

Central Study Hour – Sabbath School Lesson Notes

The Book of Revelation: Lesson 5, “The Seven Seals”

SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read the title. This is the second vision of Revelation.

What was the first vision of Revelation? Jesus among the lampstands and the 7 churches. In the second vision Jesus comes to the throne (by the lampstands) and is found worthy to open the 7 seals, and then opens them.

Why was Jesus found worthy to open the 7 seals? (See the memory text).

Read the memory verse. Last week’s lesson was on Rev. 4 and 5, “which describes Christ as worthy to open the sealed scroll, because [of] His victorious life and death. In Rev. 6 He opens those seals.

Read the second paragraph (“Pentecost marked....”).

***This is maybe a good time to use Friday’s Discussion Question #1.

Rev. 3:21 puts an emphasis on being an overcomer. Rev 4 and 5 puts the emphasis on Christ’s overcoming. Rev. 6 is about God’s people in the process of overcoming. Next week’s lesson on Rev. 7 describes “the overcomers before Christ’s throne.” They are called the 144,000.

SUNDAY: THE OPENING OF THE FIRST SEAL

Read Rev. 6:1-2. *What’s it about?* “The scene of the first seal describes the spread of the gospel, which started powerfully at Pentecost.” This is a symbolic picture of conquest. “It brings to mind Revelation 19:11-16, which portrays Christ as riding a white horse and leading His heavenly armies of angels to deliver His people at the second coming.”

What’s similar about this first seal in Rev. 6 and Rev. 19? What’s different? Both have riders on a white horse. In **Rev. 6:2** the rider is wearing a victory crown (Greek: stephanos) whereas the rider on the white horse in **Rev. 19:11-12** wears a royal crown (Greek: diadema). **Rev. 6:2** represents the church militant spreading the gospel in early Christian History, while Rev. 19 represents the church triumphant at the second coming. The rider on the white horse in Rev. 19 is clearly Christ as “**The Word of God**” (**vs. 13**) coming to earth, and that rider is parallel to the rider in the first seal in Rev. 6. The timing and the events are different.

Read the last paragraph (“Prophetically, the scene....”).

Read Rev. 8:1. *What is the seventh seal?* Second coming.

Read the question in the box at the bottom of the page. *If we know that God’s in control and everything will turn out just, fair, and true, shouldn’t that give courage to persevere in the faith and in service to God?*

***This may be a good time to use Friday’s Discussion Question #2. *Do we need to care more about all the lost people around us? Do we need to believe that God can use us?*

MONDAY: THE SECOND AND THIRD SEALS

Read Rev.6:3-4. *On the basis of the description of the red horse and the rider, what is being indicated here?* Red being the color of blood indicates persecution.

How does this relate to the gospel? The rejection of the gospel easily leads to fighting and opposing the gospel. "As Christ is waging spiritual warfare through the preaching of the gospel, the forces of evil render strong resistance. Inevitably, persecution follows."

To which of the 7 churches does this correspond? Smyrna and its persecution (Rev. 2:10).

Read Rev. 6:5-6. *Based on the description of the black horse and the rider, what reality associated with the preaching of the gospel is referred to here?* Well...note that "the rider of the black horse holds a scale for weighing food." *What is the significance of measuring small amounts of wheat or barley?* (see next texts below).

Read Leviticus 26:26 and Ezekiel 4:16. "To eat bread by carefully weighing the grain denoted great scarcity or famine." In other words, there is a famine for the word of God symbolized by the lack of grain for making bread.

Read the last paragraph ("The scene of the third....").

To which of the 7 churches does the third seal correspond? Obviously, to the 3rd church, Pergamum, which strongly moved away from Biblical truth (Rev. 2:14-15)..

What does it mean to not hurt the oil and wine? (coming on Tuesday's page).

TUESDAY: THE SCENE OF THE FOURTH SEAL

Read Rev. 6:7-8. *What scene is portrayed here?* It's all about death.

Read the first paragraph ("The color of the horse....").

How is this scene related to the previous one about a famine for the word of God? After the loss of the gospel and biblical truth, naturally, death follows due to the reign of intolerance, superstition, and ignorance.

To which of the 7 churches does this fourth seal correspond? The 4th church, Thyatira and the Dark Ages (Rev. 2:20, 23a).

Read and break down the **first sentence** in the box at the bottom of the page.

What do the meaning of these symbols tell us about the fact that, even during a famine for the word of God, oil and wine are still available? The Holy Spirit still works on people, and they can still learn some truth and experience God and salvation.

WEDNESDAY: THE OPENING OF THE FIFTH SEAL

Read the page title. Generally, the fifth seal fits the reformation and the fifth church, Sardis.

Read Rev. 6:9-10. *What is happening here?* Those martyred toward the end of the Dark Ages and during the Reformation and Counter Reformation are symbolically crying out for justice from the LORD. This "is portrayed here in terms of the sacrificial blood poured out at the base of the earthly sanctuary's altar of sacrifice."

Note: (If your class needs to discuss the state of the dead) Some assume that these are bodiless spirits. *How do we know that is not the case?* Teacher's Comments, part IV, p. 67-68.

Rev. 6:9-10 concerns "the injustice done here on earth; they are not saying anything about the state of the dead. After all, these people do not appear to be enjoying the bliss of heaven."

They are not portrayed as being in heaven at all, but rather on the earth.

What's heaven's answer to the cry for justice from the martyred saints?

Read Rev. 6:11 along with **Deut. 32:43** and **Psalm 79:10**. The cry for justice/vengeance has

been going on since Cain killed Abel, all though the history of sin. It was called for in **Psalm 79:10**. It was promised by Moses. In **Rev. 6:11** it says to wait just a little longer.

Read the first sentence of the following paragraph (“The martyred saints....offer of grace”).

Read the last paragraph for a good summary (“The scene of....”).

Read the box at the bottom of the page. Stop after the first question about struggling with injustice. Give examples of things with which people struggle (Losing someone to a fatal car accident or cancer and asking “Why God?” How many have struggled with the Holocaust?).

Read the last question in the box. *Can the promise in the fifth seal help us not to despair, not to give up?*

THURSDAY: THE OPENING OF THE SIXTH SEAL

Read the page title. Generally, the sixth seal fits both the Philadelphia and Laodicea periods right up to the second coming. The sixth seal is a time of intervention, of answering the prayers of the martyrs crying out in the fifth seal.

Read Rev. 6:12-13 along with **Matt. 24:29-30** (**2 Thess. 1:7-10** is about the fiery destruction of the wicked at the second coming).

What is being revealed in these verses? There are celestial signs in the sun, moon, and stars; and a great earthquake marking the end of the tribulation (the 1260). These are harbingers of the end, the second coming, when all injustices will be made right.

Share highlights from the 2nd paragraph as desired (“The last three....”).

Read Rev. 6:14-17. *Which of these words were prophesied in Is. 2:19?* Note that Jesus also said it. See **Luke 23:30**.

Read the last paragraph (“The scene concludes....”). That will be next week’s lesson.

CONCLUSION

Ask the question from the box at the bottom of the page. Only those who have experienced:

- 1.) full repentance (**Luke 13:3, 2 Peter 3:9**),
- 2.) forgiveness of sin (**Eph. 1:7**),
- 3.) being born again (**John 3:3**), and
- 4.) are unblameable in holiness before God at the coming of Christ (**1 Thess. 3:13, 5:23**).

We must live a faithful, totally surrendered life. Self must be crucified with Christ.

What are the implications in terms of how we should be living today in order to be prepared for the day of His coming? If we are not living it today, what makes us think that we will suddenly do it in the future? We need that totally surrendered life now! We need to really be in prayer!