

The opening of the seven seals reveals God's provision for the salvation of His people and the judgement of damnation upon those who reject the gospel. The seven seals concern the issues of salvation and judgement. The **HORSES** represent the spiritual condition and the conflicts of the Christian Church as it preaches heaven's message of salvation and judgement. (Compare Revelation 6:1-8 with Zechariah 1:8-10; 6:1-8 and Jeremiah 49:36,37.)

SUMMARY OF THE MESSAGE OF THE SEVEN SEALS

THE SEVEN SEALS	HEAVEN'S MESSAGE of salvation & judgement	CONFLICT FOR GOD'S PEOPLE
1. WHITE HORSE	THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION	God's people aggressively share the story of salvation.
2. RED HORSE	GOD JUDGES SIN	Those who reject salvation from sin persecute God's people.
3. BLACK HORSE	THE FINAL WARNING	Those who reject salvation are weighed and warned.
4. PALE HORSE	THE DAMNATION OF DEATH	Those who reject salvation face fearful judgements.
John was then shown...		
5. MARTYRS	THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION	God's people are persecuted as they witness and wait.
6. RETURN OF JESUS	THE DAY OF GOD'S WRATH	Those who reject salvation are destroyed. (Revelation 6:16) God's people are delivered. (Revelation 7.)
7. SILENCE IN HEAVEN	THE JUDGEMENT IS FINISHED	God's people are secure.

UNDERSTANDING THE MESSAGE OF THE SEVEN SEALS

The immediate context indicates that the theme of the seven seals is salvation and judgement. (See Revelation 4:1-8:1.) The Bible indicates that coloured horses represent the conflict that comes upon God's people as they preach heaven's message of salvation and judgement. (See Revelation 19:11-16; Zechariah 1:10; 6:5; and Jeremiah 49:36,37.) Because of the context, and because white is always a symbol of Christ and righteousness and never a symbol of antichrist, we must start with the white horse and its rider representing Jesus and His faithful, witnessing people.

1 Consecutive Periods of Church History

Some have noted parallels between the events revealed with the opening of the seven seals and consecutive periods of church history:

The white horse: The Christian church of the first century was zealous in its preaching of the gospel of salvation and its defence of

the purity of Christian teachings and faith.

The red horse: During the second and third centuries the Christian church suffered severe persecution. It was a time of Christian martyrdom and heroism. However, it was also during this time that false teachings began to creep into the church.

The black horse: The church of the fourth and fifth centuries compromised with paganism. The church was preoccupied with material things and became very powerful politically. However, there was a famine for the Word of God. Judgement was certain.

The pale horse: During the Dark Ages the church was a minister of death rather than eternal life. Instead of preaching the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ, the church was forcing people to accept pagan philosophies. The gospel and the Word of God was pushed aside. During this reign of spiritual error religious persecution was the order of the day.

The martyrs were encouraged with the assurance of salvation in spite of the seeming

triumph of the enemy. These words would have been of special encouragement to the faithful believers during the time of the Reformation.

The return of Jesus Christ: In vision, John saw dramatic events on earth culminating in the glorious return of Jesus Christ. The coming of Jesus will be the time of damnation for unbelievers and the time of deliverance for believers.

The silence in heaven: The silence stands in stark contrast to the agonising cries of the martyrs of the fifth seal and the terrified shrieks of the panic-stricken wicked of the sixth seal. The people of God stand in awe for Jesus Christ the great High Priest has finished His work of judgement.

2 Parallels with the “Last Day” Sermon of Jesus Christ

Jesus emphasised that the real wars are over the proclamation of truth rather than physical wars, famines or pestilences. (See Matthew 24:1-14.)

The rider of the **WHITE** horse carried a **BOW**. Victory is won through the proclamation of truth (Matthew 24:14), not political wars (Matthew 24:6).

The rider of the **RED** horse carried a **SWORD**. The weapon of the enemy is deception - and, this deception is in Jesus' name (Matthew 24:4,5,7).

The rider of the **BLACK** horse carried a pair of **SCALES**. It is a time of famine. Jesus contrasted physical famine (Matthew 24:7), with real famine - a lack of faith and love (Matthew 24:9-12).

The rider of the **PALE** horse was **DEATH**. By contrasting the physical troubles (Matthew 24:6-8) with the real devastation of persecution, betrayal, hatred, wickedness and death (Matthew 24:9-12), Jesus drew attention to the real crisis. He was saying, "Don't focus on physical calamities or signs. The real crisis will be over truth."

The **MARTYRS** cried out, "**HOW LONG?**": Jesus Christ said to His followers, "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me... but he who stands firm to the end will be saved." Matthew 24:9,13. (See Mark 13:9-23; Luke 21:12-24.)

The **RETURN OF JESUS** will be heralded **WITH SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS**: Jesus Christ said, "'The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory." Matthew 24:29,30. (See Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28.)

The **SILENCE IN HEAVEN** follows the **SEALING AND DELIVERANCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE**: Jesus Christ spoke of "gathering his elect from the four winds." Matthew 24:31. (See Mark 13:27; Luke 21:28-36.)

3 Experience of Individual Christians

The main purpose of Revelation is to change hearts rather than simply inform minds. The assurances of salvation and vindication for those who remain faithful to the gospel and the Word of God, and the threat of certain damnation for those who reject Jesus Christ and His Word, are surely to challenge us to Follow Jesus Christ who sacrificed all for us. With His life He paid the cost of our sin so that we might spend eternity with God.