

THE SEVEN SEALS

REVELATION 6:1–8:5

The amazing visions of chapters 4 and 5 finish with the hosts of heaven worshipping the One on the Throne and the Lamb. And in the Lamb's hand is the scroll which he alone has the authority and the power to open. This vision is about what happens when the Lamb begins to break open the seven seals.



THE WHITE HORSE = MILITARY CONQUEST

This rider has a bow and a crown and he rides a white horse—all are symbols of victory. John tells us this horseman uses his military power to conquer.



THE RED HORSE = WAR/VIOLENCE

This rider has a great sword and he is allowed to take peace from the earth. The red horse represents the blood that is shed through war and violence.



THE BLACK HORSE = POVERTY/OPPRESSION

The horseman has scales that were used in famine to distribute food. Just a handful of grain is a day's wage, but the finer things are kept from the poor.



THE PALE HORSE = DEATH

The name of this rider is Death and Hades (the grave) follows behind him. He has the power to bring death by any means possible over all the earth.

ZECHARIAH

The 4 horsemen come from the vision in Zechariah 1.

HISTORY

All are common experiences through human history.

AUTHORITY

Notice that the Lamb gives them their authority.



THE CRIES OF FAITHFUL WITNESSES

The souls of those slain for their witness (martyr) to the Word are crying out from under the altar. They are pictured as “ascension” offerings that aren’t ascending to God’s dwelling. God hears them and speaks a word of comfort.

HOW LONG?

The church is crying out for God’s final justice to come.

REST

God clothes his people and calls them to trust him.

FULL NUMBER

God is waiting for all of his people to be saved.



THE DAY OF THE LORD

The day of God’s judgement is poured out (see Joel 2 & Isaiah 2). The earth falls back into chaos (Gen. 1:2) and all the peoples of the earth want to escape the judgement, even calling for rocks to crush them (Hosea 10:8).

THE 144,000 SEALED

Who can stand the wrath of the Lamb (Rev 6:17)?

Answer—the 144,000 sealed by God will escape and will be saved.

CENSUS

This is a military census (Num. 1) and symbolizes victory.

The numbers symbolize the full number of God’s victorious people.

MULTITUDE

All of God’s people from every nation (Gen. 12:3). It’s the same group as the 144,000! They have victory through the blood of the Lamb.

SALVATION

The song of God’s salvation shows God reversing the work of the horsemen as he brings blessing to his people.



GOD’S FINAL JUSTICE

The cries and prayers of the church are taken with fire from the altar and they are poured on the earth. God brings final judgement on the earth.