

THE SEVEN SEALS

1. WHAT did John the revelator see in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne?

“And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne *a book* written within, and on the back side *sealed with seven seals.*” **Revelation 5:1.**

2. What did the Lamb do with this book?

“And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat on the throne.” **Verse 7.**

3. Why was Christ declared worthy to open these seals?

“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.” **Verse 9.**

4. What was shown upon the opening of the first seal?

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, . . . *a white horse*: and He that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.” **Revelation 6:1, 2.**

NOTE — The number *seven* in the Scriptures denotes completion or perfection. The seven seals embrace the whole of a class of events in which is narrated the history of the church from the beginning of the Christian era to the second coming of Christ. The white horse, with his rider going forth to conquer fitly represents the early Christian church in its purity, going into all the world with the gospel message of salvation.

5. What appeared upon the opening of the second seal?

“And when He had opened the second seal. . . there went out *another horse that was red*: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.” **Verses 3, 4.**

NOTE — As whiteness in the first horse denoted the purity of the gospel which its rider propagated, so the color of the second horse would show that corruption had begun to creep in when this symbol applies. It is true that such a state of things did succeed the apostolic church. Speaking of the

second century, Wharey, in his "Church History," page 39, says: "Christianity began already to wear the garb of heathenism. The seeds of most of those errors that afterwards so entirely overran the church, marred its beauty, and tarnished its glory, were already beginning to take root." Worldliness came in. The church sought alliance with the secular power, and trouble and commotion were the result. This symbol extends from the close of the first century to the time of Constantine, when a complete union of church and state was effected.

6. What was the color of the symbol under the third seal?

"When He had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo *a black horse*; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand." Verse 5.

NOTE — The "black" horse fitly represents the spiritual darkness that characterized the church from the time of Constantine till the establishment of papal supremacy in 538 A.D. Of the condition of things in the fourth century, Wharey (page 54) says: "Christianity had now become popular, and a large proportion, perhaps a large majority, of those who embraced it, only assumed the name, received the rite of baptism, and conformed to some of the external ceremonies of the church, while at heart and in moral character they were as much heathen as they were before. Error and corruption now came in upon the church like a flood."

7. What were the color and character of the fourth symbol?

"And when He had opened the fourth seal. . . . behold *a pale horse*: and his name that sat on him was *Death*, and *Hell* [Greek, *Hades*, the *grave*] *followed with him*. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, *to kill with sword*, and with *hunger*, and with *death*, and with the *beasts of the earth*." **Verses 7, 8.**

NOTE — This is an unnatural color for a horse. The original denotes the *pale* or *yellowish* color seen in blighted plants. The symbol evidently refers to the work of persecution and death carried on by the Roman Church against the people of God from the time of the beginning of papal supremacy in 538 A.D. to the time when the Reformers commenced their work of exposing

the true character of the Papacy, and a check was placed upon this work of death.

8. On opening the fifth seal, what was seen under the altar?

“And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar *the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.*” **Verse 9.**

NOTE — When the Reformers exposed the work of the Papacy, it was then called to mind how many martyrs had been slain for their faith.

9. What were these martyrs represented as doing?

“And *they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*” **Verse 10.**

NOTE — The cruel treatment which they had received cried for vengeance, just as Abel’s blood cried to God from the ground. **Genesis 4:10.** They were not in heaven, but under the altar on which they had been slain. On this point Dr. Adam Clarke says: “The altar is upon earth, not in heaven.” See note under next question.

10. What was given these martyrs?

“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 [have fulfilled their course, R. V.]*.” **Verse 11.**

NOTE — These had been slain during the hundreds of years covered by the preceding seal. Their persecutors, most of them, at least, had died. And if they had at death passed to their punishment, as is by some supposed, why should the martyred ones still importune for their punishment? In this, as in other parts of the Bible, the figure of personification is used, in which inanimate objects are represented as alive and speaking, and things that are not as though they were. See **Judges 9:8–15; Hebrews 2:11; 4; Romans 4:17.** These martyrs had gone down as heretics under the darkness and superstition of the preceding seal, covered with ignominy and shame. Now, in the light of the Reformation, their true character appears, and they are seen to

have been righteous, and hence are given “white robes.” “The fine linen [white robes] is the righteousness of saints.” **Revelation 19:8.** Righteousness is ascribed to them; and when they have rested a little longer where they are,—under the altar,—till all others who are to fall for their faith have followed them, then together they will be raised to life and immortality.

11. What was first seen on the opening of the sixth seal.?

“And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was *a great earthquake.*” **Verse 12,** first part.

NOTE — This doubtless refers to the great earthquake of Nov. 1, 1755, commonly known as the Lisbon earthquake, the effects of which were felt over an area of 4,000,000 square miles: Lisbon, Portugal, a city containing 150,000 inhabitants was almost entirely destroyed. The shock of the earthquake, says Mr. Sears, in his “Wonders of the World,” page 200, “was instantly followed by the fall of every church and convent, almost all the large public buildings, and one fourth of the houses. In about two hours afterward, 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 holy day, when the churches and convents were full of people, very few of whom 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!’* Mothers forgot their children, and ran about loaded with crucified images. 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. . . . Ninety thousand persons are supposed to have been lost on that fatal day.”

12. What was to follow the great earthquake?

“And *the sun became black* as sackcloth of hair, and *the moon became as blood.*” **Same verse,** latter part.

NOTE — This refers to the dark day and night of May 19, 1780, when the darkness and gloom were such as to give the

general impression that the day of judgment was at hand. See readings on pages 311, 319.

AD 31	AD 100	AD 323	AD 538	AD 1798	AD 1633	AD 1844	THE END
Purity	Persecution	Apostasy	Dark Ages and Inquisition	Reformation	Advent Message	Silence in Heaven	
White Horse	Red Horse	Black Horse	Pale Horse	Souls Under The Altar	Signs of the End	Second Advent	

13. What other event is mentioned under this seal?

“And *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.” **Verse 13.**

NOTES — This was fulfilled in the wonderful meteoric shower of Nov. 13, 1833. Describing the scene in the vicinity of Niagara Falls, one writer says: No spectacle so terribly grand and sublime was ever before beheld by man as that of the firmament descending in fiery torrents over the dark and roaring cataract.” *“Our First century,” page 330: also The American Cyclopaedia, edition 1881, article “Meteor.”* See readings just referred to.

A contributor, writing for the *Journal of Commerce* of Nov. 14, 1833, in regard to the falling stars of Nov. 13, 1833, said: “Were I to hunt through nature for a simile, I could not find one so apt to illustrate the appearance of the heavens as that which St. John uses in the prophecy. The falling stars did not come as if from several trees shaken, but as from one; those which appeared in the east, fell toward the east; those which appeared in the west; fell toward the west; and those which appeared in the south, fell toward the south. And they fell not as the ripe fruit falls,—far from it,—but they flew, they were cast, like the unripe fruit which at first refuses to leave the branch; and when, under a violent pressure, it does break its hold, it 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 side of the tree.” See study “Signs of the Times, pg. 2.”

14. What is the next event mentioned in the prophecy?

“And *the heaven departed as a scroll* when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.” **Verse 14.**

NOTE — This event is still future, and will take place in connection with Christ’s second coming. We are now standing between the two events,—the last of the signs in the heavens, and the parting of the heavens and removal of earthly things out of their places. The great signs here mentioned which mark the approach of Christ’s second coming and the dissolution of all earthly things, are all in the past, and the world awaits the sound of the last trump as the closing scene in earth’s drama.

15. How will this great event affect the world?

“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?” **Verses 15–17.**

16. After the sealing work brought to view in Revelation 7, which takes place under the sixth seal, how is the seventh seal introduced?

“And when He had opened the seventh seal, *there was silence in heaven* about the space of half an hour.” **Revelation 8:1.**

NOTE — The sixth seal introduced the events connected with the second coming of Christ. The seventh seal most naturally, therefore, would refer to that event, or to some accompanying result of it. When Christ comes, all the holy angels will accompany Him (**Matthew 25:31**); and it follows that silence will necessarily, therefore, reign in heaven during their absence. A half-hour of prophetic time would be about seven days. The seven seals, therefore, bring us down to the second coming of Christ.

IT may be at morn, when the day is awaking,
When sunlight through darkness and shadow is breaking,
That Jesus will come in the fullness of glory

To receive from the world His own.
It may be at midday, it may be at twilight,
It may be, perchance, that the blackness of midnight
Will burst into light in the blaze of His glory,
When Jesus receives His own.
O joy! O delight! should we go without dying,
No sickness, no sadness, no dread, and no crying,
Caught up through the clouds with our Lord into glory,
When Jesus receives His own.

H. L. TURNER.