

REVIVAL NEWS

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THE SEALS ARE OPENED – The Mystery of God is finished A journey through the Book of Revelation – Part 3

The Lamb opens the seals

“Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals” Revelation 6:1a. The apostle John has gone through the door that was *“open in heaven” (Rev.4:1)*. He has seen the One who was *“worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals” (Rev.5:5)*. He is in the realm of the Most Holy Place. He is at the Throne of God and of the Lamb and now He sees the **Lamb open one of the seals!** The mystery of God’s eternal purpose being outworked is unfolding before his spiritual eyes! When we are caught up in that heavenly realm, we are also in a place to receive much revelation! The Holy Spirit even *“tells us things to come” John 16:13b*. This is not a picture of some individual event in history but an unfolding of the eternal plan of God, an unveiling of how God will bring about His purpose in the earth. The seals are coming off the scroll so that the mystery of God will be finished, and every secret thing revealed!

A White Horse – the first seal

When the first seal is loosed, John hears a voice say, *“Come and see” (Rev.6:1b)*. We are invited to *see!* Paul said that he preached the *“unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all to see what is the fellowship of the mystery” Ephesians 3:8b-9a*. When John looked, he saw *“a white horse. And he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer” Revelation 6:2*. What is this *white horse*?

The first seal is very important. It undergirds all the rest of the seals that are to be loosed. Horses in the Bible speak prophetically of *“spirits” (Zech.6:3-5)*. This is a *white horse*. The colour *white* in the Bible almost always refers to holiness, purity and cleanness – *“Many shall be purified and made white, and refined” Daniel 12:10*; *“Though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” Isaiah 1:18*; *“and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” Revelation 7:14*. This is a *white horse*. Prophetically a *pure spirit* or the *Holy Spirit!* The *white horse* is mentioned again in **Revelation 19:11**. Let the Scripture interpret Scripture!

The Rider with a bow and a crown

The One who sat on the *white horse* had a *“bow, and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer” Revelation 6:2*. The *bow* is used in war to shoot arrows. Prophetically the *bow* can represent people as when God said, *“I have bent Judah, My*

bow, fitted the bow with Ephraim, and raised up your sons O Zion, against your sons O Greece” Zechariah 9:13. God also says that sons are like *“arrows in the hands of a warrior, so are the children [literally “sons”] of one’s youth.” Psalm 127:4.* Sons are arrows that are shot from the *bow*, God’s people, to deal with God’s enemies, *your sons O Greece!*

“And a crown was given to him”. The *crown* referred to here is the Greek word *stephanos*. It has the meaning of *a wreath, a prize in the public games or a symbol of honour generally* and is more akin to the *victors’ crown*. This word does not stress *kingship* but rather *victory, winning and overcoming*. This Rider of the *white horse* is going out *conquering and to conquer!*

Who is this?

In **Revelation 19:11** the Rider on the *white horse* is called *“Faithful and True”*. He also has a name, *“The Word of God” Revelation 19:13*. In **Revelation 19:12** it says that now *“on His head were many crowns”*. The word for *crowns* here is the Greek word *diadema* which are the crowns of kings, royalty! Between **Revelation 6 & 19** the One on the *white horse* has conquered and now carries as His trophies the *crowns* of the kings that He has conquered! *“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign forever and ever!” Revelation 11:15.*

The Rider is the *Word of God* Himself, *“the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us” John 1:14*. The *white horse* is the **Holy Spirit**. The First seal loosed releases the conquering gospel of the kingdom to go forth in the earth, the *Word* carried and flowing by the *Spirit* into all the earth through His sons being shot out, sent out to *“preach the gospel to every creature” Mark 16:15*. The Lord Himself, the Rider on the white horse, was then *“working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs” Mark 16:20*.

The conquering gospel of the kingdom going forth!

The First seal releases the gospel of the kingdom to go forth conquering, *“discipling nations”*, bringing the nations to the *“obedience of the faith”* through grace and apostleship (**Matt.28:19; Rom.1:5**). Through the remaining seals that are loosed, this is the undercurrent of what is happening through them! This never stops! We preach the gospel and make disciples through all the judgements and hardships around us! Jesus the conquering King and Messiah is with us by His Spirit as we give ourselves to the mission of inheriting nations for His name!

Hardship

The next part of the unfolding revelation of God’s purpose is that with the loosing of the next seals, hardship will come on the earth. It is not speaking of individual or particular historical events, but the release of these things on the earth as necessary to outwork God’s purpose.

- **2nd seal** – *“to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another” Revelation 6:4*. This has been a reality in the earth for the last two thousand years since Jesus died and rose again. We live in perilous times (**2 Tim.3:1-5**)
- **3rd seal** – *“a quart of wheat for a denarius [about one day’s wages], and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine”*

Revelation 6:6. Economic hardship and inflation in different places while at the same time some living luxuriously. Again, something that has been with us generationally in the earth ever since Jesus died and rose again. As overcomers in these things, we trust Jesus and the gospel of the kingdom keeps going forth through these things!

- **4th seal** – *“Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with the sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth” Revelation 6:8.* A limited ability, *a fourth of the earth*, to bring death in various ways. Death through war, through famine, unexplainable deaths, and deaths *by the beasts of the earth*. Again, these things are all around us. They are realities and hardships that we deal with every day in the world we live in.

In view of these difficulties all around us we should say with the apostle Paul, *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” Romans 8:35, 37.* We are to conquer in these things with the One who rides on the white horse *“conquering and to conquer” (Rev.6:2).*

The Fifth Seal – the voice of the martyrs

When the fifth seal was opened John saw, *“under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held” Revelation 6:9.* God does not forget those who have been killed for their testimony of Jesus Christ. They are honoured and we should also honour such ones and realise we live in the days where it is possible that we may have to give the ultimate sacrifice. It is comforting to know that God will bring about justice, as the martyrs cry out to God 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 6:10-11.*

There is a full complement of the blood of the martyrs to be accomplished on the earth. God will avenge at the right time. Apostle Paul encourages the persecuted church in Thessalonica that the tribulations they endure is *“manifest evidence of the righteous judgement of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer, since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven” 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7.* We are encouraged in days of hardship and trouble all around us, that there is honour in suffering for Christ’s sake and God will bring all things into account.

The sixth seal – Cosmic disturbances

When the sixth seal is opened the types of disturbances that follow are things like: *a great earthquake; the sun became black; the moon became like blood; the stars of heaven fell to the earth; the sky receded as a scroll; every mountain and island was moved out of its place (Rev.6:12-14).* Fear comes upon people of all statuses of society as they begin to realise

that these are judgements coming from the One who is in charge. They want to *“hide from the face of Him who sits on the throne and the from the wrath of the Lamb”* Revelation 6:16.

Apostle Paul said, *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness”* Romans 1:18. They know the truth, but they suppress it. This is a reality in our world as people want to justify their wickedness by legislating it. They try and make it legitimate, while knowing in their hearts the unrighteousness of it. God’s wrath is being revealed from heaven in various ways and causes men to want to hide from the *wrath of the Lamb*. These cosmic disturbances are evidence that *“the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”* Revelation 6:17.

The Sealing of the Saints

John then saw *“another angel (messenger) ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God”* Revelation 7:2. A seal is the Greek word *sphragis* and means a *signet, the stamp impressed*. Mr Vines in his expository dictionary defines the word as *an emblem of ownership and security*. This *seal of the living God* is very important as it shows who belongs to God. This angel that John saw even cried out to the four angels who would bring some destruction on the earth, *“Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads”* Revelation 7:3.

It is similar to the time of Ezekiel when God told a man with *“a writer’s inkhorn... ‘Go through the midst of the city...and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it”* Ezekiel 9:3-4. It is a spiritual mark. Not physical. It is on our foreheads just like the *“signet: Holiness to YHWH”* (Ex.28:36) was placed on the front of the turban of Aaron the High Priest, *“so it shall be on Aaron’s forehead”* Exodus 28:38. Apostle Paul writes that the *“solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His’”* 2 Timothy 2:19. The seal is about whose property you are. Do you belong to God? *“For you were bought at a price”*, the redemption price of the blood of Jesus! (1 Cor.6:20, 1 Pet.1:18-19)

The New Testament seal

When you believed the *“word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise”* Ephesians 1:13. This sealing is important to understand as it stands in direct contrast to the *mark of the beast* that many Christians, unfortunately, are afraid of and focus much of their attention on. We must be assured of and secure in the knowledge that *“He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee”* 2 Corinthians 1:21-22. There is no fear that we may unwittingly receive the mark of the beast if we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. *“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption”* Ephesians 4:30.

The number who were sealed

The number that apostle John saw was *“One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed”* Revelation 7:4. Be careful to assume this means the natural descendants of Israel. Remember that John was *“immediately in the Spirit”*

when he saw these things. Remember that apostle Paul said, *“For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham”* Romans 9:6-7. The *“Israel of God”* is a *“new creation”* people (Galatians 6:15-16). It is a company of sons of God, the true seed of Abraham, *“If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”* Galatians 3:29.

Jesus told the twelve that because they had left all to follow Jesus that they would *“sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel”* Matthew 19:28. The twelve apostles did not only govern natural Israelites, but like Peter in Cornelius’ house (Acts 10) they apostolically governed the body of Christ, made up of Jew and Gentile, who believe in the Messiah Jesus. So, are you one of the sealed? The number *One hundred and forty-four thousand* is not a literal number but the number of the company of sons of God, the seed of Abraham, the Body of Christ, the redeemed and sealed with the Holy Spirit!

Who are these ones in white?

After seeing these glorious and powerful revelations, then John saw *“a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb”* Revelation 7:9. This multitude is righteous, having believed, being *“clothed with white robes”* and they give glory to God and the Lamb! John is asked by one of the elders, *“Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?”* Revelation 7:13. John does not know but the elder tells him, *“These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”* Revelation 7:14.

Ones coming out of the Great Tribulation

The phrase *who come out of the great tribulation* is a little misleading. The literal Greek is a present participle and should be translated, *“ones coming out of the great tribulation”!* [New Spirit filled Life Bible notes for Revelation 7:14]. This gives a much different picture. This is a present and continuous process down the ages! The *great tribulation* is present and continuous. It has been happening and is still ongoing today!

There is a vast multitude who are learning that we are to *“glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope”* Romans 5:3-4. James tells us to *“count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience...let patience have its perfect work in you, that you may be perfect and complete”* James 1:2-4. The Apostle Paul tells us that it is *“through many tribulations that we enter the kingdom of God”* Acts 14:22. Peter tells us to *“not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you”* 1 Peter 4:12. There are many more such verses in the New Testament.

How are you dealing with tribulation?

The question is: how are you dealing with the great tribulation? Are you looking for a way out? Or are you washing *“your robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb”?* This is the right response to the tribulation, pressure, stress and hardship of the times we live

in. The tribulation is to refine us, deal with our flesh and sin, so we can become white and be washed in His blood to become ***“kings and priests to His God and Father”*** Revelation 5:10.

Overcomers – God dwelling with us

The result of dealing with tribulation Jesus’ way is that this people, *ones coming out of the great tribulation*, are ***“before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them”*** Revelation 7:15. The Presence of God is among the ones who overcome ***great tribulation!*** ***“They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore”*** Revelation 7:16. These ones have learnt to find the ***“food which endures to everlasting life”*** John 6:27. These ones have discovered ***“the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne who will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters”*** Revelation 7:17a. The Lamb is their Shepherd! He leads them beside still, but living, waters!

“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” Revelation 7:17b. They are healed. Having come through tribulation they have been healed, matured, restored and they find sweet fellowship with God and the Lamb, ***“fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ”*** 1 John 1:3. These ones have their ***“heart set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the valley of Baca [literally ‘weeping’], they make it a spring; the rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion!*** Psalm 84:5-7. This is to be our reality. Not something to come. It is present and continuous. Jesus said, ***“In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”*** John 16:33.

We are living in the time of the Seals being opened – the gospel is going forth during much trouble and there is an overcoming company being revealed! The Trumpets are about to sound!!

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