



## CHAPTER 5

### 5:1-5 - A SEVEN-SEALED BOOK

In Bible terminology, a scroll (writing material made of pages sewn together into a roll) is called a book (Ezek. 2:9-10). It was customary to place melted wax on the closed roll, making an impression with an official seal (sometimes a ring). This assured the privacy of the material until it reached the one intended. This “roll of a book” had been sealed with seven such official, divine seals.

Daniel the prophet (500 BC) received and recorded some of these same events. But when he asked God, “*What shall be the end of these things?*” God said, “the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end” (Dan. 12:8-9).

Ezekiel saw just such a “roll of a book” which contained “*lamentations and mourning and woe*” (Ezek. 2:9-10), just what you would expect from this blueprint of judgment.

Zechariah the prophet, around 500 BC, was shown a “*flying roll of a book,*” which is said to be a “*curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth*” (Zech. 5:1-3).

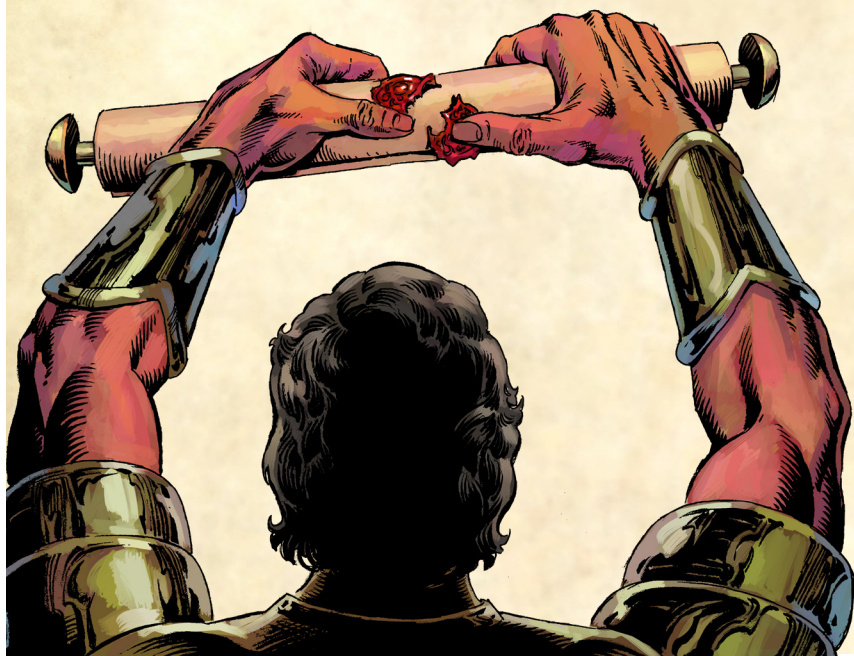
We gather from this that God’s blueprint for his siege and assault on planet earth is in a seven-sealed book. When that book is

opened, the angels will execute the wrath of God on mankind. If the judgments came all at once, the earth would instantly perish. The seven seals are opened one at a time over the judgment period—the last three-and-one-half years.

As you see on the painting, the seven-sealed book is a book within the book of Revelation. Chapter 6:1–19:21 contains the details of its contents.



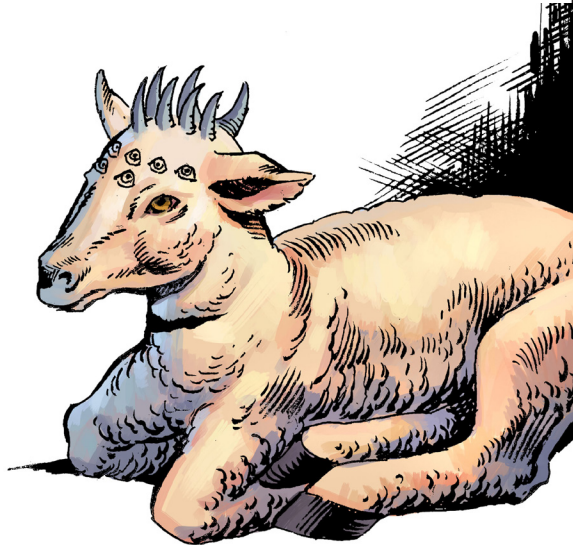
"And I saw a strong angel  
proclaiming with a loud voice,  
Who is worthy to open the  
book, and to loose the seals  
thereof? And no man in heav-  
en, nor in earth, neither under  
the earth, was able to open the  
book, neither to look thereon."  
(Revelation 5:2-3)



**5:2 - WORTHY:** “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” (5:2). A search is made for someone worthy enough to release the curse of God upon mankind. No cherubim, angel, or elder about the throne was worthy. Certainly, they were morally pure, yet none merited the honor or responsibility and all lacked the breadth of wisdom to put their hands to so permanently eternal a matter. The cup of mankind’s iniquity had overflowed, causing the offended Deity to begin the release of his cup of wrath upon the wicked of the earth, carefully and deliberately orchestrating the damning of his enemies. Such an act of holy justice is too high for anyone but God himself to even look upon his awful war-plan of judgment (5:3, 4). And, oh, the pain it must have caused him to remember that it was this very righteous judgment he had poured out on his only begotten Son, who was made sin for us so we might be made the righteousness of God in Jesus! Woe unto those who refuse to repent of their deeds (Rev. 9:21).

**5:5 - THE LION OF JUDAH:** “The Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book . . .” This title denotes Christ’s humanity as it speaks of his earthly lineage. A man (seed of woman) has prevailed. He prevailed in temptation, in testing, in the garden, before Pilate, on the cross, in death, and in resurrection. The God-man alone is worthy.

**5:6 - THE LAMB:** “A Lamb as it had been slain . . .” We have finally come to a figure. But God has not left us to our imagination. In no way is this simile open to debate. Jesus is the “Lamb” who was slain (John 1:29). Horns always denote political powers. In Rev. 17:7 we see a beast with seven heads, which represent seven kings (17:10).



Possibly, the Lamb's seven horns tell us that the Lamb, through death, prevailed to receive the Kingdom. The seven eyes are already seen in the seven lamps as the eyes of God in the earth. This figure shows us an all-seeing, conquering Lamb. As the Lamb takes the book, the twenty-four elders respond with praise (5:9), and sing their anticipation of reigning on the earth with him (5:10). Spontaneous worship becomes contagious as all heaven and earth break forth in blessing the Lamb (5:9-14).

"And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Revelation 1:19)





## CHAPTER 6

### 6:2 – 8:1 THE SEVEN SEALS (EXCLUDING CH. 7)

**OVERVIEW** - The first six seals take us all the way through the seven years. As each seal is broken, more of God's plan is executed. Every seal, trumpet, and vial judgment begins in heaven, precipitated by divine decree and executed at the hands of a heavenly being. Until God in heaven "lets," (allows), the antichrist can do nothing (II Thess. 2:7).

Revelation 6 is the first of four accounts of the Tribulation.

**6:2-8 - THE FOUR HORSEMEN** – Most fundamental commentators take the four horsemen to be figurative antichrist, or Satan, at four different progressive stages of his assault upon the earth. If they are correct, then the four horse riders are nothing but imaginary figures of speech.

But in Zech. 6:1-5, horses of the same four colors go forth and are called "*spirits of the heavens,*" whose ministry is "*standing before the Lord of all the earth.*" They are dispatched to "*walk to and fro through the earth.*" Just as the "*beasts*" around the throne and the angels blowing the trumpets are real, heavenly personalities, so also



White horseman  
conquers

Red horse  
takes peace  
from earth

are the four horsemen. They are God's messengers, not the devil's.

**6:2 - THE WHITE HORSE . . . THE FIRST SEAL:** He rides the white horse of the conqueror, carries a bow for threat of force, and is given a crown. The crown is not his, won in battle or conquest, but is given to him by one higher. “. . . *the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men*” (Dan. 4:17). This servant of God, riding the white horse, delivers up to antichrist the kingdoms of this world.

**6:3-4 THE RED HORSE . . . THE SECOND SEAL:** The horse rider himself does not kill, but rather takes peace from the earth, allowing men to kill one another.

**6:5-6 THE BLACK HORSE . . . THE THIRD SEAL:** The curse of the third horseman is famine. The balance scales are used for measuring out grain for sale. The price is exorbitant—one day's wages for one loaf of bread. Yet there remains some divine restraint, for no one is allowed to destroy oil or wine (6:6).

**6:7-8 THE PALE HORSE . . . THE FOURTH SEAL:** It is not strange that God should send forth “*Death*.” “*The Lord smote the first-born*” of Egypt (Ex. 12:29), but it was the “*destroyer*” who actually



Black horse of famine



Hell follows Death

Death rides a pale horse

did the killing (Ex. 12:23). “Hell” is not a horse rider; he just follows Death to claim his own. It does not say that one-fourth of earth’s population is killed. Rather, the boundaries of Death’s power are one-fourth of the earth geographically.

### 6:2 - 8:1 OVERVIEW

Earth’s curse under the four horsemen has not yet reached the realm of the supernatural: no stars falling, no hail mingled with fire or rivers of blood. In the early part of the seven years, the antichrist will be taking advantage of natural worldwide instability to rise to power. His message will be one of “peace” (Dan. 8:25; I Thess. 5:3; Dan. 11:21, 24).

**6:9 SOULS UNDER THE ALTAR . . . THE FIFTH SEAL:** The gospel of the kingdom of heaven will be preached during the Tribulation (Matt. 24:14). We will see later (11:3-11) that God will send witnesses to preach repentance. There will be 144,000 unmarried Jewish males ministering like the Apostle Paul. The antichrist will punish unto death all who do not “worship the beast” (Rev. 13:7). Only those who have not heard and rejected the truth before the Rapture will be able to believe and obey afterward. If you think you can put off Christ today in anticipation of getting saved after it becomes obvious

that the end is upon you, you are sadly mistaken (II Thess. 2:9-12). Those who were killed by decapitation (Rev. 20:4) are retained under the altar in heaven (8:9). As they cried out for vengeance, God consoled them by giving them white robes (a reward for overcoming (Rev. 3:5) and told them to rest until the others were killed “*as they were*” (by decapitation, 6:9-11; Rev 20:4).

### **6:12 PHYSICAL CHANGES . . . THE SIXTH SEAL (6:12-17)**

**OVERVIEW** - These six verses are a brief summary of the remaining three-and-one-half years of judgment called the “*great tribulation*” (Matt. 24:21-31; Dan. 12:7-12). The trumpet and vial judgments (Rev. 8:1–16:21) are a more detailed account of this same period. Christ taught these heavenly phenomena as literal (Matt. 24:15-31; Lk. 21:25-27; Mk. 13:24-27; Acts 2:19-20 with Joel 2:30-31).

**6:12 EARTHQUAKE:** Christ’s Second Coming is depicted four times in the book of Revelation:

1. 6:17 and 8:5 (probably the same event separated by the interval of chapter 7)
2. 11:13-19
3. 16:18-21
4. 19:11

The first three references, which are given in context of the earth, are accompanied by an earthquake. The earthquake is the reason sinners could realistically pray to the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of the Lamb (6:16). This “*great earthquake*” (16:18) changes the face of the planet. Israel, in particular, experiences a leveling of every mountain and hill (Is. 40:3-4). The low lands will be “*lifted up*” (Zech. 14:10). The Mount of Olives will be no longer (Zech. 14:4). When John the Baptist quoted Isaiah, “*Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low . . .*” (Lk. 3:5), he was not being poetic (see Rev. 11:13).

The painting follows the book of Revelation in the order John saw it, with no attempt to organize it chronologically. As there are four gospel accounts of the life of Christ, so we are given four accounts of the Great Tribulation.