

The Seven Seals



Collegiate Quarterly

Teacher's Guide

Surveying the Source

Lev. 26:21–26; Zech. 1:8–17; Gal. 3:13; Rev. 5:1–10; 6:1–17

Plotting the Course

The students will:

- ▶ Be able to describe what the first six seals of the scroll in Revelation 6 mean.
- ▶ Understand how the four horsemen represent specific times in Earth's history.

- ▶ Begin to understand how the six seals relate to their personal spiritual lives.

Preparing to Lead

Why do we bother trying to understand the book of Revelation with all its angels, scrolls, seals, and various colored horses? The book also talks about covenant curses, martyrs, and a final judgment. Reading it can be scary when we know it is all true and that we will experience some of these events in our own lifetime. Revela-

tion 6 can best be described as the story of Earth between the cross of Jesus and His second coming—which makes this study very exciting! “The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is the decisive moment of the cosmic conflict” (*Andrews University Bible* note on Rev. 5:9, 10, p. 1667).

Getting Started

A. The opening of the seven seals begins in Revelation 5 with our forever Friend Jesus being enthroned in heaven as King of the Earth. As King, Jesus must now proceed with His kingly duties and punish those who have been disloyal and rebellious and reward those who have been loyal.

Jesus shares what happens with His beloved friend John, by sending four living creatures to speak to John. The number four is also used for the four horses, the four winds of Rev. 7:1, and the four corners of the earth. This book is full of symbolism.

B. Matt. 24:4–14 is a constant reminder that the Earth is not our home. The first four seals parallel what we find in this text. The fifth seal parallels Matt. 24:15–22 with the heightened persecution of Christ's faithful, especially in the Middle Ages. The sixth seal describes some of the signs of the approach of the second coming. Some of these signs have been identified as the Lisbon Earthquake of 1775, the Dark Day and Blood Red Moon of 1789, and the Meteor Shower of 1833. Through it all, Jesus is leading and making His people overcomers.

Materials

Reproducible Activity, Bibles, pencils/pens.

Delving Into the Word

A. What was written on the scroll that Jesus has been given is never explained. What is so important about this scroll that it has seven seals keeping it closed? The following texts give us some possibilities of what might be written on the scroll of Revelation 6.

Is the scroll the Book of Life (Rev. 13:8; 21:27)?

Is it the Book of the Covenant (Deut. 17:18–20; 2 Kings 11:1, 17)?

Is it the title deed to the lands of Israel (Jer. 32:6–15)?

Is it the judgment scroll of Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:9–3:3)?

Or is this scroll the record of all human history?

After reading what the Bible says about scrolls, discuss what you believe is written on the scroll Jesus holds in Revelation 6. Is knowing what is in the scroll important to your life today? How might this information affect the decisions you make in the future? Why don't you think we know the scroll's contents?

B. After His ascension, Christ takes His rightful place on His throne in heaven and breaks the first seal. The Holy Spirit is sent to Earth at Pentecost.

The 1st seal (Rev. 6:1, 2)—The white horse represents the success of the gospel being preached to the whole world.

The 2nd seal (Rev. 6:3, 4)—The red horse represents blood and the consequences of rejecting the gospel of salvation. Those who reject Christ persecute His followers.

The 3rd seal (Rev. 6:5, 6)—The black horse relates to darkness; the absence of the gospel. This is a time of great scarcity for the Word of God.

The 4th seal (Rev. 6:7, 8)—The pale (or yellowish green or ashen gray) horse represents the ultimate rejection of the gospel and eternal death.

The 5th seal (Rev. 6:9–11)—The martyrs of the Middle Ages cry out for judgment. They must wait while more join them as Earth's sinful history ends.

The 6th seal (Rev. 6:12–17)—The last days of Earth are described (Isa. 2:10, 19–21; Joel 2:31; Matt. 24:30; Luke 23:30).

Discussing the Ideas

1. How would you explain to a friend why the study of Revelation 6 is relevant to our lives today?

2. What are some things we train or prepare to do ahead of time?

3. How should we prepare for the last days of sin on planet Earth?

4. What are some of the signs of the

end of time that have already happened?

5. What other end of time events should we expect to see in our lifetime?

6. What is the reason for the descriptions of the four horsemen?

7. Why is so much symbolism used in the book of Revelation?

Closing the Activity

Use the Reproducible Activity to outline the events leading to Christ's enthronement in heaven.

Revelation 6 describes the consequences of Christ's breaking the seals in heaven. "The opening of the seven seals begins with the inauguration and enthronement of Christ. Yet the opening of the

sixth seal describes the second coming and the events that accompany it."

"The four horsemen are evidently concerned with Christians and their response to the gospel of Jesus Christ" (Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, p. 213, 225).

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Describe the sequence of Earth's ownership as outlined in Sunday's lesson. Identify what caused the transfer of ownership.

After completing this outline, discuss why this sequence is valuable for us to understand today and how it affects us in our daily lives.

1. Genesis 1:1

How did they become the ruler of Earth?

2. Genesis 1:26

3. Luke 4:6

4. Matthew 28:18

Fold here until you have answered the four questions, then check your answers.

Answers

Ruler of Earth

1. God
2. Adam and Eve
3. Satan
4. Jesus

How they gained rulership of the Earth

- Created the Earth
- God gave it to Adam and Eve as a gift
- Delivered to Satan through his deceiving Eve
- Earned the Earth at the cross and now reigns for eternity