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The Metaphor of Beasts and Heads

Prophetic beasts come dramatically onto the scene in Daniel 7. They are called “**great** beasts” without explanation except for their surrealistic aggressive nature (7:3). Later, they are said to represent kingdoms (7:17). There, beasts symbolize four different empire realities that come in sequence.

Though these beasts relate directly to Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome; their leaders, kings (especially at the *time* the prophetic message applies), often personify the kingdoms. As an example, Nebuchadnezzar was symbolized by a lion and an eagle (Lion – Jeremiah 4:7; 49:19, 22; 50:17, 44. Eagle – Jeremiah 49:22, Lamentations 4:19, Ezekiel 17:3, Habakkuk 1:8). Therefore, we see a:

- Primary application: Beast – kingdom
- Secondary application: King – kingdom – personification of that kingdom

There are two unique kingdom leaders that epitomize this second consideration.

A mystical beast is **the dragon** (*drakon* – Gr.). This is presented frequently by John in his Revelation (12:4, 7, 9, 13, 16-17; 13:2, 4, 11; 16:13; 20:2) where he identifies it as a specific being – that old serpent, who is called the devil and Satan (12:9). Thus, a single kingdom beast equals a single being. Here, the designation, as in Daniel, is prophecy specific. The context tells us how it is to be understood. The dragon is the leader of the kingdom of Satan.

Another “beast” representing a single person is **the Lamb**. Jesus was “like a lamb to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53:7); the “Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world” (Revelation 13:8 – NIV). The imagery of Christ is beautifully embellished by one of the 24 elders: “Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda[h], the Root of David, hath prevailed ... And I beheld ... a Lamb as it had been slain” (Revelation 5:5-6). Again, the context reveals the meaning we are to derive from the prophecy. This “Lamb” refers to the “Lamb of God” (John 1:36), head of the kingdom of God.

Another disposition of a beast’s prophetic relevance is when the *animal* personifies specific groups of people in kingdoms. In Matthew 25:32 a judgment scene is associated with the second coming of Jesus. “When the Son of man shall come ... before Him shall be gathered all nations.” “Nations” (KJV) is *ethnos* (Gr.) and refers to “all peoples.”¹ Then King Jesus (He’s on a throne of glory) separates the *sheep* from the *goats*. The sheep are those who will inherit the kingdom of the Father (Matthew 25:34) and the goats are destined to the “everlasting fire” (Matthew 25:41), which is the end of the kingdom of evil (“the devil and his angels” – 25:41).

Thus, beasts can represent:

1. Kingdoms – primary application
2. Kingdom heads – secondary application
3. Kingdom people/members – tertiary application

The latter is seen in Daniel 8 where there is conflict between a ram (God’s kingdom – headed by Christ) and the he-goat (Satan’s kingdom – headed by the devil). The powers exhibited by these kingdoms are horns representing the groups of people that provide leadership and power to each beast/kingdom.

¹ Brown, Collin; *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 2, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI), 1986, p. 793.

As prophetic beasts are studied, which of the three applications above that should be used will be found in its context. In Revelation 13, the sea-beast provides a beautiful example. Throughout the Old Testament a sea monster is used to represent an evil kingdom (Job 40, 41; Psalm 74:13-14; Isaiah 27:1, 51:9). This beast (*therion* – fierce creature) imagery appeals to this horrible creature slowly arising from the sea. It is a creative composite of the four beasts of Daniel 7:1-7. There, they also come out of the sea, with specific reference to heads and ten horns. The blasphemous mouth (Daniel 7:8) is tied to the blasphemous names on the heads of the Revelation 13 beast. In Daniel 7 the lion, bear, leopard and “terrifying beast” represent those four successive world empires (kingdoms); here, three are depicted in one beast. Its behavior represents the fourth.

- Leopard (beast in general) – swiftness in its work
 - Bear (feet) – power in its activity, capable of persecution
 - Lion (mouth) – strength of its jaws and power in its evil words
- } An end-time world controlling empire will avenge truth and righteousness

Daniel’s fourth beast was a horrific creature that represented Rome.

<u>Daniel 7</u>	<u>Revelation 13</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beast – terrible in nature <li style="padding-left: 20px;">One head <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Ten horns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beast – composite of leopard, bear, lion <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Seven heads <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Ten horns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little horn from head (blasphemous mouth) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acted like little horn (heads named blasphemy)

What regime or dynasty functions for a short time (42 months – 13:5) when Satan knows his time is short (12:12)? – a kingdom that he (the dragon) gives total authority to (over kingdoms, tongues and nations – 13:7). The ties to the blasphemous little horn, terrible fourth beast and a similar timing reference (time, times and dividing of time – 7:25) suggest that the sea-beast is also a Roman kingdom at the end of time.² Intriguingly, the combined qualities of Israel’s pagan oppressors (Hosea 13:7-8) were depicted as a lion, a leopard and a bear.

What could this end-time beast/kingdom be? Let’s look at the “heads” of the same beast before its horns were crowned.

The Heads of the Beast

At times it is helpful to work backwards in prophetic symbol study. The ten-horned beast of Revelation 17, that is tied to the woman named Babylon the Great, has seven heads. The angel said that this woman sat on seven hills. At the time of John, Rome was noted as the seven-hilled city. Vespasian, one of Nero’s generals, later became emperor of Rome (69–79 A.D. – He struck coins showing a woman seated on seven hills to represent that kingdom.³

It appears that the “mountain” reference is to alert the expositor that the woman is seated in Rome. Then the message was given that the “woman ... is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth” (Revelation 17:18). The literal city becomes a metaphor for the woman called Babylon, the apostate, the harlot! Babylon is called “that great city” (Revelation 14:8) and, historically, so is Rome.

² Thomas, Robert L.; *Revelation 1–7 – An Exegetical Commentary* (Moody Press, Chicago – 1992), p. 155.

³ Captain Smyth, *Roman Coins*, as quoted in: Jamieson, Fausset, Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, p. 310.

The angel told John that the seven heads on this beast were seven kings (17:9-10). This statement clearly shows that *during the life of this beast* kingdom there were or would be seven specific temporal leaders. They were sequential (five are fallen, one is and one is yet to come). The first would begin when the woman and the beast were associated.

With this “model” to draw on, we look to the seven heads of the sea-beast (Revelation 13:1-3). There, the imagery reveals the seven heads *to be present* when the beast appears. The leaders of the beast kingdom (*therion*) have all come onto the stage of history. It must be assumed that it is during the seventh’s reign that this chapter is choreographed.

<u>Kingdom</u>	<u>Heads (kings)</u>	
Rome related (Vatican specific) (blasphemous)	Pope (king) (antichrist specific) (deity claims)	} Dragon gives it power and authority (over world)

As Christ is head of the body (the church – Colossians 1:18), so the head of the beast would be its leader or temporal head. The picture of a kingdom head is reinforced with the notion that one of the heads was “as it were, wounded to death” (Revelation 13:2). Later in the chapter it states that that “beast, which had the wound ... did live” (13:14). A distinction between the heads (seven in number) and a single beast with a wounded head strongly supports a kingdom with a defined sequence or group of leaders.

The one head that was wounded “to death” has been applied to three papal events (the papacy was the **Rome Empire** that Protestants protested against because of “blasphemy”):

1. Pope Pius VI’s arrest was on February 20, 1798 and, later, death in Valence, France. A new pope was shortly thereafter appointed (*wound was healed*).
2. September 20, 1870, Italian troops entered Rome. The next month the citizens of Rome in a plebiscite voted for union with Italy. Pope Pius IX was helpless. The Papal States and the city of Rome were no longer Vatican land/“states.” The church/state was reestablished in 1929 (*wound was healed*).
3. May 13, 1991, Mehmet Ali Agca, shot Pope John Paul II. He survived to visit his would be assassin. His power grew (*wound was healed*).

Any one of these papal “wounds” could persuasively be applied to the “wounded head” that was “healed.” A single “person,” head or leader of a “kingdom”/“state” is appealed to. Yet, the beast is personified (speaks blasphemy, makes war, is worshiped by world, has power over life and death). In the prophetic envelope we see kingdom power, kingdom ruler power and subjects to that power. In every beast motif there is a unique “supporting power.” In every head attention is directed at a pivotal leader that will move the end-time forward.

Kingdom – nation (beast) – ecclesiastical body – political state	Beast – kingdom – nation – ecclesiastical body	
Leader – king/pope (heads of beast)	Head – leader } – king } – pope }	of beast power

Summary

“Beasts” in apocalyptic prophecy are metaphors for kingdom powers. They often control wide territories with a central enclave for its dominion power. Beasts/animals have loyal subjects and represent the extremes of moral authority. They are usually governed by charismatic or powerful leaders depicting sovereign control. Within this rich imagery, God manipulates the symbols to teach valuable insights, from His viewpoint, of each power. Thus, Jesus is a Lamb and a Lion. The antichrist is a composite beast of evil and a little horn of power that becomes great. Each story is a warning to be ready for dramatic and shocking events.

Since prophecy has its origins in God’s mind, He has original permission to make the images of beasts, horns, heads, eyes, water or mouths adaptive and germane. Within the context of each vision and audition, God informs us as to the interpretative use of each illustration. At times, multiple lessons are imbedded in a prophecy, but there is always a primary application.

Prophetic metaphors elevate the baseline of our understanding. They draw on deeper issues that God would appeal to in the realm of spiritual discernment. The beasts and heads of real or surreal creatures reveal snippets of future history in the final war between good and evil. Their outcome: fire for the dragon and seven-headed beast; Marriage Supper of the Lamb for the saved.

“East” – A Prophetic Symbol

Introductory Thoughts

The Hebrew word for “east” is *kedem* or *qedem*.

- Anciently, it meant “in front of.”
 - When facing the rising sun, it was:
 - “In front of,” meaning the direction of “east” [right was south; left, north; and behind, west].
- This was tied to the rising sun.
 - It symbolized deliverance from darkness
 - A new beginning

As God chose to *decree* a seven-day clock, representing a week, He **adopted** *kedem* as a prophetic symbol for:

1. Life
2. Light
3. Newness
4. Deliverance (later)

“And the Lord God planted a garden **eastward** in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had **formed**” (Genesis 2:8).

- The Septuagint translates this place as “Paradise in Eden.”
- What it is “east of” is not defined in this pre-flood world.
 - But that Garden was “eastward” (*miqqedem*), and this direction is noted!
 - Then comes another **east** reference related to one of the four Garden rivers:

“And the name of the third river [is] Hiddekel: that [is] it which goeth **toward the east** of Assyria. And the fourth river [is] Euphrates” (Genesis 2:14).

- God chose to introduce directional messages related to:
 - The Garden – where life was given to man
 - The River – that brought it water to the east
 - Why did He describe this?
 - We can capture more insight through noting its *continued* importance.

Adam and Eve were placed “**east**” of the Garden when driven from that “home” (Genesis 3:24).

On the Day of Atonement the blood was taken into the Most Holy Place first on behalf of Aaron himself as the High Priest, then for the people (Leviticus 16:11-15).

- This blood was sprinkled on the **east side** of the mercy seat
- And before the ark/mercy seat on the **east side**
- This signified the cleansing and deliverance from sin that the Messiah would bring.
- Immediately – east part of mercy seat

- Future – east of the ark towards the rising sun

The Tribe of Judah was encamped to the **east** of the tabernacle.

- It was through them that the Messiah or Deliverer would come (Isaiah 11:1).
- Jesse, David's father, was of the lineage of Judah.
- The “standard” or symbol of the Tribe of Judah (a Lion) was to be placed “**on the east side**” of the camp “toward the rising of the sun” (Numbers 2:3).

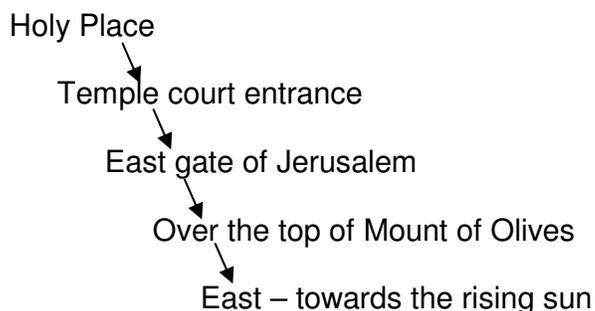
Many other references are made related to the “rising sun” (Numbers 34:15) and the east in the Old Testament.

- When *qedem* was used with the name of God, *elohiym*, intriguingly, the “in front of” or “east” suddenly meant “eternal God.”
- Malachi recorded the words of “*the Lord of host*”: “*But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings*” (Malachi 4:2).
- As east was simply viewed as “toward the rising sun”:
 - It also drew a higher and more sacred intimation.
 - Deliverance would arise with healing or restoration in its wings.
- In Revelation 7:2 an angel “*ascended from the east*,” ordering the four angels with the “winds of strife” to hold them:
 - Until that healing or restoration was complete, i.e.:
 - The sealing

The Tabernacle and later the Temple entrance faced the **east**.

- In Solomon's, and later, Herod's Temple, **a straight line** could be made from the Most Holy.

Through the:



The gate of Jerusalem had beautiful relief work, typifying the city of Shushan.

- The gate was called the “Gate Beautiful” (Acts 3:2, 10) or the “Gate of Susa” (history).
- It commemorated “Deliverance.”
 - By Cyrus (of Persia when Shushan would be its capital) from Babylon
 - By Esther (who lived in Shushan) from Haaman's deceptions

Thus, east, again, symbolized “deliverance.” The city of Shushan became a symbol for the City of Deliverance. That would later be seen as the “New Jerusalem” in Revelation.

- This gate was so sacred to the Jewish people in recognition of that city.
- They had special “keepers of the gate” (I Chronicles 31:14, Nehemiah 3:29) guarding it.

Christ, it is believed, entered Jerusalem at the onset of the Passion Week through that gate.

- He was to be the Deliverer.

The Fascinating Story of Ezekiel

God’s glory is about to depart from the Jewish temple – forever – (save for Christ’s actual presence at the first advent).

- Coals from the temple are scattered over the city (Ezekiel 10:2).
- This denotes either purification or, as here, final judgment (Revelation 8:5; cf. Deuteronomy 4:24).
- God’s glory journeys in a defined route as it departs:
 - From above the cherubim
 - To the Threshold of the temple
 - Moves to the “**east gate**” of the city
 - At this gate the wicked leaders of the city are judged.
 - God gives at this **east gate** His everlasting covenant promise (Ezekiel 11:16:20)
 - Restoration will come: “they shall be my people, and I will be their God” (vs 20).
- Glory moves to the Mount of Olives – “**east of the city**” (Ezekiel 11:22).
 - Now
 - Ezekiel’s vision of the departure of the Shekina stops.
 - God’s glory symbolically awaits “**in the east**” to return (which he implied in the covenant promise to His people and church).

The glory does return – in beautiful imagery of the second advent and restoration of man.

- Ezekiel 40–48
 - Concludes his prophetic book
 - *Yahweh* returns to the temple
 - Establishes His residence in the city
- This fulfillment vision begins on the 10th day of the first month.
 - That is the day the Passover Lamb is chosen (Exodus 12:3).
 - Ezekiel is taken to a high mountain
 - Where he sees a city to the south
 - A divine being with a measuring stick prepares to take him around the temple to measure it (Ezekiel 40–42)
 - They approach the temple through the “**east gate.**”

Then an awesome picture comes:

- From that eastern gate
- He sees “the glory of God” approaching **from the east.**
- The glory of God enters the temple “by way of the **eastern gate.**”

This is a beautiful depiction of the Latter Rain entering the hearts of God's people at the end of time.

Finally, on the Sabbath of the New Moon (Feast of Trumpets):

- The eastern gate which had been closed for six days
- Is to be opened

↓
The Prince will enter there (Ezekiel 46:1-2)

↓
To give inheritance (vss 16-18; 47:12; 48:29) to His people

The name of the city?

“The Lord is there” (Ezekiel 48:35).

Thus, **east**

- Is the direction of:
 - Hope
 - Restoration
 - Movement of God's glory
- *“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be”* (Matthew 24:27).
- In prophecy: east \cong deliverance.

“Rivers” – A Prophetic Symbol

Introduction

Many rivers are named or alluded to in Scripture.

- They usually refer to literal bodies of water.
- God chose, however, to use several rivers as prophetic symbols.

“Water” in prophecy has a distinct meaning:

- *“And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues”* (Revelation 17:15).
- “Waters,” whether rivers, seas, or as here, are generally accepted to represent people in some form.
- Other examples illustrate this.
- *“Woe to the multitude of many people, [which] make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, [that] make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but [God] shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind”* (Isaiah 17:12-13).
- *“Thus saith the LORD; Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood [conquering armies], and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein; the city, and them that dwell therein: then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl”* (Jeremiah 47:2).

The “River” Story: begins in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:10-14).

- There – four distinct rivers are named.
- Intriguingly, they are numbered.
- Their names and Sequence:
 1. Pison – encompassed “the whole land of Havilah.” That is where there is high quality gold plus bdellium and the onyx stone.
 2. Gihon – this encircles “the whole land of Ethiopia
 3. Hiddekel – goeth east of Assyria
 4. Euphrates – no information
- Note the considerable information regarding Pison and no comments on the Euphrates.

We don’t know the “fate” of Pison and Gihon.

- But intriguingly God chose to make the Hiddekel and Euphrates important rivers in prophecy.
- Since they represent people:
 1. The Euphrates symbolizes the people in support of Babylon. Since Babylon is a symbol of apostasy in prophecy, these people are apostates.

2. The Hiddekel (today called the Tigris River) “flowed” to the “east” (another prophetic symbol representing “deliverance”) and symbolize those who are “delivered” or “re-stored.”
 - They are righteous – holy – as will unfold shortly.

Four Key Prophetic Rivers Daniel and Revelation

Note how each one relates in some manner to the end of time.

“River of Life”

- Its origin was God’s throne “and the Lamb” (Revelation 22:1).
- It flowed down the middle of apparently a very wide street (Revelation 22:2).
- Its banks supported two trunks of the Tree of Life.

This river has no representation of people or nations that is understood.

- It is the Water of Life that has its source in the seat of the universe.
- It is a river of hope to the saints of *eternal life* as they look forward to its beauty.

The redeemed will drink of its water (*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, pp. 30-33).

- It will also water the heavenly Paradise of God (*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 63).
- The River of Life is a beautiful picture of what awaits the saints.

Beside that river, Jesus will conduct continuing education for the saints.

“Here in this world we are to learn what we must be in order to have a place in the heavenly courts. We are to learn the lessons that Christ desires to teach us, that we may be prepared to be taken to the higher school in the courts above, where the Saviour will lead us beside the river of life, explaining to us many things that here we could not comprehend. ... There we shall see the glory of God as we have never seen it here. We get but a glimpse of the glory now, because we do not follow on to know the Lord.” (*Heavenly Places*, p. 365).

“Some among the redeemed will have laid hold of Christ in the last hours of life, and in heaven instruction will be given to those who, when they died, did not understand perfectly the plan of salvation. Christ will lead the redeemed ones beside the river of life, and will open to them that which while on this earth they could not understand. – Undated manuscript 150.” (*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 262).

The three other prophetic rivers are tied to the time the end of the world comes.

- They represent the *people* in the last battle between right and wrong.
- The righteous – the wicked

An important river distinction is to be observed between the two great prophetic books, Daniel and Revelation:

<u>Daniel</u>	<u>Revelation</u>
Ulai River Hiddekel River	Euphrates River
(Euphrates not mentioned)	(Ulai and Hiddekel not mentioned)
The people of the east	The people supporting Babylon
Covenant fulfilled	Covenant rejected

“Ulai” and “Hiddekel”

The Ulai (called also Oubal, Ulaa, Eulaeus and Kerkhah today) flowed immediately to the north of Shushan – the ancient capital of Elam, later Persia (now Iran).

- In 640 B.C. Ashurbanipal, last king of Assyria, attacked Shushan (Susa).
- Its king, Te-umman with his army, were killed and dumped literally into the Ulai.
- Record of this was made by Ashurbanipal and now preserved in the Nineveh Gallery at the British Museum.
 - He noted the river ran red with blood.
 - Shushan was destroyed along with the palace.
- This is an important piece of history to know. When Daniel had his vision of the *ram*, *he-goat* and the *little horn*, he was at the palace in Shushan by the Ulai river. The city and palace **which were not existent at that time!** (They had been recently destroyed.)
 - That suddenly invites a symbolic meaning to all the “objects” in that vision.
 - Its **timing** fulfillment is in the explanation portion of Daniel 8 (vs 15 on).
- Daniel is physically in Babylon when he has this vision.
 - The Ulai River is in the *far east* from his location.
 - The Hiddekel River is in the *immediate east*.
 - They both prophetically represent **people** of the **east** (see article on the “East” for deeper explanation) at the time of the end – the “season” or “period” when the harvest comes (Matthew 24:32 – in prophecy – “summer”) – the “appointed time” of Daniel 8:19 and Habakkuk 2:2-3.

The Hiddekel (Tigris), also known anciently as the Idiglat [Tenny, Merrill; *Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 5, (Zondervan Publishing House)], along with the Euphrates, gave verdure to the great Mesopotamian plain.

- This supplied water for key cities like Ur of Chaldees, Babylon and Ninevah.
- Mesopotamia was also called the *Land of the Two Rivers*.
- The Hiddekel is nearly 1200 miles long.
- Its headwaters are in the vicinity of Mt. Ararat.

In prophecy we note two groups of end-time people.

- Revelation 7 describes the 144,000 – “the number of them that were sealed” (vs 4; 14:1-5).
- Revelation 7 also notes “a great multitude” “which no man could number” (vs 9; likely 19:6).
- Both groups go through the end of time tribulation.
- These two groups are represented by the two horns of Daniel 8’s ram.
 - The ram represents Jesus (cf. Genesis 22:13).
 - The horns were of different sizes, the larger coming up last.
 - This ties to the work of the smaller 144,000 who bring in the “great multitude” later.

The Ulai is small – some historical accounts suggest that it was a canal that passed Shushan. The Hiddekel was great.

- How can we be certain that there is this symbolic meaning of people in the east?
- This is one of the most important issues to discover in Daniel 8–12.

Rivers are noted four times in those chapters.

1. Daniel’s ram, he-goat and little horn vision (8:2-12) were by the Ulai (8:1-2).
2. In the verses that follow that vision, Jesus gave the 2300-year prophecy (8:14).
 - Daniel needed to know what that meant because he felt it was an omen [he would soon fall to the ground in weakness (8:18) and then faint (8:27)].
 - Jesus then requested of Gabriel that he explain things to Daniel to help him (8:16).
 - It is in *that* verse that it notes **His voice** came from **between** the banks of the Ulai.
 - He was above the people of this body of water.
 - He was over them – protecting them.
 - His words were for them.
 - This smaller body of people, the Ulai, was under Jesus’ watchful care.
3. The Hiddekel River is the **place** of a vision of Jesus (Daniel 10:4-8).
 - He is seen as priest, judge and king.
 - It is similar imagery as Revelation 1.
 - Daniel was by the “side [bank] of the great rivers” – Hiddekel is specifically mentioned.
 - He lifts up his eyes and sees Jesus in these three roles.
 - It doesn’t say, but likely, by the description, in front of him over the water.
 - He spoke – but we aren’t told what He said: “the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.”
 - Once again with prophetic imagery:
 - Jesus is with people that are His.

- He is functioning as their helper, pastor, guide – HOW DO WE KNOW?
 - In Revelation 1 His same imagery instructs us.
 - WHAT IS HE DOING?
 - Walking **among** the churches (candlesticks), nurturing them.
4. Finally, we see Jesus as a High Priest (clothed in linen) (Daniel 12:5-13).
- This is Day of Atonement imagery from His attire.
 - He is above the waters of “the river” (12:5) with two witnesses (one on either side) – a courtroom scene.
 - In an oath towards God, He promises an end to the great *conflict with sin* in the context of three timing messages.

This unnamed river is likely the Ulai – because it was next to Shushan.

- Shushan was the city of deliverance (Cyrus and Esther) – a symbol of the “New” Jerusalem.
- The 144,000 were a special body of messengers to Christ associated with that city.

Thus – rivers, people to the east (direction of deliverance where the sun of righteousness will arise (Malachi 4:2) is associated with the personal imagery of Jesus.

The Euphrates River

This is one of the most important rivers in the world.

- Turkey, Syria and Iraq compete for the use of its water for irrigation and hydroelectric power.
- It was the eastern boundary of the land God promised to Abraham (Genesis 15:18; Deuteronomy 1:7, 11:24; Joshua 1:4; II Samuel 8:3).

This river has apocalyptic significance. The dispensational world takes Biblical interpretation literally. Thus, there is an anticipation of prophetic meaning to **this area**.

- The Middle East likely will play a role – specifically the “glorious land” (Daniel 11:41) with apparently other countries being involved.
- But within prophecy, we rise to a deeper meaning of water and peoples.

With the Euphrates supplying water to ancient Babylon comes the metaphor of people supporting Babylon, symbolic of the city of apostasy and wickedness.

- This is why twice in Revelation an end-time cry is to “come out of Babylon” and be not “partakers of her sins” (Revelation 18:1-5; cf. 14:8).
- Jeremiah noted that the Euphrates was “towards the north,” “the north country” (much of the river was “north” to the people of Judah) (Jeremiah 46:2-10).
- Important is the key that all apostasy relates to action and behavior that supplants God.
- This is symbolized through Babylon, the Euphrates River and the “north.”

The north is represented as where God's throne is (Psalm 48:2)

- Lucifer (Satan) wanted to exalt his throne (Isaiah 14:13) to the "sides of the north."
- Why? "I will be like the most High on His throne."

The final apostate leader (head of Babylon and the Euphrates people) is called by Daniel as the "king of the north" (Daniel 11:40).

- Intriguingly, the prophecy goes on to note that "tidings out of the east" (**where deliverance comes from**) "and out of the north" (where God's throne is) "troubled him" (Daniel 11:44).
- **Why?** God's people, "they that understand," "shall **instruct** many" (Daniel 11:33a). The Loud Cry of the gospel to the world is being effective.
 - This represents the final work of that gospel – when the end comes (Matthew 24:14).
 - This is the work of the 144,000, the Ulai people.
 - That is why tidings out of the **east** trouble him.

In the sixth plague, the waters of the Euphrates are dried up.

- Literalists look to see some damming of the Euphrates, having it dry up. BUT:
- This plague is related to the very apocalyptic end (Revelation 9:13-14).
 - The apostate people who have been supporting Babylon – and the King of the North – cease their support.
 - The "waters are dried up."
 - This is when another third of mankind is destroyed – part of the great conflict of Armageddon.

Euphrates represents people who have supported wickedness.

God draws on things of familiarity to develop great teaching metaphors.

- Rivers are remarkable illustration tools for end-time people and associated events.
- In that context the stunning prophecies of Daniel 8–12 bring a revelation of God working with His people.
- It is a story of "ends," "finished" and "time of the end" expressions
- It is a collection of prophecies that develop the foundation for:
 - A covenant people becoming righteous and holy
 - The wicked in their last stand coming to an end

The grand finale of the *chazown* vision is:

- The deliverance of God's people (Daniel 12:1; cf. Revelation 11:11)
- Special resurrection (Daniel 12:1; cf. Revelation 1:7)
- The Ulai and Hiddekel people will be those "delivered."

The Seven Seals of Revelation

Commentary on Revelation 4-6:2

Chapter 13

Summary – Revelation 4 and 5

Timing Imagery

Debate continues within Protestants ranks between a Revelation 4 and 5 inauguration motif or a Day of Atonement pre-Advent judgment setting. The former draws on the time of His inauguration as Priest-King right after the ascension, the latter the period of 1844 on.

Those who support the pre-advent judgment draw parallels with Daniel 7; this is outlined in the following chart as one distinct view:

COMPARISONS OF DANIEL 7:9-14 WITH REV 4 AND 5

<u>The Scene</u>	<u>Daniel</u>	<u>Revelation</u>	
	Chapter 7 Verses	Chapter 4 Verses	Chapter 5 Verses
1. A heavenly scene	9-14	1-11	1-4
2. A throne(s) set up	9	2-6	1, 6-11
3. The Father sits on it	9	2, 3	1, 7
4. The glory of the throne	9, 10	3, 5, 6	
5. The glory of the Father	9	3	
6. Ten thousand times ten thousand angels	10		11
7. Jesus “came” to the Father	13		7
8. The book(s) were opened Seals were opened (began)	10		9
9. Christ receives a kingdom	14		9
11. The saved serve Him	14		10
12. Thrones are set as for a jury	9	10	8-14 ¹

A consensus does exist that the 4 and 5 imagery represents a heavenly sanctuary scene without inauguration imagery. The above parallels initially allude to a time when Jesus and the Father were in separate spaces (chapter 4; cf. Daniel 7:13). Then Jesus **comes** to the Father in chapter 5. It shows the Lamb initially in the middle of the throne coming before the Father on the throne.

These parallels are rejected by some, basing their logic on statements such as this from chapter 6: “It is significant that in coming to the fifth seal, martyrs cry out, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord,

¹ Berry, Marian; *Revelation Workbook*, (CHJ Publishing, Middleton, ID), p. 178.

holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood' (Rev 6:10). Clearly the judgment has not convened even after five of the seven seals are broken, and this agrees with the conclusion that Revelation 4–5 is not a judgment scene, for none of the seals are opened in Rev 4–5.² That ignores major issues regarding the judgment.

There are many different judgments. Which “judgment” does the author mean?

The voices of these martyrs cry out for *final* retributive judgment and for an end of persecution. Christ’s destructive judgments don’t begin until the first four Trumpets. The setting of chapters 4 and 5 is twofold – the point in time when the investigative judgment occurs **and** when the judgment of the living is about to commence.

Is Jesus–God functioning in the Holy Place or the Most Holy Place? The seven-candlestick imagery of chapters 4 and 5 suggests the Holy Place; the throne of God is the Most Holy Place (4:6; 5:1, 7). The sequence of praises at the end of chapter 5 takes us right to the post-millennial period. All these clues reveal a rich non-inaugural message.

Let us look at several issues independently and see if there are other hints that might clarify further what this setting shows.

Sanctuary–Throne Room Imagery

In looking at the noted Danielic information, there are important clues from the **sequence of events**. Chapter 7, verse 9 states that Daniel watched till the thrones (*korce* – plural) were set in place (*re mah*). There is a misapplication of words made in the KJV. It suggests that the thrones were “cast down,” implying those of previous kingdoms were now ending. That might be plausible in transitioning from one throne area to another, but the reference to *thrones* and the Ancient of Days *sitting* suggests, as seen in many other translations (NIV, RSV, ASV, etc.), that the thrones were “put in place.” This appears to be the most accurate. That would intimate the time the 24 elders took their position around the Father’s throne, noted in Revelation 4:4.

The Ancient of Days “took His seat” (NIV) – “did sit” (KJV). The Aramaic word for “sit” “took seat” is *ye tib* and ties to the Hebrew *yashab* (piel and qal). God the Father made some position and location change and *took a seat*. When this verb is used in relation to a throne (*kussi* – Hebrew or *korce* – Aramaic), it *yields* to the meaning of “ascending the throne” (e.g., I Kings 1:46).³

In Revelation 4 we are presented with the throne of God which emanates both the justice and mercy of His character through the *light* symbols. This, coupled with lightning and thunder, presents judgment-time imagery. Jesus is *not* present in the vision. The linguistic expressions present a strong judgmental motif. In Revelation 4 John was called into heaven through an open door by the “voice” of Jesus – but He was not “seen.” Daniel 7, where God moves to a throne, ascending and sitting with books open, parallels the same imagery. At first Jesus is not present! Then He comes to the Ancient of Days.

Revelation 4:2 has an interesting comment regarding the throne and the *unseen* God. The throne “was set” and one sat on the throne. The Greek word for “was set” is *keimai* – put in place, set down in its appointed place. God sat (*kathemai* or *kathemenos* – was sitting) on that throne. This was a mark of honor and authority and could reflect solely His position of sovereignty. But – *the throne* was just positioned, as was shown in Daniel 7:9, giving the appearance of the onset or transition into a new heavenly scene.

Thomas notes the “combination of *kathemenos* (‘sitting’) with *epi* (‘upon’) frequently designates God as reigning in Revelation.”⁴

² Gulley, Norman R.; *Revelation 4 and 5 Judgment or Inauguration*, JATS 8/1-2 (1997), p. 63.

³ Harris, Archer, Waltke, *Theological Workbook of the Old Testament* (Moody Press; Chicago, IL), 1980, p. 411.

⁴ Thomas, *Op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 340.

This ties to Ezekiel 1, 9 and 10 where the prophet saw God's throne coming from the north to a new location. The imagery that is initially noted in Ezekiel, Daniel 7 and Revelation 4, again, is of God, without Christ, in a throne room–sanctuary setting.

Before that particular point in time, God and the Son were on the throne together. "I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus' countenance and admired His lovely person. 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.' ...

"I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the Holy of Holies within the veil, and sit down."⁵ This description is *exactly* what is noted in Daniel 7 and Revelation 4. This is the time when the Father has changed position and gone to the Most Holy compartment.

Expositor White notes that the candlesticks described in verse 5 were in the Holy Place in heaven.⁶ Yet it says that the seven blazing lamps were "before the throne." This is either literal, which would place the throne in the Holy Place *before* Daniel or Ezekiel's positional change – or it is figurative, suggesting simply somewhere before it. We have a similar description in 8:3. The golden altar was "before the throne," reflecting the same linguistics. When E.G. White describes both verses she alludes to the compartment location of the candlesticks *and* golden altar in the Holy Place and does not address the throne. Since it is a picture of God *alone* (Jesus appears later), this whole setting reflects the two *separated* compartments of the heavenly sanctuary.

Jesus appears in this Revelation 4–6 scene visually as the Lamb – standing in the midst of the throne and *called* the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. There He represents the full power of the trinity – but is seen as a Lamb. Judgment is portrayed in the "Lion" name with the ten horns. The Latter Rain is depicted in the seven eyes of the Spirit. Yet, the Lamb is bleeding. Thus, Jesus is seen as both Judge and still the Advocate.

"Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and most of those who were bowed down arose with Him.... Then a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father."⁷

Now the two are in the Holiest. This takes us back to Daniel 7, verse 13 and then 14.

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed." Daniel 7:13-14 (KJV).

Before Jesus receives His kingdom, He is "before" the Father as High Priest – our Intercessor and judge. Between chapters 4 and 5 we see a great transition in the throne room–sanctuary scene. This initially portrays the 1844 setting when the investigative judgment begins. Then the scroll scene, with the Seals being broken, moves fast forward in time to another scene when the judgment of the living begins as earth's final events begin to unfold.

"It was the Lion of the tribe of Judah who unsealed the book and gave to John the revelation of what should be in the last days."⁸

"The Saviour 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

⁵ White, Ellen G.; *Early Writings*, pp. 54-55.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁷ White, Ellen G.; *Early Writings*, p. 55.

⁸ White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 115.

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. 'He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.' Matthew 24:31."⁹

"The fifth chapter of Revelation needs to be closely studied. It is of great importance to those who shall act a part in the work of God for these *last days*. There are some who are deceived. They do not realize what is coming on the earth. Those who have permitted their minds to become beclouded in regard to what constitutes sin are fearfully deceived. Unless they make a decided change they will be found wanting *when* God pronounces judgment upon the children of men. They have transgressed the law and broken the everlasting covenant, and they will receive according to their works."¹⁰

The evidence is strongly against any inaugural scene. The Spirit, represented by the seven eyes, depicting its *full expression* on the Lamb, was sent out (*apostello*) to the earth. This, it might be argued, represents the Pentecostal experience. Against that, however, is the movement of thrones, God being seated, horns of the Lamb, meaning and timing of the scroll plus the "seven" eyes brings imagery of the greatest expression of the Holy Spirit – that was not at Pentecost but when the Latter Rain will be poured out.

There is no inaugural imagery in the heavenly choirs noted. They represent sequential time periods *and* messages – and include both God the Father and the Son. This is preparation time for the *final events* of earth's history. The breaking of the Seals will confirm that. Finally, E. G. White made it clear that the 5th chapter represents *last-day*-related issues.¹¹

⁹ White, Ellen G.; *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 589.

¹⁰ White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 267 (emphasis supplied).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

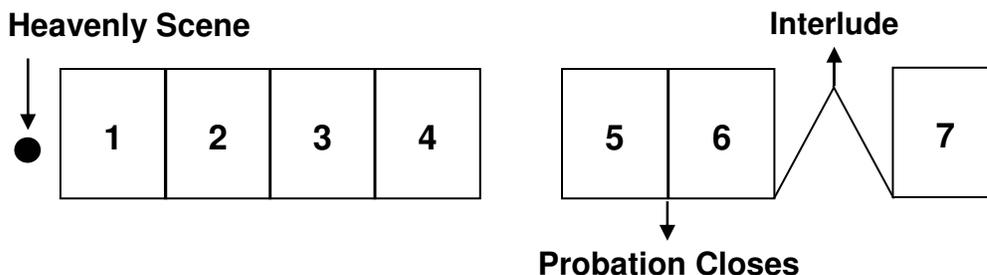
Chapter 14

The Seven Seals and Prophecy

(CHAPTER 6)

INTRODUCTION

The seven Seals are divided into three segments consisting of the first four, then two and finally the last. This is how the Trumpets (chapters 8–9) and the Bowls (chapter 16) are also presented.



The first group introduces the *major players* in the *final* battle between good and evil – Jesus and His people – Satan and his. The second set addresses *specific* end-time *issues* and *events*. The third division or seventh Seal relates to events surrounding the coming of Jesus. This 4–2–1 setting covers the final period of earth’s history – the “appointed time” of Daniel 8:19.

Though a preterist and historical application can be made for these Seals, they are incomplete and serve only as a general pattern to the greater eschatological application. In dramatic symbolism the finale of God’s work here on earth is described. We can see God finalizing who will comprise His kingdom through His remnant people and His church, in the first Seal. They go out to conquer for Him. The final hours of the wicked are also portrayed. The Seals develop an important framework for the rest of the book.

Who are those major players?

1. God’s purified people – the Philadelphia church
2. The martyrs – the Smyrna church
3. The papacy – the Thyatira church, with the remaining four representing apostate Protestantism
4. The great multitude who will be called out of Babylon – Seal number three

“There is language within the Seals which indicates that the Seals do progress in a chronological order with respect to themselves. First of all, they are designated by number – i.e., they are referred to as the ‘first’ Seal, the ‘second’ Seal, etc. This stands in contrast to the Seven Churches, for example, where no specific designated order was specified or implied. There is also language within the content of the Seals which implies specific timing. The events of the Seals occur ‘when’ the Seal is broken, and not before. Finally, we see within the Seals, a spe-

cific escalation of events toward the end. The sixth Seal describes the Second Coming of Jesus, which obviously occurs after the events of the preceding Seals.

“The events are specifically directed from Heaven, but they take place on Earth. These events are orchestrated by God. A cherubim in Heaven sends out each of the horsemen. They are not under the *direction* of Satan, but of God. They describe circumstances that God creates. Each person will react to these circumstances according to their own free will. But we must keep in mind that these are events that are decreed by God and occur when the Lamb breaks each Seal. The events are decreed in Heaven, but occur on the earth.”¹⁵

God Remains in Sovereign Control

“One of the things that we very quickly notice about the Seven Seals is that each one has a very short description. The first four Seals are particularly brief – each consisting of only two or three verses. Many expositors have capitalized on this brevity to expound some very fantastic explanations. There is very little detail within the texts themselves to counter their imaginative claims. That is why it is so important to have a good understanding of the Introductory Sanctuary Scenes [chapters 4 and 5]. These scenes provide the chronological and conceptual background for the Seven Seals. They comprise the foundation upon which we can build a solid interpretation of the Seals themselves. They provide the detail that is missing from the descriptions of the Seals. Any interpretation of the Seal events that is inconsistent with the background provided by the Introductory Sanctuary Scenes should be rejected.”¹⁶

There is a chiasmic tie between Revelation 4–7 and 19. One is preparation for the end, the other completion. One involves a crown of victory, the other the crown of a king.

“In both scenes there is a picture of heaven opened (4:1; 19:11); God is seated on His throne (4:2, 9; 5:13; 19:4, 6); salvation, glory, honor, and power are ascribed to the Lord (5:1; 7:10, 12; 19:1); there is a noise of thunder (6:1; 19:60); God is Judge and avenger of the blood of His servants (6:10; 19:2); the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fall down in worship (4:10; 5:8, 14; 19:4); a great multitude arrayed in white stands before the throne (7:9, 13, 14; 19:6-8); a white horse goes forth in battle (6:2; 19:11); crowns are on the heads of the riders of the horses of white (6:2; 19:12); and there is a sharp sword for the smiting of the nations and the taking of peace from the earth (6:4; 19:15).

“If Rev. 4–7 pictures God as both Judge and warrior, Rev. 19:11 specifically mentions the fact that ‘He doth judge and make war.’ In Rev. 6:10 the question is raised, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?’ whereas in ch. 19:2 ‘He hath judged’ and ‘avenged the blood of His servants.’”¹⁷

Here begins fulfillment of the great passion of God’s people to have the end come. Here unfolds that reality – all in a short period of literal time.

Interpretation Viewpoint

There are two major ways that the Seals are viewed. One is through the eyes of literalism. The other views the messages and imagery as depicting significant incidents to guide God’s people through the final period of earth’s history.

Here are a few thoughts that imply a more *literal* understanding of the Seals: “It should be noted that although the form of John’s vision is related to Zechariah [6:1-15], the subject matter corresponds to the eschatological discourse of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. Luke records wars and tumults, nation rising against nation, great earthquakes, famines, pestilences, great signs from heaven, and persecution (Luke 21:9ff.; cf. Mark 13:7ff. and Matt 24:6ff). By combin-

¹⁵ Canter, Bryan; Revelation – A Study of the Eschatological Application of Prophecy – Part 3, “The Seven Seals” (Prophecy Research Initiative document – 2002), p. 51.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

¹⁷ Thiele, Edwin R.; *Outline Studies in Revelation* (Emmanuel Missionary College; Berrien Springs, MI), p. 10.

ing earthquakes and the cosmic disturbances, the seven woes of Luke are included within the six seals of Revelation. In Jewish thought the 'age to come' would be preceded by a period of unprecedented woe. 'These are the beginning of birth pains.'"¹⁸

Scholars draw such parallels from the Seals to Christ's end-time messages to His disciples as noted in this outline:

	<u>Mark 13</u>		<u>Revelation 6</u>
1. Wars	v. 7; Matt. 24:6	War	v. 2
2. International strife	v. 8; Matt. 24:7	Strife	v. 4
3. Earthquakes	v. 8; Matt. 24:7	Famine	v. 5, 6
4. Famines	v. 8; Matt. 24:7	Pestilence	v. 8
5. Persecution	v. 9, 11; Matt. 14:9	Persecutions	v. 9, 10
6. Preaching of Gospel	v. 10, 13; Matt. 24:14	Waiting	v. 11
7. Eclipses, falling stars	v. 24; Matt. 24:29	Eclipses,	v. 12
	Luke 21:25	Falling stars	v. 13
8. Fear for the coming Christ	v. 26; Matt. 24:30	Fear for the wrath of the Lamb	v. 1, 5-17

"This comparison shows that we must consider the successive seals in Rev. 6 as Christ's further unfolding of His earlier speech in which He had outlined what would happen to them during their mission in the world. This means that the seals forecast not only the end-time judgments but also the Messianic judgments during the entire church age. In Matt. 24 Jesus adopted Daniel's apocalyptic style of repetition and enlargement. Twice Jesus started His outline with His own generation and then went quickly forward in history until the end of the church era: see Matt. 24:1-14 and 24:15-31."¹⁹

"Ezek. 14:12-23 is also formative for this section (cf. Deut. 32:23-25).... [These] punishments come on nations in general when they are unfaithful to God. The trials there are listed respectively as lack of bread and 'famine' (14:13), 'wild beasts' (14:15), 'sword' (14:17), and 'death' (14:19). The point of Ezek. 14:21 is that *all* ... [Israel] will suffer persecution because of rampant idolatry (cf. 14:3-11). The purpose of the trials is to punish the majority of the nation because of its sin and simultaneously to purify the righteous remnant by testing their faith (cf. 14:14, 16, 18, 20, 22-23).

"The same dual purpose is likely in mind in Revelation 6, except now the church community is the focus of the judgments. The faithful will be purified, but those who compromise through idolatry and become disloyal to Christ will be judged by the same tribulations.

"The Ezekiel passage itself is further developing the idea of four judgments from Lev. 26:18-28, which may also be secondarily in John's mind. The Leviticus test also concerns woes that God will send on the Israelites if they commit idolatry....

"The promise interwoven in these warnings is that if Israel does repent of idolatry (cf. 26:1, 30-31), God will bless Israel again (cf. likewise Deut. 32:24-25). Thus, these are warning judgments inducing repentance and so renewing faith and only permanently punishing apostate Israelites.

¹⁸ Mounce, Robert H.; *The Book of Revelation, Revised* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI / Cambridge, UK), 1998, p. 140.

¹⁹ LaRondelle, Hans Th.D.; *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible*, (First Impressions, Sarasota, FL), pp. 120-121.

“If this background is in mind in Rev. 6:1-8, then the afflictions cited there not only purge and punish but also serve as warnings for people to repent....

“Therefore, these segments from Zechariah, Ezekiel, and Leviticus provide the composition paradigm for Rev. 6:1-8.”²⁰

This commentary will emphasize, not this literal approach which creates voids in understanding as will be noted, but will unfold special end-time sequential messages revealed within each Seal. The spiritual purpose behind them appears to be the greater objective for this prophecy. God is beginning to unfold *specific issues* so His people will understand the last steps of their final challenges immediately preceding the eschaton. This book will build on that understanding. Though some literal imagery is described, the spiritual battle is the overriding theme. It is a tribulation preparation message and parallels other events in Revelation.

Numerical Thought

In the fourth horse it notes that he was given power over a *fourth* part of the earth (6:8). As will be discovered, these horses represent people who *claim* to belong to God. The “one fourth” symbolism relates to God’s people and to His kingdom. Intriguingly, the Trumpets relate to thirds. In Revelation 16:19 we find that Satan’s kingdom has three parts. Thus, one fourth relates to God’s people and His kingdom and one third to Satan’s people and his kingdom.²¹ That would suggest that the fourth horse has power over God’s people for a period of time.

The Scroll the Seals Protect

“Before analyzing the amazing figures in these seals, we should recognize that a ‘seal’ (from the Greek word ‘sphragis’) which bound the scroll document, was used not only to keep it secret, but the ‘seals’ also suggest that God had already *certified the contents* as authentic and genuine. However, ‘no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon’ (Rev. 5:3). A sense of how serious it was to have the book opened can be gained by considering, not only why John ‘wept much’ (Rev. 5:4) at the prospect of an unopened book, but by the fact that it required the Lamb to have shed His own blood in order to be worthy enough to open it.

“Therefore, its *prewritten* contents are of enormous significance, not only for the human race, or even the celestial onlookers who ‘were filled with awe’ as it was unrolled (see 12MR 297), but for God Himself, whose character must be vindicated before His creatures in order to preserve the freedom and harmony of the universe throughout eternity.”²²

Timing of the Seals

The first Seal depicts a group of people who are pure, white and ready for the kingdom. They went out conquering and to conquer. The imagery portrays God’s messengers going out under the leadership of Christ to finish the work (11:3-6; cf. 10:11). Here, a crown of victory (it has been achieved) is given to the rider. In 19:11 Jesus, the Faithful and True, rides forth with a sword to execute the wrath judgment. It is the time during the final *1260-day period* noted in 11:3 when the work is finished.

In a brief commentary of the sealed book, E. G. White notes:

“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 au-

²⁰ Beale, G. K.; *The New International Greek Testament Commentary; The Book of Revelation* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999), p. 373.

²¹ Paulein, Jon; *Seven Churches and Heavenly Vision*, Tape 12, “Seven Seals and the Experience of the Church,” The Ambassador Group, 1996 – *The Bible Explorer Series*.

²² Wood, Robert, M.D.; *Revelation 6* (Prophecy Research Initiative document – 2002), p. 1.

thority, 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....

“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: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, Holy and true, doest Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them [They were pronounced pure and holy]; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled’ [Rev. 6:9-11]. *Here were scenes presented to John that were not in reality but that which would be in a period of time in the future.* [Rev. 8:1-4, quoted.]”²³

“Thy right hand, O God, shall dash in pieces Thine enemies.” Revelation 6 and 7 are full of meaning.

“When the Lamb takes the scroll from the hand of God in the heavenly sanctuary and breaks the first seal, we have the beginning of the final phase of the conflict between Christ and Satan. Christ’s kingdom will be established ... and ‘the gates of hell will not prevail against it’ (Matthew 16:18).”²⁴

As noted in the Summary of Revelation 4 and 5, this scene is not of the time when the judgment begins. It is at the *time* of the judgment when the cases of the *living* come up before God. Later, warnings that major retributive judgments will soon come, then with executive judgments be presented under the Trumpets.

“In these passages the events of the last days fall into three periods: (1) the period of false Christs, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and death, called ‘the beginning of birth pains’ (Matt 24:8); (2) the period of the Great Tribulation (Matt 24:21; NIV, ‘great distress’) and, (3) finally, the period ‘immediately after the distress of those days,’ when the sun, moon, and stars will be affected and Christ will return (Matt 24:29-30). This parallel to the unfolding of Revelation is too striking to be ignored.”²⁵

Through the sealed document God has proleptically judged the world. The world’s destiny is in the Lamb’s hands before it is unrolled. The opening of the Seals begins that process. When the scroll is finally opened, the judgment and character of God will be open to all, and when reviewed, will vindicated His conclusions.

The historical “literal” model gives us an incomplete illustration of the judgment and associated conflict. The eschatological rendering fills in exquisite details and ties more fully with the numerous end-time templates in this remarkable book.

²³ White, Ellen G.; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20, p. 197 (emphasis added).

²⁴ Shumate, Gordon; “Heaven and the Seven Seals,” *Revelation Chapters 4-8:5* (Prophecy Research Initiative document – 2002).

²⁵ Gaebelien, Frank E.; *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 12 (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI), 1984, p. 472.

Prototypical:	White horse	Apostolic establishment of early Christian church
	Red horse	Persecution
	Black horse	Apostate church
	Pale horse	Dark ages – persecution and death
	Martyrs	Long age of martyrs
	Earth and celestial signs	16th and 17th century signs
	Coming of Jesus	Consummation
Typical:	White horse	144,000, remnant, pure, loud cry
	Red horse	Persecution – Apostate Protestantism
	Black horse	Apostate Babylon – those awaiting the call to come out
	Pale horse	Death decrees – plans to annihilate Remnant – Roman Catholicism
	Martyrs	Martyrs – Little Time of Trouble
	Earth and celestial signs	Probation closed
	Coming of Jesus	Jesus comes

With the opening of the Seals, dramatic shifts in the imagery of God occur. From chapters 6-19 we find violence, devastation, wrath and calamities. Associated with this is a vast contrast between the loving Jesus in the Gospels and the Lamb with horns that heaven calls a Lion?

“The traditional imagery of apocalyptic terror is adopted and used by John, but like everything else in his revelation it is transformed within his Christological perspective. The imagery of the lion is still used, but the Messiah is the slain Lamb.

“Every event of apocalyptic violence in chapters 6–19 must be seen as *derived from* the scene of chapters 4–5. This means that *all* of [chapters] 6–19 transpires from the hand of the Lamb ... ‘all is situated in the cross of Jesus Christ ... these texts must not be read in themselves but only in relation to that love which sacrifices itself for those who hate it’ (Ellul, p. 123). The *Lamb* is the bloody garments (19:13) of the eschatological victory, but the blood is his own (1:5).”²⁶

In a summation sweep of this “catastrophic imagery,” we suddenly note that the “wrath of God” is not revenge but justice. There we find a remarkable expression of love in the Seals and Trumpets, for God mercifully warns dramatically, before opportunity ceases, that time is soon to end. Though John was told the Lion of the Tribe of Judah would open the book and loosen the scroll (5:5-7), the Lamb was personified in the task of breaking the Seals. Thus the Seals are seen still in the time of great mercy and advocacy.

²⁶ Boring, M. Eugene; *Interpretation – A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky), 1989, pp. 112, 118.

Chapter 15

The Conquering Horse

VERSE 1: “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.”

Verse 1 – “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals.”

John is permitted to see in real time the opening of each Seal. He is a witness to what is recorded.

“*Kai eidon* (‘And I looked’) marks a transition of the vision to another phase of revelation. Revelation 1 was preparation for John to receive information. Revelation 2 and 3 informed the seven churches – God’s people – of moral preparation for the hour of trial and the requirements to complete the covenant. Revelation 4 and 5 describe the throne room *from which all* of the dramatic events in the rest of the book would be directed. **Now the events begin.** John is drawn to the Lamb as He opens the first seal.

“*Eidon* (‘I looked’) specifies the role of the prophet: he is to be an eyewitness of this dramatization of future events. John’s role is explicit only one other time in the opening of the seals, in 6:12 where the combination *kai eidon hote enoixen* (‘and I looked when He opened’) is repeated. The special attention resulting from this combination should be noted. It comes here because this begins the whole seal opening process. In 6:12, it prefaces a description of the sixth seal and its far-reaching impact. As for introduction to the rest of the seals, *hote enoixen* (‘when He opened’) without *eidon* (‘I looked’) is used, except for the seventh seal, which substitutes *hotan* (‘whenever’) for *hote* (‘when’) (cf. 6:3, 5, 7, 9; 8:1). No explicit attention is given in the other cases to John’s personal observation of what transpires.”²⁷

The Seals held the scroll closed. This protected the it from a premature release of judgment information. But now, during warnings and invitations, Jesus begins to break each Seal. When all the seven Seals are broken, the scroll will then be opened.

Though Jesus is identified as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, by a heavenly being (5:5) who opens the seals, the portrayal given John is the visualization of a Lamb. The Lamb opens the Seals. This Lamb is still bleeding; thus, His intercessory blood is yet pleading for the saints. Man’s great Advocate opens each Seal – but functionally as a judge – the Lion.

Verse 1 – “and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.”

Contextually, this suggests that the voice of one of the living creatures sounded like thunder. The Greek expression of words in this phrase is confusing, as is the KJV. The NIV renders a very logical meaning: “I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven Seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, ‘Come!’”

“*Hos phone brontes* (‘as the voice of thunder [speaks]’) betokens a coming storm (cf. Rev. 14:2; 19:6). This is the only Seal accompanied by such a voice of thunder.”²⁸

The significance of the thunder and voices was previously discussed under Revelation 4:5. There is a great parallel drawn from the lightnings, thunder and voice at Sinai. “Voices” or

²⁷ Thomas, Robert L.; *Revelation 1-7 – An Exegetical Commentary* (Moody Press, Chicago), 1992, p. 333 (emphasis added).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 415.

“speaking” means a decree or declaration is made. Thunder coincides with some phase of God’s judgment. Lightning symbolizes the absolute authority and power of God. Here we have thunder and a voice. Judgment is beginning – it is being decreed. Since this is the only Seal with thunder, the first Seal is a timing marker for judgment. But, what kind?

In Christ’s trumpet-like voice in chapter 1 there was no thunder. It was a declaration that time had come to get God’s house and people in order – the great call of assembly of the church leaders to the “sanctuary.” In chapters 4 and 5 the thunder, voices and lightning declared that divine *judgment had begun*. This is related to the motif of Daniel 7 and brings to view the final judgment scenes when God begins to make up His kingdom. That work began with those who died. Here, at the opening of the first Seal when the voice and thunder are heard for the second time, another judgment is announced. This is urgent and end-time – it decreed that the *judgment of the living begins*. Thunder two has just sounded – there are five more to go (10:4). This judgment begins at the house of God (11:1-2) and “them that worship there.” That comes from Him who cried with a loud voice which sounded like a lion (10:3), Jesus, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. This relates to creature one of the four (Judah) who were around the throne.

Reinforcing the “judgment of the living” setting is the *interlude message* of the sealing of the 144,000 that is depicted in Revelation 7. That goes back and reviews and enhances issues just talked about that span from the white horse (pure people) till after Jesus’ coming. It also marks the onset of the Little Time of Trouble.

“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.”²⁹

The Seal was opened by the Lamb. The living creature’s words “and see” are an added phrase. But to whom is the Creature saying “Come?” Most commentators, however, feel that the call is for the rider and the horse to appear (John already being in a position to observe by prior invitation of Jesus).

A rider and horse are dispatched. The thunderous call is a metaphor for the Loud Cry call. The rider and horse deliver a crucial symbolic message: Come (*Erchou*) (erchamai – root) means “come forth.”

“The Greek word frequently denotes making a public appearance and is used with special reference to a divine epiphany, such as the coming of God to bring judgment or salvation. In Revelation it [frequently] refers to the coming of God or the Christ (1:4, 7, 8, 2:5, 16, 3:11, 4:8, 6:17, 22:7, 12, 14, 20).”³⁰

Here, there is a related meaning. As we shall see, the horse represents people – this first horse is God’s remnant. Thus, we have a dramatic picture of God’s people to “Come forth.” This occurs when the judgment of the living begins and is when they are going out with a loud (to be heard by all) message.

This exegetes back to Matthew 28 when Jesus said to the disciples: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19). In turn, Jesus said when the gospel would go to all the world, “then shall the end come” (24:14). “Come forth” – “Go ye” – ties to the final work of God’s people.

“Looking for other similar uses of the word in Revelation provides an interesting alternative answer. This same single-word imperative statement shows up at the end of Revelation in Chapter 22, verse 17. ‘The spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.’ [come for them and prepare to enjoy]

²⁹ White, Ellen G.; *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 101 (1915).

³⁰ Ford, J. Massingberde; *The Anchor Bible* (Doubleday, New York), 1975, p. 97.

“When the Spirit issues the invitation to ‘Come,’ what is His intent? When the bride says to ‘Come,’ what is implied? Those who hear this invitation and respond are told to also compel others to ‘Come.’ ... The entire Gospel is wrapped up in this invitation.... Thus we see that all of Heaven is focused on the life-and-death drama of salvation ...

“Ezekiel makes it clear that the four creatures are full of the spirit. ‘And each went straight forward; wherever the spirit was about to go, they would go, without turning as they went.’ (Eze. 1:12) Should we be surprised then, that the invitation John hears from them is exactly the same that the Spirit gives? Since they are filled with the Spirit, and are intimates of God and His Son, why should we not expect them to also issue this gospel invitation?

“With the opening of the first four seals, we hear the gospel invitation sounding from heaven with the power and authority of thunder.”³¹

“Which ‘beast’ extends the invitation here? since there are four of them. Again as we inspect the next seven verses we hear the ‘second, third’ and ‘fourth’ beasts all say ‘come and see’ in verses 3, 5 and 7. Therefore, this is the ‘first beast ... like a lion’ (Rev. 4:7) who extends the first invitation. Note that this same ‘beast’ is also likely called ‘one of the four beasts’ in Rev. 15:7. And, according to Jewish tradition, the figure of a lion was on the standard of the leading tribe of Judah as Israel encamped in the wilderness. Note that ‘Judah’ heads the list of the 144,000 (Rev. 7:4). Furthermore, ‘the face of a young lion’ was portrayed facing the ‘palm tree’ of victory in Ezek. 41:19.”³²

“[Judah] ... was associated with the symbol of a lion and was the first tribe to lead out when the Israelites moved between camps in the wilderness. One interesting parallel to this text is found in Revelation 10:3. This passage is part of the Interlude Scene for the Seven Trumpets. An angelic figure is seen in the vision. From the description, we can surmise that this angelic figure is Jesus. Look at the description of how Jesus speaks in this passage. Rev 10:3: and *he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices.*

“So we once again see an instance where a voice like thunder is associated with a lion roaring. This gives us more confidence that the first living creature is indeed the lion. It supports the conclusion that the living being issues the command as if he were speaking with God’s voice – i.e., God’s authority....

“This would be consistent with the conclusion that we came to earlier that the cherubim are ‘senior officials’ in God’s heavenly court, and that they pass on His instructions.”³³

As Judah was the lead tribe for ancient Israel, the 144,000 symbolize spiritual Israel, the lead “tribe” – Judah. The white horse takes on great symbolic significance.

“And under the control of God are the forces and powers of earth, ever guided and directed by unseen messengers from heaven. ‘As the wheel-like complications were under the guidance of the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, so the complicated play of human events is under divine control. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations, He that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of the earth.’ Ed., p. 178. ‘In the visions given to Isaiah, to Ezekiel, and to John, we see how closely Heaven is connected with the events taking place upon the earth, and how great is the care of God for those who are loyal to him. The world is not without a ruler. The program of coming events is in the hands of the Lord. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as the concerns of his church, in his own charge.... The tireless vigilance of the heavenly messengers, and their unceasing employment in their ministry in connection with the beings of earth, show us how God’s hand is guiding the wheel within a wheel.’ (5T, pp. 753, 754).

“The messengers sent are messengers of salvation and judgment. Co-operation means life and victory, resistance means defeat and death.”³⁴

³¹ Clover, David; *Revelation, Chapters 4:1-8:5* (Prophecy Research Initiative document – 2002), p. 5.

³² Wood, *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

³³ Canter, *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

The opening of the first Seal sets in motion events that will culminate human history.³⁵

Some expositors claim this first Seal began at Pentecost, starting successive ages in the history of the church. An argument against such reasoning was made by David S. Clark:

“There is no reason for assuming that these four seals or four horses are successive events to the extent of representing successive ages. It is not true to fact that conquest comes in one age, war in another, famine in another, and death in another. They all belong to the same age; they are parts of the same affair; they all go together, conquest, war, famine, death.”³⁶ (This comes from a literal interpretative section of this prophecy.)

“Ch. 6 may comprise the beginning of a holy, or rather eschatological, war, for it introduces the struggle between the two sovereignties, earth, i.e. the ungodly, and heaven, i.e. the godly; see vss. 14-15. Operations seem to be directed from the throne room itself. This is suggested 1) by the four commands, ‘Come forth,’ from the living creatures who are associated with the movements of the throne—chariot; vss. 1, 3, 5, 7; 2) by the four repetitions of *edothē*, ‘it was granted’ or ‘given,’ the impersonal passive frequently used euphemistically when God is the agent; vss. 2, 4, 8, 11; 7:2-3) by the phrase *ho kathēmenos*, ‘he who was seated upon it (the horse),’ rather than the usual Greek word for cavalier or rider, *hippeus*. This may have been done deliberately to associate the riders on the horses with ‘he who sat upon’ the throne. The same Greek participle with the definite article, *ho kathēmenos*, is used.... they are of such magnitude that they could not have been caused purely by human agency, and indeed are clearly eschatological.”³⁷

VERSE 2: “And I saw, and behold 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.”

Verse 2 – “And I saw, and behold a white horse:”

John witnesses the staging of the first Seal.

I saw	Lamb open Seal
I heard	Beast call on stage actors of the scene
I saw	Prophetic allegory portrayed

White Color

White stands for purity. It symbolizes the perfect righteousness of Christ. It also is a metaphor for victory³⁸ (Isaiah 1:18; Psalm 51:7; Revelation 7:14). When the saints wear white linen garments it is the righteousness they now possess (Revelation 19:8). White is also symbolic of holiness.

Here a horse is colored white. It isn’t changed to white; it *is* white – holy – it is part of its being. White among the Romans was not only the color of innocence and purity but also, as noted above, the color of victory. One can immediately discern, therefore, that this first Seal scene begins with the *triumph of righteousness*. This is end-time language. They were conquering and would continue to do so until victory was achieved.

In this passage as well as in the exegetic tie to Zechariah 1 and 6, the *focus* is more on the horses than the riders. The horses go forth to patrol or conquer.

Horse

³⁴ Thiele, *Op. cit.*, p. 121.

³⁵ Mounce, *Op. cit.*, p. 141.

³⁶ As quoted in Gregg, *Op. cit.*, pp. 102-104.

³⁷ Ford, *Op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.

³⁸ Thiele, *Op. cit.*, p. 122.

A horse is often used for a symbol of people in battle, This Seal is no exception. They represent God's remnant depicted as a holy people.

"I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of *horses* in Pharaoh's chariots.' *Song of Solomon 1:9*. 'That led *them* (the Israelites, God's people) through the deep, *a horse* in the wilderness, that they should not stumble?' *Isaiah 63:13*. 'Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats; for the Lord of hosts hath visited *His flock the house of Judah*, and *hath made them as His goodly horse in the battle.*' *Zechariah 10:3*.

"Following this concept we may see the horses of the first four seals as religious peoples and the riders as their leaders or guiding forces. Indeed they are horses in battle – the struggle between good and evil."³⁹

"In the context of last-day judgment prophecy, Joel also compares people to horses, Joel 2:1-4: 'Blow the trumpet in Jerusalem; shout a warning on my holy mountain. Let all the people who live in the land shake with fear, because the Lord's day of judging ... is coming; it is near. It will be a dark, gloomy day, cloudy and black. Like the light at sunrise, *a great and powerful army* [KJV = people] will spread over the mountains. There has never been anything like it before, and there will never be anything like it again ... In front of them a fire destroys; in back of them a flame burns. The land in front of them is like the garden of Eden; the land behind them is like an empty desert. Nothing will escape from them. They *look like horses, and they run like war horses.*"⁴⁰

The various hues on the four horses reveal the characters of the people they represent, the natures of those depicted at that point in time. Carrying this a step further:

"The '*white* stone' (Rev. 2:17) represents Christ's character which is freely offered. The promise is made to the 'few' in Sardis that 'they shall walk ... in *white*' and 'be clothed in *white* raiment.' (Rev. 3:4, 5) The members of Laodicea are urged to 'buy ... *white* raiment,' (Rev. 3:18) representing Christ's pure character. The 'four and twenty elders' were 'clothed in *white* ...' (Rev. 4:4) We are yet to study about the '*white* robes' of Rev. 6:11 which surely represents Christ's character. The members of a 'great multitude' depicted in Rev. 7:9 are 'clothed with *white* robes.' There are many other examples signifying the same thing, but probably the most outstanding example is in Rev. 19:11 where we see Jesus 'called Faithful and True' sitting upon a '*white* horse.'

"Therefore, with the understanding that the 'horse' represents 'people,' the 'white horse' must represent people who have accepted Christ's character and the Person in control is Christ Himself.

"According to our understanding the white horse represents the 144,000 clothed in the righteousness of Christ. They go out to do battle with Satan and his lies about God. Jesus gives the 144,000 the victory over sin in their lives."⁴¹

Verse 2 – “and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.”

Commentators debate as to who is on the horse. Who is leading God's victorious people? The imagery leads us directly to Revelation 19:11-13. There, a white horse is shown on which is Faithful and True" and "his name is The Word of God." There, Jesus is depicted as "he doth judge and make war" – He judges and executes judgments. This dual function of Christ points to this Seal as the beginning of the judgment (see under 6:1) and war. What war? Later we will show that this is when the early stages of Armageddon commence.

Some have questioned, How can the Lamb who opens the Seals be the one leading a remnant forward into battle? He is also the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

³⁹ Wade, Ted; *The Throne, the Lamb and the Hymns* (Prophecy Research Initiative document – 2002).

⁴⁰ Nicholas, C. L.; *The Bridegroom Is Coming*, p. 202.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

“The color white is associated with Christ throughout the book, as already noted (Johnson). Only Christ can ride a horse that is white, the color of righteousness (Mounce). The triumph of Christ before the beginning of woes is promised in Mark 13:10 (Beckwith).”⁴²

Some (there are many) see an antichrist or a demonic rider here on the horse. But would a cherubim that is before God the Father’s throne call forth a demonic power to lead *God’s people*? No! The context and the details make clear, it is the Messiah.

“That the rider is Christ (or his forces of the gospel) is supported by the following parallels: (1) It may be an allusion to Ps 45:3-5 (MT), where the rider is an Israelite king who defeats his enemies with arrows as he ‘rides on victoriously’ (Ps. 45:6 is understood by Heb 1:8 as a messianic prophecy). (2) In Rev 19:11-16 Christ who has diadems on his head, rides on a white horse and defeats his opponents. (3) Similarly, in 14:14 a scene of judgment is introduced by Christ, as ‘Son of Man,’ sitting on a ‘white cloud,’ wearing ‘a golden crown on his head,’ carrying a weapon in his hand and being commanded to do something by an angelic being. (4) Christ also ‘conquers’ elsewhere in the book (... 3:21; 5:5; 17:14). (5) Part of the Synoptic discourse tradition (Mark 13:10) places the universal preaching of the gospel before the beginning of some of the messianic woes and before the Son of man’s coming in judgment. (6) ‘White’ is used without exception elsewhere in Revelation (14 times) in a good sense in description associated with holiness of God, Christ, or the saints. (7) The first horseman is different from the others in a positive sense because there is no clear woe linked with him.”⁴³

Horsemen

“As is often the case (cf. Job 39:19-25; Ps. 76:5-6; Prov. 21:31), horses are connected with war and conquest, and *horsemen are associated with an omen of the end* (Moffatt).”⁴⁴

Conquering

Perhaps the most important clue to the nondescript rider is His going forth to conquer.

“This rider on the white horse goes out ‘conquering and to conquer.’ The word translated as ‘conquer’ here is the exact same word that is translated as ‘overcome,’ ‘prevail,’ or ‘gotten the victory’ approximately 30 times throughout the New Testament. This is the only case where it is translated as ‘conquer.’ It is the same word that is used in the Introductory Sanctuary Scene when one of the elders tells John ‘the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has *overcome* so as to open the book and its seven seals.’ – Rev 5:5. This ‘conquering’ is therefore more appropriately ‘overcoming’ and is consistent with the *stephanos* crown that is given to the rider. One more point – there is a repetition of the word in the Greek. *This construct conveys a very strong sense that the action will continue until it is complete.* This rider, therefore, goes out to overcome, and continues to overcome until his work is complete. Notice that the rider already had a bow but was given a crown.”⁴⁵

The motif states that Jesus is leading His remnant people onward to finish the work to help others overcome also. E. G. White does use the conquering expression often. To overcome, one must be victorious, with Christ’s help, in conquering sin. In this setting both applications are apropos.

“Although ... [she] says nothing specifically about the ‘white horse,’ she does paraphrase ‘conquering and to conquer’ some thirty-three times. For example: ‘After gaining one advantage, you must do battle again; you must go on conquering and to conquer, gathering fresh struggles’ (ST9-7-91). ‘Your leader goeth forth, conquering and to conquer. Never forget that you are fighting the battle of the Lord of hosts, in full view of the invisible world’ (RH 3-15-98).

⁴² Thomas, *Op. cit.*, p. 419.

⁴³ Beale, *Op. cit.*, p. 375.

⁴⁴ Thomas, *Op. cit.*, p. 417.

⁴⁵ Canter, *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

'Clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict.... she is to go forth into all the world, conquering and to conquer' (RH 7-1-15). 'In the power of Him who rides forth conquering and to conquer, weak, finite man may gain the victory' (SD 358)."⁴⁶

God's people, armed with His character, are going forward with the power of Jesus, with the crown of victory to help others conquer. They are moving onward in the great work of finishing the final spread of the gospel. That is end-time imagery, revealing the work of the final Loud Cry under the Latter Rain!

Now let us explore another remarkable symbol.

The Crown

This crown is a *stephanos*, a crown of victory. As the horse and rider go out, victory is assured. The crown is in the rider's hand. It was given to him. It would be a promise of hope.

The Bow

"This symbol is a little more ambiguous in the Bible. There are no other references to a bow anywhere in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, a bow generally represents military force or military might. Often, God would 'break the bow' of a nation, indicating that He would overthrow their military might. At other times, the bow would symbolize spiritual warfare. The bow seems to be an indiscriminate tool which can be used either for good or evil. Sometimes the symbol of a bow was associated with God's punishment of His own people for their persistent disobedience. At other times the symbol of a bow was associated with God's punishment of the nations who were oppressing the Israelites. Consider the following passage from Isaiah. In this passage, God is warning Judah that He will call a nation to subdue them and take them into captivity because they have refused to follow Him. In context, God does assure them that after this chastisement, He will restore a remnant and turn His anger toward the nations that oppress them.

"Isaiah 5:25-30; Jeremiah 6:22-30; Jeremiah 50:44-46; Jeremiah 4:27-31; Jeremiah 50:13-15, 29; Hebrew 3:1-19; Psalms 11:1-7 all contain one or more linguistic ties to the seals mentioning the bow....

"[Zechariah] ties in one additional idea that is significant... Remember that the two primary background passages that talk about the four colored horses came from Zechariah chapters 1 & 6. Zechariah provides the primary Old Testament background for the first four Seals. The whole book of Zechariah is filled with end time types and themes. The following passage appears in that context.

"But I will camp around My house because of an army, because of him who passes by and returns; and no oppressor will pass over them anymore, for now I have seen with My eyes. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; and the **bow** of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; and His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. As for you also, because of the blood of My covenant with you, I have set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to the stronghold, O prisoners who have the hope; this very day I am declaring that I will restore double to you. For I will bend Judah as My **bow**, I will fill the **bow** with Ephraim. And I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece; and I will make you like a warrior's sword. Then the LORD will appear over them, and His arrow will go forth like lightning; and the Lord GOD will blow the trumpet, and will march in the storm winds of the south. The LORD of hosts will defend them. And they will devour, and trample on the sling stones; and they will drink, and be boisterous as with wine; and they will be filled like a sacrifi-

⁴⁶ Wood, *Op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

cial basin, drenched like the corners of the altar. And the LORD their God will save them in that day as the flock of His people; for they are as the stones of a crown, sparkling in His land. For what comeliness and beauty will be theirs! Grain will make the young men flourish, and new wine the virgins. Ask rain from the LORD at the time of the spring [i.e. latter] rain – the LORD who makes the storm clouds; and He will give them showers of rain, vegetation in the field to each man.’ Zech 9:8-10:1.

“The first reference to a bow was to the bow of the wicked which was used against God’s people. The next reference to a bow is to the Lord’s bow. He says that Judah is His bow, and Ephraim is the arrow. This refers to the re-uniting of the two kingdoms of Israel – Judah is the southern kingdom, and the Northern kingdom is often referred to as Ephraim because Jero-boam was an Ephraimite. This reference indicates that all of spiritual Israel will be saved, and that God will work through them to accomplish their own deliverance. He will bend Judah as His bow and fill His bow with Ephraim, and will save them in that day as the flock of His people. The new point that we should notice here is in verse 10:1: ... a specific reference to the Latter Rain is introduced.⁴⁷

There are bows held by the enemies of God’s people. But here at the time of the latter rain the “Lord” is carrying this bow as He leads His purified people. This symbolism must relate to what they represent as they go forth to conquer. First, they characterize Jesus; secondly, what He is carrying – the bow – invites us to some remarkable imagery. The Greek word for “bow” is *taxon*, which simply means a bow. In the Septuagint this word refers to the bow of a warrior. The bow, the instrument drawn into a *curve*, has allusions to the sign of God’s *bow of promise*, the permanence of God’s covenant truth. The symbolism moves deeper. When a bow misses the mark, it is deceitful; when it hits the mark, it is *truth* in verity. It is guided by God (I Kings 22:34, II Kings 13-16).⁴⁸

Drawing all the illustrations together, this bow is God’s Spirit-filled truth. Its arrows will hit the mark because they represent God’s great redemptive covenant truth (carried forth by His people). A transforming promise is behind this beautiful illustration:

God’s people – The horses

Have a righteous character – white

Under the influence of Christ – rider

Victory is assured – *stephanos* crown

By the power of the Spirit and weapon of truth – bow

To go forth to conquer – to overcome Satan

They will hit the mark.

The first Seal begins the move to conquer, spiritually, the honest hearts by a message of truth. It will soon swell into a Loud Cry. This work is ongoing, as noted previously from the Greek words, while the other Seals are broken. The work of the remnant 144,000 is to subdue and prevail in this final activity.

Clover puts this Seal squarely at the end of time, strongly drawing away from the historicist view:

“So do I believe that the White Horse seen with the opening of the first seal is the early Christian Church? No. I believe we have correctly interpreted the White Horse, but that we have made the wrong application. After all, John was told that he was to be shown what must take place after *these things*. Pentecost, and the early spread of the Church, was behind him. It was history, not prophecy.

⁴⁷ Canter, *Op. cit.*, p 47-51.

⁴⁸ Harris, R. Laird, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. II, p. 819. Brown, Colin; General Editor; *New International Dictionary of New testament Theology*, vol. 1, p. 623.

“The events of Pentecost were truly remarkable. Never in the history of the world had the power of God so directly touched the lives of men. And the effect was dramatic. The convicting power of the Holy Spirit drove men to confront the truths from which they had been hiding, and to accept – or reject – the claim of Jesus on their lives. Miracles were performed that rivaled any that Jesus did. Prophecy ran rampant. Lives were changed forever as commitments were made.

“But let’s not lose sight of the fact that what happened at Jerusalem was only a small portrait of what is to happen again on a worldwide basis. What happened locally will happen globally. The ‘early rain’ must instruct us on what to expect when the ‘latter rain’ is poured out, and not this time on a small group only, but on *all people everywhere!* Joel records that:

“It will come about after this
That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind;
And your sons and daughters will prophesy,
Your old men will dream dreams,
Your young men will see visions.
Even on the male and female servants
I will pour out My spirit in those days.
I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth,
Blood, fire and columns of smoke.
The sun will be turned into darkness
And the Moon into blood
Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.
And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord
Will be delivered.’ (Joel 2:28-32)

“As the ‘latter rain’ experience will be worldwide in scope, I believe it to be a better match to the symbol of the White Horse than the ‘early rain.’

“It was with great interest that I came upon the following statements from the pen of Ellen White. On page 33 of *Early Writings* she wrote, ‘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.’ She was apparently asked about this statement, because she later issued a clarifying statement that is recorded on page 85 of the same work. ‘The commencement of the time of trouble,’ here mentioned does not refer to the time when the plagues shall begin to be poured out, but to a short period just before they are poured out, while Christ is in the sanctuary ... At that time ... trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check ...’ In this clarifying statement, Ellen White is saying that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that empowers the last-day church does not come at the commencement of the Great Time of Trouble, *but at the start of a little time of trouble* that will precede the Great Time of Trouble. This is one of Ellen White’s first references to the Early time of Trouble, and at its start the Holy Spirit will be poured out.

“Besides the fact that the empowering of the church by the Holy Spirit matches the symbolic picture given in Revelation, and beside the fact that the timing coincides with what Ellen White saw in vision, there are other logical reasons that support this prophetic application.

“1. The Holy Spirit is the one essential agent in the ripening of Earth’s crops. Both the Wheat and the Tares will ripen with exposure to His power.

“2. The events that follow will be seen to flow sequentially from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We will see the effect of that action in the seals that follow. One seal will be seen to reference persecution of the church on a global scale. This persecution will not rise up without an infusion of ‘primitive Godliness’ which only the Holy Spirit can give.

“3. This construction places the responsibility for the commencing of ‘end-time’ events squarely in the hands of God and Jesus. God is sovereign, and He alone decides when the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit will begin. But when it does, the world will never be the same again.

“4. The time in which the seals are removed is the time in which the 144,000 are selected and sealed. This would be impossible without the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁹

“In vision I saw two armies in terrible conflict. One army was led by banners bearing the world’s insignia; the other was led by the bloodstained banner of Prince Immanuel. Standard after standard was left to trail in the dust as company after company from the Lord’s army joined the foe and tribe after tribe from the ranks of the enemy united with the commandment-keeping people of God. An angel flying in the midst of heaven put the standard of Immanuel into many hands, while a mighty general cried out with a loud voice: ‘Come into line. Let those who are loyal to the commandments of God and the testimony of Christ now take their position. Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters. Let all who will come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.’”⁵⁰

“The rider on the horse held a bow. He was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest or conquering to conquer. ‘The aorist tense Christ is portrayed as the Conquering One. Being introduced, by the first living creature, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, He rides forth to direct the work of the priests of His kingdom on earth. The ‘called out ones’ will conquer, by the proclamation of the gospel, in the context of judgment. Those on earth who respond positively will be redeemed. Those who reject the invitation will be slated for final judgment.”⁵¹

“The Captain of our salvation was ordering the battle, and sending support to his soldiers. His power was mightily displayed, encouraging them to press the battle to the gates. He taught them terrible things in righteousness as He led them on step by step, conquering and to conquer.”⁵²

⁴⁹ Clover, *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁵⁰ White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 41.

⁵¹ Shumate, *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁵² White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 41.

WRATH OF GOD IN DANIEL 8:19 (*Zaam*)

“And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation [*zaam*]: for at the time appointed the end [shall be].” (Daniel 8:19).

Gabriel is trying to help Daniel understand the timing of a prophetic vision he just witnessed and the unique timing audition which followed. Within the above explanation is this important comment:

*“I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the **indignation**.”*

Daniel had just witnessed the torture of the Ram by the he-goat. He had also seen a little horn magnify himself against the Prince of heaven and His host.

Was this the “indignation” that Gabriel referred to?

Indignation – meaning:

The Hebrew word for *zaam* is used often in the Old Testament. It is usually translated “to be indignant” or “indignation” – with one exception (Hosea 7:16)⁵³ – It always refers to God’s anger or wrath against sin or apostasy.

Here in Daniel it refers to God’s wrath at “the last end” (*acharyth*), meaning future/latter part/or last days of a revealed sequence of events? What events?

1. End of the Ram story (8:7)
2. End of the little horn story (8:25)

Later, we will see similar messages with specific storyline “ends” [in actuality the same time]:

1. **End** of king of the north (11:45)
2. **End** to the vision – deliverance of God’s people and special resurrection (12:1-2)
3. **End** to persecution (12:7)

This Hebrew “end” (*acharyth*) concept is very useful:

It is the end of a story or series of events.

There are other ways within Daniel to define an “end” through timing clues – *time of the end*, *appointed time* and *specific time prophecies* in Daniel 8, 9 and 12 that have an ending.

Here “God’s wrath” is related to the end of the Ram – He-goat – Little Horn stories clue. From this we discover a link to Revelation.

⁵³ Lacocque, Andre; *The Book of Daniel*, p. 170.

Beast – Lamb Clues

Those who worship the beast and his image, and receive its mark on the forehead or hand will be forced to drink of the “wine of the wrath of God” (Revelation 14:9-10) from the “cup of His indignation.” Here, two words are used to describe God’s reaction to this sin/abomination.

1. Wrath/anger (*thymou*) (fury) (cf. Romans 2:8)
2. Indignation/wrath (*orges*) (vented response) (cf. Revelation 5:16-17; 14:10, 19; 15:1, 7; 16:1, 19; 19:15).
3. cf. Revelation 16:19, 19:15 – “the anger of the wrath of God”

In **Revelation 13:15-17**:

- The false prophet (earth beast)
- Forces all to accept the **mark** of the beast
- “Causeth that as many as do not worship the image of the beast be killed” (vs 15)
- “Causeth all to receive a mark” (vs 16)
 - “Causeth” (*poiese*) – implies a **decree** to do or be killed (Thomas, Robert L.; *Revelation 8-22 –An Exegetical Commentary* (Moody Press, Chicago), 1992, pp. 178-180).
 - Causes – decrees – violence
 - If doesn’t **worship** the beast or receive its **mark**.
- The decree comes from a supreme command.
- Toward:
 - “Small and great”
 - “Rich and poor”
 - “Free and slave” } Universal
- It alludes to an eventual world command.

In **Revelation 7**:

- Four winds are held till 144,000 voluntarily receive the **seal of God** [judgment in waiting]
- Here in Revelation 13, the **mark of the beast** is universally enforced – [judgment in action]
- Stunning!

In **Revelation 14**:

- Begins with a snapshot of the 144,000 – those with the Seal/Father’s name
- On Zion – in heaven enjoying rewards
 - **Then** – That’s the outcome of being voluntarily sealed.
- **Warning**: “Fear God ... worship him” (vs 7). Why?
- “If any man worship the beast or receive his mark” (vs 9) (the ultimate abomination)
 - The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God” (vs 10)

- From “cup of his indignation”

As in Daniel, the Ram and the He-goat were in competition; here in Revelation it is between the God and the beast.

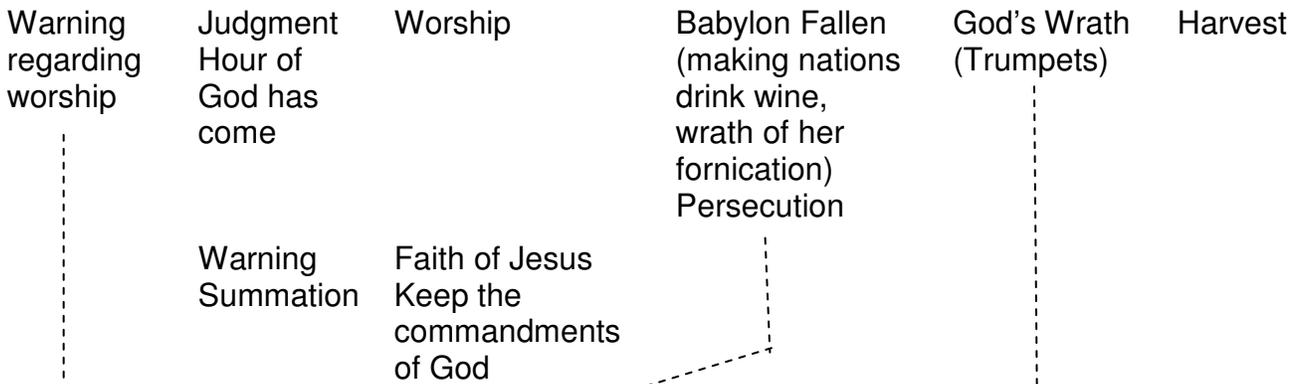
	<u>Beast</u>	<u>God</u>
Worship	Beast	God
Mark/Seal	Blasphemy	Father’s name
Sentence	Temporal death	Eternal death
Wrath	Of man	Of God
Loyalty	Forced	Invitational
Basis	Civil law	Heavenly law
Source	Cup abomination	Cup indignation

What is the whole issue over?

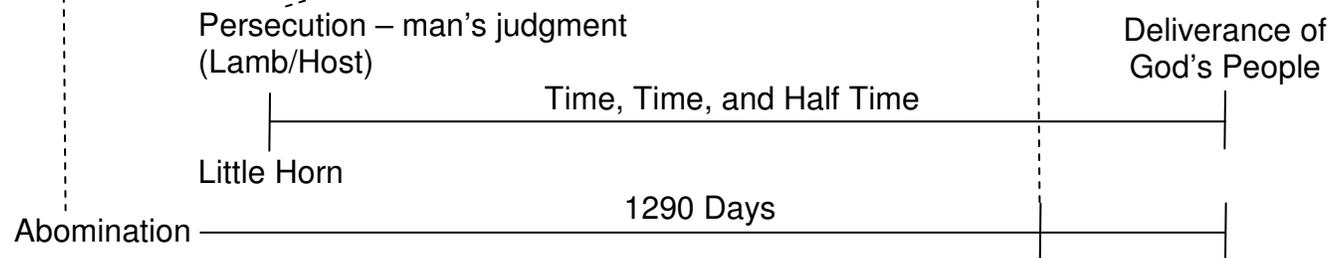
- Worship
 - “Mark” – worship beast (but claims to worship the resurrected Christ)
 - Calling card-day of worship
 - “Seal” – worship Creator (as the Re-Creator)
 - Calling card-day of worship
 - Worship either the God of life – if you worship me, I’ll reward you
 - **OR**
 - Worship the God of death – If you don’t worship me, I’ll kill you

When does God’s wrath begin?

Sequence – Revelation:



Sequence – Daniel:



What is God angry over?

- Transgression (*pesha*) that leads to desolation (8:13)
 - Desolation is God's judgment against the
 - Transgression – man's special sin
- That sin relates to the law and the Sabbath.
- Later, in Daniel, he calls it an "abomination."

Stunning – that's where Jesus asked us to go to learn more about the time of His second coming (Matthew 24:15).

- Revelation 14, Daniel 8, Matthew 24 – all speak of the same time.

This is a counterpart to Numbers 12:9, 22:27: "The anger of the Lord." The visions/auditions of Daniel clearly refer to this **same** time. Revelation 14 ends with the harvest at Christ's coming. Daniel's visions end with the deliverance of God's people and special resurrection immediately preceding that harvest. This parallels the terrifying picture of God's future judgment (Psalm 75, Jeremiah 15).

Thus, *zaam*, in an explanation **to** Daniel, is a pivotal clue to the timing of this prophecy, the ram, he-goat and little horn will occur during a period called the "*appointed time*" that **ends** with the resurrection.

- It **is** eschatological and relates to the very end of time.
- It is Sabbath related.

Going Deeper

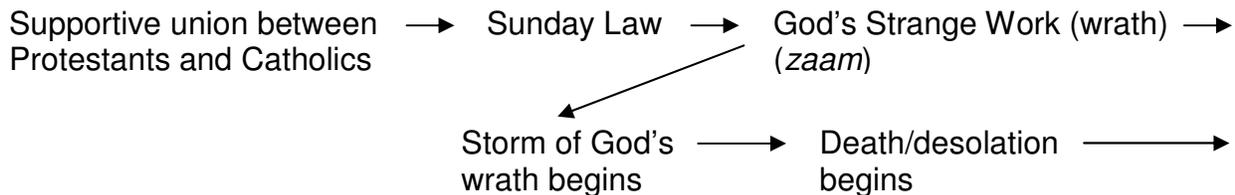
“Protestantism **shall give** the hand of fellowship to the Roman power. **Then** there will be a law against the Sabbath of God's creation, and **then** it is that God will do His ‘strange work’ in the earth. – 7BC 910 (1886).” – *Last Day Events*, p. 130 (emphasis added).

- Notice the sequence:

Supportive union between Protestants and Catholics → Sunday Law → God's Strange Work (wrath) (this is the *zaam* of Daniel)

- Once it begins, it will progress through the time of earth's desolation. [“Abomination that leads to *desolation*” (Daniel 12:11); “Transgression of *desolation*” (Daniel 8:13); “Abomination that maketh desolate” (11:31)]

“The bolts of God's wrath are **soon to fall** [timing – future to 1892], and **when** He shall **begin** to punish [executive judgment] the transgressors, there will be **no period of respite** until the **end** [progression over time]. The storm of God's wrath is gathering [negative signs have started], and those only will stand who are sanctified through the truth in the love of God. They shall be hid with Christ in God **till** the **desolation** shall be overpast. He shall come forth to punish [desolation – ultimate end] the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity, and ‘the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.’” – *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 182-183 (emphasis added).



What does God's wrath initially do?

“The Lord does not delight in **vengeance**, though he **executes judgment** upon the transgressors of his law. He is **forced to do this, to preserve** the inhabitants of the earth from utter depravity and ruin. *In order to save some, he must cut off those who have become hardened in sin* [during death/desolation of the first four Trumpets, opportunity to repent is still open]. Says the prophet Isaiah: ‘The Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act.’ The **work of wrath and destruction** is indeed a strange, unwelcome work for Him who is infinite in love.” – *The Signs of the Times*, August 24, 1882.

“To our merciful God the act of **punishment** is a strange act. ‘As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the **death of the wicked.**’ Eze. 33:11.... Yet He will ‘by no means clear the guilty.’ ‘The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.’ Ex.

34:6, 7; Nahum 1:3. By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. The severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor may be judged by the Lord's reluctance to execute justice. The nation with which He bears long, and which He will not smite until it has filled up the measure of its iniquity in God's account, will finally drink the cup of wrath unmixed with mercy." – *The Faith I Live By*, p. 338.

At the "time of the end" – *eth qets* (Daniel 8:17) – during the "appointed time" (8:19) – *mowed* – in the "last days" (8:19) (*achariyth*):

- God's wrath (*zaam*) comes
 - The Sunday laws ("transgression" – *zaam*) – the abomination (God's reaction) – is the catalyst
 - Occurs after the fifth Seal when the saints cry out, "How long?" (Revelation 6:10)
 - That "How long?" parallels Gabriel's question to Jesus, "How long?" in 8:13. Gabriel answers part of his own question in 8:17 and 19.
- Just before probation closes
- During **the** "appointed time"

Wrath of God – Interesting Thoughts

[Emphasis of all references added]

Wrath Can't Come Until Work Finished in Most Holy Place

Then I saw that Jesus would not leave the most holy place until every case was decided either for salvation or destruction, and that the wrath of God could not come *until Jesus had finished* His work in the most holy place, laid off His priestly attire, and clothed Himself with the garments of vengeance.” – *Christian Experience and Teaching of Ellen G. White*, p. 100.

[The priest serves as a mediator during defense proceedings. This is called the Atonement process. He acts as an attorney on our behalf. At the same time, the sentencing phase moves forward on those whose cases *have* been decided. The seven Vials or Plagues represent the first phase of that judgment.]

“It was impossible for the plagues to be poured out while Jesus officiated in the sanctuary; but as His work there is finished, and *His intercession closes, there is nothing to stay the wrath of God* [judicial review of each case and the defense counsel's intense work to continue probation is time limited], and it breaks with fury upon the shelterless head of the guilty sinner, who has slighted salvation and hated reproof. In that fearful time, after the close of Jesus' mediation, the saints were living in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. Every case was decided, every jewel numbered. Jesus tarried a moment in the outer apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and the sins which had been confessed while He was in the most holy place were placed upon Satan, the originator of sin, who must suffer their punishment.” – *Early Writings*, pp. 280-281.

[The Priest – Jesus – personally took those sins while the court was in session. When it is closed, they were transferred to the originator of sin. Jesus is cleansed as well as the court. The record books will be destroyed later. God will give all the saved a chance to re-view His justice once more.]

“The nations are now getting angry, but when our High Priest has finished His work in the sanctuary, He will stand up, put on the garments of vengeance, and then the seven last plagues will be poured out.” – *Christian Experience and Teaching of Ellen G. White*, p. 100. [Angry nations will find full murderous expression at this time of the Plagues or Vials. That part is called Armageddon. The winds of strife are fully let loose.]

“Men are prone to abuse the long-suffering of God, and to presume on His forbearance. But there is a point in human iniquity when it is time for God to interfere; and terrible are the issues. ‘The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked’ (Nahum 1:3). The long-suffering of God is wonderful, because He puts *constraint on His own attributes*; but punishment is nonetheless certain. Every century of profligacy has treasured up wrath against the day of *wrath*; and *when the time comes*, and the iniquity is full, then God will do His *strange work*. It will be found a terrible thing to have worn out the divine patience; for the wrath of God will fall so signally and strongly that it is presented as being *unmixed with mercy*; and the very earth will be desolated. [This is the decreation of the earth. The righteous will be recreated; the wicked and their habitation,

decreated. Desolation – nothingness – is its descriptive end.] It is at the time of the national apostasy, when, acting on the policy of Satan, the rulers of the land will rank themselves on the side of the man of sin--it is then the measure of guilt is full; the national apostasy is the signal for national ruin.” – *Selected Messages*, bk 2, pp. 372-373.

Partial wrath had been occurring.

“Were all the sins, which have brought *the wrath of God upon cities and nations*, fully understood, their woes and calamities would be found to be the results of uncontrolled appetites and passions.” – *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 160-161 (1909).

“Fathers and mothers, watch unto prayer. Guard strictly against intemperance in every form. Teach your children the principles of true health reform. Teach them what things to avoid in order to preserve health. *Already the wrath of God has begun to be visited upon the children of disobedience.* What crimes, what sins, what iniquitous practices, are being revealed on every hand! As a people, we are to exercise great care in guarding our children against depraved associates.” – *Counsels on Health*, p. 134.

“Satan puts his interpretation upon events, and they think, as he would have them, that the calamities which fill the land are a result of Sundaybreaking. Thinking to appease the wrath of God these influential men make laws enforcing Sunday observance.—10MR 239 (1899).” – *Last Day Events*, p. 129.

[God’s wrath is to be understood. In this phrase it serves as a warning. Attorney Jesus still pleads your case. But proceedings are about to close.]

“A rainbow is represented in Heaven round about the throne, also above the head of Christ, as a symbol of God’s mercy encompassing the earth. When man, by his great wickedness, *provokes the wrath of God*, Christ, man’s intercessor, pleads for him, and points to the rainbow in the cloud, as evidence of God’s great mercy and compassion for erring man; also the rainbow above the throne and upon his head, emblematical of the glory and mercy from God resting there for the benefit of repentant man.” – *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 78.

“The blood, marking the door-posts of their houses, was the symbol of the blood of Christ which was to be efficacious for the believing sinner, in cleansing him from sin, and *sheltering him from the wrath of God* which was to come upon the impenitent and unbelieving world, as *the wrath of God fell upon the Egyptians*. But none could be benefited by this special provision made by God for the salvation of man unless they should perform the work the Lord left them to do. They had a part to act themselves, and by their acts to manifest their faith in the provision made for their salvation.” – *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 36.

“I was shown that a terrible condition of things exists in our world. The angel of mercy is folding her wings, ready to depart.... The law of God is made void. We see and hear of confusion and perplexity, want and famine, earthquakes and floods; terrible outrages will be committed by men; passion, not reason, bears sway. *The wrath of God is upon the inhabitants of the world*, who are fast becoming as corrupt as were the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Already fire and flood are destroying thousands of lives and the property

that has been selfishly accumulated by the oppression of the poor. The Lord is soon to cut short His work and put an end to sin. Oh, that the scenes which have come before me of the iniquities practiced in these last days, might make a deep impression on the minds of God's professing people." – *Maranatha*, p. 137.

Wrath Before Plagues

"All the judgments upon men, prior to the close of probation, have been mingled with mercy. The pleading blood of Christ has shielded the sinner from receiving the full measure of his guilt; but in the final judgment, wrath is poured out unmixed with mercy." – *The Great Controversy*, p. 628.

"There is an unerring register kept of all sins committed. All man's impiety, all his disobedience to Heaven's commands, are written in the books of heaven with unerring accuracy. The figures of guilt rapidly accumulate, yet the judgments of God are tempered with mercy, until the figures have reached their appointed limit. God bears long with the transgression of human beings, and continues through His appointed agencies to present the gospel message, until the set time has come. God bears with divine patience with the perversity of the wicked; but He declares that He will visit their transgressions with a rod. He will at last permit the destructive agencies of Satan to bear sway to destroy (MS 17, 1906)." – *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1171.

"The Lord will not suddenly cast off all transgressors, or destroy entire nations; but He will punish cities and places where men have given themselves up to the possession of Satanic agencies. Strictly will the cities of the nations be dealt with, and yet they will not be visited in the extreme of God's indignation, because some souls will yet break away from the delusions of the enemy, and will repent and be converted, while the mass will be treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.—Evangelism, p. 27. (1906)" – *Country Living*, p. 8.

"Some of these have been blessed with the light of truth, and yet they are rapidly drifting away from faith, trust, and confidence in God, and do not recognize his blessings; and, unless arrested in their mad course, they will be found in the dark, restless, turbulent waters of skepticism and infidelity. This will be the result of honoring themselves and of not making God first and best in everything. Some of these will be suddenly arrested by the chastisements of God, and they will be led through a series of affliction until they shall inquire for the old paths, zealously repent, and return to their first love. Through sorrow they may be led to place their feet in the way that is cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. They will no longer seek for a place where money and selfish interests are the only objects to be attained. All worldly success without God is dry and barren waste. They will value the working of the Spirit of God upon the heart more highly than they value gold and the praise of mortals. Their minds will become free from the influence of selfishness and skepticism, for there will be an amazing change in heart and character, in thought and feeling. The aspirations will be stirred toward that which is divine, and the effort of the life be to practice that which is holy." – *The Signs of the Times*, January 17, 1895.

God's Wrath in Seven Last Plagues

“Satan was trying his every art to hold them where they were, until the sealing was past, until the covering was drawn over God's people, and they left without a shelter from the burning wrath of God, in the seven last plagues. God has begun to draw this covering over His people, and it will soon be drawn over all who are to have a shelter in the day of slaughter. God will work in power for His people; and Satan will be permitted to work also.” – *Early Writings*, p. 44.

“I was then made capable of enduring the awful sight of the seven last plagues, the wrath of God. I saw that His anger was dreadful and terrible, and if He should stretch forth His hand, or lift it in anger, the inhabitants of the world would be as though they had never been, or would suffer from incurable sores and withering plagues that would come upon them, and they would find no deliverance, but be destroyed by them. Terror seized me, and I fell upon my face before the angel and begged of him to cause the sight to be removed, to hide it from me, for it was too dreadful. Then I realized, as never before, the importance of searching the Word of God carefully, to know how to escape the plagues which that Word declares shall come on all the ungodly who shall worship the beast and his image and receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands. It was a great wonder for me that any could transgress the law of God and tread down His holy Sabbath, when such awful threatenings and denunciations were against them.” – *Early Writings*, pp. 64-65.

Christ Experienced God's Wrath

“Man has not been made a sin-bearer, and he will never know the horror of the curse of sin which the Saviour bore. No sorrow can bear any comparison with the sorrow of Him upon whom the wrath of God fell with overwhelming force. Human nature can endure but a limited amount of test and trial. The finite can only endure the finite measure, and human nature succumbs; but the nature of Christ had a greater capacity for suffering.... The agony which Christ endured, broadens, deepens, and gives a more extended conception of the character of sin, and the character of the retribution which God will bring upon those who continue in sin. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ to the repenting, believing sinner.” – *Amazing Grace*, p. 168.

(Hebrews 5:8, 9; Isaiah 53:10). Sundering of the Divine Powers.—The Captain of our salvation was perfected through suffering. His soul was made an offering for sin. It was necessary for the awful darkness to gather about His soul because of the withdrawal of the Father's love and favor; for He was standing in the sinner's place, and this darkness every sinner must experience. The righteous One must suffer the condemnation and wrath of God, not in vindictiveness; for the heart of God yearned with greatest sorrow when His Son, the guiltless, was suffering the penalty of sin. This sundering of the divine powers will never again occur throughout the eternal ages (MS 93, 1899).” – *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 924.

Warnings Before Wrath

“The Lord, in his great mercy, does not bring judgments upon the earth without giving warning to its inhabitants by the mouth of his servants. Says the prophet Amos, ‘Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.’ [Amos 3:7.] When the iniquity of the antediluvians moved him to bring a flood of waters upon the earth, he first made known to them his purpose, that they might have opportunity to turn from their evil ways. For a hundred and twenty years was sounded in their ears the warning to repent, lest the wrath of God be manifested in their destruction. But the message seemed to them an idle tale, and they believed it not. From unbelief they proceeded to scorn and contempt, ridiculing the warning as highly improbable, and unworthy of their notice. Emboldened in their wickedness, they mocked the messenger of God, made light of his entreaties, and even accused him of presumption. How dare one man stand up against all the great men of the earth? If Noah's message were true, why did not all the world see it and believe it? One man's assertion against the wisdom of thousands! They would not credit the warning, nor would they seek shelter in the ark.” – *Spirit of Prophecy*, pp. 208-209.

“But not one is made to suffer the wrath of God until the truth has been brought home to his mind and conscience, and has been rejected. There are many who have never had an opportunity to hear the special truths for this time. The obligation of the fourth commandment has never been set before them in its true light. He who reads every heart, and tries every motive, will leave none who desire a knowledge of the truth, to be deceived as to the issues of the controversy. The decree is not to be urged upon the people blindly. Every one is to have sufficient light to make his decision intelligently.” – *The Great Controversy*, p. 605.

“Time will last a little longer until the inhabitants of the earth have filled up the cup of their iniquity, and **then the wrath of God, which has so long slumbered, will awake**, and this land of light will drink the cup of His unmingled wrath.—1T 363 (1863).” – *Last Day Events*, p. 41.

“God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God” (Romans 5:8-9 – RSV).

Wrath Seen in Sacred History

“We are not ignorant of the fall of Sodom because of the corruption of its inhabitants. The prophet has here [Ezekiel 16:49] specified the particular evils which led to dissolute morals. We see the very sins now existing in the world which were in Sodom and which brought upon her the wrath of God, even to her utter destruction.—HR, July, 1873. (4BC 1161.)” – *Mind, Character, and Personality*, p. 232.

The people will be eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage, until the wrath of God shall be poured out **without mixture of mercy**. The world will be rocked to sleep in the cradle of carnal security.... The multitudes are striving to forget

God, and they eagerly accept fables, that they may pursue the path of self-indulgence undisturbed (RH Oct. 26, 1886). {5BC 1122.4} **[implication that wrath could come with mercy]**

Righteous saints buffer God's wrath.

“Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.’ The people could see the white salt, glistening in the pathway, where it had been cast out because it had lost its savor and was therefore useless. Jesus used salt as an illustration of the Christian's life and teachings upon the world. Were it not for the few righteous who inhabit the earth, the wrath of God would not be delayed a moment from punishing the wicked. But the prayers and good works of the people of God preserve the world; they are the savor of life. But if Christians are only so in name, if they have not virtuous characters and godly lives, they are like the salt that has lost its savor. Their influence upon the world is bad; they are worse than unbelievers.” – *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 214.



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