

PROPHETIC STUDY SERIES

THE SEALED BOOK



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Proclaiming the Revelation of Jesus

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Larry Wilson

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The Sealed Book

“When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. *all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.* How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!”¹

The seven seals of Revelation contain two elements we must understand in our study. God wrote and sealed a book, or scroll, with seven seals before creation. I will focus on the meaning of this book before we investigate the seven seals.

A simple story may help us understand why God prepared the book. Let us assume that your heart is full of love and that you have the gift of omniscience (all knowledge). Further, as you will be married soon, you and your fiancé agree that you will have nine children.

Because you have the gift of omniscience, you know that your first child will be a son, and he will be born next year. You also understand that fifty years later, your son, whom I call “Joe,” will become extremely hostile toward you and your wife because he wants your money to support a secret addiction. Because

¹ Psalm 139:15–17, italics mine

you have foreknowledge, you know that Joe will use lies and deceit to declare both of you incompetent.

To cover his true motives, Joe will try to convince the other eight children that you were horrible parents. Unfortunately, two children will side with him! You and your wife even know that Joe would take your lives, if he could, to get the money he wants. To complicate matters, imagine you also know that during Joe's first 40 years of life, he will be a wonderful, loveable son.

If you knew all these facts in advance, what would you do to protect yourself from the inevitable?

- a. Choose to have no children.
- b. Choose to have eight children and forfeit Joe.
- c. Choose to kill Joe while he is still your loving son.
- d. Choose to kill Joe when he passes the point of 'no return' to limit his deadly influence on others.
- e. Before any child is born, record what you know will happen before it occurs and show this information to all your children and grandchildren at the appropriate time.

This illustration may seem ridiculous, but it has profound ramifications within the context of God's love and omniscience. God faced this situation before He created life. God knows everything.¹

God knew Lucifer, the first created being, would eventually become the Devil. God foreknew that creating Lucifer would cause horrendous consequences. God also foreknew that Adam and Eve would fall prey to Lucifer's deceit. Billions of rebellious people would eventually fill the earth.

Given His heart of perfect love and His power of omniscience, God faced the following five options and chose Option E.

Option A

Choose to have no children. I believe God rejected this option because He desired to fill His universe and life with many joyous children—too numerous to count.² God may have thought that the gift of life, and the joy that comes from sharing love, was much more valuable than any damage caused by sin. God gave the gift of life to billions of angels and human beings, so He must have loved children.

¹ Isaiah 44:8; 46:10–11; Jeremiah 17:10

² Isaiah 45:18

Option B

Choose not to create Lucifer. While this option may solve God's problem with Lucifer, it does not solve the real issue. If God limited creation to beings who would remain obedient, then He would not be a God of love. Love is not about control, love is about free will. It is because "God is love" that angels and humans have choices. They can *choose* to rebel against God or love and serve Him—the choice is ours to make, not His to dictate. If God created children with no choice, His created beings would be unreasoning robots. Therefore, God could not avoid creating Lucifer and other beings who might rebel against His will because manipulating His children for His benefit contradicts His principle of love. Sin's existence proves that God grants the power of choice to His children. Jesus' death proves that God is love. God did not have to offer salvation, but because of love, He *chose* to provide salvation for humanity. Even though God foreknew the great price sin would extract on His children, His foreknowledge did not prevent Him from creating Lucifer or Adam and Eve.¹

¹ Revelation 13:8

Option C

Choose to destroy Lucifer before he sins. If God had killed Lucifer before he sinned, God would have been guilty of murder! What could justify His behavior before the angels if God killed Lucifer based on His foreknowledge alone? God is righteous, and deceit is not in His character; so God couldn't deceive the angels by making Lucifer's death look like an accident. If God killed Lucifer without justification, intelligent angels could conclude that God was a tyrant! Despots with a self-centered ego destroy those who threaten their authority because they love power and wealth. In contrast, God is righteous in everything He does,¹ and to kill Lucifer simply to avoid having problems later would not be righteous. God did just the opposite. Sin has caused God's children to experience sorrow, suffering, sickness, and death. He permitted Lucifer to live to demonstrate the atrocities of sin. God's rules for eternal life are best—not because He says so—but because they have proven to be so. God will annihilate Lucifer and all sinners at the end of sin's drama, but every saint will witness God's rules are righteous when He destroys the wicked!

¹ Isaiah 41:10

Option D

Choose to immediately kill Lucifer after he sinned to limit his influence on others. If God had chosen this option, the angels would not have been able to observe and understand sin's nature and malignant growth. In other words, if Lucifer were prematurely put to death, the possibility of sin occurring again in the universe would remain high because the angels would never wholly understand the nature of sin. By allowing sin to run its ugly and grievous course, God has enabled a comprehensive drama to reveal the horrendous properties of sin. Six thousand years of sin have proven that God's laws are not arbitrary. God bases His laws on His love for His creatures and they encompass all issues of life. The truths expressed in His laws spring from infinite wisdom. He alone knows what it takes for His children to live life more abundantly! Since God foreknew that sin would become a reality and produce a harvest of suffering and destruction, He chose to allow Lucifer to live. This may seem surprising, but God did this to benefit those who choose eternal life. After sin's drama is complete, God's created beings will study the history of sin throughout eternity. Their *knowledge of good and evil* will prevent sin from rising again.

Option E

God recorded a complete history of sin *before* angels and humans were created to protect himself from Lucifer's forthcoming accusations.¹ This book, or scroll, is called the *Book of Life* because it contains the entire story of life.² God recorded His foreknowledge to show all His children what He knew *before* sin existed. God sealed the Book of Life with seven seals to secure the book's contents until the end of the 1,000 years. If the contents of the Book of Life were prematurely revealed, God could not prove that He does not manipulate the eternal destiny of His children. This fact confuses many people who maintain that even if we choose our eternal destiny and God already knows it, we do not have a choice. However, God's foreknowledge has no effect on our choices. We are free to rebel against His laws or to submit to His authority. By sealing the contents of the Book of Life until the end of sin's drama, God will prove that He can be trusted. **He does not use His foreknowledge to manipulate His children.** As far as God is concerned, the future is like the past; both result from His chil-

1 Revelation 17:8

2 Revelation 3:5; 5:7; 20:15

dren's choices. At the end of the 1,000 years in Revelation 20, when everyone who has lived on earth is present, He will break the last seal on the Book of Life and reveal its contents.

Every angel and every person will see the contents of the Book of Life and learn of God's foreknowledge! Every created being will be awestruck as they consider this profound truth: God foreknew the *choices* of each angel and each person from the beginning, yet He did not use manipulation or force.

God will prove that He loved everyone the same, even though He foreknew what each person would choose! This is a profound truth: We are free to submit or rebel against the authority of God. In the end, God will prove the eternal destiny of each angel and each person to be of their own choice.

We can Trust God

God is love. He is perfect, and His actions are in harmony with His character, which explains why faith in God is necessary. There is only one way to reconcile the unknown and live at peace with a God whose actions we are incapable of understanding. Jesus said it very simply, "You have to trust me."¹ If you have

¹ John 14:1

stepped out in faith, then you know from experience, that you can trust Him explicitly. Faith in God is always rewarded because faith will ultimately lead to understanding.¹ Faith is an experience with God that makes perfect sense when seen in reverse. God stands today where we will stand tomorrow.

Because God is love, He grants each child the *irrevocable* freedom of choice. We can choose to obey God or rebel against Him. Our Creator granted us the freedom to rebel, placing Him in a vulnerable position! This does not mean God is subject to weakness but that our God of love is willing to be vulnerable. Lucifer exercised freedom of choice when he decided to disobey, and so did Adam and Eve. Lucifer rebelled, and God lost one-third of His angelic host. Adam and Eve rebelled, and it cost the life of Jesus. Many may consider this topic not a big deal, but the freedom to choose comes with a great price. The freedom of choice that God offers has enormous consequences for God and His children. This means that God cannot demand our love. Our love for God is awakened in our hearts after we begin to understand His love for us.²

God is omniscient. He has granted the power of choice to every angel and human being. He foretells

1 Hebrews 11:6; 1 Corinthians 13:10

2 Romans 2:4; 1 John 4:19

the future with 100% accuracy. Prophecy demonstrates this power.¹ The Bible states that He knows the changing number of hairs on our heads,² when every sparrow falls,³ and what choices each of us will make before we are created!⁴

God is omnipotent. He created a universe of life by merely speaking words! However, God does not use His incredible power to force the behavior of His subjects. Even though God foreknew the rise of sin, He was willing to pay an enormous price for sin's existence. God's omnipotence and omniscience do not alter His actions of selfless love. He can do *today* what may take 7,000 years to understand, so He knows what to do *today* for His children 7,000 years from now! This wisdom belongs only to God. If we do not understand what God is doing during these periods, we may find it difficult to trust Him. There is only one way to live in peace with the Creator of the universe: a non-negotiable faith in His righteousness—right doing.

Great White Throne

“And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. An-

1 Jeremiah 1:5; Isaiah 45:1–5; 2 Kings 8

2 Matthew 10:30

3 Matthew 10:29

4 Psalm 139:16; 1 Kings 13:2

other book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.”¹ This text reveals that God will open the Book of Life and the Books of Record, and present the information in these books to the people of earth at the end of the 1,000 years.

When the wicked ponder their life as recorded in the Books of Record, they will kneel before Jesus, admitting that He has been unquestionably accurate and fair in His judgment. When the righteous consider their life, they too will confess that the record is correct with one significant difference. They will confess they have no claim to the marvelous gift of eternal life that He has bestowed upon them. They will also kneel with a sense of overwhelming gratitude.

Consider the scene: Two groups of people will kneel before God on that great day. One will kneel before God's justice, the other before His mercy. **“By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear. They will say of me, ‘In the Lord alone are deliverance and strength.’ All who have raged against him will come to him and be put to shame. But all**

¹ Revelation 20:12

the descendants of Israel will find deliverance in the Lord and will make their boast in him.”¹

The Book of Life

“Then I [John] saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll [book] with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll [book]?’ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.”²

The second book opened is the Book of Life. God will reveal its contents to the vast throng. Everyone will be astonished that God, who foreknew the choices of every angel and person, gave so many offers to respond to His love and grace.

The Book of Life contains a record of everyone’s life which God wrote before creation.³ There will be no blame, denial, excuses, or escape from God's judgment when the Great White Throne judgment occurs at the end of the 1,000 years. The contents of this

1 Isaiah 45:23–25

2 Revelation 5:1–4, insertions mine

3 Daniel 7:9–10; Ecclesiastes 12:14; 2 Corinthians 5:10

scroll (book) will prove that Jesus judged accurately and righteously. The eternal reward of each person is based on that person's choices.¹

God foreknew who would hate and rebel against Him before creation. Yet, He gave everyone the opportunity to accept the gift of life and Jesus as a ransom for their sinful life. As this revelation illuminates everyone's consciousness, all will bow again. Sinners will bow, not in submission to God's awesome authority and power; instead, all will bow, admitting that He is worthy of honor and worship. They will agree that His love and generosity exceeded the bounds of *fairness*. The depth of God's love and goodness is unimaginable!

Many unintentionally skip over the pivotal importance of the *book* that is sealed up! For some reason, the seven seals *on the book* have gained more attention than the book itself. Actually, the book is more important than the seals. The all-important purpose of the book is the reason for the significance of the seven seals! The drama in Revelation 5 occurs in heaven because sin began and produced serious problems there.

The problems accompanying sin and rebellion are not limited to earth. Revelation's story reveals God's

¹ Revelation 22:12

plan to resolve sin in heaven and on earth. I understand the book sealed with seven seals is the *Book of Life* for three reasons.

1. John mentions the *Book of Life* six times in Revelation, distinguishing this book from others.¹ In Revelation 5, Jesus (the Lamb) was found worthy to receive the book with seven seals. John sometimes referred to this book using the possessive noun, *Lamb's*, as in the *Lamb's Book of Life*.² After the Lamb received the sealed book from the Father's right hand, the Lamb possessed the Book (of Life).
2. According to the Bible, the Book of Life will be opened, and its contents revealed *only* at the end of the 1,000 years.³ Notice how this unfolds: The sixth seal is broken at the time of the Second Coming;⁴ therefore, the seventh seal must be broken, and the contents of the Book of Life must be revealed *after* the Second Coming. According to John, the Book of Life will be opened at the very *end* of the 1,000 years. Since the breaking of the seventh seal must occur *after* the Second Coming, the alignment of these two features suggests that the Book of Life is the book sealed with seven seals.

1 Revelation 3:5; 20:12

2 Revelation 13:8; 21:27

3 Revelation 20:12

4 Revelation 6:16–17

3. I have concluded that the book sealed with seven seals is the Book of Life because of its contents. Even though no one knows what specifics are recorded in the book sealed with seven seals,¹ we do know the contents! **“Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.”**² This verse implies that only the names of the redeemed are found in the Book of Life. In fact, because of this verse, many Christians believe the Book of Life contains *only* the names of the saved. They interpret the title to mean *The Book of (Eternal) Life*, but the Bible does not confer this meaning on the book, even though this will be the final result.

The Book of Life includes the life record of everyone to whom God gave life. The book is a roster of everyone who was ever born. God prerecorded our choices and actions in His book before we had life.³ Based on God’s perfect foreknowledge, He wrote a complete history of life before life was created. Then He blotted out the names of those who would live but chose to rebel.

God foreknew who would choose eternal life and who would choose rebellion. God does not want any-

1 Revelation 5:3

2 Revelation 20:15

3 Psalm 139:16

one to know who will be saved or lost (information that He foreknew) until the wicked angels and humans have been judged. However, the Book of Life will remain sealed until the 1,000 years have ended and the seventh seal is opened. The Book of Life has nothing to do with the judgment.

Man is not judged based on God's foreknowledge but on the information written in separate books by angels who chronicle our daily actions.¹ This brings up an interesting question. Why did God include everyone in the Book of Life only to blot out the names of the wicked? He did this to prove that each person has the freedom to choose and that He does not manipulate their freedom.

This means that at the appointed time, God will show that He foreknew who would rebel and who would submit to His authority. Yet, despite this knowledge, He did not treat anyone unfairly. The Book of Life, will exonerate God from all allegations of unfairness that Lucifer and others have made against Him.

The Purpose of the Book

God wrote the book to verify that He foreknew the choices everyone would make based on the freedom

¹ Daniel 7:9–10; Revelation 20:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Malachi 3:16

to exercise their power of choice. Remember, God wrote the book before any being was created. The *process* of breaking the seven seals includes judgment and testing to identify who will stand for truth and righteousness. All creatures granted the power of choice have moral accountability to their Creator.

When people lose sight of their accountability to God, they become degenerate. When Jesus opens the fourth seal, a great testing time will begin for a degenerate world.¹ God will test human beings to reveal their choices and the motives of their hearts. During the Great Tribulation, the 144,000, with Holy Spirit power, will present a powerful call to worship God. Each person, small and great, rich and poor, will have to make a choice about their loyalty to God.²

As God sets up a global situation that forces everyone to choose whom to worship, every human heart will be exposed. God does not force the will but instead creates a situation that forces all people to make a decision. War always does this. War forces those involved to take sides.

Options during the Great Tribulation will be simple: Obey the laws of God and suffer the wrath of man,

¹ Matthew 24:21–22; Luke 21:34–36; Revelation 3:10

² Revelation 14:6–7; 13:8–10

or obey the laws of man and suffer the wrath of God. Make no mistake. Wrath of some type will affect everyone. God is about to declare war on sin.

God has designed this coming test so His laws will oppose man's laws. I believe this test is a *repeat* of what happened in heaven before God created the earth. Before He created the world, a war in heaven developed over the issue of worship. Lucifer wanted the adoration and worship that belonged to Jesus. Eventually, God forced a showdown to reveal who would worship Jesus. God lost one-third of His angels because they chose to worship Lucifer rather than Jesus. The angels who followed Lucifer put their faith in Lucifer's lies and promises that he would free them from God's alleged tyranny.

For several thousand years, Lucifer and his angels claimed that God was a tyrant, but Jesus' death proved otherwise. Resurrection Sunday will be forever remembered because God threw Lucifer and his angels out of heaven permanently!¹

History is about to repeat itself. The human race will face the same test. Because of Lucifer's sin and Adam and Eve's sin, we live in a wicked world full of lies about God. Because of our inherited sinful nature, we are naturally inclined to rebel against God.

¹ Revelation 12:7-9

However, through the death of Jesus, God will redeem anyone who will worship Him and loyally stand for His truth. God will impose a testing truth on the whole world at His appointed time. This testing truth, concerning whether to worship or reject God, will separate people into one of two camps. All people who are honest in heart, including many who are not religious, will see the light of God's truth and stand on God's side. Unfortunately, there will also be billions who will refuse to worship the true God. The rebellious, including many who claim to be devoutly religious, will reject God's truth because they do not love God or His truth. Do not be confused. Love for religion is not the same as love for God.¹

When human beings are confronted with the command to worship God, our response defines the love and loyalty within our hearts. If we love ourselves more than God, we will choose what we think is best rather than the expressed will of God.

Bible Writers Mention the Book

Several Bible writers knew about the Book of Life. Notice this conversation between Moses and God: “**But now, please forgive their sin [of Israel]—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have writ-**

¹ Matthew 15:9

ten.’ The Lord replied to Moses, ‘Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book.’”¹

Moses knew that God *had finished* the Book of Life and begged God to forgive Israel or otherwise, blot his name out of the book! God responded to Moses by saying that whoever has sinned against Him would be blotted out. Some Christians have concluded that the Book of Life is a dynamic recording; that is, God adds or removes names daily. This conclusion is incorrect because God wrote and sealed the Book of Life before He created the world. Also, only Christ determines a person’s eternal destiny!

God's response to Moses is an assurance that only the wicked are blotted out of His book. Moses knew that the book had been written—that is, finished! Therefore, we must understand God's response to Moses as a policy statement: “When I wrote the book, I blotted out the names of those who would sin against Me.” Notice how this policy aligns with a statement from Revelation concerning the appearance of the Antichrist during the Great Tribulation: **“The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast.”**²

1 Exodus 32:32–33

2 Revelation 17:8

Did you notice when the Book of Life was written and whose *names* God did not include? God already knows who will worship the beast and who will not. God knows everything. However, even though God foreknows what we will do, the choice must be ours! This is freedom. By giving us the power of choice, the responsibility for our actions rests upon our heads. We would have no moral obligation or responsibility if we were mere robots. However, in a universe of freedom, everyone who has the power of choice bears responsibility and accountability for their choices.

King David knew about the Book of Life. He wrote, **“May they [the wicked] be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous.”**¹ King David understood that God had written his entire life record long before he was born.

He wrote, **“Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”**² Jesus alluded to the Book of Life when He said to His disciples, **“However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”**³

1 Psalm 69:28, insertion mine

2 Psalm 139:16

3 Luke 10:20

Paul also mentioned the Book of Life: **“Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.”**¹

The Seven Seals

Now that we understand the purpose and contents of the Book of Life and why God sealed it from the beginning, we can consider the seven seals that protect the sensitive data inside the book. The seven seals on the book represent seven revelations about Jesus. When the Father wrote the Book of Life, He foreknew the rise of sin and that Jesus would die for sinners. This is why John says that Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.²

When Adam and Eve sinned, the Father and Son agreed that Jesus would assume the task of resolving the sin problem for man.³ Jesus also agreed to be the agent to resolve the sin problem for the Godhead. To resolve the sin problem for God and man, God had to find Jesus worthy before men and angels.

This is why the angelic host and the 24 elders (24 in-

1 Philippians 4:3

2 Revelation 13:8

3 Psalm 2; John 3:16

dividuals taken from the earth) were summoned to the great convention described in Revelation 4, 5, and Daniel 7. When the solution for sin was presented before this innumerable gathering, Jesus was found the only one worthy to receive the book sealed with seven seals.¹ Since all at the convocation had the power of choice, this was not a rubber stamp approval.

Jesus was found worthy to redeem man based on His righteous life and shed blood.² He was also found worthy to exonerate the Godhead of all charges of misconduct based on His perfect submission to the Father's will.³

Jesus' worthiness to resolve the sin problem unfolds before angels and mankind in seven phases. As Jesus breaks each seal on the Book of Life, a new revelation about Jesus occurs in heaven and on earth. This is why the book of Revelation is called *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. It reveals the drama surrounding the revelation of all that Jesus is! Jesus is the Word of God⁴ and is, therefore, the spokesperson for the Godhead. Jesus is that member of the Godhead who lives among His creation, revealing the ways of the Godhead to us.

1 Revelation 5

2 Revelation 5:9

3 John 6:38; Hebrews 5:7-10

4 Revelation 19:13

Because Jesus humbled himself to come, live, and die as a man, the Father exalted Jesus to sit by His side. The universe will then see that Jesus is an equal of the Father. Incredibly, after receiving the highest honor that the Father can bestow upon Jesus, Jesus turns everything back over to the Father.

Paul describes this amazing scene, **“The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he [the Father] ‘has put everything under his [Jesus’] feet.’ Now when it says that ‘everything’ has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this [destroyed death], then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.”**¹

After the Father and created beings have given Jesus every glory, praise, and accolade, He does not bask in it. Jesus chooses once again to be subject to the Father so that He can humbly live among their creation as one of His subjects. What a Creator! What a God! What love! What a stunning revelation about Jesus!

When the Book of Life is opened at the end of the 1,000 years, God will reveal to billions of angels and human beings that Jesus, the creative agent of the

¹ 1 Corinthians 15:26–28, insertions mine

Godhead, was willing to give up His life forever—if necessary—to redeem sinners.

This overwhelming revelation will confirm the great depth of God's love for His children! At the end of the 1,000 years, everyone who has ever lived on earth or in heaven will be present on judgment day. The wicked will stand before their Maker; those who chose to rebel will see His face!

The Father will prove to created beings that before anyone was created, Jesus was willing to perish, if necessary, so that they could have the possibility of eternal life. No wonder John describes Jesus as **“the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.”**¹

Jesus single-handedly rescued His redeemed sinners from the penalty of death. Because of Jesus' unselfish love, the Father predetermined to exalt Jesus before the wicked and the righteous. Jesus was willing to perish eternally for those He created, but He also made a way for sinners to regain what was lost through sin.

Jesus is Found Worthy to Open the Book

“And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to break the seals and open

1 Revelation 13:8

the scroll?”¹ The angel’s question, “Who is worthy?” means, “Who is qualified to break the seals and open the book?”

John does not reveal the lofty qualifications required to break the seals, but he does say, **“But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.”**²

God’s offer was profound. He would give the book to anyone qualified to break the seals and disclose the book’s contents. When the Father presented this question to the assembly, He did not initially allow Jesus to be included in the search. The Father wanted the 24 elders and the angelic host to consider the importance of this book and the qualifications necessary to break the seals and open the book. God would have gladly summoned anyone who was qualified to the vast assembly, whether they were among the living or the dead, but there were NO nominations. No one in the entire universe appeared to be qualified to accomplish the task.

John wrote that he wept because he understood (as did the angels) that if no one was qualified to open

1 Revelation 5:2

2 Revelation 5:3–4

the book, God could not be exonerated from Lucifer's long-standing accusations. An omniscient and omnipotent God can *only* prove that He does not manipulate His creatures by revealing the contents of the book.

After it became clear that no one in the universe was qualified, Jesus presented himself for the task. The angels and the elders rejoiced because someone was qualified! Jesus had attributes that no one else could meet: **“Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.”**¹

The seven horns represented the fullness of power—omnipotence, and the seven eyes represented the fullness of knowledge—omniscience. **“The seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth”** indicates that Jesus perfectly knows everything occurring at any time.

The four living creatures and 24 elders reiterated the qualifications required to break the seals as they sang a song of praise and dedication to Jesus. **“And they sang a new song saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God**

¹ Revelation 5:6

persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.’”¹

No one in the universe could meet these qualifications. You may wonder why one of the qualifications for an individual to break the seven seals is to experience the second death. Because Jesus experienced the second death, He is in a righteous position to judge all creation. Jesus can sentence angels and humans to death because God does not inflict punishment that He has not experienced.

Jesus is uniquely qualified to open the seven seals because He was the only one who experienced the penalty for sin—the second death, and He flawlessly submitted to the terms and conditions the Father established. He has successfully reconciled man to God through His blood.

When did Jesus Receive the Book?

“Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He came and took the scroll from the right

¹ Revelation 5:9

hand of him who sat on the throne.”¹ Church history confirms that until 1850, most Christian writers believed that Jesus received the book sealed with seven seals upon His ascension to heaven in AD 30.

Because Jesus began opening the seals, one by one, after He received the book, most Bible students thought the seven seals began to be opened around the first century AD. Authors have written hundreds, perhaps thousands, of articles and books interpreting the seven seals as events occurring over the past 2,000 years. Even though this was the majority view of Christians for centuries, they did not all agree about the book’s purpose and meaning of its seven seals.

About 1850, a new prophetic thought developed within Protestantism which combined the idea of a restored Israel, the doctrine of dispensationalism, and the pretribulation rapture. So, many Protestants concluded that the breaking of the seven seals would be a future event.

Today, many Protestants place Revelation 4–6 chronologically *after* a pretribulation rapture. Although they agree on the timing of Revelation 5, they disagree on the purpose and meaning of the book or the seven seals. In effect, pretribulation Protestants have the

1 Revelation 5:6–7

same problem as those who still cling to the first-century view; they do not understand the book's contents.

I believe Jesus received the Book of Life in 1798. For an in-depth explanation, read Chapter 5 of my book, *The Lamb's Book of Life*.¹ I believe Jesus has already broken the first three seals (1798-1844), and the fourth seal is imminent. As the fourth seal is opened, life will dramatically change for eight billion people.

The opening of the fourth seal marks the beginning of the Great Tribulation. During this time, the whole world will be brought face to face with the testing truth of worship and begin to realize the authority of Jesus. He is sovereign over kings and nations and will send a series of judgments throughout the earth to demonstrate His anger with sin and decadent behavior.

What do the Seven Seals Represent?

As each seal is broken, it releases a new revelation about the identity and attributes of Jesus throughout the earth. Thus, breaking the seven seals is a progressive revelation of seven truths about Jesus. He will break open each seal at the appropriate time in history. The truth about Jesus grows in glory and intensity

¹ See <https://wake-up.org/book-of-life-who-is-jesus/jesus-worthy-to-open-the-book.html>

when He opens each seal. The process continues until everyone understands who Jesus really is.

- **Seal 1** – The Salvation of Jesus
- **Seal 2** – The Gospel of Jesus
- **Seal 3** – The Judgment of Jesus
- **Seal 4** – The Authority of Jesus
- **Seal 5** – The Faith of Jesus
- **Seal 6** – The Glory and Power of Jesus
- **Seal 7** – The Sovereign Deity of Jesus

The Four Horsemen and the First Four Seals

The first four seals are associated with four horsemen. Artists have painted some very dramatic representations of the four horsemen of the apocalypse, but few people have a clue as to the meaning of the horsemen.

In ancient times, kings did not have telephones, satellites, internet, televisions, or radios. Instead, they sent couriers on fast horses throughout their kingdoms to deliver laws, bulletins, and directives pertinent to their kingdom's operation. Thus, God used language referencing horses in terms they could understand.

The king often dispatched couriers on royal horses from the throne room because his dictums could not

be delayed. Royal horses were specially bred and trained for long-distance running. For example, during the time of Queen Esther, King Artaxerxes blindly issued a decree which allowed the Persians—at an appointed time—to kill all the Jews and take their possessions. Queen Esther learned about the plot and exposed Haman, who wickedly masterminded the plan.

When King Artaxerxes discovered that he had been deceived, he had Mordecai, her uncle, send an emergency edict to all Jews throughout his kingdom, giving them the right to arm themselves and fight their enemies. **“Mordecai wrote in the name of King Xerxes, sealed the dispatches with the king’s signet ring, and sent them by mounted couriers, who rode fast horses especially bred for the king. The king’s edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves; to destroy, kill and annihilate the armed men of any nationality or province who might attack them and their women and children, and to plunder the property of their enemies.¹ The couriers, riding the royal horses, went out, spurred on by the king’s command.”²**

Just as King Artaxerxes dispatched horsemen from his throne room, so God dispatches horsemen from

1 Esther 8:10–11

2 Esther 8:14

His throne. The imagery of horses and how they are used in Revelation can also be found in Zechariah 6. Notice that the color of each horse in Zechariah 6 is identical to the horse found in Revelation 6.

Zechariah wrote, “I looked up again, and there before me were four chariots coming out from between two mountains—mountains of bronze! The first chariot had red horses, the second black, the third white, and the fourth dappled—all of them powerful. I asked the angel who was speaking to me, ‘What are these, my lord?’

“The angel answered me, ‘These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. The one with the black horses is going toward the north country, the one with the white horses toward the west, and the one with the dappled horses toward the south.’

“When the powerful horses went out, they were straining to go throughout the earth. And he said, ‘Go throughout the earth!’ So they went throughout the earth.

“Then he called to me, ‘Look, those going toward the north country have given my Spirit rest in the land of the north.’”¹

1 Zechariah 6:1–8

God revealed how His work is accomplished throughout the earth in a vision to the ancient prophet Zechariah. God sends four living creatures (or spirits) who stand before His throne throughout the world to do His bidding.

God represented these four living creatures to Zechariah as horses going north, south, east, and west. In this vision, their task was to restore peace in the *land of the north*. The Bible reveals that God sends war¹ and peace throughout the earth as He deems necessary. The four living creatures appear to be the couriers of His will.

Before Zechariah's day, God had destroyed Jerusalem because of its degeneracy. Later, when the 70 years of captivity were fulfilled, God sent peace to Israel. Peace in the *north* indicated that God's anger had subsided. The north is the direction of the origin of God's wrath.² Even though Zechariah did not specifically mention riders on the horses he saw, the four living creatures who stood before the throne of God were represented to Zechariah as couriers displaying four colors, the same four colors found in Revelation 6.

These four living creatures are not horses. Instead,

¹ Leviticus 26:24–25; Jeremiah 15:3; Zechariah 1:19–21

² See Isaiah 41, Jeremiah 1, and Jeremiah 50.

they are *represented* as horses (with riders) sent from the throne of God throughout the earth.

The Breaking of the Seals

As you study each seal, remember these issues as a seal is broken: First, each courier leaves from God's throne room.¹ Second, as each living creature is given an assignment, John is invited to observe the unique work of each courier. The description of each horse and rider details their task and objective. Third, each living creature is given the power to accomplish all that is commanded. Fourth, the story about the book sealed with seven seals is one of Revelation's prophecies because it uniquely resolves issues that God wants earth's final generation to understand.

Acts I, II, and III

The first three seals are preparing the stage for a drama. After the stage is set, the drama unfolds. The grand finale of the drama occurs when the final seal is broken. I outline the seven seals as three acts. Act I deals with how the global stage is prepared for the tribulation. Act II is the *test of worship*. Act III is the full disclosure of Jesus. I am convinced that Jesus be-

¹ Revelation 4 and 5

gan opening the seals about 1798, and my explanation of the four horsemen falls within this time frame.

Act 1

Seal 1 – Living Creature #1 ~ 1798

“I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, ‘Come!’ I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.”¹

Experts of the Greek language have varying opinions about the bow in Revelation 6:2. While some authorities maintain that the first horseman carries a bow in preparation for battle, I believe this bow is actually a winner’s ribbon—a decorative bow made of fabric. He is also given a *stephanos*, a laurel crown of victory, not a diadem or crown denoting authority as artists usually depict.

The Greek language in this passage indicates that it takes a while to complete the work of this horseman. The breaking of this seal connects to a painful transition on earth. For 1,260 years, the Church of Rome had dominion over the nations of Europe, using the

¹ Revelation 6:1–2

doctrine that salvation is possible only through receiving the sacraments administered by priests.

In 1793, a bloody revolution to overthrow the authority and oppression of the Church began in France. With great sacrifice and enormous loss of life, France was able to expel the Church from its government. In 1798, Napoleon's forces captured the pope in Vatican City and exiled him.

This wound to papal power in Europe gave Protestantism an opportunity to become a worldwide religious force. Just 22 years earlier, in 1776, God provided a new nation where religious freedom was guaranteed. As a result of the work done by the first horseman, America became the champion of the Protestant movement. It has sent out more Christian missionaries, gospel workers, and literature than any other nation.

The rider on this horse dispatched from heaven's throne is still responsible for promoting the good news throughout earth: "Salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone." A crown of victory and a winner's ribbon are promised to all who receive the gospel into their hearts and overcome the sin in their lives through faith.¹

1 2 Timothy 4:8

The work of the first horseman will continue until the offer of salvation ends during the Great Tribulation.

Seal 2 – Living Creature #2 ~ 1800

“When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, ‘Come!’ Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people slay each other. To him was given a large sword.”¹

The second horseman is given the task of creating controversy and causing war and bloodshed throughout the earth. The large sword represents the Bible, the sword of truth.² During the Great Tribulation, the Bible will become the source of a global controversy that causes bloodshed. The war and bloodshed culminate during Act II, when Satan physically appears at the fifth trumpet,³ and forces everyone to choose whom to worship. Later, millions of saints will be martyred at the time of the fifth seal.

Inhabitants of this world need to be prepared for this horrible drama, so the second horseman from God’s

1 Revelation 6:3–4

2 Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6:17

3 Revelation 9:1–11

throne is charged with translating and distributing the Bible across the globe. In the nineteenth century, Bible societies began in the USA and Europe, and testify to the power of the sword of truth.

This horseman continues to prompt people to spread God's Word in every country. The Bible has been made available to approximately 66% of the world's population in 200 years. During this time, it has been printed in such vast numbers that no other book in the world has exceeded it.

Seal 3 – Living Creature #3 ~ 1844

“When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, ‘Come!’ I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, ‘Two pounds of wheat for a day’s wages, and six pounds of barley for a day’s wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!’”¹

The third courier sent out from God's throne carries a *message* throughout the earth. I believe the scales indicate that a pre-advent judgment of man has begun. Remember the frightening words written on the wall

¹ Revelation 6:5–6

at Belshazzar's feast? **“You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.”**¹

God weighs the actions of men and women against their understanding of right and wrong. This is how God judges man. For prophetic reasons beyond the scope of this booklet, I believe Jesus began this judgment process in 1844. Beginning with those who have died, He decides who will be saved and who must be destroyed. The work of the third horseman is to inform the world that Christ is judging each person in heaven's temple. As this horseman leaves the throne room, Jesus says: **“Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages, and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!”**

Jesus promises wages to everyone who promotes the message of the third courier. These words are borrowed from the days of Solomon, who offered the servants of Hiram wages to gather material to construct the temple in Jerusalem. **“I will give your servants, the woodsmen who cut the timber, twenty thousand cors of ground wheat, twenty thousand cors of barley, twenty thousand baths of wine and twenty thousand baths of olive oil.”**²

1 Daniel 5:27

2 2 Chronicles 2:10

The parallel is obvious. People who labor on projects that God has ordained are generously paid. The Lord, the King of the universe, owns the whole earth. He is faithful to those who choose to serve Him. For a more comprehensive study on the pre-advent judgment of man and its timing, read Chapter 3 in my book, *Daniel Unlocked for the Final Generation*.¹

Seal 4 - Living Creature #4 ~ Soon to Occur

“When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, ‘Come!’ I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.”²

This courier from heaven brings the Great Tribulation to earth. He implements the horrendous destruction of 25% of earth’s population. He uses God’s four deadly judgments—sword, famine, plague, and wild beasts—to accomplish the slaughter.

God used these same deadly judgments upon ancient

¹ <https://wake-up.org/daniel-prophecy/daniel-3-a-faith-more-precious-than-gold.html>

² Revelation 6:7–8

Israel: **“For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: How much worse will it be when I send against Jerusalem my four dreadful judgments—sword and famine and wild beasts and plague—to kill its men and their animals!”**¹

The Old Testament proves that God sends these four deadly judgments when His patience with us produces no redemptive effect. At that time, God sends overwhelming destruction to deal with the runaway locomotive of degeneracy.²

Act II

The sudden and horrific destruction of billions of people will undoubtedly *wake up* the survivors. In this desperate setting, the great controversy between all nations will be about *how to worship God*. The issue of worship will separate people into two groups—those who worship the true God of heaven and those who worship man’s earthly false God. Remember, the seven seals are like a three-part drama. With the breaking of the first four seals, the four horsemen prepare a global stage. Act II begins with the events that force individuals to choose whom to worship, which leads to the breaking of the fifth seal.

1 Ezekiel 14:21

2 Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 32; Ezekiel 14

Seal 5 – Martyrdom ~ During the Great Tribulation

About five months before the fifth seal, the Devil will physically appear, and, along with his angels, will torture those who refuse to obey him.¹ For five months, Lucifer will intimidate and torture people into submission, but he cannot kill them. Then, Jesus will break the fifth seal, and the sixth trumpet occurs simultaneously. To the shock of many Christians, the fifth seal describes a time when even saints will be martyred.

When the sixth trumpet sounds, the Devil will set up a worldwide theocracy. He will rule the world as King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus will allow four powerful demons to be released to move on the hearts and emotions of wicked people. Satan will attempt to kill everyone who refuses to obey and worship him. Lucifer's forces will kill two groups of people: those who rebel against Lucifer's authority and the saints who refuse to worship him. This is when the martyrdom of the fifth seal occurs: **“And the four angels [demons] who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number.”**²

¹ Revelation 9:5–6

² Revelation 9:15–16, insertion mine

Notice why they perish: **“When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.”**¹ The saints are martyred because they obey God’s Word and remain steadfast in their faith to follow the testimony of Jesus!² The blood of these martyrs cried out in a loud voice for relief and revenge, **“‘How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?’** [Then, God told the martyrs,] . . . **to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.”**³

Seal 6 – The Second Coming ~ The End of the Great Tribulation

The sixth seal includes a display of divine power, brilliance, and glory as Jesus arrives to rescue the righteous and destroy the wicked. Revelation 6:12 indicates there will be a great earthquake. This global earthquake will cause the earth to begin shaking with violent tremors which grow in intensity, ultimately making islands disappear and lev-

1 Revelation 6:9

2 Revelation 13:15

3 Revelation 6:10–11, insertion mine

eling the mountains! **“No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake.”**¹ **“Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found.”**² As Jesus approaches the earth at the Second Coming to deal with His enemies, the sixth seal is broken. The wicked run for cover when they see the majesty and glory of the sinless One whom they despised. The time for mercy has passed, and Jesus slays every one of them.³

Five months before the end of the fourth seal, Jesus allows the Devil and his angels to physically appear. At the sixth seal, when Jesus returns at the Second Coming, He will consume Lucifer’s physical body with fire and return him and his demonic angels to the Abyss, the spirit world.⁴ Jesus will throw the false prophet (another name for Lucifer) and his crisis government (called Babylon, the beast of Revelation 13:1) alive into a lake of burning sulfur. **“The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.”**⁵

Two distinct groups of people will see Jesus appear. The population of earth at this time will be

1 Revelation 16:18

2 Revelation 16:20

3 Revelation 19:19–21

4 Revelation 9:1–3; 20:1–3

5 Revelation 19:20

quite small. Jesus' precious saints who remain alive, clothed with tattered rags, will tremble at His majesty and grandeur as He approaches earth. They will cry out, **“Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in Him; let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.”**¹

A much larger group will also tremble at Jesus' majesty and grandeur, but their trembling will not be joyful. They are captives of fear—fearing justice, exposure, death, and righteousness. **“Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?’”**²

Act III

Seal 7 – The Grand Finale

When the seventh seal is finally broken 1,000 years after the sixth seal, everyone will see the glorious truth about the identity, authority, power, and prerogatives of Jesus. Seven is a perfect number, and the

¹ Isaiah 25:9

² Revelation 6:16–17

seven revelations of Jesus perfectly reveal all that Jesus is. The Father has predetermined this revelation because He wants the universe to see that Jesus is God, just like himself. Jesus has the power, prerogatives, and rights of the Father!¹

Jesus will break the seventh seal at the end of the 1,000 years, when He resurrects every wicked person to stand before the Great White Throne. Remember, most of these people did not see the Second Coming because they were asleep in their graves. Since most of earth's population did not participate in the Great Tribulation, only the final generation will have experienced it. Billions of people have no idea what occurred while they were dead. On this day of resurrection, two distinct classes of people will be present. The saints, a thousand years older, but free of the aging process and any deformity, will see the wicked's miserable and degenerate condition. The wicked will rise from their graves just as they went in.

This is the moment the Father has been waiting for—the moment to reveal the contents of the Book of Life. This will be the only moment in the history of the universe when everyone to whom God has given life will be alive. As the seventh seal is opened, the

¹ Colossians 1:16–19

Father will be exonerated. He will show everyone to whom He has given life that He foreknew each person's choice and gave everyone the freedom to exercise that choice.

Jesus will give a complete account of His judgment to each person. Upon seeing God's love, fairness, and benevolence, each person will bow and confess that God has been more than fair. All created beings will understand that Jesus, the exalted Son of God, loved His creation so much that He was willing to perish to save sinners. As this revelation grips every heart, all will confess that Jesus is to be praised, for He is almighty God!

I close this study of the seven seals with a bit of irony: Everyone will bow before the love, righteousness, and wisdom of Jesus. Those who bow while salvation is available will enjoy life without end. Those who refuse to bow are no different from those who refused to enter the ark in Noah's day.

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