

Revelation 4 and 5: The Seven Seals and The Investigative Judgment

Overview: The study of the seven seals is a study of the investigative judgment as a series of events described in Revelation chapters 4 and 5. It reveals the cases of every generation from Adam and Eve up to the crucial events that mark the opening of the Judgment for the living (JOL).

Prayer Thought: *Testimonies Vol. 9, p. 267 or Testimonies to Ministers, p. 116*

Scripture Reading: Revelation 4 and 5

- **Verse 4:1**—A door was opened
- **Verse 4:2**—One sitting on the throne
- **Verse 4:3**—A rainbow around the throne
- **Verse 4:4**—24 Elders
- **Verse 5:5**—Seven Lamps
- **Verse 4:6**—Sea of Glass
- **Verses 4:6-8**—Four Beasts (with four faces, six wings, and full of eyes)
- **Verses 5:5-6**—The Lamb (with seven eyes and horns)
- **Verses 5:11-12**—Thousands of Angels
- **Verse 5:1**—The Book

This Must Be The Heavenly Sanctuary

- **A Door** was opened in heaven—the only door this could be is the door to the **Most Holy Place** in the heavenly Sanctuary (**EW 42**, also **GC 429-30**).
- **Seven Lamps of Fire**—before the throne—the candlestick or seven lamps is a sanctuary fixture.
- This proves that this scene in Revelation 4 and 5 must be in the heavenly sanctuary.

Summary: John, the Revelator is describing what took place in 1844—the opening of the investigative judgment, which for John was “**Hereafter**”—after about 96 A. D. This is the heavenly court scene where all those who professed Christ will be judged. (**GC 480**).

(cont. to next page)

Daniel And John Both Saw The Judgment

Daniel's Vision

(Daniel 7)

1. Thrones were cast down (v. 9).
2. "The Ancient of Days did sit" (v. 9)
3. "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him." (v. 10).
4. "One like the Son of man came . . . to the Ancient of Days, and they brought near before Him." (v. 13)
5. "The books were opened." (v. 10)
6. "Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times and ten thousand stood before Him." (v. 10)
7. "The judgment was set, and the books were opened." (v. 10).

John's Vision

(The Revelation)

1. "And I saw thrones" (Rev. 20:4)
2. "And One sat on the throne" (Rev. 4:2)
3. "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire" (Rev. 15:2).
4. "In the midst of the throne and of the beasts . . . stood the Lamb." (Rev. 5:6)
5. "And the books were opened." (Rev. 20:12)
6. "I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne . . . and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." (Rev. 5:11).
7. "And I saw the dead small and great stand Before God; and the books were opened . . . and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books . . ." (Rev. 20:12)

Note: Daniel saw the Judgment being set up, while John saw it in full session. Daniel saw the opening of the Judgment—John saw the entire proceedings from beginning to end. The Judgment is in Three Phases:

- **First phase:** the investigative judgment of the **Dead**. (**GC 490; EW 280**)
- **Second phase:** the investigative judgment of the **Living**
- **Third Phase:** the judgment of the wicked—**Sentencing** (**GC 480; EW 52-3**)

Note: The *first two phases* of the judgment are *investigative—during probationary time* while Jesus is still the bleeding Lamb. It involves *only* those who have entered the service of God. (**GC 480-81; COL 310**). The *third phase* of the judgment takes place during the thousand years, the millennium. The seven seals deals primarily with the investigative phases.

Symbols from the Judgment Scene

- **Door** — the door to the Most Holy Place (**EW 42**)
- **The One who sat**—the Judge, God the Father.

- **Rainbow**—God’s faithfulness to His promises (**Gen. 9:12- 15; COL 148**). His divine mercy (**ED 178, DA 83**).
- **24 Elders**—the Jury (**Matt. 27:51-53; DA 785-86, EW 184**). They are from among those who ascended with Christ.
- **7 Lamps of Fire**—Completeness of truth, the church throughout the all ages. (Candlestick)
- **Seven spirits** (verse 5)—Seven is complete. This shows that the Holy Spirit has been guiding the church from the very beginning by revealing light and truth.
- **Sea of Glass**—Sea denotes an endless expanse. Clear as crystal denotes perfection. Together it represents eternal perfection—life eternal.
- **Four Beasts**—The saints, the defendants, those to be judged (**Rev. 5:8-9**). Only human beings have been redeemed. **Note:** The saints are not physically there, yet are represented there symbolically as beasts (**EW 54, 92**) in the same way that the beasts of Daniel and Revelation symbolizes nations.
 1. **Lion**—First period of the church before the ceremonial system, from Adam to Moses.
 2. **Calf**—Period of the ceremonial system (Moses to Cross)
 3. **Man’s head**—Cross to the harvest period.
 4. **Eagle**—Period when the church is to be translated (144,000 and the Great Multitude).
- **Full of eyes**—Eyes give light to the body providing sight. Thus it shows that God’s people have had sufficient light in every age.
- **Eyes before and behind**—Prophetic light: past, present and future.
- **Six Wings**—Wings represent periods of time. Thus the six wings represent the sixth period of the judgment when the judgment begins.
- **Lamb**—Jesus, our advocate (lawyer), also as a priest, a lamb bleeding, “as it had been slain.”
- **Seven horns**—Jesus has complete power (**Matt. 28:18**).
- **Seven eyes**—Complete vision—knowledge (**Ps. 139:12, Zech 4:10**).
- **Seven spirits of God**—God’s Spirit at work in all ages (**John 14:26**).
- **Many Angels**—The Witnesses, angels who record and testify to all events (**GC 482-83**).
- **The Book**—The Book of Life. The book that decides every man’s destiny (**Rev. 13:8, 20:12, 21:27, 22:19; Exo. 32:33; COL 294**). The Judgment reviews every case beginning with Adam through each successive generation and closes with the living (**GC 482-83**).

When Do The Seals Begin?

- **GC 483.1**—with those who first lived upon the earth, and closes with the living. They covers the entire world’s history.
- The Book of Seven Seals is the same as the book of life. Therefore, the unveiling the seals must be the revelation of the lives of all those who ever

entered the service of God. The first person would have to be Adam. It cannot then start in the New Testament period as it is generally taught.

- The setting of the Seven Seals is in the context of the Judgment, and the investigative judgment includes *all* of the world's history—not just the New Testament.

Rev. 6:1-8

What is the meaning of the:

- **Colors:** (White , Red , Black, Pale) A progression of worsening conditions.
- **Implements:** Similarly, the symbols of the crown, sword, balances and death indicates that by men's deeds, the earth has gone from good to bad to worse.
- **Horses:** Something created by God but ruled (driven) by man. It symbolizes the earth given by God to man to rule.

First Seal (see chart on page 6)

- **White Horse**—The earth in a pure, sinless state (**PP 47**).
- **Rider**—Adam (**Gen. 1:26, 28**).
- **Crown**—Kingly authority (**Gen. 1:26**).
- **Bow**—The instrument with which Adam was to conquer and people the earth—it represents Eve. In harmony with the symbolism, children are compared to arrows (**Ps. 127:4, Gen. 3:20**).
- **Conquering and to conquer**—Man was to inhabit the earth, fill it with people, conquer it (**Gen. 1:26, 28**).

Summary: The first seal reveals those who first lived upon the earth—Adam and Eve who were commanded to reproduce and thereby conquer it—subdue it. These were the first ones to be judged in 1844 when Jesus our High Priest took the Book of Life (book of seven seals) and began the investigative Judgment for the dead.

Second Seal

- This denotes the period in which murder and war broke out among the nations.
- Red is a symbol of curse, bloodshed. Abel was the first victim.
- This condition climaxed just after the flood and the Babel disaster with its confusion of languages.

Note: To “take peace from the earth” (verse 4), implies that there was *peace before the time of the red horse*. This again proves that the first seal must have begun with Adam when the earth was pure and at peace. There was no peace on earth at the time of the New Testament era, the time generally taught to be the beginning of the seven seals.

Summary: The second seal reveals the lives of those who lived particularly during the time just after the flood. Remember, the seals overlap. So, after Adam and Eve, the world gradually became “red” that is, cursed with wars and murders until it peaked with the birth of the nations at the Tower of Babel.

Third Seal

- **Black Horse**—Spiritual darkness, idolatry. This is the time when the knowledge of God was well nigh obliterated. In fact, we have record of only Abraham and Lot who served God.
- **Balances**—Trading, commercialism led by the Phoenicians. Tyre and Sidon were the chief centers of commerce (**Isa. 23:8**). The Phoenicians were known as the “busy bees of the ancient world.”
- **One measure of Wheat**—for a penny and three measures of barley.
- **Matt. 20:8-16** and the study of the 11th hour. All workers received a penny (eternal life). The last workers worked for only one parabolic hour. All other workers worked for three parabolic hours. The first workers complained that they should have received more. The 11th hour workers received their penny first even though they were hired last.
- **Penny**—Eternal Life, Salvation (**Matt. 20:2**). Only human beings receive salvation as a reward for labor here on earth.
- **Wheat**—Represents the 144,000 and the Great Multitude (GM), those who were hired last.
- **Barley**—Represents the Jews, those who were hired first.
- **One measure**—The one hour (**Matt. 20:6, 12**) the length of time the 11th hour workers labored.
- **Three measures**—The three hours symbolizing the work of the Jews (**Matt. 20:1-3**). **Note:** The reward was given to the 11th hour workers first, showing that the 144,000 will receive (penny) eternal life or salvation before the Jews, the other laborers. Thus, the voice (God) said, “One measure of wheat [first] for a penny and three measures of barley [last].” Jesus said, the “last shall be first and the first last.” (**Matt. 20:16**).
- **Do Not Hurt the Oil and the Wine**—A command not to interfere with the Holy Scriptures that were then being written by Moses (**GC v**). Oil and Wine are symbols of spiritual food—Jesus said that His words are “Spirit and Life” (**John 6:63; Ps. 45:7; Zech. 4:12**). **Note:** It is during the time of the black horse (third seal) that God called Israel, the time when Moses began to write the Bible. Thus it was appropriate for God to announce protection for the Scriptures.

Summary: The third seal reveals the time when mankind well nigh lost the knowledge of God, the time God called Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Israel. It is also the time commerce and the Bible were introduced.

Fourth Seal

- **Pale horse**—Non-descript color. Same period as the Non-descript beast of **Dan. 7:7-8**, the period of the ancient Roman government. The color denotes a mixture of paganism and Christianity.
- **Rider (death)**—Persecution. Rome killed thousands and thousands of people, especially the Christians.
- **Fourth part of earth**—Rome was allowed to persecute the Christians for a fourth part of the earth. After which its power was to wane. The record of life on earth is about 6,000 years. To get a fourth part you must divide four into 6,000 ($6,000/4 = 1500$). Beginning from the crucifixion (31 A. D.) add 1500, which will bring you to 1530 A. D., the date of the Augsburg Confession, the time when Lutherans separated from Catholicism.

Fifth Seal

- **Souls under the Altar**—Souls slain for the word of God, they are already dead at the time of the opening of the fifth seal. They were martyrs from the preceding period (4th seal). Their untimely deaths demanded justice.
- **Altar**—An altar signifies a renewal of faith, worship, a reformation. Therefore, this altar must symbolize the Protestant Reformation, which began the downfall of Rome, the beginning of a spiritual renewal.
- **How Long . . .** The answer that they should “rest for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled”, is evidence that the persecution and martyrdom of the fourth seal were to overlap the fifth seal and the judgment was not to begin until after the persecution had ceased completely. That is, although the reformation brought the decline of Rome (the papacy), some of God’s people were still to be martyred for their faith up to the complete fall of the papacy—then the Judgment of the dead would begin.
- **White Robes**—Accounted worthy of eternity.

Sixth Seal (signs of its opening)

- **Earthquake**—Lisbon: Nov. 1, 1755 (**GC 304**).
- **Sun, Moon**—May 19, 20, 1780 (**GC 306**).
- **Falling Stars**—Nov. 13, 1833 (**GC 333**, see also: **Matt. 24:29**).

Rev. 6:14-17

- It is commonly taught that these verses apply to the second coming of Christ.
- The primary application is to the purification of the church—Ezekiel Nine.
- The application to the second coming is only secondary.

Why Does Rev. 6:14-17 Not Primarily Apply To The Second Coming of Jesus?

- The judgment is still in progress, all seven seals must be opened and reviewed before Jesus can leave the sanctuary.
- **Verses 6, 16**—Jesus is still the bleeding lamb—probation is still open.
- This is the wrath of the lamb period, *not* the wrath of God period which is during the seven last plagues and the 2nd advent (**Rev. 15:7; 16:1, 18-21**).
- **9 T 268**—inspiration applies these verses to the church.
- **Verse 17** is the same as **Mal. 3:1-3**. This passage applies to the purification of the church in the time of judgment.
- **Isa. 2:1, 19-21**—This shows that wicked in the church will also run to the rocks and the mountains.
- **Isa. 34:4-8, 1 T 190, 198**—The heavens will also depart at the purification of the church.

Note: Chapter six ends with the question “who will be able to stand?” The answer is found in Rev. 7—the 144,000 and the Great Multitude.

Summary: The sixth seal will close with the slaughter of Ezekiel Nine, the judgment of the living on earth—*not* with the second coming of Christ.

Seventh Seal

This seal is also generally taught to be the second coming. However, the following will prove that this is the opening of the judgment of the living in Heaven. The sixth seal closes with the judgment of the living on earth, but the seventh seal opens with the judgment of the living in heaven, which is after the slaughter of Ezekiel Nine and continues during the Loud Cry to the final close of probation.

Note: The judgment of the dead involves only cleansing the books in Heaven since those on trial are not alive. However, the judgment of the living involves two parts: 1. the cleansing of the books in Heaven and, 2. the cleansing of the church on earth.

Is The Half Hour Of Silence The 2nd Advent Of Christ?

- The judgment is still in progress since Jesus is still in the Sanctuary opening the seventh seal, which means that he is still investigating the names of those during this period.
- Christ is still the bleeding lamb.
- An half hour of silence implies that there is after the half hour whatever was going on before must continue—the Judgment. The half an hour divides the judgment into two sections, the judgment of the dead and the judgment of the living.
- The prayers of the saints are offered up before God. This indicates that probation is still open since you cannot offer prayers after Jesus’ 2nd advent.

- The angel cast fire down to the earth. Fire is a symbol of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:1-4**). The outpouring of the Holy Spirit after the second coming of Christ is not necessary.
- The voices, thunderings, lightnings, return, showing that the judgment has resumed. Compare with **Rev. 4:5**. The voices must represent the speaking of the beasts, elders, angels, etc. When God speaks it is like thunderings and lightnings. The voices clearly indicate that judgment continues after the half hour of silence.

What happens during the half hour of silence?

- The silence reveals that the Judgment must have ceased for a time. The only event which would cause silence during the judgment is the purification of the church (Eze. 9). It is the only time we know from both the Bible and the Testimonies that Jesus will interrupt His mediatorial work.
- **5 T 690**—This passage must be fulfilled during probationary time because it mentions: “. . .the unfolding of truth. . .” Truth only unfolds while probation still lingers. Furthermore, it states that “the Lord Jesus shall rise up from His mediatorial work. . .” This would indicate that He will interrupt his work of atonement.

How Long is the Half Hour of Silence?—About Seven Days, or One Week. Using prophetic time (A day = a year).

- One day = 24 hours One year = 360 days
- 360 days/24 hours = 15 days/hour
- 1 hour = 15 days, so
- 1/2 hour = 15/2 = 7.5 days — about a week.
- The purification of the church by Ezekiel Nine will last about a week.

Summary: The seventh seal reveals that the judgment of the living in Heaven will begin after the half hour of silence—purification of the church. The half an hour of silence, therefore, divides the investigative judgment into two parts: the judgment of the dead and the judgment of the living.

Final Summary: The study of the seven seals reveal that God’s professed people have been on trial since 1844. This court case is the greatest and most important in the history of earth and the Universe. Each individual and generation is investigated with terrible exactness. It especially, and more import-antly, reveals that the Judgment in the S. D. A. Church will mark the opening of the Judgment for the living.

Soon we will have to stand before the never erring Judge and give an account for our deeds, not physically, but our records will testify to whether we are worthy through the merits of Christ to be sealed, allowing the slaughtering angels to

pass by and have our names retained on the Book of Life. Thus, we determine our own destiny by either holding on to our sins or repenting of them.

Further Reading: [Tract No. 15, To the Seven Churches](#)

