

THE SEVEN SEALS

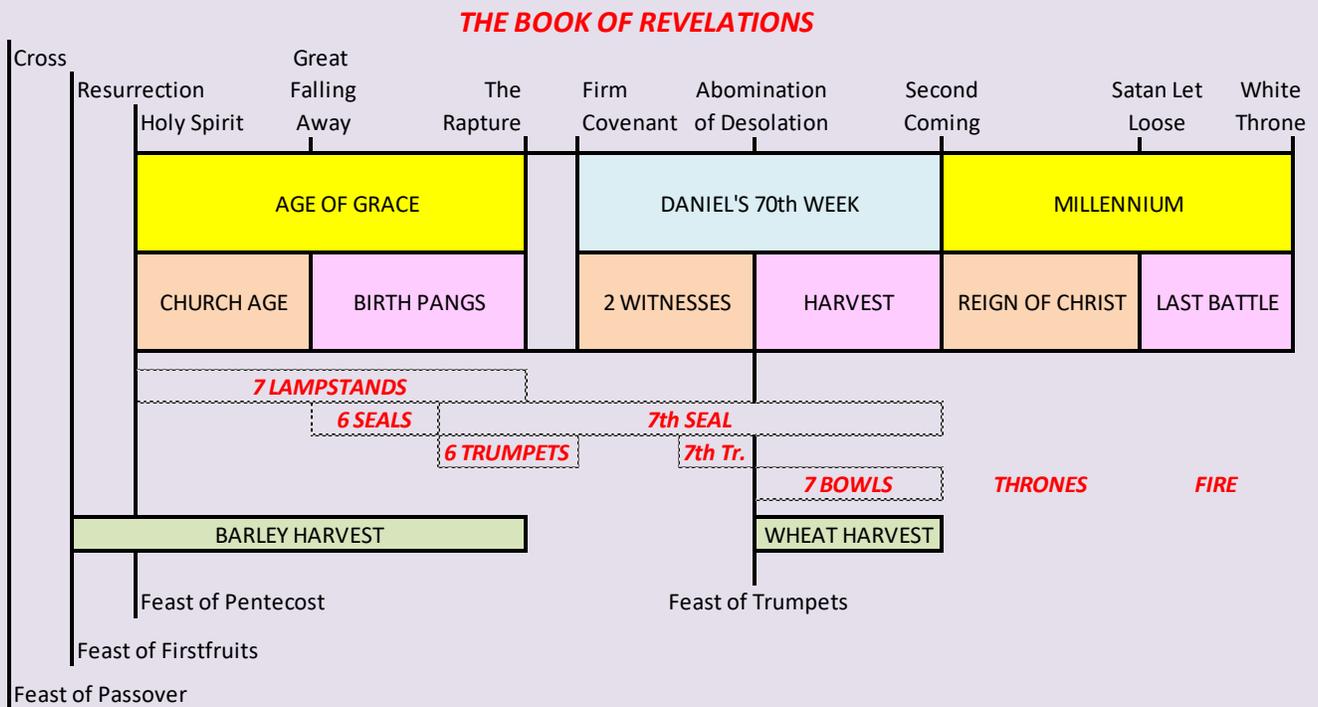
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to provide evidence to support the notion the Rapture is preceded by the Seals of the Book of Revelations.¹

Revelations divides history from the Cross to the Eternal State into distinct ages:

- (1) Age of Grace (2) Daniel's 70TH Week (3) The Millennium (4) The Eternal State

The diagram below shows within the ages there are subdivisions: eras. Dividing each age is a crisis event. Beneath are the prophecies of Revelations.



TWO HARVESTS – TWO COMINGS

In Biblical prophecy there are two harvests: the Barley Harvest, and the Wheat Harvest. The Barley Harvest speaks of the resurrection of Jesus and the salvation of Christians; The Wheat Harvest refers to the salvation of Jews. There are also two comings: At the end of Barley Harvest Christ meets the saints in the air and at the end of Wheat Harvest Christ comes to back to earth with his angels.

¹ In [The Seventh Day](#) we provide evidence six of the Seals have already been opened. We are very close to the end of the Age of Grace! But, there is no point for the reader to read the more advanced paper before being convinced of this paper.

THE TEACHING OF JESUS ON THE END TIMES

The most extended and detailed discourse of Jesus on prophecy in the last days is Matthew chapter 24. The disciples came to Jesus and very specifically asked him to tell them: “**What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?**” (Matt. 24:1)

Much confusion has arisen over the interpretation of this passage. This is avoided by recognizing that:

- There will be two comings of Jesus (one at the end of each harvest)
- There will be signs for each coming of Jesus
- Jesus addresses the signs for both of the comings in Matthew 24

One cause of confusion is the popular term: ‘Second Coming’, which is actually the Third Visitation. To be precise it should be called the ‘Second Coming – To Earth’ or the ‘Third Visitation’.

The disciples expected Jesus was only coming again once, and so they asked for ‘the sign of your coming and of the end of the age’. Jesus tried to explain that there will be two comings and two sets of signs. The disciples could hardly be faulted for failing to grasp what he said – there are still scholars 2,000 years later who are confused!

As would be expected, Jesus addresses the signs of his Second Visitation in the beginning of the discourse (Matt. 24:4-14) and he addresses the signs of his Third Visitation in the latter part of the discourse (Matt. 24:15-35).

The dividing line between the separate accounts of his two comings is crystal clear:

“**And this gospel to the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.**” (Matt. 24:14)

“**So, when you see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, spoken of through the prophet Daniel, let the reader understand, then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.**” (Matt. 24:15)

The first account (Matthew 24:4-14) pertains to the Age of Grace, the period from Pentecost to the Rapture, during which time any soul can be saved and go to heaven by believing the gospel. This is the period that corresponds to the Barley Harvest. The end of the Age of Grace will be the Rapture. When Jesus said ‘then the end will come’ it means the end of the Age of Grace – of Christians on the Earth.

The second account (Matthew 24:15-31) begins precisely when the Abomination of Desolation occurs in the Temple, which is in the middle of Daniel’s 70th Week. This is the period that corresponds to the Wheat Harvest. The end of that age will be the ‘Second Coming’ or the Third Visitation – when he appears with his angels and all his elect to destroy the Anti-Christ and the False Prophet.

THE ACCOUNT OF JESUS' SECOND VISITATION - MATCHES THE SEAL EVENTS

The complete text of the first account of Jesus pertaining to the signs of his Second Visitation:

“Jesus answered: ‘Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name claiming ‘I am the Christ’, and will deceive many. You will hear of wars [1st 2nd and 4th Seal] and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end [Daniel’s 70th Week] is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginnings of birth pangs [Birth Pangs]. Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith [1st to 7th Seal] and betray and hate each other. And many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached to the whole world as a testimony to all nations [Age of Grace], and then the end [Daniel’s 70th Week] will come.” (Matt. 24:1-14)

We notice that there is a high degree of symmetry between the description of last days events provided in this account and the description of the Seals in Revelations. All seven of the Seal events are described in detail in the Book of Revelations. We don’t see them all in the account of Jesus. It doesn’t mean all the events described in Revelations won’t happen – it just means Jesus did not provide all details in his account. Jesus was going to die in two days (Matt.26:1) – time was short.

THE ACCOUNT OF THE RAPTURE IN 1ST THESSALONIANS – MATCHES REVELATIONS CHAPTER 7

Conventional Christian doctrine is the Rapture occurs immediately prior to Daniel’s 70th Week. This paper agrees with that. Conventional Christian interpretation of Revelations is Daniel’s 70th Week begins with the first Seal (Revelations Chapter 6). This paper does not agree with that - we propose the six Seals in Revelations Chapter 6 occur while Christians are still on the earth.

According to 1 Thess. 4:16, Christians are raptured when: “(1) the Lord comes down from heaven, (2) with a loud command, (3) with the voice of the archangel, and (4) with the trumpet call of God”.

Each of the four signs described above in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 are described in Revelations in close proximity to the Seventh Seal. In fact, there Revelations records all four events described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 in Revelations chapter 7:

- (1) There is no wind on earth – the Holy Spirit [breath or wind] (living in hearts of Christians) is restrained, grieved, by the evil of the times (Rev. 7:1)
- (2) The archangel calls out (3) in a loud voice (Revelations 7:2-3)
- The 144,000 Israelites on earth are sealed by angels (Rev. 7:4-8)

- John sees saints in heaven as a great throng no man can number (Rev. 7:9-17)
- The Seventh Seal is opened (Rev. 8:1)
- Silence in heaven for one half hour (Rev. 8:1)
- (4) Trumpet sounds (1st: Rev. 8 v 7) (2nd: Rev. 8 v 8) (3rd: Rev. 8 v 10) (4th: Rev. 8 v 12) etc.

The events in 1st Thessalonians 4 v 16 match the events described in Revelations chapter 7. The other event described: "the Lord comes down from heaven" is not spelled out in Revelations chapter 7. Perhaps that is why 1 Thessalonians 4 v 16 was written: to offer us an important clarification.

We ought not to assume the "Trumpet Call of God" is the 1st Trumpet. In fact, we are inclined to believe it is the 4th Trumpet. Not to be dogmatic. The Rapture will coincide with a Trumpet.

We ought not to assume John's vision of the saints in heaven (Rev. 7 v 9-17) is the Rapture. John wrote Revelations before the Rapture. And John was transported to heaven to see these things. So those saints which John saw in heaven likewise could be Christians transported to heaven before the Rapture. Indeed, the Bible encourages Christians to approach God at any time; "to boldly come before the throne of grace" (Hebrews 4 v 16).

THE ACCOUNT OF THE RAPTURE IN 2nd THESSALONIANS – MATCHES REVELATIONS CHAPTER 7

The doctrine that the Holy Spirit will be withdrawn from the Earth when the saints are raptured to meet the Lord in the air is based on 2 Thessalonians:

"Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus [Second Visitation] and our being gathered to him [the Rapture] we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report, or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the Day of the Lord has already come...for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed [The Anti-Christ]...And you know what is holding him back [the power of the Holy Spirit], so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is at work; but the one [Holy Spirit (living in Christians)] who holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way [Rapture]." (2 Thess. 2:1-7)

THE SEALS ARE PROPHETIC EVENTS – THE WRITING IN THE SCROLL IS THE JUDGMENT OF ISRAEL

There is a difference between the writing in the scroll and the seals upon the scroll.

"Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat upon the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals." (Rev. 5:1-3)

The only other reference in Scripture we have of a scroll with writing on both sides comes from the call of Ezekiel to prophesy to Israel:

“He said to me ‘Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you’. As he spoke the Spirit came into me...Then I looked and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament, and mourning, and woe. And he said to me ‘Son of man: eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the house of Israel.” (Eze. 2:1; 2:9-10; 3:1)

Two points are critical to understand about the scroll of Ezekiel:

- (1) It was a record of judgment of punishments (lament and woe written on both sides);
- (2) The judgments were against Israel.

We infer that the scroll of the Apostle John was also a record of judgments against Israel. It is emphasized in Scripture numerous times: the scroll pertains to Israel (see Ezekiel 2:5).

The scroll cannot pertain to the Church because the blood of Jesus has washed away all our sins. There is no judgment ever against the Church: we are sons not slaves, governed by the Spirit not by laws.

“He forgave us all our sins having cancelled the written code with its regulations that was against us and stood opposed to us; he took it away nailing it to the cross” (Col. 2:13-14)

“Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?” (Romans 8:33)

“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath [of God] but to receive salvation...” (2 Thess. 5:9)

The Seals are not judgments against Israel or against the Church. Only the Scroll contains judgments – and those are against Israel. The imagery is clear: no one could see inside the scroll of John – it must first be opened in order to be read. To be opened the seals must be removed. But, there was no writing on the seals. The seals are merely there to bind the scroll of the judgments against Israel together. So, removing a seal does not imply a judgment either against the Church (we are not subject to judgment) nor against Israel (her judgments are written in the scroll). Certain prophetic events must occur prior to Daniel’s 70th week – this is all that the Seals signify.

WHO IS WORTHY TO OPEN THE SEALS?

The entire fifth chapter of Revelations deals with the issue of who is worthy to loosen the seals and to open the scroll. The issue of who has the right to open the Seals supports our interpretation of them.

And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice ‘Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll? But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look at it. But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep, Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah the Root of David has prevailed to open the scroll and to loosen its seven seals. And I looked

and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb as though it had been slain having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then he came and took the scroll out of the right hand of him who sat upon the throne. Now when he had taken the scroll the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb; each having a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song – saying:

'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals; for you were slain and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on earth.'" (Rev. 5:2-10)

A slain lamb was not needed for Ezekiel to eat the scroll with the judgments of Israel upon it (Eze. 2:9) – it was simply handed to him. So, what is all the fuss about 'who is worthy?' to loosen the seals?

According to our interpretation, although the Seals are not a judgment against the Church or Israel – the impact of the Seals will be enormous and it will be for all people: Gentiles, Christians, and Jews.²

Who in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth could be worthy to break the Seals and permit mass suffering to fall on so many Gentiles, Christians, and Jews?

John the Apostle was in tears over this issue. John did not weep that no one was worthy to permit such suffering. John was concerned the promises of God would be honored – that those who were asleep or alive when Christ comes would be raptured and go to heaven! But in order for the rapture of Christians to occur so many unpalatable prophetic events must come first.

Who is worthy to break the seals? The answer: "I saw a Lamb as if slain" (Rev. 5:6); "You are worthy because you were slain" (Rev. 5:9); "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain" (Rev. 5:12). The death of Christ pays for our salvation and guarantees Christians will go to heaven. Jesus our Savior is He who permits the suffering of the Seals to pave the way for the Rapture.

NO ANGELS ARE INVOLVED IN THE SEALS

In contrast to the trumpet and bowl judgments, when the Lord opens the Seals no angels are sent forth to deliver consequences or to announce events. Instead, we see the four living creatures, who stand before the throne day and night, cry out: "Come!" as the first four Seals are opened (Rev. 6:1-7).

Who are the four living creatures? They stand before the throne of God – suggesting their role pertains to the government of God over the Universe. (Appendix I addresses the role of the four living creatures). One of their tasks is to announce when prophecy comes to pass.

² The fifth Seal of Revelations specifically speaks of the genocides, including the Jewish Holocaust. See our other paper.

Many future events have been announced aforetime to the patriarchs in the form of the prophecy in the stars. The four living creatures stand before the throne day and night – because the motion of celestial bodies is continuous no matter if the Sun is up or down. The Lord is the one who set these objects in motion and the Lord determined there would be prophetic information in them:

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech [messages]; night after night they display knowledge.” (Ps. 19:1-2)

For those who are interested in Revelations and wish to investigate the prophetic information in the names of the stars and the pictures of the constellations we invite you to learn more about the three constellations relevant to this topic: Taurus (The Time of the Gentiles), which includes the ‘Birth Pangs’ time period; Gemini (1st Half of Daniel’s 70th Week); and Cancer (2nd Half of Daniel’s 70th Week).³ If you are not familiar with star knowledge, you will be astounded how much prophetic detail is contained in them. If you question whether the stars contain specific prophecy consider the teaching of the Bible that the Magi knew from the stars (and planets) the time and place of Christ’s birth.

In contrast to the ministry of the four living creatures, when the relationship is based on a legal covenant, God deals operates through angels:

“The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator [Moses]” (Galatians 3:19)

Angels were witnesses of all the terms of the Old Covenant. Angels also kept records of all transgressions of the Law. Finally, angels participate in the judgments for those transgressions. When the scroll is opened a litany of judgments will fall upon Israel – these are the consequences of the nation’s transgressions of the Law. This is why we see angels involved in Trumpet and Bowl judgments.

Even in Daniel’s 70th Week, God will offer an opportunity for repentance. At the mid-point of Daniel’s 70th Week when the Abomination of Desolation occurs – every Jew will be given a choice to believe in Jesus and be martyred, or take the Mark of the Beast. Only a remnant will be saved. Those who do not repent will receive the full force of the judgment of God for the sins of Israel.

CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER

The impact of the Seals falls on all humanity: Gentiles, Christians, and Jews prior to the time God deals with the earth through angels ministering a covenant to revived Israel, i.e. Daniel’s 70th Week.

The evidence in the New Testament describing events close to the Rapture matches events occurring after the Seventh Seal is opened – and the Trumpets sound.

Therefore, we conclude the Seals of Revelations precede the Rapture.

³ Papers are provided for those three constellations on Page 7 “STARS” on www.biblenumbersforlife.com

APPENDIX ONE – THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES

Four living creatures stand before the throne of God. What or who they are?

Ezekiel (Eze. 1), Isaiah (Isa .7), and John (Rev. 4) all saw them. They are real – they are alive - and most significantly - they are continually before the throne of God - this suggests they have something to do with God's judgment and rule - since that is what the throne symbolizes.

In Exekiel's vision:

"As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like chrysolite, and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be a wheel intersecting a wheel... Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around." (Ezekiel 1:15-18)

We propose these wheels represent the four celestial movements and circles: (1) Moon around the Earth; that circle intersecting with (2) Earth around the Sun; that circle intersecting with (3) Sun around the center of the galaxy; that circle intersecting with (4) The galaxy around the center of the Universe.

In Ezekiel's vision the wheels were covered with eyes. Eyes are symbolic of the stars - who look down upon the earth - keeping watch so to speak - every day. So, there is some basis for supposing the wheels refer to movements of heavenly objects - or stars.

Ezekiel says:

"When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved" (Ezekiel 1:19)

Now, you might ask: what could four LIVING creatures possibly have to do with the orbits of zillions and zillions of stars in the heavens? We know those planets and stars are INANIMATE objects: rocks and gas and metal. We know the laws of physics that GOVERN the movements of inanimate celestial objects, even ones separated by millions of light years.

Wait a second...there is that word 'GOVERN'. Is there a connection between celestial mechanics and the throne of God?

Take civilian laws for example: we have a parking laws that say you get a ticket if you overstay the time you paid for. What good would such a law be unless there was an enforcer - a parking officer - who patrolled the parking spaces and ensured the law was kept?

Here we have an example of a living creature - a parking officer - given the responsibility of overseeing the keeping of civilian laws.

In the same way - the four living creatures enforce the laws of God regarding the heavens - they ensure the law of gravity is obeyed - and all the rest of the laws of physics. The laws of physics have no power in themselves - the power comes from the living creatures - who in turn receive their power from God.

God created the heavens and the earth - and by his mighty power He continually upholds all things. The moment God decides not to uphold all things - the entire heavens will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:12).