Special Resurrection
- The Seal of the Living God
- The 144,000 and the Great Multitude
- The Twelve Gates of the City (the twelve tribes of Israel)
- The Sons of Jacob—part 1
- The Sons of Jacob—part 2
- The Sons of Jacob—part 3
- The Sons of Jacob—part 4
- Dan and Ephraim
- The Character of the 144,000—part 1
- The Character of the 144,000—part 2
- The Character of the 144,000—part 3
- The Song of Moses
- The Song of the Lamb
- The Elijah Generation
- The Enoch Generation



## “STUDIES IN REVELATION – THE SEVEN SEALS”

*by Pastor Stephen P. Bohr*

# LESSON #10 - RESURRECTIONS IN THE BIBLE

### Old Testament Resurrections

- **Moses**

**Deuteronomy 34:5, 6:** “So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. 6 And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day.”

**Matthew 17:3:** “And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.”

**Jude 9:** “Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

**I Thessalonians 4:16:** “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.”

- **Son of the Widow** of Zareptah

**I Kings 17:17, 21, 22:** “Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. <sup>21</sup> And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, “O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him.” <sup>22</sup> Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived.”

- One who touched **Elisha's bones**

**2 Kings 13:21:** “So it was, as they were burying a man, that suddenly they spied a band of raiders; and they put the man in the tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet.”

### **New Testament Resurrections of People who Died Again**

- Son of the **widow of Nain**

**Luke 7:11-15:** Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. <sup>12</sup> And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. <sup>13</sup> When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." <sup>14</sup> Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said: 'Young man, I say to you, arise.' <sup>15</sup> So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

- Daughter of **Jairus**

**Luke 8:41, 42, 49-55:** “And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, <sup>42</sup> for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. <sup>49</sup> While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher." <sup>50</sup> But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well." <sup>51</sup> When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. <sup>52</sup> Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." <sup>53</sup> And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead. <sup>54</sup> But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Little girl, arise." <sup>55</sup> Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given something to eat.”

- **Lazarus** (John 11)

*“During His ministry, Jesus raised the dead to life. He raised the son of the widow of Nain, the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus; but these were **not clothed with immortality**. After they were raised, they continued to be **subject to death**.” Selected Messages, p. 304*

- **Eutychus**

**Acts 20:9, 10:** “And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. <sup>10</sup> But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, ‘Do not trouble yourselves for his life is in him.’”

## New Testament Resurrection of People who did not Die Again

- **Matthew 27:51-53: Special resurrection**

“Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,<sup>52</sup> and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;<sup>53</sup> and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.”

*“But those who came forth from the grave at Christ's resurrection were raised to everlasting life. They were the multitude of captives that ascended with Him as trophies of His victory over death and the grave.” Selected Messages, volume 1, pp. 304, 305*

- **Jesus as the first-fruits (Leviticus 23:9-11; I Corinthians 15:20)**

*“Christ arose from the dead as the first fruits of those that slept. He was the antitype of the wave sheaf, and His resurrection took place on the very day when the wave sheaf was to be presented before the Lord.” DA, pp. 785, 786*

- **Multitude as the first-fruits (Leviticus 23:20; Acts 2:1)**

*“They were those who had been co-laborers with God, and who at the cost of their lives had borne testimony to the truth. Now they were to be witnesses for Him who had raised them from the dead.” DA, p. 786*

*“All heaven was waiting to welcome the Savior to the celestial courts. As He ascended, He led the way, and the multitude of captives set free at His resurrection followed.” DA, p. 833*

*“So those who had been raised were to be presented to the universe as a pledge of the resurrection of all who believe in Christ as their personal Savior.” Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 305*

## Two End Time Resurrections

**John 5:28, 29:** No time element mentioned. John was the writer of both the Gospel of John and Revelation.

“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”

## General Resurrection of the righteous

**I Thessalonians 4:13-17:** “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.<sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus

died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

**I Corinthians 15:51-55:** "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." <sup>55</sup> "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

**Revelation 20:4-6:** "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. **And they lived** and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. <sup>5</sup> but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

#### **General Resurrection of the Wicked:**

**Revelation 2:11:** "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."

**Revelation 20:5:** "But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished."

**Revelation 20:14:** "Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

**Revelation 21:8:** "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

#### **The Special Resurrection**

##### **The Special Resurrection of those who pierced Jesus:**

**Matthew 23:37, 38:** "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! <sup>38</sup> See! Your house is left to you desolate; <sup>39</sup>



for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'

**Matthew 26:64:** "Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

**Revelation 1:7 (Matthew 24:30):** "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen."

### **Special resurrection of those who died in the faith of the third angel:**

**Revelation 14:13:** "Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.'

- This text comes immediately **after** the third angel's message (Revelation 14:12) and immediately **before** the second coming (Revelation 14:14).
- The word "**blessed**" is important. This blessing is not pronounced upon **all** those who have died in the Lord. It is only pronounced on a **special group** who died in the Lord after the third angel's message began to be proclaimed. This is clearly indicated by the word "**henceforth**".
- Death is spoken of as "**rest**".
- This message began to be proclaimed in **1844** so those who die in the Lord after this date are blessed in a special sense.
- No Seventh-day Adventists who are saved will come forth in the general resurrection— all will come forth in the special resurrection!

### **Daniel 12:7, 11, 12**

- Some have attempted to make these time periods literal time in the future but **Revelation 10:6** precludes this possibility. This time periods had to end in 1844 at the very latest.
- The 1260, 1290 and 1335 days are mentioned. The 1260 days begin in 538 and end in 1798. The 1290 days begin in 508 and end in 1798. The 1335 days begin in 508 and end in 1843.
- Notice the word "**blessed**" in Daniel 12:12. This is the same word that appears in Revelation 14:13 after the third angel's message. A special blessing is pronounced upon those who **wait and reach** until the 1335 days.

- At the latest, the time periods of Daniel 12 have to end in 1844 because we are told in Revelation 10:6 that prophetic time would be no longer after 1844.

“There will always be false and fanatical movements made by persons in the church who claim to be led of God--those who will run before they are sent and will give day and date for the occurrence of unfulfilled prophecy. The enemy is pleased to have them do this, for their successive failures and leading into false lines cause confusion and unbelief.” Selected Messages, volume 2, p. 84

“Our position has been one of waiting and watching, with no time-proclamation to intervene between the close of the prophetic periods in 1844 and the time of our Lord's coming.” Manuscript Releases, volume 10, p. 270

“The people will not have another message upon definite time. After this period of time [Rev. 10:4-6], reaching from 1842 to 1844, there can be no definite tracing of the prophetic time. The longest reckoning reaches to the autumn of 1844.” Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 7, p. 971

### Daniel 12:2

- We are told that **many** (Hebrew: *rab*, see Daniel 12:3, 4, 10; 11:44) of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will be raised. Notice that **not all** who are dead resurrect but rather “**many**”.
- This text speaks of a partial resurrection of **some righteous** and **some wicked** people. This cannot be referring to the **general resurrection** of the wicked because they don't rise until **after the millennium**.

### Summary of the Resurrections:

- General resurrection of the righteous: Those who died in Christ until 1844 resurrect at the end of the second coming of Jesus.
- General resurrection of the wicked: Unbelievers from all ages resurrect after the millennium.
- Special resurrection of the righteous: Those who died in the faith of the third angel resurrect as Jesus begins His second coming.
- Special resurrection of the wicked: Those who pierced Jesus and the worst enemies of the truth resurrect as Jesus begins His second coming.
- Living Righteous: The 144,000

## Ellen White's View of the Timing of the Special Resurrection:

- The Great Controversy, p. 613: Jesus stands up (Daniel 12:1) and begins to reign (Daniel 11:2, 3, 4 on the meaning of "stand up"). He lays off His priestly robes (which He wears in Hebrews) and puts on His kingly robes (spoken of in Revelation 19:11ff).
- The Great Controversy, pp. 613-634: The time of trouble (Daniel 12:1).
- The Great Controversy, p. 635: The death decree about to be executed (Daniel 11:44).
- The Great Controversy, p. 635, 636: God's living saints are delivered by the voice of God (Daniel 12:1). The fact that they are written in the book indicates that they went through a pre-advent judgment (see, Revelation 22:11, 12).
- The Great Controversy, p. 637: **The special resurrection** (Daniel 12:2).
- The Great Controversy, p. 640: The **day and hour of Jesus' coming** is announced.
- The Great Controversy, p. 640, 641: The second coming of Jesus concludes.
- The Great Controversy, p. 644: The general resurrection of the righteous.

## Will Ellen G. White be among the 144,000?

- Ellen White does not fit the description of the 144,000 she herself gives in The Great Controversy, pp. 648, 649.
- Ellen White never says that she will be **among** the 144,000. It is always **with** the 144,000.

"Then the angel said, "You must go back, and if you are faithful, you, **with** the 144,000, shall have the privilege of visiting all the worlds and viewing the handiwork of God."  
Early Writings, p. 39

## Mrs. Hastings and the 144,000

In 1850 Ellen G. White wrote a letter of condolence to a brother Hastings who had just lost his wife:

"I hardly know what to say to you. The news of your wife's death was to me overwhelming. I could hardly believe it and can hardly believe it now. God gave me a view last Sabbath night which I will write....

**I saw that she was sealed** and would come up **at the voice of God** and stand upon the earth, and would be **with** the 144,000. I saw we need not mourn for her; she would **rest in the time of**

**trouble**, and all that we could mourn for was our loss in being deprived of her company. I saw her death would result in good. Selected Messages, volume 2, p. 263

The question is: How could Mrs. Hastings be sealed if the seal of God is given at the very end of time just before the close of probation? Ellen White is clear that the seal of God will be received in the same time frame as the mark of the beast.

In Manuscript 51, 1899 Ellen White wrote that the mark of the beast had not yet been received by anyone:

**“No one has yet received the mark of the beast. The testing time has not yet come.** There are true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion. None are condemned until they have had the light and have seen the obligation of the fourth commandment. But **when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit Sabbath**, and the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, the line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true. Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast.” Evangelism, p. 234

In 1911 Ellen White made it clear that the seal of God will be received at the very end of time:

“The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When **the final test** shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false Sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, **receive the seal of God.**” GC, p. 605

### **The Gospel Seal and the Eschatological Seal**

When a person receives Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord he receives the seal of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:38; Ephesians 1:13, 14; 4:30; II Corinthians 1:22).

But the end time seal is a special seal that empowers God's people to finish the proclamation of the gospel and to stand in the time of trouble. The seal of the early rain begins the proclamation of the gospel and the latter rain seals the crop for the harvest.



## **“STUDIES IN REVELATION – THE SEVEN SEALS”**

*by Pastor Stephen P. Bohr*

# **LESSON #11 - ISRAEL AND THE 144,000: LOCAL AND LITERAL OR GLOBAL AND SYMBOLIC**

### **Introduction**

To the handful of disappointed pioneers in 1844, the number 144,000 seemed impossibly large while to us it appears incredibly small! In a world that has over seven billion inhabitants the number 144,000 is indeed small! If there will only be 144,000 living saints when Jesus comes, what hope could I ever have of belonging to that group? It is comforting to know that through Christ there will be a **numberless** multitude of spiritual Israelites saved from **every nation**.

### **A Global Israel in a Global Crisis**

Revelation's three angels' messages go to every nation, kindred, tongue and people—their messages are global in extent (Revelation 14:6). Included in the three angels' messages is a warning against worshiping the beast and his image and receiving his mark. The issue over the mark of the beast and the seal of God will be global and therefore God's people must be global.

If the Seal of God will be given only to literal Jews, then why would God warn every nation, kindred tongue and people about the dangers of worshiping the beast and his image and receiving his mark? The fact that nations, multitudes, tongues and peoples are warned not to receive the mark of the beast clearly indicates that it is possible for people from every nation, kindred, tongue and people to receive the Seal of God or the mark of the beast. Clearly, then, the sealed ones from the twelve tribes of Israel cannot be literal Jews only! Revelation 3:10-12 makes it very clear that the tribulation will come upon the whole world.

In Revelation 7:1 we find a description of four angels who are holding back the four winds at the four corners of the earth. When the angels release the winds there will be a global cataclysm such as has never been seen in history. The seal of God is given to His people so that

they can survive this cataclysm. If the cataclysm will be global then the sealed ones will need to be protected globally.

Revelation 6:14-17 depicts the negative **global** reaction of the wicked to the coming of Jesus. The 144,000 (who were sealed in 7:1-4 in order to be able to stand when Jesus comes) must therefore be worldwide.

The 144,000 are God's elect. When Jesus comes He will send His angels to pick up his elect from the **four winds** of heaven (Matthew 24:30). This being the case, God's people must be found in every corner of the globe.

Ellen White has emphasized that the seal is given to people from every nation, kindred, tongue and people:

"The message of the renewing power of God's grace will be carried to every country and clime, until the truth shall belt the world. Of the **number of them that shall be sealed** [Revelation 14:1] will be those who have come from **every nation and kindred and tongue and people**. From **every country** will be gathered men and women who will stand before the throne of God and before the Lamb, crying, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." [Revelation 7:10]. But before this work can be accomplished, we must experience here in our own country the work of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts." Counsels to Teachers, p. 532

According to Ellen White, people from all over the world will be among those who are numbered and sealed:

"I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer's inkhorn by his side returned from the earth and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and **the saints were numbered and sealed**. Then I saw Jesus, who had been ministering before the ark containing the Ten Commandments, **throw down the censer**. He raised His hands, and with a loud voice said, "It is done." And all the angelic host laid off their crowns as Jesus made the solemn declaration, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." EW, p. 279

Adventists who have received the latter rain will begin the proclamation of the Sabbath but then they will be joined by those who receive the message and proclaim it. When the entire world has been warned and everyone has received the Seal of God or the mark of the beast, then probation will close and the time of trouble will begin. Then the great multitude will come out of the great tribulation victoriously.

"The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator.

While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.”

GC, p. 605

### **Literal or Symbolic**

#### **Important Questions:**

Are we to understand that all who are faithful and receive the Seal of God will be literal Jews? Are we to understand that there will be only 144,000 living saints when Jesus comes? Are we to understand that there will be exactly 12,000 from each tribe of Israel? Are we to understand that they are literal Jews? Why would the tribes be symbolic and the number literal? Why would Ellen White say that there will be people from every nation, kindred, tongue and people in that group if they are literal Jews?

#### **144,000 is a Symbolic Number**

The book of Revelation presents its message in symbolic language. Persons, names, places and numbers are all symbolic. Numbers such as seven, three and a half times, three and a half days, 42 months, 1260 days, 666, half hour, two hundred million, are all symbolic expressions. Revelation 7 and 14 (where the 144,000 appear) are saturated with symbols such as the Lamb, winds, trees, tribes of Israel, seal, four corners of the earth, earth, sea, white robes, virgins, first-fruits, etc. Why should the number be understood literally when these chapters are full of symbols?

If there will be only 144,000 faithful living saints when Jesus comes (not one more and not one less!) then we would have to conclude that God pre-determined, pre-chose or hand-picked them. It is very unlikely that exactly 144,000 would exercise their freedom of choice to be among the living righteous when Jesus comes. This becomes even clearer when we realize that there are exactly 12,000 from each tribe of Israel. What are the odds that exactly 12,000 persons from each of the twelve tribes of Israel will be the living saints when Jesus comes? The fact is that the twelve tribes of literal Israel were lost when Israel went into Assyrian captivity in 722 B. C. The ten tribes of the north intermingled with the surrounding nations. The Samaritans of Christ's day were to a great extent the result of this amalgamation.

The literal Greek rendering of the number is not “one hundred and forty four thousand” (as if emphasizing the conglomerate group), but rather “one hundred and forty four thousands” (with the emphasis on 144 groups of one thousand each). The intensified multiple of the number 12 (which is the number of God's people in all ages--actually 12 x 12 x 1000) would seem to emphasize that this group is composed of the true Israel of God who live at the end of world history.

The word for “thousand” (*eleph*) does not refer precisely to 1000 people but can mean “family” or “tribe” (Micah 5:2; I Samuel 23:23; I Samuel 10:19). Ellen White also uses the word “thousand” to describe those who are faithful to God among the Israelites.

Revelation 7 is a parenthesis in the sixth seal and therefore the people who are sealed must live at some point in the period between the beginning and the ending of the sixth seal. For this reason, the great multitude cannot be the redeemed from all ages.

Both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy make it clear that Israel today is to be understood spiritually. Therefore, it stands to reason that if Israel is spiritual then the number must also be spiritual. Why would the number 144,000 be literal while Israel is symbolic?

**The dispensationalist/futurist idea:** God has two **mutually separable** peoples with **different plans** for each—the Christian Church and Literal Israel. We will examine **ten different avenues** to determine if this is so. We will clearly see that Israel is **defined in Christ**, not by its location or ethnic makeup.

1. God has only **one fold** with **one shepherd**—Jesus Christ.

**John 10:16**

*“And **other sheep** I have which are **not of this fold**; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be **one flock** and **one shepherd**.”*

**John 11:51, 52**

*“ Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> and **not for that nation only**, but also that He would gather **together in one** the **children of God** who were scattered abroad.”*

2. God has only **one Israel** [those who are **baptized** into Christ]. This Israel is not defined **geographically** or **ethnically** or **genetically** but **relationally**. Jesus is the only faithful Israelite and when we receive Him we too become Israelites indeed (see also Romans 2:28, 29; 9:6-8).

**Galatians 3:16, 26-29**

*“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ. <sup>26</sup> For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ** have **put on Christ**. <sup>28</sup> There is neither **Jew nor Greek**, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for **you are all one** in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> And **if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed**, and heirs according to the promise.”*

**John 1:47-49:** Before **Jacob's name** was changed to Israel he was certainly a **liar**. But after his struggle with the Angel his name was changed because his character had changed.

*“Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an **Israelite indeed** [alethinos: ‘genuine’], in whom is **no deceit!** [pseudos: ‘falsehood’; the same is said of the 144,000 in Revelation 14:5]” <sup>48</sup> Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the **fig tree**, I saw you.” <sup>49</sup>*



Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the **Son of God!** You are the **King of Israel!**"

**3. God has only one body [of Christ] that is composed of both Jews and Gentiles.**  
**Ephesians 2:13-18**

*"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were **far off** have been brought **near** by the **blood of Christ**.<sup>14</sup> For He Himself is our peace, who has **made both one**, and has broken down the **middle wall** of separation,<sup>15</sup> having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself **one new man** from the two, thus making peace,<sup>16</sup> and that He might reconcile them both to God in **one body** through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.<sup>17</sup> And He came and preached peace to you who were **afar off** and to those who were **near**.<sup>18</sup> For through Him we **both have access by one Spirit** to the Father."*

**I Corinthians 12:13**

*"For by **one Spirit** we were all baptized into **one body**--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into **one Spirit**."*

**Ephesians 3:6**

*". . . that the Gentiles should be **fellow heirs**, of the **same body**, and partakers of His promise **in Christ** through the gospel."*

**Colossians 1:18, 24**

*"And He is the head of the **body, the church**, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.<sup>24</sup> I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of **His body, which is the church**."*

**4. God has only one chosen city** composed of **Old** and **New Testament** saints. It is the **Lamb's City** and its **Light** is the Lamb.

**Revelation 21:2**

*"Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as **a bride adorned for her husband**."*

**Revelation 21:12**

*"Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the **twelve tribes of the children of Israel**."*

## Revelation 21:14

*“Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the **twelve apostles of the Lamb.**”*

## Hebrews 11:9, 10, 13-16

*“By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; <sup>10</sup> for he waited for the **city which has foundations**, whose **builder and maker is God**. the seashore. <sup>13</sup> These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were **strangers and pilgrims** on the earth. <sup>14</sup> For those who say such things declare plainly that they **seek a homeland**. <sup>15</sup> And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> But now they desire **a better, that is, a heavenly country**. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has **prepared a city** for them.”*

Conclusion: The city is composed of the **redeemed from all ages** because the names of the **twelve tribes** are on the gates and the names of the **twelve apostles** are on the foundations.

5. The church of the Old and New Testaments is illustrated by only **one woman** who is garbed with the sun.

## Revelation 12:1, 2, 5, 6

*“Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. <sup>2</sup> Then being **with child**, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. <sup>5</sup> She bore a **male Child** who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was **caught up to God and His throne**. <sup>6</sup> Then the **woman fled into the wilderness**, where she has a place prepared by God that they should feed her there **one thousand two hundred and sixty days.**”*

The number 12 twelve is vitally important because it is the **number of God’s people**—Israel. The story of **Acts 1** reveals the importance of the number 12.

6. The kingdom is illustrated by only **one olive tree** that bears **good fruit**.

- There are **natural branches** that are **retained** in the tree (the literal Jews who **believed** in Jesus).
- There are **natural branches** that are **cut off** (the literal Jews who **rejected** Jesus).
- There are **natural branches** that are grafted **once again** into the tree (Literal Jews who rejected Jesus and **then accepted** Him).
- There are **wild olive branches** that are **grafted into** the tree (Gentiles who believe in Jesus).

- There are **wild olive branches** that can potentially be **cut off** the tree (Gentiles who **abandon** their relationship with Jesus).
- The key is in **verse 20** where we are told that to be part of the tree means **to believe** in Jesus. To be cut off from the tree means to **reject Jesus**. The root and the trunk of the tree symbolize Jesus. If we are connected to the trunk and the root, we will bear fruit.

### Romans 11:17-26

*“And if some of the branches were **broken off**, and you, being a wild olive tree, were **grafted in** among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, <sup>18</sup> do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. <sup>19</sup> You will say then, “Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.” <sup>20</sup> Well said. Because of **unbelief they were broken off**, and **you stand by faith**. Do not be haughty, but fear. <sup>21</sup> For if God did not spare the natural branches, He **may not spare you either**. <sup>22</sup> Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. <sup>23</sup> And they also, if they do not continue in **unbelief, will be grafted in**, for God is able to graft them in again. <sup>24</sup> For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? <sup>25</sup> For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to **Israel** until the fullness of the **Gentiles** has come in. <sup>26</sup> And so all **Israel will be saved**, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; <sup>27</sup> For this is My covenant with them when I take away their sins.”*

7. There will be only **one banquet** table in the kingdom for all of the redeemed

**Matthew 8:11-12:** Immediately before this passage is the story of the **Roman centurion** who was a Gentile.

*“And I say to you that many will come from east and west [**Gentiles**], and sit down [**Jesus says: ‘at my table’ in Luke 22:30**] with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven [**literal Israel**]. <sup>12</sup> But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

8. God has only **one spiritual temple** that is composed of the **apostles** and the **prophets** and Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone.

### Ephesians 2:19-22

*“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but **fellow citizens** with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the **apostles** and **prophets**, Jesus Christ Himself being the **chief cornerstone**, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a **holy temple** in the Lord, <sup>22</sup> in whom **you also** are being built together for a **dwelling place** of God in the Spirit.”*

9. The redeemed from every nation, kindred, tongue and people will sing only **one song**—the Song of Moses and the Lamb.

#### Revelation 15:3-4

*"They sing the song of **Moses**, the servant of God, and the song of the **Lamb**, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!  
4 Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested."*

10. The redeemed have only **one Father** and that Father is defined in Christ. Only those who have received Jesus are sons and daughters of God

#### Galatians 3:26

*"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."*

**John 1:12-13: We become brothers and sisters of Jesus and as a result we are sons and daughters of God.**

*"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."*

#### John 14:6

*"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through Me.**"*

#### John 8:32-44

*"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." <sup>33</sup> They answered Him, "We are **Abraham's descendants**, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free?'" <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. <sup>35</sup> And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. <sup>36</sup> Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. <sup>37</sup> "I know that you are **Abraham's descendants**, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. <sup>38</sup> I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father." <sup>39</sup> They answered and said to Him, "**Abraham is our father.**" Jesus said to them, "**If you were Abraham's children**, you would do the works of Abraham. <sup>40</sup> But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. <sup>41</sup> You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father--God." <sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, "**If God were your Father**, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. <sup>43</sup> Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. <sup>44</sup> You are of **your father the devil**, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not*

*stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it."*

**Galatians 4:** According to Paul the Jews are descendants of Hagar and Ismael while the believing Gentiles are the children of Sarah and Isaac.

**God was faithful in rejecting literal Israel as His chosen people and His plans did not fail because of literal Israel's failure:**

## **2 Timothy 2:11-13**

*"This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. <sup>12</sup> If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. <sup>13</sup> If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself."*

Ellen G. White repeatedly refers to the remnant church as the true Israel of God:

*"That which God purposed to do for the world through Israel, the chosen nation, He will finally accomplish through **His church** on earth today. . . Never has the Lord been without **true representatives** on this earth who have made His interests their own. These witnesses for God are **numbered** among the **spiritual Israel**, and to them will be fulfilled all the covenant promises made by Jehovah to His ancient people. . . To **spiritual Israel** have been restored the privileges accorded the people of God at the time of their deliverance from Babylon." PK, pp. 713-715*

*"To Isaiah it was given to make very plain to Judah the truth that among the **Israel of God** were to be **numbered** many who were not descendants of Abraham after the flesh." PK, p. 367*

*"The Spirit of God was to be poured out upon **all flesh**. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness were to be **numbered** among the **Israel of God**." PK, p. 371*

*"I was shown that those who are trying to obey God and purify their souls through obedience to the truth are God's chosen people, His **modern Israel**." 2T, p. 109*

*"The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The observance of the false sabbath will be urged upon us. The contest will be between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. Those who have yielded step by step to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will then yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. At that time the gold will be separated from the dross. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliance will then go out in darkness. Those who have assumed the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will then appear in the shame of their own nakedness.*

*"Many of these converts from **heathenism** would wish to unite themselves fully with the Israelites and accompany them on the return journey to Judea. None of these were to say, "The Lord hath utterly separated me from His people" (Isaiah 56:3), for the word of God through His*

prophet to those who should yield themselves to Him and observe His law was that they should thenceforth be numbered among **spiritual Israel--His church on earth.**" PK, p. 371

"Then it is that the redeemed from among men will receive their promised inheritance. Thus God's purpose for Israel will meet with literal fulfillment. That which God purposes, man is powerless to disannul. Even amid the working of evil, God's purposes have been moving steadily forward to their accomplishment. It was thus with the house of Israel throughout the history of the divided monarchy; it is thus with **spiritual Israel today.**

The seer of Patmos, looking down through the ages to the time of this **restoration of Israel** in the earth made new, testified:

"I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all **nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues** [notice that these are defined as Israel], stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

"And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts ["living creatures," R.V.], and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever."

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him." "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Revelation 7:9-12; 19:6, 7; 17:14." PK, pp. 720, 721

"In this our day, we see the **Gentiles** beginning to rejoice with the Jews. There are converted Jews who are now laboring in ----- and in various other cities, in behalf of their own people. The **Jews** are coming into the ranks of God's chosen followers, and are being **numbered with the Israel of God** in these closing days. Thus some of the Jews will once more be **reinstated with the people of God**, and the blessing of the Lord will rest upon them richly, if they will come into the position of rejoicing that is represented in the Scripture, "And again He saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people."--Manuscript 95, 1906. Evanqelism, pp. 577, 578

"Among earth's inhabitants, scattered in **every land**, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. In heathen **Africa**, in the Catholic lands of **Europe** and of **South America**, in **China**, in **India**, in the **islands** of the sea, and in **all the dark corners** of the earth, God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness, revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law. Even now they are appearing in **every nation**, among **every tongue and people**; and in the hour of deepest apostasy, when Satan's supreme effort is made to cause "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond," to receive, under penalty of death, the sign of allegiance to a false rest day, these faithful ones, "blameless and harmless, the sons of God,

*without rebuke," will "shine as lights in the world." Revelation 13:16; Philippians 2:15. The darker the night, the more brilliantly will they shine.*

*What strange work Elijah would have done in **numbering Israel** at the time when God's judgments were falling upon the backsliding people! He could count only one on the Lord's side. But when he said, "I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life," the word of the Lord surprised him, "Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal." 1 Kings 19:14, 18.*

*Then let no man attempt to **number Israel today**, but let everyone have a heart of flesh, a heart of tender sympathy, a heart that, like the heart of Christ, reaches out for the salvation of a lost world. PK, p. 189, 190*

*"Wherein they were weak, even to the point of failure, the **Israel of God** today, the representatives of heaven that make up the **true church of Christ**, must be strong; for upon them devolves the task of finishing the work that has been committed to man, and of ushering in the day of final awards." PK, p. 74*

The key to this whole issue is how we identify Israel. If Israel is literal then the number must be literal. If Israel is spiritual then the tribes must be spiritual and the number must also be spiritual. Revelation 7:3 describes the giving of the seal. It is underlined there that the seal is given to members of the twelve tribes of Israel. Are these tribes literal? They can't be because

The only other place where the expression "I heard their number" is used is in Revelation 9:16 (the sixth trumpet) where two hundred million riders are seen riding on two hundred million horses. Here we are told that when the hour, day, month and year arrive these horses will be released to kill one hird of mankind. The **hour** [Revelation 14:7], **day** [Leviticus 23:27, 28], **month** [Leviticus 23:27, 28] and **year** [Daniel 8:14] are referring to the beginning of the judgment in 1844.

Are these horses and riders to be understood as literal? Are there exactly two hundred million horses, not one more and not one less? Actually, the two hundred million in the sixth trumpet depicts the vast multitude of the wicked while in contrast to the few in number of the sixth seal who are the 144,000. The contrast is between the small number of God's faithful people and the numberless hosts of the wicked represented by two hundred million.

*"He **numbers the world** as his subjects; but the **little company** who keep the commandments of God are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete." GC, p. 618*

We have already studied the relationship between the great multitude and the 144,000 and have seen that they are the same group under different circumstances. The 144,000 are the elect who are being sealed as they are prepare to enter the tribulation. The great multitude is the same group that has come out of the great tribulation. If the 144,000 and the great multitude that no one can number are the same group then it is clear that the number 144,000 is symbolic of a much larger group.

The idea that the unnumbered multitude is composed of the redeemed of all ages and that they were won to the Lord by the 144,000 is an unsubstantiated assumption. Revelation 7 is related to the events of the sixth seal and the sixth seal began with the great earthquake (1755), and continues with the dark day and the moon looking like blood (1780) and the falling of the stars from heaven (1833). Bringing in the redeemed of all ages into view in the sixth seal is incongruous with the literary context as well as with the events depicted in the sixth seal.





## “STUDIES IN REVELATION – THE SEVEN SEALS”

*by Pastor Stephen P. Bohr*

# LESSON #12 – PREACHING THE SABBATH MORE FULLY

### Introduction

Seventh-day Adventists are **not the only ones** who keep the seventh day Sabbath. There are **Jews, Messianic Jews, Seventh-day Baptists**, various offshoots from the **Worldwide Church of God** and **various Pentecostal** churches who keep the Sabbath.

But the Seventh-day Adventist concept of the Sabbath is **unique** and is not held by **any other church** in the world. **How** is that?

*“As far as the Sabbath is concerned, he occupies the same position as the **Seventh Day Baptists** [they use the same arguments as SDA’S do]. Separate the Sabbath from **the messages**, and it loses its power; but when connected with the **message of the third angel**, a power attends it which convicts unbelievers and infidels, and **brings them out** with strength to stand, to live, grow, and flourish in the Lord.” Testimonies for the Church, volume 1, p. 337*

*“I saw that the holy Sabbath is, and will be, the **separating wall** between the **true Israel of God** and unbelievers; and that the Sabbath is the **great question** to unite the hearts of God’s dear, waiting saints.*

*“I saw that God had children who do not see and keep the Sabbath. They have not rejected the light upon it. And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and **proclaimed the Sabbath more fully**. This **enraged the churches and nominal Adventists**, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth. And at this time God’s chosen all saw clearly that we had the truth, and **they came out** and endured the persecution with us. I saw the sword, famine, pestilence, and great confusion in the land. The wicked thought that we had brought the judgments upon them, and they rose up and took counsel **to rid the earth of us**, thinking that then the evil would be stayed.” EW, pp. 33, 34*

## What makes the SDA view distinctive?

- The Sabbath is **not just** one of the Ten Commandments; it will be the **final test**. It is the opposite of the mark of the beast and Sabbath observance will lead to persecution.
- Jesus entered the most holy place in 1844. All who enter the **most holy place** must keep the Sabbath because the Law and the Sabbath were **in the Ark**.
- The Sabbath is **highlighted or accented** by the presence of the **Manna** in the Ark. See **Exodus 16**.

**Three concentric circles:** Law, first table, Sabbath

**The Largest Circle: The final conflict will involve the Law of God.**

- **Revelation 12:17:** Satan **hates** the **commandments** of God.
- God's people at the end will have a seal on their foreheads (**Revelation 14:1**). According to **Jeremiah 31:33** and **Hebrews 8:7-13** it is **the law** that is written on the mind and in the heart.
- **Isaiah 8:16:** Seal the law among my disciples.
- **II Timothy 2:19:** Notice the seal that God's own have: [*adikia*]: The law defines good and evil (**Ecclesiastes 12:13**: Commandments and good and evil linked). **Matthew 7:23** uses the word *anomias* while **Luke 13:27** uses *adikia* but it is the same saying.
- **Revelation 14:9-11** contrasts with **14:12**. **Contrast** of those who worship the beast and receive the mark with those who keep the **commandments of God**.

**The Smaller circle: The final conflict will center on one particular table of the Law, the first.**

- **Deuteronomy 6:4** [first table]: Has to do with the first four and then **verses 5-9** commands Israel to write them on the **forehead** and the **hand**.
- The issue at the end time has to do with **worship** (Daniel 3 [11 times]; Revelation 13:8, 12, 15; 14:11; 14:7) and the **first four** commandments have to do with worship. The **last six** commandments do not have to do with worship because they deal with **horizontal** relationships. Thus, the first four commandments must be involved.
- **Chapter 13** speaks of false **worship to the beast** and his image and receiving the mark. In contrast, **Chapter 14:6, 7** calls upon God's people to **worship God the Creator**.
- Beast is worshipped (Revelation 13:4)

- Image is worship [second] (Revelation 13:14)
- Name is blasphemed (Revelation 13:6)
- Attack on the Creator (Revelation 14:7 with 14:9)

## The Smallest Circle: The conflict will center around the Fourth Commandment

### Testimony of Scripture:

- We worship God because He is our **Creator** (Revelation 4:10 11; Psalm 95:1-6; Nehemiah 10:6).
- **Revelation 14:6, 7** calls to worship the Creator and strongly alludes to the **Sabbath commandment** in Exodus 20:8-11.
- **Isaiah 66** explains that all flesh will come to worship on the Sabbath because God created a **new heavens and a new earth**.
- We worship God because He is the **Creator** and the **sign** of the Creator is the Sabbath.

**God's signature** on the week of creation. It identifies the Creator. Talk about the **artist** and how he signs the linen at the end of his work. It **identifies the artist**.

**Sign = seal (Romans 4:11)**. In **Exodus 31:17** the Sabbath is spoken of as a sign between God and Israel. **Who is Israel** today? Also **Ezekiel 20:12, 20**.

### Ezekiel 8:16, 17 in contrast to Ezekiel 9:1-6.

- Notice those who sigh and cry over abominations.
- Notice in **Jeremiah 17:26, 27** why Jerusalem was destroyed, it was because of Sabbath desecration.
- Revelation picks up on this in **Chapter 7** and chapter **13:16, 17** with **14:1** where the contrast is once again seen.
- How **Sunday** came into the Christian church from **Paganism through Constantine**.
- It is the **same day** of the sun as in Ezekiel. Is it the same to **worship the sun** as to worship on the **day of the sun**?

### The Testimony of Analogy

The **law of analogy** with the **presidential seal** of the United States. Three elements: **Name, Office, Territory**

### The Testimony of Archeology

The seals at **Ugarit**

Covenant: Deuteronomy 4:13

Tables: Deuteronomy 4:13

Both sides: Exodus 32:15, 16

Middle: Sabbath

Three elements: Name, Office, Title

*"The fourth commandment is **the only one** of all the ten in which are found both the **name** and the **title** of the Lawgiver. It is **the only one** that shows by **whose authority** [the creator] the law is given. Thus it contains the seal of God, affixed to His law as evidence of its **authenticity and binding force.**" PP, p. 307*

## Testimony Prophecy

**Daniel 7:25:** Thought he could change the Law, three and a half times.

## Revelation 12:14-17:

- Dragon persecutes for three and a half times.
- Earth helps (the United States).
- Dragon hates remnant who **keep the commandments** of God.
- The remnant **counteracts the change** in the Law (Mark 7:9, 10; Matthew 19:17; Romans 13:8, 10: Law and commandments are used interchangeably).
- **Revelation 13:11** [notice the connection with Revelation 12:16, 17]: Beast rises **from the earth** and speaks like a **dragon** and it will enforce **the change** that the beast made in the Law (the mark of the beast).

**The Testimony of History: Catholics tell us** what their sign of authority is:

*"For ages all Christian nations looked to the Catholic Church, and, as we have seen, the various states enforced by law her ordinances as to worship and cessation of labor on Sunday. Protestantism, in discarding the authority of the Church, has no good reason for its Sunday theory, and ought logically, to keep Saturday as the Sabbath. **The State in passing laws for the due Sanctification of Sunday, is unwittingly acknowledging the authority of the Catholic Church, and carrying out more or less faithfully its prescription. The Sunday as a day of the week set apart for the obligatory public worship of Almighty God is purely a creation of the Catholic Church.**"--John Gilmary Shea, in The American Catholic Quarterly Review, January 1883, p. 139 [Shea (1824-1892) was an important Catholic historian, of his time].*

*"Protestants . . . accept Sunday rather than Saturday as the day for public worship after the Catholic Church made the change . . . But the Protestant mind does not seem to realize that in accepting the Bible, **in observing the Sunday, they are accepting the authority of the spokesman for the church, the Pope.**" Our Sunday Visitor, Feb. 5, 1950 [One of the largest U.S. Roman Catholic magazines]*

*"Ques. --What Bible authority is there for changing the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week? Who gave the Pope the authority to change a command of God?" Ans. --It was the*

Catholic Church which, by the authority of Jesus Christ, has transferred this rest [from the Bible Sabbath] to the Sunday. Thus the observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an **homage they pay**, in spite of themselves, **to the authority of the [Catholic] Church.**" Monsignor Louis Segur, Plain Talk About the Protestantism of Today, 1868, p. 213 [L.G. Segur (1820-1881) was a French Catholic prelate and apologist, and later a diplomatic and judicial official at Rome.]

"**Q.** What is the Third Commandment?[the fourth in Protestant Bibles, because the Catholic Church took out the Second Commandment--Exodus20:4-6] "**A.** The Third Commandment is: Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day." **Q.** Which is the Sabbath day?" **A.** Saturday is the Sabbath day." **Q.** Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?" **A.** The Catholic Church, after **changing the day of rest from Saturday**, the seventh day of the week, to Sunday, the first day, made the third commandment refer to Sunday as the day to be kept as the Lord's Day." Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 4, p. 153.

"Prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. There is no such law in the Bible. **It is a law of the holy Catholic Church alone.** The Bible says 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' The Catholic Church says, No. **By my divine power I abolish the Sabbath day and command you to keep holy the first day of the week. And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in reverent obedience to the command of the Holy Catholic Church.**"--Priest Thomas Enright, CSSR, President of Redemptorist College, Kansas City, Mo., in a lecture at Hartford, Kansas, February 18, 1884, and printed in the Hartford Kansas Weekly Call, February 22, 1884, and the American Sentinel, a New York Roman Catholic journal in June 1893, page 173.

"Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act . . . **AND THE ACT IS A MARK** of her ecclesiastical power." From the office of Cardinal Gibbons, through Chancellor H.F. Thomas, November 11, 1895.

"A word about Sunday. God said: "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day!" The Sabbath was Saturday, not Sunday; why, then, do we keep Sunday holy instead of Saturday? The **Church altered** the observance of the Sabbath to the observance of Sunday. . . Protestants who say that they go by the Bible and the Bible only, and that they do not believe anything that is not in the Bible, must be rather puzzled by the keeping of Sunday when God distinctly said, 'Keep holy the Sabbath day.' The word Sunday does not come anywhere in the Bible so, without knowing it, they are **obeying the authority of the Catholic Church.**" Henry T. Cafferata, The Catechism Simply Explained (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1938), p. 89.

"The arch-deceiver had not completed his work. He was resolved to gather the **Christian world** under his banner and to exercise his power through his vice-regent, the proud pontiff who claimed to be the representative of Christ. Through half-converted pagans, ambitious prelates, and world-loving churchmen he accomplished his purpose. Vast councils were held from time to time, in which the dignitaries of the church were convened from all the world. **In nearly every council the Sabbath which God instituted was pressed down a little lower, while the Sunday was correspondingly exalted.** Thus the **pagan festival** came finally to be honored as a divine institution, while the Bible Sabbath was pronounced **a relic of Judaism**, and its observers were declared to be accursed." GC, p. 53.

*"The Lord commands by the same prophet: "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples." Isaiah 8:16. The seal of God's law is found in the fourth commandment. This only, of all the ten, brings to view both the name and the title of the Lawgiver. It declares Him to be the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and thus shows His claim to reverence and worship above all others. Aside from this precept, there is nothing in the Decalogue to show by whose authority the law is given. When the Sabbath was changed by the papal power, the seal was taken from the law. The disciples of Jesus are called upon to restore it by exalting the Sabbath of the fourth commandment to its rightful position as the Creator's memorial and the sign of His authority." GC, p. 452*

The image of **Daniel 3** (which is the background to **Revelation 13:11-18**) and its dimensions. Hidden behind them is the # 666 and the sun god. Is it the same to worship the sun god as it is to worship on the sun day? Yes when the origins of Sunday in the Christian Church go back to the day of the sun in the days of Constantine.

### **Two Signs: Saved or Lost**

**Two groups with two marks** (Revelation 13:16, 17; 14:1)

At the beginning the issue was not a tree it was the **test of obedience**. Who will you be **loyal** to? If they disrespected God's tree they would show themselves loyal to Satan. If they respected God's tree they would show themselves **loyal** to God. The issue is **loyalty** and the tree and the day are just the means to test that loyalty. The issue is whose **authority** do you accept?

*"The Sabbath will be the **great test of loyalty**, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the **final test** shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false Sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an **avowal of allegiance** to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an **evidence of loyalty** to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of **submission** to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of **allegiance to divine authority**, receive the seal of God." GC, p. 605*

If we are **lax** in keeping the Sabbath how can we believe that we will keep it if **buying and selling** are at stake or **imprisonment, confiscation of goods** or **death**?

*"Not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed. There are many even among those who teach the truth to others who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads. They had the light of truth, they knew their Master's will, they understood every point of our faith, but they had not corresponding works. These who were so familiar with prophecy and the treasures of divine wisdom, should have acted their faith. They should have commanded their households after them, that by a well-ordered family they might present to the world the influence of the truth upon the human heart." CET, p. 189*

**Cain:** Those who have the mark of the beast will be protected by the beast. Those who have the seal of God will be protected by God. Which of the two would you rather be protected by?

**There are two possible ways** of serving the beast but only one way of serving God. The beast is willing to have service on the forehead **or** in the hand (Revelation 13:16). God accepts the service only of the forehead **and** the hand.

Discuss the difference between the sin of **Eve** and the sin of **Adam**.

"I asked my accompanying angel the meaning of what I heard, and what the four angels were about to do. He said to me that it was God that restrained the powers, and that He gave His angels charge over things on the earth; that the four angels had power from God to hold the four winds, and that they were about to let them go; but while their hands were loosening, and the four winds were about to blow, the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not sealed, and He raised His hands to the Father, and pleaded with Him that He had spilled His blood for them. Then another angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the four angels, and bid them hold, until the servants of God were sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads. CET, p. 102

About four months since, I had a vision of events, all in the future. And I saw the time of trouble, such as never was,--Jesus told me it was the time of Jacob's trouble, and that we should be delivered out of it by the voice of God. Just before we entered it, we all received the seal of the living God. Then I saw the four Angels cease to hold the four winds. And I saw famine, pestilence and sword, nation rose against nation, and the whole world was in confusion. Then we cried to God for deliverance day and night till we began to hear the bells on Jesus' garment. And I saw Jesus rise up in the Holiest, and as he came out we heard the tinkling of bells, and knew our High Priest was coming out. Then we heard the voice of God which shook the heavens and earth, and gave the 144,000 the day and hour of Jesus' coming. Then the saints were free, united and full of the glory of God, for he had turned their captivity. And I saw a flaming cloud come where Jesus stood and he laid off his priestly garment and put on his kingly robe, took his place on the cloud which carried him to the east where it first appeared to the saints on earth, a small black cloud, which was the sign of the Son of Man. While the cloud was passing from the Holiest to the east which took a number of days, the Synagogue of Satan worshiped at the saints feet. Ellen G. Harmon Day Star, March 14, 1846

I saw four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and were on their way to accomplish it. Jesus was clothed with Priestly garments. He gazed in pity on the remnant, then raised his hands upward, and with a voice of deep pity cried--"My Blood, Father, My Blood, My Blood, My Blood". Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from God, who sat upon the great white throne, and was shed all about Jesus. Then I saw an angel with a commission from Jesus, swiftly flying to the four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and waving something up and down in his hand, and crying with a loud voice--"Hold! Hold! Hold! Hold! until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads." I asked my accompanying angel the meaning of what I heard, and what the four angels were about to do. He showed me that it was God that restrained the powers, and that he gave his angels charge over things on the earth, and that the four angels had power from God to hold the four winds, and that they were about to let the

four winds go, and while they had started on their mission to let them go, the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not all sealed, then he raised his hands to the Father and plead with him that he had spilled his blood for them.--Then another angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the four angels, and bid them hold until the servants of God were sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads. RH, August 1, 1849





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