



**The
Book
of
Revelation
Explained**

Volume 2

Earl R. Borders

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of
Revelation Explained**

**Volume 2
Chapters 4-8:2**

Earl R. Borders

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FOREWORD

It is with a sense of deep gratification, yet profound humility, that I present to the church *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume Two*. It is humbling and sobering that the Lord has committed such a great task to such a small man. Jesus said in Luke 17:10, ". . . when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." Certainly those words of our Lord describe our feelings very well.

We have endeavored to set forth these precious truths, because we have a great burden for the saints to have "the eyes of your understanding . . . enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18) and for those who have not had the benefit of seeing these precious truths before that they might be able "to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

In these writings you will notice that in the exposure of spirits and systems that we are expressly explicit. However, it must always be remembered that we are speaking of systems and the spirits that motivate those systems, not individuals. We are not in any way against any individual; our burden in speaking in such a plain manner is prompted by a love for the souls of men. We do not want to see precious souls duped by these spirits and systems that are contrary to the Scriptures. We desire that those who are bound by them will see a revelation of truth and "Come out of her [Babylon]" (Revelation 18:4) and be gathered back to Zion where all the true saints belong.

As nearly as possible, we have attempted to set forth the prophetic truths and aspects of the Scriptures under consideration rather than the practical aspects. We recognize that there are hosts of practical applications which may be derived from the Revelation. However, it has been our intent to set forth their prophetic application. It has been our thought that once one is familiar with the prophetic content of the message, then when they hear a practical application preached, they will have a point of reference to better understand the practical aspect being applied.

I would be remiss if I did not convey my heartfelt appreciation for the tremendous company of dedicated laborers who have made what you hold in your hands possible. The Psalmist said, "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it" (Psalm 68:11). I would like to recognize Sister Sheri Strelecky who has served as the editor for this daunting task. Her untold hours of labor and tireless efforts will only be revealed by eternity and hence can only be rewarded by the Lord. Also, this book would not have been possible without the great host of transcribers, typists, editors, proof readers, and Print Shop staff who each played a vital role in this process. To each of these I offer a heartfelt thank you and am confident that "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name" (Hebrews 6:10).

I want to offer my sincerest thanks and appreciation to Pastor Roger L. Decker. His unwavering support of the truth of the Revelation message has made this publication possible. Without his commitment to the truths contained in this book, it is very doubtful that it would ever have come to fruition. For this I am eternally grateful. I not only count Brother Decker as a faithful man of God, but I am glad to count him as a friend.

So without further adieu, I humbly present for your edification and to the Glory of God, *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume Two*.

Yours in Christ,

Earl R. Borders

Newark, Ohio

January 2006

PREFACE

You will notice that *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 2*, begins with Chapter 4, not Chapter 1 and ends with Chapter 8, verse 2. This is to correspond with the chapters in Revelation that deal with the seals series. Chapters 1-3 cover the seven letters to the seven churches of Asia and are explained in *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 1*.

These books are divided in this manner for ready reference sake. Thus, when studying a chapter in the Book of Revelation, you will turn to the same numerical chapter in *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 1* or *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 2*.

The Time Delineation of the Revelation

There are seven series in the Revelation. They carry us from the morning-time portion of the Gospel Day to the evening time or the seventh-seal period of time. The Revelation retraces the Gospel Day seven times. It does this by taking us (through the vehicle of these series) through the seven periods that comprise the Gospel Day. It portrays the seven spirits of God carrying the truth into all the earth (Revelation 5:6; 1:20). The seven letters to the seven churches of Asia describe the predominant spiritual condition during each period of time.

| | A.D. 33 | A.D. 270 | A.D. 530 | A.D. 1530 | A.D. 1730 | A.D. 1880 | A.D. 1930 |
|--|----------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| | Ephesus | Smyrna | Pergamos | Thyatira | Sardis | Philadelphia | Laodicea |
| 1 (Chapter 1 is an introduction to Series One) | C. 2 | | | | C. 3 | | |
| 2 (Chapters 4 & 5 are an introduction to Series Two) | C. 6 | | | | | C. 7 | C. 8:1-2 |
| 3 | C. 8:2-13 | | | | C. 9 | | C. 10 |
| 4 | | C. 11 | | | | | |
| 5 | C. 12 | C. 13 | | | | C. 14 | |
| | | | | | | C. 15 | |
| | | | | | | C. 16 | |
| | | | | | | C. 17 | |
| | | | | | | C. 18 | |
| | | | | | | C. 19 | |
| 6 | C. 20 | | | | | | |
| 7 | C. 21:1-8 | | | | | C. 21:9-16 | |
| | | | | | | C. 22 | |

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The New Covenant and What It Produces

Revelation 4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

A Door Opened in Heaven

Revelation, Chapters 2 and 3, contain the seven letters to the congregations in proconsular Asia, which are representative of the entirety of the Gospel Day. Since the Laodicean epistle (the seventh candlestick age) completed the Gospel Day, the scene has changed in Revelation, Chapter 4. Keep in mind that the Book of Revelation teaches in a manner known as parallelism. In other words, Christ takes one through this Christian dispensation in the form of the seven letters, and in each letter He emphasizes special aspects of that period of the Gospel Day. Then, He begins another series to accent another facet of truth. This is done repeatedly until the picture is complete. This is not totally unique to the Book of Revelation, for Jesus used this same manner of teaching in Luke, Chapter 15, where He related three accounts that teach the same basic truth: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. These accounts are vivid examples of how Jesus employed parallelism as a manner of conveying the truth.

Revelation, Chapters 4 and 5, basically introduce us to the opening of the seven seals, which begin in Revelation, Chapter 6. This in no way minimizes the value or prophetic merit of Chapters 4 and 5, because they roll back the veils of time and give a glimpse of eternity. They also portray the intricate design and institution of the spiritual realities that we so freely enjoy today.

Revelation 4:1 says, "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven . . ." This must have been a scene that afforded John great pleasure. To understand why, recall that the physical setting of our Scripture text is John banished to the Isle of Patmos. He was unable to minister in the manner in which he was accustomed. No doubt he was praying as the Apostle Paul did when he penned Colossians 4:3, which says, "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance." Here was the great Apostle John, that beloved disciple, with seemingly every door shut to him. Man had placed him in a position where he was cut off, where every door was shut, but as he "looked . . . behold, a door was opened in heaven." Though man had put him in a position where he was cut off, though the outlook was bleak, the uplook was vastly different.

When all other doors are shut, the door of divine revelation can still be open. This is why we, as God's people, are repeatedly instructed to "lift up your heads" (Luke 21:28) and to "lift up your eyes" (John 4:35). Do not get your eyes on the level of circumstances lest you become engulfed by them. Peter learned this in Matthew 14:27-30. As long as he kept his eyes focused on Christ, Who is the truth (John 14:6), he was above all the surrounding circumstances. However, as soon as his vision dropped to a human level, he was engulfed by circumstances.

John saw "a door," representing an access or opportunity. Jesus said in John 10:9, "I am the door." Certainly, He is not literally a door, but He merely meant, "I am the access, the mode of entrance." When Paul prayed for a door of utterance, he was crying out for an opportunity, for access to a people. Remember, this vision is figurative. So here in Revelation 4:1, John saw an opportunity made available. What was the opportunity for? Well, where was this

opportunity? Verse 1 goes on to say it was "in heaven," letting us know that this scene took place in an exalted position (Ephesians 2:6), or in a spiritual position. This is borne out with the call to "come up."

After John saw this "door," he penned, "And the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me." This is a figure of the voice of Christ (Revelation 1:10-11; 22:13, 16). What was His message? Revelation 4:1 says, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." Here we gain this insight: if one is to gain a real vision of truth, he or she must spiritually move from an earthly position to a heavenly one. Truth cannot be perceived on the low plains of the earth (humanity); it requires communication with the Divine Source. According to Hebrews 12:2, "the author and finisher of our faith" is Jesus, and Revelation 4:2 tells us His Agent is "the spirit." It still takes the Spirit and a reliance upon Him to understand divine realities. John could have missed viewing this entire scene if he had not been sensitive and responsive to the Spirit.

Also, in Revelation 4:1 John gave an indication of the prophetic setting. He wrote of the "things which must be hereafter." Bear in mind that Chapter 3 completes one series and Chapter 4 introduces another. Christ was rolling back the curtain of eternity, starting the prophetic scene over, returning to where it all began. Where is that? Revelation 4:2 tells us, "Behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne." The beginning of this Gospel Day and the plan of redemption that began it had its ultimate conception in God. It was God who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). God is the Supreme Monarch. He is always pictured, as Revelation 4:2 portrays, on "the throne." Here again is a term with which a studied Hebrew would be familiar. The Prophet Micaiah said in 1 Kings 22:19, "I saw the LORD sitting on his throne." The Prophet Isaiah saw Him and declared in Isaiah 6:1, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up." In the Revelation, the throne of God is mentioned in almost every chapter, showing that God stands back of each of these truths as its ultimate Designer and Administrator.

Many times in looking at the redemption aspect of the Gospel Day and in viewing Christ and His work, we fail to realize that God, the Father, was the Administrator, the ultimate Sovereign, behind the plan. Revelation 19:6 declares, ". . . for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." When time shall be no more, and Christ sits down, it will be God who will reign. Look at 1 Corinthians 15:25, which says, "For he [Christ] must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." First Corinthians 15:28 tells us, "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

It was God who stepped upon the stage of action and uttered the first Messianic prophecy of the Bible (Genesis 3:13-15), and it was God who "so loved the world that he gave" (John 3:16). Jesus, in the parable of the wicked husbandmen, said in Luke 20:13, "Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son" In Galatians 4:4-5 the writer said: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son . . . To redeem" Who designed and instituted this? God! It is only fitting that when Christ, through the Spirit, showed John a vision, in the first scene he saw the "he" (verse 3) in that heavenly position was representative of God. Why? Because this is where it all began. *He* is the source of it all. It also portrays the ultimate authority. Throughout this chapter, we also see a portrayal of God's order in the church. First, we see described the position of "The Lord God omnipotent" (Revelation 19:6).

John's Vision of the Glory of the Lord

Let us notice what John saw. **Revelation 4:3** says, "**And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.**" Let me dispel one thought that often looms to mind. John did not see a vision of God personally. In Exodus 33:20 God said that "there shall no man see me, and live." Thousands of years later John penned in his Gospel account, "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18). In 1 John 4:12, subsequent to coming off Patmos, again John declared, "No man hath seen God at any time." If he did not see God, what did he see? The prophets caught a glimpse of the same vision. Let us see how they described it.

Ezekiel 1:26-28 tells us: "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when

I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake." Here Ezekiel beheld a very similar scene to what John saw. What did he describe the appearance as? He said in verse 28, "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD."

Let us look a little closer and find where this glory is housed. Ezekiel's rendering spoke of "a sapphire stone," which was "the colour of amber." In Ezekiel 8:2, a portrayal of the same type of scene, he said, ". . . as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber." In **Revelation 4:3** John wrote, ". . . like a jasper and a sardine stone." Both of these visions were related in terms of brilliant light. Ezekiel was dazzled by the radiant light that flashed from these precious stones. Certainly, there is a significance in these stones (which we shall get to shortly), but just as an overview, these stones are a scene of light. John taught in 1 John 1:5 that "God is light." The epistle to Timothy described God as "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto" (1 Timothy 6:16).

The Psalmist spoke of God as He "who coverest thyself with light as with a garment" (Psalm 104:2). What is the picture? The vision John saw, in Ezekiel's words, was "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD" (Ezekiel 1:28). Why is it that when ones try to view God, all they see is the glory? The reason is that He covers Himself "with light" (Psalm 104:2). Why is this important? The design of salvation is to get this light and glory from God to man, and a vast part of the Revelation is the vision of how God accomplishes this. Was He successful? Certainly so! When John saw "the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Revelation 21:9), the first feature that he saw he described as "having the glory of God" (Revelation 21:11). He went on to say that "her light was like unto a stone most precious."

Back in **Revelation 4:3** we see that this glory and light began with God. Then God's desire was to get it down to man. How does He accomplish this? **Revelation 4:3** says that "**there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.**" Here is a symbol that is very familiar in the Scripture: "**there was a rainbow.**" What is this emblematic of? In Genesis 9:13 we are first introduced to this figure. God said, "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token [one rendering says, 'I put my rainbow in the clouds, and it shall be a symbol'; a symbol of what?] of a covenant between me and the earth." This bow, or "**rainbow,**" represented a covenant. But in **Revelation 4:3** this "**rainbow round about the throne**" was "**in sight like unto an emerald.**" This one had a different cast to it. The difference was that while it was a "**rainbow,**" it also was "**in sight like unto an emerald.**" This was something new. The rainbow is a symbol of a covenant, and this "**rainbow**" had something that was new, teaching us that this represents a new covenant.

When Christ came forth, in the dawning of the morning of the Gospel Day (Revelation 6:2), He "had a bow." He came forth with the new covenant (the New Testament) in the morning time of the Gospel Day. Hebrews 9:15 declares that "he [Christ] is the mediator of the new testament." Hebrews 8:6 says that "he is the mediator of a better covenant." So, this rainbow round about the throne portrays the new covenant and where it began—about the throne. It started in the mind of God Himself.

The Seven Colors of the Rainbow

Let us consider this "**rainbow.**" We have already discovered that Ezekiel saw this same vision and described it in Ezekiel 1:28. It reads, "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about." This shows that the brightness, the glory of the Lord, is contained in this bow, the new covenant. What makes up a rainbow? A rainbow consists of seven colors, the biblical number for perfection, or completeness. Every time a rainbow is formed, it will have the same seven colors, and they will appear in the same order. These seven prismatic colors are the colors from which all others are formed. Each of these seven colors represents a part of the covenant, a divine attribute of the covenant, and also symbolizes one of the seven periods of the Gospel Day.

Revelation 4:5 mentions "**the seven Spirits of God,**" denoting that this passage must have a prophetic setting. It is a picture of a message going forth during the seven periods in which these "**seven Spirits of God**" work. Also, these seven prismatic colors are the same seven colors that appear in the stones in the high priest's breastplate (Exodus 28:17-21) and that are described in the foundations of the wall of the city (Revelation 21:19-20).

Let us look at the seven colors of the rainbow. They are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. These colors are constant; they do not vary in appearance or in order. These seven colors were in the high priest's breastplate, and as such, each represented a tribe of Israel. Exodus 28:21 verifies this. It says, "And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel [Jacob] . . ." Exodus 39:14 says, ". . . every one with his name, according to the twelve

tribes." Let us compare the colors of the rainbow with the corresponding stones in the breastplate and in the wall and perhaps the tribe it represented, to see the divine attribute of the covenant portrayed and discover the candlestick age they represent.

RED: First is the color red. This was the sardius stone in the breastplate (Exodus 28:17), and in the foundation of the wall of the city (Revelation 21:20). Also, red is a dominant color in John's description of the throne scene in **Revelation 4:3**, which says, "**And he that sat was to look upon like . . . a sardine stone.**"

This stone was blood red in color. In the new covenant, red represents the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The outermost color on the rainbow is red, teaching that the outermost thing is the blood. One must first come through the blood before he can go any further. The tribe this stone represents is the tribe of Judah, the tribe through which Christ came. The first thing one must do is understand why Christ came, understand His sacrificial work and His shed blood. This stone also symbolizes the first period of time (from A.D. 33 to A.D. 270), the morning time of this Gospel Day, for Christ's blood was shed during this period. In **Revelation 4:3** John described "**a sardine stone,**" portraying the great sacrificial price that was paid to purchase our salvation. The high premium that was expended is ever before God and in His presence. God does not count it a light thing when people have "trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing" (Hebrews 10:29). This verse also shows us that the blood is a vital part of the covenant.

ORANGE: The second color is orange. It is comparable to the onyx or sardonyx stone (Exodus 28:20; Revelation 21:20). Bear in mind that the stones referred to in that day were not necessarily as they are today. In ancient times, the onyx was a fire-like orange color. Fire represents the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:3-4 says: "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Orange, fire-like brilliance is also a portrayal of the brilliance of a "day dawn" (2 Peter 1:19). The tribe represented by the color orange is the tribe of Asher, which means "blessed." The period of time represented here is a period when many of God's people were going into bondage or apostasy (from A.D. 270 to A.D. 530). The name *Asher* reveals that those who held true to Christ and truth in an era of apostasy were indeed blessed. So here we have a day dawn (2 Peter 1:19), those who have the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3-4), which is life (Romans 8:10), and contrasted with those going into bondage or apostasy.

The literal sun is only brilliant orange when there is darkness all around—at dawn. Accordingly, during this candlestick age, spiritual darkness was gathering around. This was a transition period in the Gospel Day, and an apostasy was taking place. Yet, right in the midst of it were a people who had a "day dawn," a people to whom the "Sun of righteousness" had arisen (Malachi 4:2). Right in the midst of gathering darkness, these people had light and life. Here we can see a picture of that divine attribute of the faithfulness of God (Lamentations 3:23). It is a vital element of the covenant. Numbers 23:19 says, "Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

YELLOW: The next color is yellow, which corresponds with the beryl stone (Exodus 28:20), a brilliant yellow stone. The tribe it represents is Dan, which literally means "judgment," or "he that judges." The time frame is that which is referred to as the Dark Ages (from A.D. 530 to A.D. 1530). The brilliant yellow is a picture of a beautiful, precious, golden light and a people who were blessed to see this light. This was an era when darkness was the prevailing condition. Yet, God in His faithfulness sent judgment forth to His people. He allowed them to have understanding and even put judgment on the system they faced. In the letter series (Chapters 2 and Chapter 3), we dealt with the negative aspects of the Dark Ages—Satan's seat (Revelation 2:13), the doctrine of Balaam, idols, and fornication (Revelation 2:14). However, in this scene He was balancing the picture and showing the other aspect of this era of time.

While light in the natural is radiating brightly to one side of the earth, darkness fills the other side. While one side basks in rays of sunlight, the other side is enshrouded in darkness. So it was in the Dark Ages. God prophesied and said, "I will cause the sun to go down at noon" (Amos 8:9). While this was the prevailing condition, there were fifty to sixty million martyrs who were blessed to see the light. Some say that there was no light in this age, and in the sense of a public message, there was no light. Yet, the martyrs had light. How do we know? Because "God is light" (1 John 1:5), and they had God. Though the predominant condition was darkness, the saints had golden light! Those whose names were written in the Book of Life did not worship the beast, Roman Catholicism, which held sway during the Dark Ages (Revelation 13:8).

The Apostle Paul taught in 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness." He said that *the brethren* are all the children of light, not of the night nor of darkness. The martyrs did not die grisly, horrifying deaths during this time period because they did not have any spiritual light; but they were

persecuted because light clashes with darkness and has no fellowship with it (2 Corinthians 6:14). The predominant condition of the era was darkness, and people who can see light when darkness is all around are a blessed people. This shows the persistence and preciousness of light and truth and the strength it provides to God's people.

GREEN: The next color of the rainbow is green, which correlates with the emerald (Exodus 28:18; Revelation 21:19). This is a bright green color without any mixture. The tribe it represents is Reuben, which means "see a son." Green is a very soft, appealing color. It stands for the mercy of God, by which alone we can meet the purity and justice of God. It portrays not only an essential element of the new covenant but the one that is centermost to the covenant. There are three colors on each side of green in the rainbow. Mercy is the most central doctrine of Christianity. It is the motivating force and all-encompassing virtue that has enabled men to receive the others.

Verse 3 of our Scripture passage says, "**There was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.**" When John looked upon "**the throne, in sight**" it was "**like unto an emerald.**" The "**emerald**" represents mercy, and all around the "**throne**" the primary sight is mercy. This is the overshadowing characteristic of the new covenant. In the Old Testament they "died without mercy" (Hebrews 10:28), but the New Testament declares, "God . . . is rich in mercy" (Ephesians 2:4). When you study the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-11), you will see nine listed, and "blessed are the merciful" is the centermost beatitude, with four on each side of it. Again, this is reinforcing the truth that mercy is the centermost doctrine of Christianity. As stated earlier, the tribe represented by this stone is Reuben, meaning "see a son." So we see that those who receive mercy and have a burden to have others receive it will cause those to "see a son," or get a vision of what Christ can do for them. Certainly, the opposite is true as well—if there were no mercy, there would be no vision of Christ.

This color of green symbolizes the Lutheran era, or the period of time from A.D. 1530 to A.D. 1730. During the Dark Ages, the prevailing condition was one of harshness, persecution, and martyrdom, but the message of the Lutheran era was a message of mercy. Salvation by faith (Romans 1:17; Ephesians 2:8-9) was put back in the midst of the people in a public manner. This era restored the vision of Christ as a Savior.

BLUE: The fifth color in the bow is blue, which connects with the stone of sapphire (Exodus 28:18; Revelation 21:19). It is next in hardness to the diamond. The intense blue of the sapphire has made it, in all ages, the natural symbol of heavenly purity. The tribe represented by this stone was Simeon, which means "hearing with acceptance." This portrays the Wesleyan era, from A.D. 1730 to A.D. 1880, when the message of purity and holiness was restored. One must truly have a hardness and firmness to maintain purity. Those who will enjoy this purity must have "hearing with acceptance." They must have an ear to hear "what the Spirit saith" (Revelation 3:6) and continue to "walk in the light" (1 John 1:7) to maintain this purity.

INDIGO: Sixth in order of color in the rainbow is indigo, which relates with jasper (Exodus 28:20; Revelation 21:19). There are two varieties of this stone, violet and bluish gray. Jasper corresponds with the tribe Naphtali, which means "my wrestling." Here we have a combination of colors, symbolizing the sixth seal (A.D. 1880 to A.D. 1930), or the sixth candlestick age, which had received the evening-light message and a revelation of many previous truths. They did not have just a single message as other eras but a combination of the truth of them all. During this age, they had the message on salvation or justification by faith, the message on holiness, and the message on the unity of God's people. In this era there were many who accepted holiness, but there was great "wrestling" over the message to "come out of her" (Revelation 18:4). Though many embraced it and came "to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads" (Isaiah 35:10), many others wrestled with the message. In this time frame Christ was bringing together a people. We can see this by studying Revelation 1:7 and Matthew 24:30-31.

VIOLET: Seventh, and last, the innermost color is violet. This corresponds with an amethyst (Exodus 28:19; Revelation 21:20), and the tribe that it represents is Benjamin, which means "son of the right hand" and "reigning." When Christ, the "son of the right hand," has been formed in us (Galatians 4:19), then we through Him "shall reign in life" (Romans 5:17; Revelation 5:10). In this seventh-seal period of time, God has a victorious people. They are a people so great that John called them "a great multitude, which no man could number" (Revelation 7:9). It goes on to say that a "multitude" is comprised of "all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." God, in this seventh and final period of time, has brought His people to full victory. He is calling His saints out of sectarian religion (Revelation 18:4), and He is amassing His people under the leadership of Christ. Thank God, this is not something that has been done in a corner, but as Daniel 2:35 says, it has "filled the whole earth."

Seven Colors Denote Perfection

Colors are very special in the Word of God, especially as figurative representations. Consider how particular the Lord was in His instruction for building the old tabernacle in the wilderness, in the specific colors of all the various articles (see Exodus, Chapter 26). This was all by divine design for a purpose. (It is the same with the sacerdotal vestures in Exodus, Chapter 28.) Consider Joseph, a type of Christ, and his coat of many colors (Genesis 37:3). We have found in God's Word that the rainbow is spoken of numerous times. The rainbow has seven colors, and these same colors were in the breastplate of the Old Testament high priest as well as in the New Testament foundations of the wall. Also, these colors represented various tribes of Israel (Exodus 28:21).

Although, as a whole there were twelve tribes, they were broken down into four major divisions. (Numbers, Chapter 2, will substantiate this point.) In these seven colors that we have studied, there are representatives of all four of the major divisions of Israel. It is a picture of completeness, representing a complete transition from the old to the new, and it portrays a new covenant that the new Israel can enjoy in this Gospel Day. This **"rainbow"** in **Revelation 4:3**, consisting of seven colors, denotes perfection or completion, with each color depicting an attribute of the new covenant.

Notice that the colors are portrayed as one bow (**Revelation 4:3**), a **"rainbow"**—letting us know that they are all parts of a whole and that we must have each of these attributes working in our lives to be complete and to shine as He desires that we do. Must we do this to truly shine, to truly please God, and to be pure? Well, look at these prismatic colors again. Science tells us that all seven of these colors together produce white. These attributes are all elements of our white robe, our righteousness (Revelation 19:8). Without any one of these, our garment will not be white. These seven lights together form pure white light and denote completeness. These seven attributes of the seven eras together form the purity of the evening-time church and portray the completeness of the message. Also, you can only see this **"rainbow"** in light; you cannot see it in spiritual Babylon.

Bear in mind, as we look back to our text in **Revelation 4:3**, it was this new covenant and the attributes that it consists of that God ordained to use as the vehicle to get light and glory from God to man. It enabled them to share in common those divine elements that make fellowship possible between God and His people. In order to make this a possibility and a reality, the first thing that had to be established was a new covenant. Hebrews 8:6 declares that "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" was instituted.

Symbols From the Old Economy

Revelation 4:4 says, **"And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting . . ."** After viewing the **"throne"** scene in **verse 3**, the brilliance that God dwells in and His plan to convey to man the new covenant, the next episode that we see is a portrayal of divine order and the agents employed to implement the new covenant. Now, we must recall that John was very familiar with the old Hebrew economy. He was even known by the high priest (John 18:15). So much of the imagery here refers to the old economy. He speaks of **"four and twenty elders"** (**Revelation 4:4**), **"seven lamps"** (**Revelation 4:5**), **"a sea of glass"** and **"four beasts"**—the Greek renders it as four "living creatures" (**Revelation 4:6**). All of these are references to the Old Testament.

Let us examine **Revelation 4:4**. First, John spoke of **"four and twenty elders."** Keep in mind that we are dealing in figurative expressions. First of all, let us recall that God had formulated a new covenant, and it had been instituted by a "Lamb as it had been slain" (Revelation 5:6), which we will consider in more detail when we get to Revelation, Chapter 5. Now this covenant must be conveyed to mankind. The plan, or the covenant, was initiated by One who **"sat on the throne"** (**Revelation 4:2**). It was instituted by the supreme price of "a Lamb as it had been slain" (Revelation 5:6).

This Lamb is representative of Jesus Christ (John 1:29). Now it must be conveyed to mankind. Romans 10:14 verifies this necessity. Paul penned, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" Some may say that the Holy Spirit "will reprove the world of sin" (John 16:8). Yes, He will, but look closer. How does He do this? John 16:7-8 states: ". . . for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, [Where? Unto you.]

he will reprove the world of sin." How? Through you! That is where He is. There must be a human agency employed for the Spirit of God to work through. Our Scripture text portrays this as well.

The "Four and Twenty Elders"

Before we see the "**seven Spirits of God**" (verse 5) appear, we first see "**four and twenty elders**" (verse 4), showing us that the Holy Ghost must first have something to work with. In Romans 10:14 Paul declared, ". . . and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Thus to convey the Gospel, or the new covenant, to mankind, God must have men, or *preachers* as Paul penned it. The Spirit of God must have a ministry through which He can work.

In 2 Corinthians 3:5-6 we are told: ". . . but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament . . . of the spirit . . ." Is this who "**the elders**" are that **Revelation 4:4** is speaking of? Look at the Apostle Peter's words in 1 Peter 5:1. He said, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder . . ." Here the Apostle Peter spoke of himself as being an elder. The Bible speaks of elders in Acts 20:17, telling us that Paul "called the elders of the church." Paul had instructed Titus to "ordain elders in every city" (Titus 1:5).

What is the function of an elder? The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 5:17, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour." Here we gain an insight into the function of an elder. Not only are they preachers, but they are to rule as well. In this age of independent spirits, this is contrary to what many feel. However, Hebrews 13:17 admonishes, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: [Some may say that means the civil authorities. No! He goes on to tell us:] for they watch for your souls." Also, Hebrews 13:7 says, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God." This is one who has spiritual rule or authority. Does our Scripture text teach this? Look at **Revelation 4:4**. It states, "**And round about the throne were four and twenty seats** [the Greek says 'thrones']."

Notice several truths here. These "**elders**," figures of the ministry, were round about the throne. A true ministry is close to God; they have an audience with God; they "hear the word at my mouth" (Ezekiel 3:17). The ministry is pictured as between the people and God. They "stand in the gap" (Ezekiel 22:30). They are portrayed as the closest to God and to the covenant. This is foreign to modern thinking, but a true, God-called man is going to hear and receive the truth before the people do. Why? It is his responsibility to give it to the people.

We have in Revelation, Chapter 4, a description of divine order. The Source, "The Lord God omnipotent" (Revelation 19:6), is He that "**sat on the throne**" (**Revelation 4:2**). Next, He formulated a "**rainbow**," emblematic of the new covenant. Then it had to be instituted, so "in the midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain" (Revelation 5:6), representing Jesus Christ (John 1:29). Paul also mentioned part of the divine order when he wrote, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ . . . and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3). But in **Revelation 4:4**, the divine order is brought down further: "**And round about the throne** [close to God, in His presence] **were four and twenty seats** [the Greek says 'thrones']: **and upon the seats** [or thrones] **I saw four and twenty elders sitting . . .**" The "**elders**" represent the ministry, and the "**elders**" are to rule.

The "**thrones**," which are what a ruler rules from, are where these "**elders**" are sitting. What does this mean? These are the ones who sit in authority. These are the ones who have "the rule over you" (Hebrews 13:17). If this new covenant is to operate as designed, God's people must recognize the fact that there are ones who are over them in the sense of authority. First Corinthians 14:40 says to "let all things be done decently and in order," and to have order there must be authority. Otherwise, who would keep order? Thus, the ministry must "preach the word." If some will not respond to that properly, then the one who has the rule must "reprove, rebuke" (2 Timothy 4:2). We each want order, but to have order we must have government, and to have government we must have governors.

Why was the figure of "**four and twenty**" employed in **Revelation 4:4**? This refers back to the old Levitical priesthood. In 1 Chronicles 24:7-19 there were twenty-four courses of the Old Testament Jewish priesthood. First Chronicles 24:2 says, "But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children: therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office." Verse 4 adds, "Among the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen chief men of the house of their fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar according to the house of their fathers." The sixteen plus eight equaled the twenty-four courses of priests.

First Chronicles 24:5 says, "Thus were they divided by lot . . . for the governors of the sanctuary, and governors of the house of God." So, we see these twenty-four courses of priests were the "governors of the house of God." This

is the type; now let us get the antitype. What is "the house of God" in this dispensation of the new covenant? First Timothy 3:15 plainly tells us, "The house of God . . . is the church of the living God." In one sense, these **"four and twenty elders"** (**Revelation 4:4**) are the governors of the Church of God! They are those who are seated in authority.

Crowns of Gold

Let us look at why the number twenty-four was used. In 1 Chronicles the number twenty-four represented the entirety of the priesthood: those who were "in their service" (1 Chronicles 24:19) and those who were "in the service of the house of the LORD" (1 Chronicles 23:32). Likewise, these twenty-four **"elders"** represent the entirety of the ministry throughout this Gospel Day, those entrusted as "faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). How do we know that they are faithful men? **Revelation 4:4** says they were **"clothed in white raiment."** This **"raiment"** that is "clean and white . . . is the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:8). These were men who had "put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). They could cry as Paul, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Because of their purity, their faithfulness, and their calling, **"they had on their heads crowns of gold"** (**Revelation 4:4**).

What are these **"crowns of gold"** on their **"heads"**? Bear in mind that we are dealing in symbols. **"On their heads"** means "on their minds." There is always something weighty, yet precious, on their minds. What was it? **"Crowns."** What are these figurative of? Paul penned to the Thessalonian brethren, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" (1 Thessalonians 2:19). The Prophet saw this as well when he wrote in Isaiah 62:2-3: "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness [this is a New Testament setting] . . . and thou shalt be called by a new name . . . Thou shalt also be a crown of glory . . ." Who is the "thou" that verse 3 refers to? It is those who have a new name, those who have salvation according to Isaiah 62:1. In Philippians 4:1 the Apostle said, "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown . . ." The saints are likened to a crown, and there is nothing more precious to a pastor than his people. They are ever on his mind. He feels the weight of his responsibility. This is why Revelation 4:10 says that the ministry "cast their crowns before the throne." A true ministry feels the weight and is constantly bringing their people before God.

In Revelation, Chapter 4, a faithful ministry was commissioned to take this new covenant to men. Some may say, "Shouldn't we see the Spirit first? In the Scripture text, the ministry is commissioned first." This is a prophetic portrayal, and this is the exact manner in which Jesus implemented the Gospel Day. He called the twelve first (Matthew 4:18-22); next He commissioned them (Matthew 10:1 and Luke 9:1-2); and then, when there was a ministry in place, they were told they would receive the Holy Ghost (John 20:21-22).

"Four and Twenty" Is a Multiple of Twelve

Another reason for the **"four and twenty"** mentioned in **Revelation 4:4** is because this is a multiple of twelve. There are other multiples of twelve in the Book of Revelation: "twelve thousand" (Revelation 7:5-8); "an hundred forty and four thousand" (Revelation 7:4 and Revelation 14:1); "twelve thousand furlongs" (Revelation 21:16); and "an hundred and forty and four cubits" (Revelation 21:17). What is the significance of twelve? Jesus said, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" (John 11:9); "the sons of Jacob were twelve" (Genesis 35:22); and then there were "the twelve tribes of the children of Israel" (Revelation 21:12), which represented God's people in the Old Testament era. Twelve denotes entirety. Twelve hours were the entire day; twelve sons were Jacob's entire family; and the twelve tribes were the entirety of old Israel.

Joshua was instructed in Joshua 4:2 to "take you twelve men out of the people." He was to command those men, "Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan . . . twelve stones" (verse 3). Finally, he told them to take "every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel" (verse 5).

Twelve not only represents entirety, but it represents those who were saved from Egyptian bondage and the wilderness and were able to enjoy Canaan. In the New Testament, God's people are referred to as "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (James 1:1). Today God's people are those who have been set free from spiritual Egypt (sin's bondage) and are able to enter into an experience of full salvation. Thus, twelve denotes an entirety as well as a reference to our salvation. Romans 11:26 tells us, "And so all Israel shall be saved." Old Testament Israel was comprised of twelve tribes, and Canaan was their salvation from the wilderness. In type, this represents God's people

of the New Testament and our salvation from sin. Twelve is a figure of entirety and denotes entire salvation. Also, on a corporate level, it denotes an entire transition from old to new.

A multiple of twelve, such as the **"four and twenty"** in our text, also means to multiply, or to amplify. It shows that these men, the ministry, were responsible to amplify or multiply salvation. And they did. Acts 6:7 says, "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied" This happened because of prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4). God's people in the Old Testament were literally only the twelve tribes. The Gentiles were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). However, through Christ "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17), and a transition has taken place.

The Ministry Is Entrusted With a Powerful Message

Now, "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29). The new Israel is comprised of "as many as walk according to this rule"(Galatians 6:16). What is that? It is being "a new creature" (Galatians 6:15). This is the New Testament Israel of God. The old could be numbered: David numbered Israel in 2 Samuel 24:2-10. However, the New Testament Israel is "a great multitude, which no man could number" (Revelation 7:9). The New Testament is greatly multiplied or amplified. Acts 6:1 states, "And in those days . . . the number of the disciples was multiplied." Throughout the Revelation, multiples of twelve are used to show the superiority of the new covenant over the old. As in the case of the **"four and twenty elders" (Revelation 4:4)**, it is used to show an entire transition from the old ministry, those who were "of the letter," to those who are "of the spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:6). There are those who feel that the old patriarchs or prophets are a portion of this picture. Keep in mind, this is to be a figurative representation, not a literal scene, and the whole order of imagery here is to use the old to convey the new, and the twenty-four is spoken of as a unit. Though it takes us into eternity, it is eternity past, to show us the formulation and institution of the new covenant.

Next, let us look at the vehicle that they were entrusted with to produce a people of God. **Revelation 4:5** says, **"And out of the throne [in other words, from God, of divine origin] proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices."** This represents the message that the ministry is entrusted with. The figures of **"lightnings and thunderings"** represent God's voice. Look at Exodus 19:16, which says, "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings." Exodus 19:19 says, "And God answered him by a voice." Job 37:4-5 declares: ". . . he thundereth with the voice of his excellency God thundereth marvelously with his voice" John 12:28-29 says: "Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered" Thunder is commanding. Sharp peals of thunder are arresting. They get your attention. The **"thunderings"** spoken of in **Revelation 4:5** are a picture of a ministry entrusted with a powerful, commanding, arresting message.

With thunder comes lightning. "The entrance of thy words giveth light" (Psalm 119:130). When this message from the voice of God, or the Word of God, is proclaimed, men gain light. They can see clearly what their understanding was dark to before. Paul said in Ephesians 4:18 that there are those who have their "understanding darkened." So, if lack of understanding is darkness, then light is gaining understanding. Thus, the ministry is entrusted with a strong, commanding, powerful message that brings light, or understanding, to men.

The Sea of Glass Is the Word of God

What is at the core of the Christian message that has such a strong effect on men? Let us read Revelation 4:6 and see what the message was. It says, "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal" Here is another scene that John was familiar with. This sea of glass, or the brazen sea (2 Kings 25:13; Jeremiah 52:7), was more commonly called the laver (Exodus 40:7). The laver was constructed of brass (Exodus 30:18) and was polished to the place that when ones looked upon it, they saw a clear reflection of themselves. It was placed between the tent of the congregation and the altar (Exodus 40:7). The only article of tabernacle furniture before this was the brazen altar, where the sin offering for atonement was made (Exodus 29:13).

Jesus Christ offered one sacrifice for sins forever (Hebrews 10:12). The sacrifice was Himself (Hebrews 9:26). Because of that, we have access to the laver, and every man can truly see himself as he is (James 1:23-24). This glass,

or the sea of glass, is a figure of the Word (James 1:22). It is when we see ourselves as we truly are and see the Sacrifice that was given that we can be cleansed. The Psalmist portrayed this cleansing in Psalm 119:9, which states, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." Thus, the laver, the sea of glass, is the Word of God. The message that the true ministry is entrusted with is "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). The powerful message is that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). This is the message that resounds in Revelation 4:6 "like unto crystal." This is the clear message, a precious message, and one that the true ministry in all eras have proclaimed. In many eras, they may not have had much understanding, but in all times they heralded this message. It was not always the predominant public message, but nonetheless it was preserved. We know this because **Revelation 4:5** says, ". . . **there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.**"

In each of the seven periods that comprise the Gospel Day, the Spirit of God has been working. One of this Divine Agent's functions was to keep light burning throughout each period of time. There were "**seven lamps of fire,**" denoting the facet of the Holy Ghost's ministry that perpetuates light. The Holy Spirit has perpetuated this new covenant and allowed men to partake of it and have fellowship with God in every age of this New Testament dispensation. This new covenant was committed to a faithful ministry, and as the Spirit anoints and leads this ministry, they are able to declare a clear message that produces a godly people in every age of time.

An Introduction to the Seals Series: Agents of the Covenant

Revelation 4:6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

The Four Beasts

Revelation 4:6 says, ". . . and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind." To clarify this further, let us look at a more detailed description in **Revelation 4:7-8**: "**And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him . . .**" The word rendered *beasts* in the King James Version is actually rendered "living creatures" in the original Greek. The actual Greek word is *zoon* and is totally distinct from the Greek word *therion*, which means "wild beast," and is the Greek word used in Revelation, Chapter 13, and other places throughout the Apocalypse. The word *zoon* is found approximately twenty times in the Book of Revelation and comes from the Greek word *zoe*, which is "life," and it means "living creatures."

Ezekiel caught a glimpse of this vision and gave an insight into how these creatures were produced and what they represent. Look at Ezekiel 1:1-14, which reads: "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him. And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also, out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.

"And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning."

Let us examine these verses. Verse 1 tells us that "the heavens were opened, and I saw visions." Ezekiel was seeing visions just as John did. Verse 4 says that "a whirlwind came out of the north." What does "the north" represent? Job's writings tell us. In Job 37:9 we read, "Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north." "The north" represents a cold condition. When John the Baptist came on the scene, Israel had not heard from God since the Prophet Malachi. Daniel, in his prophecy of the seventy weeks (Daniel 9:24-27), spoke of three score and two weeks, or sixty-two weeks, with each week representing seven years (Genesis 29:27 and Ezekiel 4:6). Sixty-two times seven equals 434 years. These were the 434 years when man did not hear from God in a public message, the time from Malachi to John. Israel was then a cold place, spiritually. Jesus said, "But in vain they do worship me [that period of silence moved them to where they were], teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

Jesus also said, "For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (Matthew 23:4). He called them "whited sepulchres . . . full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27). Matthew 4:16 says, "The people which sat in darkness saw great light." These people were in gross darkness. They were in a very cold spiritual state. They had no compassion and no reality; they made merchandise of the people and were very cold and calculating indeed.

Ezekiel 1:4 says, "A whirlwind came out of the north." Yet, Job's writings teach us that "out of the *south* cometh the whirlwind" (Job 37:9). Now this is what is natural. So in Ezekiel we are seeing something that is contrary to nature. It is not natural, but rather supernatural. What is this emblematic of? Well, read a little further in Ezekiel 1:4. It says that "a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself." To understand what this represents, look at Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind [here is the whirlwind Ezekiel spoke of], and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost . . ." Fire is emblematic of the Holy Spirit, and the whirlwind portrays the Holy Spirit's powerful advent on the Day of Pentecost.

Living Creatures Are the Redeemed

Next, let us notice what the Holy Spirit produced on the Day of Pentecost. Ezekiel 1:5 says, "Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures." We see the first of these "creatures" coming into view in Acts 2:41, where we read, "The same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." They were produced when the Holy Spirit became available to mankind. It could not have taken place previously because these are "living creatures." Romans 8:10 teaches that "the Spirit is life," and in 2 Corinthians 3:6 Paul told us that "the spirit giveth life." Ezekiel wrote in Ezekiel 1:12, "Whither the spirit was to go, they went." These "creatures" are living; they have life; and they have the Divine Agent that produces it—the Spirit. This prophecy has a New Testament setting.

Why are they called "creatures"? Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Some may think that these are supernatural, or celestial, beings, but Ezekiel 1:5 says that "they had the likeness of a man." These "living creatures" represent people. To understand what type of people, look at the song they sing in Revelation 5:7-9: "And he [Christ] came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts [the Greek calls them 'living creatures'] and four and twenty elders . . . sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood . . ." These "living creatures" are those who have been redeemed by the blood and are now new creatures in Christ Jesus. They are not celestial beings, for celestial beings do not have "the spirit" (Ezekiel 1:12).

The "four living creatures" (Ezekiel 1:5) represent the redeemed of all ages, or the entirety of the redeemed ones of new Israel. How do we know? Notice their faces. (One is identified by the face.) Ezekiel 1:10 states, ". . . they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle." Notice John's description in our Scripture text (**Revelation 4:7**): "**And the first beast [the Greek says 'living creature'] was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.**" Here are the same four faces.

Numbers, Chapter 2, tells us that all of old Israel was separated into four major divisions that encamped on the four sides of the old tabernacle. Each division consisted of three tribes, and each had a predominant tribe. Each division had its "own standard, with the ensign of their father's house" (Numbers 2:2). A standard, or ensign, is merely a banner

or a flag. Numbers 2:3 speaks of "the standard of the camp of Judah," which history tells us was a lion. Jacob prophesied, "Judah is a lion's whelp" (Genesis 49:9).

Numbers 2:10 speaks of "the standard of the camp of Reuben," which was a man. Jacob's prophecy tells of Reuben acting as a natural man would act. He said, "Thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch" (Genesis 49:4 and Genesis 35:22). Next is "the standard of the camp of Ephraim" (Numbers 2:18), which was a calf. In Moses' final blessing, he said in Deuteronomy 33:16-17: ". . . let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph . . . His glory is like the firstling of his bullock . . . and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim [Joseph's son, who became a tribe]." Lastly, "the standard of the camp of Dan" (Numbers 2:25) was an eagle. These were emblems that Ezekiel and John, as Hebrews, were both very familiar with. These four divisions represented all of Israel, the entirety of the people of God, in the old dispensation.

Where Are the Old Testament Brethren?

In our Scripture text we see these emblems put in the setting of the new covenant to portray an entire transition from the old to the new. As these four ensigns represented all of the old Israel, so these "four living creatures" represent all God's people under this "new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20). These "creatures" are the redeemed of all ages. But where are the Old Testament brethren? We must remember that "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24). The legal era was a pointer, not an end in itself. It was designed to point men to the coming of Christ, but did not bring deliverance in the Old Testament dispensation. The Apostle Paul penned in Galatians 3:22, "But the scripture [the Old Testament] hath concluded all under sin," and Romans 6:23 tells us that "the wages of sin is death."

What about before the Law? Romans 5:14 says, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses." What is the picture? The vision Ezekiel was seeing of these "living creatures" was a vision of the Gospel Day, just as it was in Ezekiel 36:26-27, where he penned: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." This is a definite, prophetic doctrine concerning the Gospel Day. The Spirit of God was not available until after Christ was glorified (John 7:39) and neither was the new heart. Much of Ezekiel's vision portrayed truths that were realized in the Christian dispensation.

What about the Old Testament brethren? Under the old economy there was no rest from sin. There was no spiritual life because death reigned. Provision was made for these brethren once every year. Hebrews 9:7 says on the Day of Atonement that "into the second [room of the tabernacle] went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people." When this was performed, they gained a year's reprieve from their sins. Hebrews 10:3 says, "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year." So, continually, every year, they rolled their sins ahead for another year. Why? Because Hebrews 10:4 says, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

There was no saving merit in those old sacrifices or in the blood that was shed. Rather they did this with faith "on him which should come" (Acts 19:4). It was accounted to them as justification. They were justified men. However, the Law "can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Hebrews 10:1). So the first thing that Christ's work accomplished was to remit the "sins that are past" (Romans 3:25), and He enabled "the spirits of just men [to be] made perfect" (Hebrews 12:23).

Under the old economy, the people's sins were rolled ahead each year, until they were rolled up to Christ. Then, Christ remitted the "sins that are past" (Romans 3:25). These men were "just men." Genesis 6:9 says, "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations." Yet, Hebrews 9:9 says they "offered . . . sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." They still had a "conscience of sins" (Hebrews 10:2). Jesus enabled the "spirits of just men [to be] made perfect" (Hebrews 12:23). This is why the "church of the first born" is referred to as "the general assembly." Just as a state legislature is called this because both chambers are in session, the church is called this because it is comprised of both the Old Testament and the New Testament brethren.

In Matthew 8:11 Jesus said that "many [of the New Testament brethren] . . . shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom." (Also, see Luke 13:28-29.) They are in the general assembly. Hebrews 11:40 teaches us "that they without us should not be made perfect." This means that the new covenant had to be instituted to perfect the Old Testament believers. That which has perfected and taken away the sins of people in the New Testament is what

perfected and took away the Old Testament brethren's sins as well. Thus, all the sins of the Old Testament brethren were rolled up to Christ, to the morning time, and this is why **"the first beast was like a lion" (Revelation 4:7)**. This was the era in which the King appeared, and the lion is the "king of the beasts." The morning time was a time full of victory. Revelation 6:2 says, "He went forth conquering, and to conquer." In this era, truth became militant, a predator, as a lion. Christ devoured the Old Testament brethren's sins and imperfections and brought them right into the morning time of this Gospel Day. So, in this sense, they are a part of this first "living creature." All things both old and new are met together in Jesus Christ. The focal point of all history is Jesus Christ and His atoning work. The answer to the question "Where are the Old Testament brethren?" is, they were brought in, just as we are, by Jesus Christ.

What Do the "Four Living Creatures" Portray?

Keep in mind the context of this passage of Scripture that we are viewing—the new covenant and what it produces. The setting is essentially the New Testament. Christ is using the old as imagery to convey the new. Now what do these **"four beasts" (Revelation 4:6-9)** or living creatures portray? We have found they are the antitype of the entirety of *old* Israel, so they are the entirety of *new* Israel. In order to picture the entirety of the new Israel, you must incorporate the entire Gospel Day. They picture the redeemed of all ages in this Gospel Day. Four creatures are viewed because, as earlier stated (Revelation 1:4), the Christian era is broken down into four major epochs, with these emblems symbolizing the nature that was predominant in each epoch of time. **Revelation 4:7** says, **"And the first beast [the Greek says 'living creature'] was like a lion."** As previously mentioned, this represents the morning-time church, a conquering, militant era. Proverbs 28:1 says, "The righteous are bold as a lion."

The **"second beast"** was like a **"calf" (Revelation 4:7)**. This **"calf,"** or Ezekiel 1:10 says "ox," was an animal of sacrifice. In Leviticus 9:2 Moses told Aaron, "Take thee a young calf for a sin offering." Verse 4 tells us why: "to sacrifice before the Lord." Numbers 7:88 says, "And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace offerings . . ." So this **"calf,"** or ox, portrays that era when, because of sin, God's people were sacrificed. A time when Revelation 12:11 says, "They loved not their lives unto the death" and also when "the woman [was] drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Revelation 17:6). This was the period of time when the blood of the saints was poured out, that period of fierce persecution under pagan Rome and that which led to and included the Dark Ages.

Next, we read in **Revelation 4:7** that **"the third beast had a face as a man** [this was the time in the Gospel Day when the saints were under man rule, human domination, and bondage that included both the papal and the Protestant eras and the dark and cloudy day (Ezekiel 34:12)], **and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle."** The **eagle** is the only creature that can look straight into the sun. This portrays a movement back toward light. This is a move toward the bright evening light (Zechariah 14:7). This also has been a trait of the redeemed in all ages. One cannot be firmly definitive in establishing the assumptions of the natures or characteristics the saints assumed as many of them are overlapping in their time of operation.

The Apostle Paul penned in 1 Thessalonians 5:6, "Let us watch and be sober." John, as a part of the redeemed, cried in Revelation 22:20, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." How can the redeemed be ready when He comes? **Revelation 4:8** says, **"They were full of eyes within."** This merely means the redeemed follow the Apostle's injunction in 2 Corinthians 13:5, which states, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." The redeemed do not have their eyes on their brothers, but their **"eyes"** are turned **"within"** to constantly maintain their own spiritual experience.

Seraphims and Cherubims

Let us look a little further at these "four living creatures" of **Revelation 4:7**. **Revelation 4:8** declares that they **"had each of them six wings."** To see why John used this description to portray the redeemed, let us look at another picture where these six-winged creatures are portrayed. Isaiah saw them in Isaiah 6:2. He said, "Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings . . ." The Hebrew word for seraphims is *saraph*, which means "burning" from the root "to set on fire." Now, what is the significance of the **"wings"**? Let us look at what they did. Isaiah 6:2 continues, ". . . with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." This is a type of the saints, those who are truly burning, on fire, who guard what they see and what they view. They guard their minds. This is why Isaiah said "he covered his face."

The saints are careful in their walk. They are careful to "walk in the light" (1 John 1:7), and to "walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25). This is why "he covered his feet." The end of Isaiah 6:2 says, ". . . with twain he did fly." This kept him above the world, pure and undefiled, "unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). So here we find a picture of the redeemed, holy in their thoughts, holy in their walk, and holy in their victory over this world. This is why they could cry in Isaiah 6:3, as well as in **Revelation 4:8, "Holy, holy, holy."** Why? Because their holiness was threefold: they had victory within (face), victory without (feet), and victory over others ("he did fly"). John used these descriptions in **Revelation 4:7-8** to give the antitype, or reality, of what was portrayed, in more detail, in these animal descriptions of the Old Testament.

Note Ezekiel 1:6 and 8. These creatures were described as this: "every one had four wings. . . . And they had the hands of a man." In **Revelation 4:8** they **"had each of them six wings."** While this may seem contradictory, the facial descriptions, and many other points, let us know that we are speaking of the same entities. So the differences in the number of wings must be for a distinct reason. Ezekiel's vision emphasized the human element. Ezekiel 1:5 says that "this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man." Ezekiel wanted to establish that they were a people. In Revelation, John showed them as having **"wings."** He wanted to establish that these were a product of the new covenant and that this was not of the natural but of the divine.

Ezekiel 10:15 is rendered, "And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar." Here the "living creatures" are identified as "cherubims." The Hebrew word from which "cherubims" comes from is *chaoth*, which means "the living ones." It comes from a root word, which means "a brilliant appearance." Ezekiel used cherubims to portray the redeemed. The "cherubims" are entrusted "to keep the way of the tree of life" in Genesis 3:24; and in conjunction with the "cherubims" Genesis 3:24 speaks of is a "flaming sword." Jesus is the way (John 14:6), and He is the "tree of life." Proverbs 3:13 and 18 say: "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom . . . She is a tree of life . . ." Now, who is wisdom? First Corinthians 1:24 says that "Christ [is] the power of God, and the wisdom of God." So Christ is the "tree of life," and it is the saints who work in concert with the flaming sword. Contrary to common assumption, this verse does not say the sword was in their hands. Actually, the Hebrew text reads, "the flame of the sword turning itself." This teaches us the sword may operate in conjunction with the redeemed, but that it is still under divine control, not in the hands of men.

Hebrews 4:12 tells us that the "twoedged sword" represents the Word of God. Just as the "cherubims" were "to keep the way of the tree of life," so are we, as saints, to work in conjunction with the Word of God, to show mankind that there is a way, and that they can have life. However, they must come by the sword, and there are some things they must be willing to keep. Cherubims are pictured as God's manner of conveyance. Psalm 18:10 says, "And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly." Second Corinthians 6:16 tells us that "God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Thus, the saints are God's manner of conveyance to a lost and dying world. There are many places He would like to go, but it is up to you and me to take Him there.

In the old tabernacle, God was pictured as fellowshiping with the people "from between the two cherubims" (Exodus 25:22). This is a picture, in type, of God dwelling and fellowshiping in the midst of His people. The seraphims, cherubims, and living creatures are all a picture of the people of God, the redeemed. Exodus 25:20 states, "Toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be." In all ages, God's people have looked toward Jesus Christ, the One through which God is able to fellowship man by manifesting His mercy, "the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

Revelation 4:9-10 says: **"And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne . . ."** When a true man of God sees his people praising God and living victorious lives, he is able to bring those people before God and "do it with joy, and not with grief" (Hebrews 13:17). We must remember that these **"crowns"** are symbolic. They were on the brow of **"the four and twenty elders"** (the ministry). This symbolizes something always on their minds. What is always on a true pastor's mind? His people. Thus, **"crowns"** represent the people, the congregations. In Philippians 4:1 Paul wrote to "my brethren dearly beloved . . . my . . . crown." In 1 Thessalonians 2:19 he asked, "For what is our . . . crown . . . ? Are not even ye . . . ?" These **"crowns"** are a people. The symbol of the **"elders"** casting **"their crowns before the throne"** is nothing more than a portrayal of prayer, the ministry bringing their people before the throne of grace.

Lastly, **Revelation 4:11** says, ". . . for thou hast [past tense] **created all things, and for thy pleasure they are [present tense] and were created.**" Why did he employ the present tense "**they are . . . created**"? What is He still creating? Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [the Greek says 'creation']." The message is still being heralded by the elders, and the Spirit is applying it to men's hearts. All who receive it are new creations, created for God's pleasure that He might have the pleasure of fellowshiping those who have been made "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). No doubt there are many other truths incorporated within this chapter, and many other practical applications could be given, but I have attempted to create as strict a contextual view of this chapter as possible. In this chapter, we have seen a vision of the Designer of the covenant, we have viewed the covenant itself, and we have seen the agents of the covenant, those who have produced it in all ages.

An Introduction to the Seals Series: Preparation for Understanding

Revelation 5:1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

"A Roll of a Book"

This chapter portrays an introductory portion to the series of the seven seals. The veil of eternity is rolled back, and here, in figures, is a vision of eternity past. We know this because in **Revelation 5:6** the predominant character is "**a Lamb as it had been slain.**" The Apostle Peter taught in 1 Peter 1:20, "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world . . ." First Peter 1:19 reveals that he was speaking of "Christ, as of a lamb [However, at this time, none of the seals were loosed, and there "**stood a Lamb,**" according to **Revelation 5:6, "in the midst of the throne."** This predates Christ's incarnation. So in figures, or symbolic expressions, we are looking at eternity past.] without blemish and without spot." This Scripture text contains a glimpse of eternity past and of a plan being formulated in the counsel halls of eternity. This "**book**" referred to in **Revelation 5:1** does not, in and of itself, represent the plan of salvation, but rather the entire scene is a portrayal of the elements and the implementation of this plan of salvation and how it was brought to this time world and the destiny of the church it would produce. This "**book**" is much more inclusive than some may view it.

In verse 1 John penned, "**And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.**" We have already discovered who the "one" that "sat on the throne" is (Revelation 4:2). It represents God (Revelation 20:11-12). Let us consider this "**book**" mentioned in verse 1. In the

Greek manuscript this was rendered as "scroll," or "roll." There is a valid reason for this. In the ancient world, down to the second century A.D., the form of literary work was the roll, not the book. Again, this was an allusion back to the old economy, with which a Hebrew would be familiar.

Ezekiel 2:9-10 reads: "And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe." Ezekiel viewed the same scene that John saw. Ezekiel called it "a roll of a book" (Ezekiel 2:9). Let us biblically establish the identity of this "roll of a book." In Ezekiel 3:1 he was commanded, "Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel." The Prophet was instructed to eat this roll and go speak. This indicates that the roll must contain a quality that gives man something to speak.

Let us read on in Ezekiel 3:2 and 4: "So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll . . . get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them." When he said in Ezekiel 3:2, "I opened my mouth," what was it that he was taking hold of? What was it that he was putting into his mouth? It was that which God called "my words" (Ezekiel 3:4). Isaiah's prophecy confirms this. In Isaiah 59:21 God said, ". . . my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth . . ." Speaking to Jeremiah, God said, "Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth" (Jeremiah 1:9). The same vision that Ezekiel received concerning the eating of the roll, John received as well, in Revelation 10:8-11. In Revelation 10:9 and 11 he penned: "Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up . . . he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again . . ." John was given something that would enable him to "prophesy again." He was given the same thing that Ezekiel was given—God's Word.

Look at what Ezekiel 2:10 says this roll contains: ". . . there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe." Someone may say, "Do you believe that this portrays God's Word?" The Apostle Paul said in Romans 1:16-18: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ . . . For therein [in the Gospel] is the righteousness of God revealed . . . [Also] the wrath of God is revealed . . ." The Gospel, or God's Word, contains both "the righteousness of God" and "the wrath of God."

In the past there were those who held that this "**book . . . sealed with seven seals**" (**Revelation 5:1**) was the plan of salvation. If indeed it were salvation, is salvation in seven parts? If complete understanding did not come until the seventh seal, what position were those ones in who were saved in previous eras? Revelation, Chapter 4, shows that God was faithful to people in every period of the Gospel Day. No matter how spiritually dark the time, they had a clear message on salvation, even though it may not have been generally a public message.

To understand what this "**book**" represents, we need to see what it is we are getting an understanding of. Revelation 10:7 says that "the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." Matthew 26:56 tells us what God declared to the prophets. It says, "But all this was done, that *the scriptures* of the prophets might be fulfilled." The Apostle Paul let us know what was "declared to his servants the prophets" (Revelation 10:7). Romans 1:1-2 says: "Paul . . . separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his *prophets* in the *holy scriptures*.)" God declared His Word unto the prophets, and those words were set in writing and became Scriptures. That is what God's people are gaining understanding of.

A Sealed Book

To further understand this "**book**," let us look at what the "**seven seals**" represented. The word "**seals**" in this text is the Greek word *sphragis*, and it portrays the idea of "security and postponement of disclosure until a destination is reached." In other words, the seal kept the contents secure from those who were not to receive it. It also gave admission to those who were destined to receive the contents. What do the "**seals**" symbolize? Paul penned in Ephesians 1:13, "Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Here it is plain that the "**seals**" are the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:30 also substantiates the fact that the Holy Spirit is the seal because there the Apostle Paul recorded, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are *sealed* unto the day of redemption." It is the Holy Spirit who is entrusted with truth, and He withholds it securely from some and reveals it to others. Jesus said in John 16:13-14: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . . for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." The Holy Spirit, as Christ's Divine Agent, is the One who unseals the truth to God's people. In Ephesians 1:17-18 we find that it is through "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened . . ."

Ephesians 3:5 states, "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." What the Spirit reveals is given to the Apostles and Prophets. Romans 1:2 tells us it is "in the holy scriptures." Revelation, Chapters 4 and 5, take us into eternity past, unveiling the plan of God, the new covenant, its institution, and its agents. Chapter 5 begins by mentioning a "**sealed**" "**book**." Jesus had to prevail to unloose the "**seven seals thereof**" in **verse 5** because the "**seals**" are the Spirit. Until the "**Lamb**" was "**slain**," the Spirit of God could not be loosed, and until He was loosed, men could not see spiritual realities or gain understanding.

Let us look at some prophecies concerning this sealed "**book**." Isaiah penned in Isaiah 29:11, "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed . . ." This "book that is sealed" is the vision of all. Then Isaiah gave a prophecy. In verse 18 he said, "And in that day . . ." This is a prophetic phrase. The antecedent of the pronoun "that," in this and many other verses in Isaiah's writings, is found in Isaiah 2:2, which mentions "the last days," speaking of our day. Isaiah 2:2 says, "And it shall come to pass in *the last days*, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Biblically, what period of time does this refer to?

First Peter 1:19-20 says: "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." In A.D. 63-65, when this epistle was penned, Peter considered himself in "*these last times* [present tense]." Hebrews 1:1-2 says: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in *these last days* spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." This lets us know that Jesus ushered in the last days.

Again, Isaiah 29:18 says, "And in that day [the Gospel Day] shall the deaf hear the words of the book [here are words the deaf can hear], and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness." What kind of Word is this that the deaf can hear and the blind can see? Isaiah 29:24 tells us, "They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine." This is, as Isaiah 29:11 says, "the vision of all [or] . . . a book that is sealed." It is doctrine. Now, biblically what is doctrine? Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture . . . is doctrine." Doctrine is *all Scripture*. So the "book that is sealed" (Isaiah 29:11) is all Scripture or the Word of God.

Let us look at another prophecy. Daniel was told in Daniel 12:4, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." We are now in that "time of the end." The Gospel Day is, scripturally speaking, that "time of the end," or the end of the world. The Hebrew epistle substantiates this in Hebrews 9:26, saying, ". . . but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Since Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice for sins in A.D. 33, biblically this is when the end of the world commenced. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:11, "Now all these things happened unto them [the Old Testament brethren—1 Corinthians 10:1-10] for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world *are* [present tense] come." This New Testament dispensation is the last dispensation in human history.

The Book Represents All Scripture

"The time of the end" (Daniel 12:4 and 9) is this Gospel Day. It is in this day when "many shall run" (Daniel 12:4). First Corinthians 9:26 declares, "I therefore so run . . ." First Corinthians 9:24 speaks of us as "they which run in a race." Paul wrote of those who "did run well" in Galatians 5:7, and the Hebrew writer enjoined us to "run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). So, the prophecy definitely has reference to our day, the Gospel Day, and in our day "knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4). To understand this, read Daniel 12:9, which says, "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." Then Daniel 12:10 says, "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

Knowledge will be increased because the wise shall understand. This was not so when the words were closed up and sealed "till the time of the end" (Daniel 12:9). Yet now, we are no longer in that time when they are "**sealed**." Now "**the Lion of the tribe of Judah . . . hath prevailed to open the book**" (**Revelation 5:5**). This "**book**" was closed under the Old Testament dispensation. Men were natural men. They could not understand spiritual realities. They could not understand God's Word. But by the "**Lamb**" being "**slain**" (**Revelation 5:6**)—a picture of Jesus Christ (John 1:29

and 1 Peter 1:18-19)—the Spirit has been loosed, and He can abide in our hearts. He can give us an understanding and knowledge of the precious truths of God's eternal Word.

To confirm that the "seals" represent the Spirit, look at **Revelation 5:6**. It states, ". . . in the midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Here the "seven eyes" are the "seven Spirits of God." It is only through the Spirit that one can see spiritually. Christ is the One who loosed the "seven seals"; He is the One who loosed the Spirit of God that causes us to gain understanding. In John 16:7 Jesus said, ". . . for if I go not away, the Comforter [John 14:26 tells us the Comforter is the Holy Ghost] will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Jesus promised, "I will send the Comforter unto you." In a symbolic picture in Revelation 8:5, Christ performed the sacred role of the high priest. When "the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth," it was a portrayal of Christ sending the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost. This proves that it was Christ who loosed the Holy Spirit, who made Him available to mankind. When **Revelation 5:1** speaks of a "book," that "book" represents all Scripture—the Word of God—and the "seven seals" are a picture of the "seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God" (**Revelation 5:6**).

Let us look a little closer at this "book written within and on the backside" (**Revelation 5:1**). Ezekiel said this as well, in Ezekiel 2:10, which reads, ". . . it was written within and without . . ." The significance is that it was written on two sides of the parchment. The two sides portray the same thing as the "twoedged sword" (Hebrews 4:12). The Word of God is composed of two parts or two covenants—the old covenant, which is the Old Testament, and the new covenant, which is the New Testament.

Why was the "book" sealed with "seven seals?" For the same reason there are "seven Spirits of God" (**Revelation 5:6**). This represents the complete giving of understanding as it came in portions down throughout the Gospel Day. **Revelation 5:2** states, "And I saw a strong angel [Because the 'Lamb' was 'slain,' we may have the Spirit of God. Yet, if people are ever going to catch a vision of truth as John did, there must be a strong ministry. The Greek word for "strong" is *ischuros*, which means "mighty." This was a mighty angel. This is the same Greek word that was used in Revelation 10:1 and Revelation 18:21, and in each case it portrayed the evening-time ministry.] **proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?**" The reply is in **verse 3: "And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon** [the Greek says 'to see it']."

The key here is the words "no man." This lets us know that human efforts are fruitless. This book is divine. It came from "the right hand of him that sat on the throne" (**Revelation 5:1**). Man cannot prevail to do what only the divine can do. In John 7:46 the officers cried, "Never man spake like this man." Matthew 7:28-29 says: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

No Man Was Worthy to Open the Book

So, we find that "no man in heaven [even in the divine realm], nor in earth [the human realm, the living], neither under the earth [no man who was dead], was able to open the book [or see the truth], neither to look thereon" (**Revelation 5:3**). Man was devoid of salvation, devoid of the Spirit of grace, and no other man in the same condition could bring the remedy, could make truth available to mankind. When John saw this scene, he said in **Revelation 5:4**, "And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon [the Greek says 'to see it']." John said that **no man was found worthy**, and here we gain insight to why no man was able. **Revelation 5:2** asks, "Who is worthy?" Man's worthiness is based on his moral worth. Concerning mankind, Isaiah 53:6 states, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." No man has that moral worth.

Romans 3:23 declares, "For all have sinned." This is why John "wept much." He realized man's utter unworthiness, morally and spiritually. **Revelation 5:5** says, "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold [God's ministry has a message for those who are bereft of comfort, to those who see no hope; they can point mankind to], the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David [who], hath prevailed . . ." Jesus was the One who had the moral worth. Second Corinthians 5:21, speaking of Christ, says, "who knew no sin," and according to Hebrews 4:15, He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Who is the One who "hath prevailed to open the book,

and to loose the seven seals thereof"? He is **"the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David"** (Revelation 5:5). Revelation 22:16 tells us who this is. It says, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David . . ." So, these figures, in **Revelation 5:5**, are nothing more than representations of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 5:1-5 is a portrayal of John longing for the things of God. John had been privy to many intimate moments with Christ and had received a great deal of truth from Him firsthand. Here he was confronted with a closed, **"sealed" "book"**; nothing can be more trying to one who desires truth in the inward parts. The scene was compounded by **"no man [being] . . . able to open the book"** (Revelation 5:3). However, the beauty of the scene is that God prepared it. He designed it that way to portray the bleak condition of mankind, how man is totally unable to grasp or receive truth without divine intervention. Then, once this startling, yet disheartening, truth strikes home, He rolled back the curtain to reveal the masterpiece of His plan—Jesus Christ—who not only *can* but **has prevailed**. He is the "one mediator between God and men" (1 Timothy 2:5), and through His work (portrayed in **Revelation 5:6**), He has also enabled "all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

In this vision John went from a dismal scene—mankind devoid of understanding—to one of triumphant glory—man being able to receive glorious revelations of truth from God's Word. Mankind went from being devoid of the Spirit of God to having Him "teach you all things" (John 14:26). A Conqueror appeared, a Lion came on the scene, and the course of human history was forever altered. Man can now have God's Word, and through the Spirit be able to understand the truth.

There is a prophetic aspect to these **"seals."** In the loosing of these **"seals"** (gaining understanding throughout the Gospel Day), there are prophetic truths. There is much opposition to the church. This is all contained in the Word of God. The Scriptures contain what we need to have understanding of, and the Spirit's guidance is to provide insight and direction, whether individually or collectively. Much of what we see, as each seal is loosed, is a prophetic picture, but bear in mind that where people in any age gained understanding, it was based on the Word of God and on the Spirit of God.

In **Revelation 5:6** the central figure of the **"throne"** scene is introduced in a very vivid figure. **Revelation 5:6** states, **"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts [the Greek says 'living creatures'], and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain . . ."** Here, portrayed explicitly, is the truth that everything is centered around the Lamb. Indeed He is the central figure in this scene, for if the **"Lamb"** had not been **"slain,"** there would be no need of the elders to herald it, and there would be no living creatures to enjoy it. It was His atoning work that enabled the Spirit of God to be made available and to be sent forth.

Horns Denote Power

Let us look a little closer at this **"Lamb as it had been slain."** The idea of Christ as the Lamb is one of the great characteristic ideas of the Revelation. In the Revelation Jesus Christ is called the Lamb no fewer than twenty-nine times. The writer of the Revelation wished to underline a point from the Greek that shows that this was a new concept. The Greek word that the Apostle John used for **"Lamb"** is not used of Jesus anywhere else in the New Testament. In other places in the New Testament where Jesus is spoken of as a Lamb (John 1:29, 36 and 1 Peter 1:19), the Greek word is *amnos*, whereas the word that John used here is *arnion*. *Arnion* is the word used in Jeremiah 11:19, which says, ". . . but I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter." The distinction is this: *amnos* points directly to the *fact* of Christ's sacrifice, whereas *arnion* shows that it was *wrought*. *Arnion* not only shows the grisly mutilation of the slaughter but the victory, power, and work that were wrought by it. In this scene the **"Lamb"** still bears the marks of having been slain. These serve as eternal reminders of the supreme price that has been paid.

Revelation 5:6 describes the **"Lamb"** as **"having seven horns."** What do the **"horns"** symbolize? Zacharias prophesied of it in Luke 1:69, when he cried, "And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." The term *horn* denotes power. In Old Testament imagery a horn signifies sheer power. In Moses' final words to Israel (Deuteronomy 33:17), he said, ". . . his horns [of Joseph] are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth . . ." Joseph is a type of Christ. Ephesians 1:10 declares, ". . . he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." First Kings 22:11 says, "And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these

shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them." The wicked are admonished in Psalm 75:4 to "lift not up the horn."

The horn is also portrayed, in imagery, in Daniel 8:3-7. Here, concerning the ram and the he goat, the Scriptures employ these horns to draw from the literal manner in which these creatures do battle, face opposition, and subdue their opponent. So it is with Christ. He came with **"seven horns" (Revelation 5:6)**, which denote complete, omnipotent power. Jesus cried in Matthew 28:18, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." When the **"Lamb as it had been slain" (Revelation 5:6)** instituted salvation, He came prepared to do battle. In Revelation 12:1 the morning church is portrayed in her pristine glory. In verse 3 there appeared an opposing force (Revelation 12:3).

Further on, Revelation 12:7 states that "there was war in heaven." When Jesus came to institute salvation, He said, "Think not that I am come to send peace . . . but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). He came prepared to do battle. He is "the captain of their salvation" (Hebrews 2:10). There would be no need of a captain if there were no warfare; there would be no need of power if there were no opposing force. So, part of the significance of these **"seven horns"** is that "it is the power of God" (Romans 1:16).

To understand where the power is vested we need to see where these **"seven horns"** were located. **Revelation 5:6** speaks of a **"Lamb having seven horns."** The **"horns"** were part of the **"Lamb,"** and the **"Lamb"** represents Christ. We read in John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word . . ." John 1:14 states, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:17 tells us, ". . . but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Who is the Word (John 1:14)? John 1:17 tells us that it is "Jesus Christ." To carry salvation victoriously through the Gospel Day in the face of all opposing forces requires the power of the Word. It is the Word that enables God's people to face every foe victoriously. It is His Word that "for ever . . . is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89). It is His Word that "is a lamp unto my feet [it lets us know where we are], and a light unto my path [it gives understanding of where the way we are following will lead us]" (Psalms 119:105). It is His Word that is omnipotent. "The word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Peter 1:25).

Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." His power is vested in His Word. The Apostle Paul taught that "the gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). There are **"seven horns"** and seven periods. The **"horns"** represent the power of the Word that the **"Lamb"** has employed to do battle, face opposition, and subdue hostile forces in order to bring salvation and maintain it in every period. Luke 1:69 refers to "the horn of salvation." These **"horns"** also represent salvation and what it takes to obtain and maintain it in the seven periods of the Gospel Day. Here, in a figure, is one of the two vital agents that must be utilized to have victory in any period of time—the Word of God.

Spiritual Eyes Needed to Truly See

Revelation 5:6 next mentions **"seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God."** We can see this picture in prophecy in Zechariah 3:9, which says, "Upon one stone shall be seven eyes." Who was this stone? Peter told us, in 1 Peter 2:4, that Christ was "a living stone," and 1 Peter 2:6 says that He is the "chief corner stone." Ephesians 2:20 confirms who this is: "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." These **"seven Spirits"** were dealt with in Revelation 1:4. However, here in **Revelation 5:6** they are mentioned to show the other necessary agent to have victory in this Gospel Day. The **"seven Spirits"** are likened as **"seven eyes [an omnipotent 'Lamb'] and seven horns [denoting complete, perfect, unequalled, or unexcelled, omnipotent power]."** No matter how mighty the warrior, how omnipotent the **"horns,"** or the weapon, without **"eyes"**—without knowing where the foe is, or what type of foe it is—the mightiest warrior with the most powerful weapon is useless. So is one who has only the Word at his disposal.

Consider the mighty Samson. When he lost the Spirit of God, he lost his sight, and when he lost his sight, that mighty warrior was useless and was easily led away captive (Judges 16:20-21). We must have the Holy Spirit as well as the Word. The New Testament is "not of the letter, but of the spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:6). The Holy Spirit is our spiritual eyes. It is through Him that we know not only what is lawful but what is expedient as well. We must be reminded that the Word of God is the "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17). Only He knows how to properly administer it. No doubt entire volumes could be penned on this point of truth, but suffice it to say that these **"seven Spirits of God"** are brought forth here to complement the Word of God working throughout the seven periods of this Gospel Day.

Prayer Brings and Looses Understanding

In verse 6 we see, centermost, the One who made it all possible: **"a Lamb as it had been slain" (Revelation 5:6)**—Jesus Christ. Those charged to convey this blessed event to mankind, "the four and twenty elders" (Revelation 4:10), are the ministry. Those who had been glad recipients of the vicarious work of the **"slain" "Lamb,"**—"the four beasts [or the Greek says 'living creatures']"—are the saints. The divine agents enabling this to continually be a reality throughout the Gospel Day are the Word and Spirit. The **"book"** and the **"seals,"** the Word and the Spirit, were brought down from the unreachable corridors of Heaven to the grasp of man by Jesus Christ.

After Christ **"had been slain" (Revelation 5:6)**, then **"he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne" (Revelation 5:7)**. It was not until after the sacrifice was made and the price was paid that Jesus took the **"book."** Prior to this time He uttered such statements as that found in John 3:12, which says, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" and "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13:7). Also, Jesus said in John 16:12, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Understanding could not be loosed until after the supreme price was paid and He had been **"slain."**

Notice, in **Revelation 5:7** John wrote the words **"he came."** After Christ was slain, where did He come from? Acts 1:9 and 11 say he was "taken up . . . into heaven." Jesus said in John 16:28, "I leave the world, and go to the Father." So when our Scripture (**verse 7**) says, **"And he came [a picture of His ascension] and took the book out of the right hand of him,"** whom did He take the **"book"** from? John 16:28 tells us that it is "the Father." **Revelation 5:8** states, **"And when he had taken the book [after His ascension], the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb [they fell down because they had], . . . golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints."** Psalm 141:2 shows this as well. This portrays that prayer was taking place prior to any of the seals being opened.

Prayer is what brings and looses understanding. When Christ had ascended back to Heaven but had not yet loosed the seals, what were the saints doing? "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:14). Bear in mind that here in **Revelation 5:8** there had not been any seals loosed. This did not begin until Revelation 6:1. So, here we are viewing where the eternal realm and the human realm meet. They meet through the avenue of prayer. Redemption's price had been paid, but understanding had not yet been given. They were still very literalistic in their views. They asked in Acts 1:6, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" They had been instructed to "wait for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4). They accordingly waited, and as they waited, they **"fell down before the Lamb" (Revelation 5:8)** and "continued . . . in prayer" (Acts 1:14). As they did this, something took place.

Revelation 5:9 tells us that **"they sung a new song."** Acts 2:4 tells us how: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." It is still through the office of prayer that the eternal realm and human realm meet. It is still through this avenue that eternal realities become human realities, that man is put in a position to be ready to receive divine truth and understanding. **Revelation 5:9-10** shows a people in a condition for understanding to be given and portrays what that spiritual condition is.

A Song of Deliverance

Again, **Revelation 5:9** declares, **"They sung a new song . . ."** This denotes a new experience, an experience with real victory. It was something they had not had previously. The Psalmist employed the same phrase in Psalm 40:3, which says, "And he hath put a new song in my mouth [what is it?], even praise unto our God: many shall see it . . ." Here is a song people *see* rather than *hear*. What is this verse actually saying? Look at the preceding verse. Psalm 40:2 tells us, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock . . ." This is a clear expression of what happens in salvation. It is a portrayal of victory.

Why is it described as a **"new song?"** Because we are "new creatures" (2 Corinthians 5:17); we "have put on the new man" (Colossians 3:10); and we "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). Therefore, it is only fitting that we have a **"new song."** What does this **"song"** consist of? Psalm 40:3 tells us, ". . . even praise unto our God: many shall see it . . ." This is not a literal **song** that is sung, but rather a life that is now in tune with God. A life that 2 Peter 1:4 describes as having a "divine nature." It gives praise and glory unto God. Salvation brings a song of victory.

Revelation 5:9 continues, ". . . saying, **Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof** [a portrayal of Christ's position of preeminence]: **for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood . . .**" This is a picture of our procurement of an experience of salvation. The "**song**" is more explicitly detailed in Revelation 15:3, where it is called "the song of Moses [a reference to Exodus, Chapter 15] the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb."

In **Revelation 5:9** the term rendered "**redeemed**" in the English is the Greek word *exagarayo*, which literally means to "buy out of the market." It is a picture of how Christ took us off the auction block and out of the servitude of sin. He took us out of the market and made us "free from sin . . . [to] become servants to God" (Romans 6:22). Once these dear ones were "**redeemed,**" **Revelation 5:10** declares, "**And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.**" I dealt with much the same phraseology in Revelation 1:6. Our redemption through Jesus Christ places us in a position where we can "reign in [this] life by one, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17).

Look at **Revelation 5:11-14**. In these verses a Heaven-and-earth union takes place in Jesus Christ. **Verse 11** speaks of "**the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders.**" In this verse the word "**angels**" refers to celestial, angelic beings. We know this because the ministry in this text is identified by another symbol—"the elders." This is portraying just what was shown on Pentecost, what was shown through Christ's incarnation and through our experience of salvation: Heaven and earth are met together in Jesus Christ.

Let us look at a few examples. When the seventy weeks prophecy was given to Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27), who brought it to him? Daniel 9:21 says that it was "Gabriel." When it came time for the annunciation to Mary, who appeared on the scene again? Luke 1:26 says that it was "the angel Gabriel." Who spoke to Joseph in a dream? Matthew 1:20 states, "The angel of the Lord appeared unto him." Who appeared unto the shepherds at the time of Christ's advent? Luke 2:9 tells us it was "the angel of the Lord." Who appeared on that night when Heaven and earth became united in that One of whom Isaiah 9:6 spoke, saying that "a child is born"? Hebrews 1:6 says it was "all the angels of God." Who appeared after the Ascension and encouraged the followers to quit gazing skyward and remember matters at hand? Acts 1:10 states, ". . . two men stood by them in white apparel [angels]." Who appeared to bring about the Gentiles' pentecost? In Acts 10:3 Cornelius was visited by "an angel of God."

I trust that you can begin to see why it was fitting in **Revelation 5:11** for the "**angels**" to join in with the eternal chorus of **Revelation 5:12**, saying, "**Worthy is the Lamb . . .**" Though the angels cannot truly comprehend salvation, it is referred to as "things the angels desire to look into" (1 Peter 1:12). Angels were there at the Incarnation (Luke 2:9-15); an angel was there in Gethsemane (Luke 22:43); an angel was there at the Resurrection (Matthew 28:1-7); and there were angels at the Ascension (Acts 1:9-11). Although the angels do not understand salvation, one thing that they do understand is, "**Worthy is the Lamb.**" They beheld all that Christ went through for mankind, and all of that enhanced His worth in their sight.

An Innumerable Throng

The scene in **Revelation 5:11** portrays the entire scope of the ages. The four **beasts**, which literally mean the "four living creatures," is a picture of the redeemed of all ages. So this expression "**and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands**" is not meant to be any literal numerical reckoning. The actual Greek text says "*myriads of myriads.*" This expression is designed to convey an innumerable number. A similar gigantic expression is "millions and millions," or "billions and billions." In the Greek there is no word for *million*, so the translator, attempting to strictly translate from the original, gave the literal rendition of the words. They made no numerical expression literally. This verse is conveying a vision of the redeemed down throughout the entirety of the Gospel Day. John merely gave them expression, as the Lord did in Genesis 15:5, when He said, ". . . tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be."

Genesis 22:17 says, "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." Where is the realization of these promises to Abraham found? Who is "thy seed"? Galatians 3:29 lets us know. It says, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The fulfillment of the promise to Abraham is found in those who are Christ's. To understand who this is, look to see whom the Apostle was addressing in the Galatian epistle. Galatians 1:2 states, ". . . unto the churches [the Greek says 'congregations'] of Galatia." Congregations of what? Galatians 1:13 tells us it is "the church of God."

These who are as "the stars of the heaven" or as "the sand which is upon the sea shore" or, as our text denotes, "**ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,**" portray the innumerable throng of the church as a whole. In this picture was all the angelic host as well. The angels alone are "a multitude of heavenly host" (Luke 2:13). In Luke 2:12-14 we see the universal harmony of every sphere, heavenly and earthly, focusing on the Executor of all, the One who sits on the right hand of the throne, the One upon which all history turns and all salvation rests.

Thus, with a proper and lengthy introduction and a preparation of man's heart for understanding, we are now ready to commence Revelation, Chapter 6, which begins with a conjunction in verse 1: "*And.*" This begins the actual opening of the seals. Man has been properly prepared. There has come the individual experience of salvation, and there has been a vision of the collective body of the church. With these two occurrences, which took place on the Day of Pentecost, mankind was ready for the Lamb to open the seals and let understanding come forth.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FIRST SEAL

(A.D. 33-270)

Revelation 6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Seals Convey Understanding

As we begin Revelation, Chapter 6, keep in mind that the Book of Revelation is broken down into at least seven series. Series 2 properly begins with Revelation, Chapter 6. Chapter 5 is basically an introductory chapter to the seals series in Revelation, Chapter 6. **Revelation 6:1** shows where the particular seals are beginning to be loosed, or opened. Let us look at the expressions that are used in Revelation, Chapter 6, because they convey truth to us. First of all, **Revelation 6:1** says, "**And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals . . .**" Every seal is for this time world. They are not for the eternal realm, but every one of these seals was for a period of time.

Every one of these "**seals**" was "**opened**" while Christ was still a "**Lamb**," but when time reels into eternity, He will no longer be a "**Lamb**." There will no longer be salvation from sin. There will no longer be redemption operative. He will no longer be a "**Lamb**," but He will be our Judge. So every one of these "**seals**" was loosed while time was still standing, from **Revelation 6:1**, where it says, "**And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals . . .**" all the way down through to Revelation 8:1, which says, "And when he [the '**Lamb**'] had opened the seventh seal . . ." Every one of these "**seals**" conveys understanding that God desires for you and me to have in this time world.

To rightly understand who the "**Lamb**" is, let us look at John 1:29. It says, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus Christ is that "**Lamb**." **Revelation 6:1** says, "**And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals . . .**" Now, we need to understand what sealed up the understanding to where man could not readily grasp hold of it, or wrest it out by brute strength. What is the seal? Ephesians 1:13 tells us what the seal is. The Apostle Paul wrote, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise." The seal is the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:30 says, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed . . ."

Unless the "**Lamb**" looses the Holy Spirit and tells Him to reveal truth to you, you will never see it. Truth is not something you can merely study or dig up. Truth is something that comes down. It is revealed through the agency of the Holy Spirit at the direction of Jesus Christ. Unless the "**Lamb**" looses the Spirit of God to where He brings understanding to your heart and mind, the Bible is a book of brass. Have you ever tried to study the Bible when the Holy Ghost was not giving understanding? There is not a less interesting book than the Bible when the seal is not loosed. However, when the seal is loosed, or when the "**Lamb**" tells the Holy Spirit to start showing you some things, there is not a more thrilling book! There is not a book in man's world that can begin to compare to God's Word when the seal is loosed off of it.

Let us look at why the plural word "**seals**" (**Revelation 6:1**) is used. If you go back to the previous chapter, you will find that there are seven Spirits of God (Revelation 5:6). There are not seven Spirits of God, literally speaking, because Ephesians 4:4 says, "There is *one* body, and *one* Spirit." The seven Spirits of God are nothing more than the *one* Spirit of God working throughout the seven periods of time that make up this Gospel Day.

In John 16:12 Jesus told the disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Jesus, in His first advent, in no way exhausted the truth to the disciples. What He told them was only the tip of the iceberg, so to speak. He had many things to tell them, but they were not in a position to hear them for they did not have the seal, or the Holy Spirit to bring them understanding. Much of what Jesus did tell the disciples, they could not comprehend. It was sealed up to them; they were not ready for it. Jesus continued in John 16:13-14: "Howbeit when

he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

Let us come back to the first verse of our lesson. The "**Lamb**" opening "**one of the seals**" represents Christ speaking and the Holy Spirit hearing what He is speaking. Then the Holy Spirit gives God's people understanding, showing them the things of Christ. In essence, Christ said, "I have many things to tell you, but you are not in a position to hear it right now." In every one of the periods down through the Gospel Day, when the time was right, Christ spoke the word and dispatched the Holy Spirit to bring understanding to the hearts and minds of the people of that particular age. Thus, the Spirit of God is the agency that God has chosen to bring spiritual understanding. Ephesians 1:17-18 says: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened . . ." Who enlightens our understanding? It is the Spirit of "wisdom and revelation." He hears it at Christ's mouth, and then He conveys it to our hearts and to our understanding.

As we begin to look into this lesson, first of all we need to realize that Christ had a victorious people throughout every period of the Gospel Day, and He has a victorious people yet today. Conditions in many periods of time were less than ideal. There were prevailing conditions throughout the dark and cloudy day that were certainly less than favorable. Yet, in the midst of it all, God always had a people. He has always had a remnant that has stood true to Him. Today, you and I live in the most glorious and enlightened age that history has ever known. In this seventh-seal age God is bringing understanding that has been hidden since the world began. Today if people do not understand, too many times it is because they choose to not understand. In Revelation 10:7 we read, "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel [the day and time in which you and I live], when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."

The Voice of God Is Thunder

As we begin our study and consider these various portions of the Gospel Day, keep in mind that we are viewing it from a position of light; we are viewing it from a day of enlightenment. Isaiah caught a glimpse of this day in Isaiah 30:26. He said, "Moreover the light of the moon [a figure of the Old Testament] shall be as the light of the sun [a figure of the New Testament], and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." We are now in this seventh seal, a time of light, a time of the light of seven days. We are in the evening of time of which Zechariah prophesied. Zechariah 14:7 tells us, "But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light."

Spiritually, we are living in the most enlightened age that history has ever known. However, although we have the greatest understanding of any age, we see less power. We are living in a time when that which is perfect, or complete, has come. In 1 Corinthians 13:9-10 Paul said: "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. [Paul did not understand the darkness of Roman Catholicism, such as we do; he did not understand the cloudy day of sectism, such as we do. Paul knew in part, and he prophesied what he knew, but he did not live in the fullness of time.] But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." We live in that perfect time. The word *perfect* means "complete." We are living in a time when the mystery is being completed. God is showing truth in its full beauty. He is making it plain and clear.

The beginning of the series of seals is at the beginning of this Gospel Day, the era of time from A.D. 33 to A.D. 270. **Revelation 6:1** says, "**And I saw when the Lamb [Christ] opened [Revelation 5:5 speaks of it as 'to loose the seven seals'] one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder . . .**" What does this "**noise of thunder**" symbolize? Any time that Christ looses the Holy Spirit to open understanding to men and women, there is going to be a "**noise of thunder.**" In the Scripture "**thunder**" is the symbol of understanding or of hearing the voice of God. Revelation 10:3-4 states: "And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." If John had not been given an explicit message—to seal it up, when these "thunders had uttered their voices"—they would have given

some understanding; they would have made some things clear. However, it was not the right time at that particular point. Thus, John was told to seal that up for later. The **"thunder"** symbolizes the voice of God.

In Exodus, Chapter 19, the Israelites were approaching Mount Sinai when Moses was to go up in to the mount to hear from God and get the commandments. Exodus 19:16-19 tells us: "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice." Notice when the thunder came on the scene in verse 16, it was not long until God answered him by a voice (verse 19). The thunder represented the presence of God; it represented the voice of God and understanding being given.

Job 37:4-5 lets us know what the **"thunder"** represents. It says: "After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard [the **'thunder'** is God's voice]. God thundereth marvellously with his voice . . ." There is something about literal thunder that gets your attention, and there is something about the voice of God that will get your attention too. When the Lamb decides to loose one of the seals and the Holy Spirit begins to utter forth truth, it strikes your heart and mind like a thunderbolt. It will make you pay attention.

"Thunder" is a representation of the voice of God. Second Samuel 22:14 states, "The LORD thundered from heaven, and the most High uttered his voice." The thunder was His voice. Jesus plainly explained it in John 12:28-29, which says: "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered . . ." What was it that they heard? It was the voice of God.

The only way that Christians are going to see any spiritual truth at all is if Jesus Christ sees fit to open it up. It is still a divine work. You can study until you are worn out, but the words of the wise man let us know that it does not come that way. In Ecclesiastes 12:12 Solomon said, "And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; [I am not against having some reference materials, but you cannot wrest a revelation of truth from books or materials. It still comes through the seal—the Holy Spirit of God. Men who were illiterate, men who could not read or write, were given a revelation of truth because it is spiritual truth. Acts 4:13 tells us that Peter and John were perceived as unlearned and ignorant men.] and much study is a weariness of the flesh." However, it is not a weariness when the Holy Ghost is pumping it in. When you are studying in the flesh, trying to sort it out, you will get quite weary in the flesh. Truth does not come through that avenue.

Revelation 6:1 says that the **"Lamb opened . . . the seals."** It still takes Jesus Christ to see that it is the fitting time to loose the seal, or the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit shows the things of Christ unto you, you will hear a **"noise of thunder."** You will read a verse of Scripture, and it will be as if you never read it before in your life. You might have read that verse many times, but the difference is, this time you heard the voice of thunder. Truth was revealed, and it struck your soul.

Living Creatures

Revelation 6:1 continues, ". . . and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, **Come and see.**" Let us look a little further at these **four beasts**. They were employed to convey the message to **"come and see."** They are still the ones God wants to use to convey a message. The word "beast" in the actual Greek is the word *zoon*. It does not mean a beast as we think of a beast. In the margin of many Bibles, it notes that the actual Greek says "living creatures." These were not hideous beasts, as in Revelation 13:1 and in Revelation 13:11. In these verses the word "beast" in the Greek is *therion*, which means "a wild beast." However, the **"four beasts"** found in Revelation, Chapters 4, 5, and 6, are not actually beasts at all. They are living creatures. Revelation 6:1, 3, 5, and 7 use the Greek word *zoon* for beasts.

Now, we need to understand what these four living creatures actually are. Revelation, Chapter 4, is the first place these beasts are introduced. Revelation 4:6-8 says: "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts [the same Greek word *zoon* meaning 'living

creatures'] full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And those four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

Each of the Old Testament prophets caught a glimpse of what John saw in its entirety. Ezekiel caught a glimpse of these living creatures in Ezekiel 1:4-10: "And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also, out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had faces and their wings.

"Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle." These four living creatures are a picture of the redeemed of all ages. Revelation, Chapter 4, calls them "four beasts" (Revelation 4:6), and Revelation 5:9 lets us see what these four beasts were. It says, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us."

Who is the "us" doing the addressing? Revelation 5:8 says, "And when he [speaking of the Lamb] had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb [these four living creatures are the redeemed], having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints." If these four living creatures had the four golden vials, which are the prayers of the saints, would it not stand to reason that they would be the saints?

Verse 9 begins, "And they sung a new song." Who is it that sings a new song? In Psalm 40:1-3 we read: "I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock [a picture of salvation], and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth" That "new song" comes when one gets saved. These four living creatures who had a "new song" were new creatures. That is why they were *living* creatures. They had new life.

Look again at Ezekiel 1:4-5. It says: "And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself . . . out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures." This whirlwind that came, this fire that came was nothing more than a prophetic expression of the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:1-4 states: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind [there is the whirlwind Ezekiel spoke of] . . . And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire [there is the fire that Ezekiel 1:4 says was infolding itself, that had a brightness about it] . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost . . ."

When the Holy Ghost moved into these people on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:8), they became new creatures in Christ Jesus. They became part of the redeemed. Second Corinthians 5:17 tells us why they were called living creatures: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature . . ." The Hebrew letter ties the words *new* and *living* together. Hebrews 10:20 says, "By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." Jesus brought in a new and living way. When you are a *new* creature, you are a *living* creature. You are no longer spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. Ephesians 2:1 says, "And you hath he quickened [which means to be made alive], who were dead in trespasses and sins."

The Revelation was given to John, who was a Hebrew, and it draws many Hebrew allusions to things with which a Hebrew was familiar. The old literal Israelites were broken down into four major divisions. As they traveled during the Exodus, the tabernacle was a collapsible affair. It was a tent that was pitched, and as they traveled, they put that tent down whenever they stopped. Then Israel, which comprised twelve tribes, broke up into four major divisions of three tribes each, and they pitched on the four sides of that tabernacle. Each one of those divisions had an insignia by which they were known. Those four major divisions and the insignias that represented them stood as a symbol of all of Israel. Those four insignias are the same symbols that Ezekiel and John, in the Revelation, used to portray the redeemed. This shows us that just as those four major divisions represented all the people of God in that era, these four living creatures represent all the New Testament Israel.

The Lion, the Calf, the Face of a Man, and the Eagle

Numbers 2:2-3 says: "Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house [each one of these four major divisions had a standard] . . . And on the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch . . ." There were three tribes that pitched there. The standard of the tribe of Judah was a lion. Genesis 49:9 states, "Judah is a lion's whelp." Thus, the standard for the east side was a lion. Numbers 2:10 tells us, "On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben." The standard for the south side was the face of a man. Numbers 2:18 says, "On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim." That was a symbol of a calf. Lastly, we read in Numbers 2:25, "The standard of the camp of Dan shall be on the north by their armies." The standard of that camp was the eagle. So these four emblems were the lion, the man, the calf, and the eagle—representing the entirety of old Israel.

Revelation 4:7 tells us, "And the first beast [living creature] was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle." These same four insignias represent all the people of God in the New Testament dispensation. The Gospel Day can be broken down into four major epochs. The lion represented the morning time, a time when the church **"went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Revelation 6:2)**. Just as the lion is the king of beasts, Jesus Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and He came in this first epoch of time. Then the scene changed, and the next major scene was that of a calf. A calf was a sacrificial animal. During the pagan persecutions and the dark days of apostasy and of the ensuing time, the Dark Ages of Roman Catholicism, many of the saints took on a sacrificial nature and were martyred. During the Dark Ages alone, fifty to sixty million people were martyred.

The next two epochs of time were during the dark and cloudy day. Through those periods of time, the face of a man was shown because they were eras of time when man rule was prevailing. Needless to say, some of these characteristics were overlapping and had application in more than one epoch. However, we have attempted to place them where they were the predominant characteristics. In the fourth major epoch of this Gospel Day, the church has taken on the form of an eagle. In the evening time it shall be light, and the eagle is the only animal that can fly right into the face of the sun. It can soar above all of its enemies. Now is the evening time when God is taking His people higher, to a brighter light, right into the sun. To be certain that these four living creatures are a picture of the redeemed, let us look at each one a little further.

LION: Revelation 4:7 states, "And the first beast was like a lion." Is that a figurative expression? Proverbs 28:1 says, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion." Here the saints, the righteous, are likened to a lion. Go to Ephesians, and you will see that Paul was like a lion. He was very bold. Ephesians 6:19-20 tells us: "And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

The church in the morning time was as bold as a lion. They did not cower down, but they were strong. In Acts 4:29-31 they prayed: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." They were victorious, and they were bold.

CALF: Let us look at this thought of a calf, spoken of in Revelation 4:7, which says, ". . . and the second beast like a calf . . ." The calf is a symbolic expression of a sacrifice. It represents the days of pagan persecution as well as the Dark Ages, an age when many saints sacrificed their lives. Jesus foretold of it in Matthew 24:9, saying, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." When Ezekiel saw the vision, he referred to the calf as an ox: "As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox . . ." (Ezekiel 1:10). Whether it is called an ox or a calf, it portrays the same picture of a sacrificial animal.

Aaron was instructed in Leviticus 9:2: "Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the LORD." Numbers 7:88 says, "And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace offerings . . ." These oxen, or calves, were sacrificial animals. The Revelator caught a glimpse of the period of time when God's people became sacrifices. Revelation 12:11 tells us "they loved not their lives unto the death," and Revelation 17:6 tells us, "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus . . ." During that time, when persecution was predominant, the saints took on a sacrificial nature.

FACE OF A MAN: Next we find the face of a man representing the papal and Protestant eras. When the Revelator caught a picture of the papal beast in Revelation, Chapter 13, he said it was best represented by "a man" (Revelation 13:18), and when he saw false preachers, he described them as locusts. Revelation 9:7 says, "And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men." Here the saints went through a period of time when they were subject unto men.

EAGLE: In the evening time the church is represented by the eagle. Isaiah 40:31 says, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles." We are in that time when God is lifting the saints up, enabling them to rise to the light. Just as the eagle can fly toward the sun, we are able to fly right to the Source of light and obtain greater light and greater truth. God does not want His people sitting down with their wings all folded down, going through molting season. He wants you and me to soar to higher heights and gain greater understanding; He wants us to fly above all of men's ideas, above all the things of this life. All of this was made possible by the Lamb.

Revelation 6:1 states, "**And I saw** [The only time you will see these truths is when the Lamb, Jesus Christ, looses understanding through the Spirit of God. When the Spirit of God begins to bring understanding to you, you will hear as it were the '**noise of thunder.**' It will be the voice of God bringing an awakening to you. A revelation will strike your soul.] **when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.**" These four living creatures want you and me to experience, experimentally, the truth. Truth is not something you can just get in your head. You can memorize the Revelation chart, frontward and backward, yet be empty and devoid of truth. The message is to "**come and see.**"

A White Horse

John continued in **verse 2**, "**And I saw, and behold a white horse . . .**" The first four seals are represented by the "**white horse,**" the red horse, the black horse, and the pale horse. There is significance behind every one of them. To understand what these horses represent, go back to Zechariah 6:1-5, which states: "And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass. In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord? And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth."

When we read about these horses, we are actually getting a vision of spirits. The spirits are portrayed as these horses because horses, in the time in which these prophecies were given, were an article of warfare. They were used by the military. Horses denote militancy, letting us know that every one of these spirits is a militant spirit. They are working to take over the souls of men. The Holy Spirit is out to conquer and capture men's souls. However, all these other spirits are too.

The red horse is the spirit of unbelief. The black horse is the spirit of apostasy. The pale horse is a picture of the spirit of compromise—light and darkness, truth and error, mixed together. Each horse's color depicts what sort of a message that the corresponding spirit produced. The color portrays what type of message each one produced and what manner of spirit motivated them.

Zechariah 6:1 tells us that "there came four chariots." Chariots also were an article of warfare. When Zechariah spoke of chariots, he was introducing something military. People in that day knew if they saw chariots, they were under attack. Nobody had to write the Israelites an explanation. When they saw Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen coming (Exodus 14:23), they knew they were in trouble. If God did not intervene, they knew they would be under attack.

Look again at Zechariah 6:2-4: "In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. [Every one of these horses was militant. They were going forth; they were out to take territory.] Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord?" In other words, he was asking, "What are these four horses? What does this symbolize?" Verse 5 answers that, saying, "And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens [of heavenly places, religious places, or ecclesiastical positions], which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth." These horses are the four major religious spirits that are working in this earth. As we study the "**white**

horse" in Revelation 6:2, we are getting a picture of a spirit working. We are being taken behind the scenes. Christ is loosing the Holy Spirit to give us understanding.

Zechariah saw the horses as something militant (Zechariah 10:3). However, John went even further and gave understanding about the riders and what they were working to accomplish. Let us identify why the horse in this first seal was "**white" (Revelation 6:2)**. Throughout the Scriptures *white* is a symbol of purity. The Holy Spirit is a holy, pure spirit. To see what *white* symbolizes, look at Revelation 7:13-14. It states: "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Thus, white denotes purity and holiness. God, speaking through Isaiah in Isaiah 1:18, said, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

The Holy Spirit Is a Militant Spirit

Revelation 19:8 says, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." The Gospel Day started out with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts, Chapter 2). When the saints came out of that upper room, they came out as though motivated by a horse, a militant spirit. They preached to everybody in sight. The true church must be pure, holy, and blameless. Ephesians 5:27 says, "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." The only way to be pure and holy is to listen to the Holy Spirit.

Titus 2:12 tells us, "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." The reason the morning-time church made such an impact was that they allowed the Holy Spirit (that white horse) to motivate, guide, and direct them. We read in Acts 2:4, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues [the Greek says 'languages'], as the *Spirit* gave them utterance." They were effective because they allowed the Spirit to have free right of way.

One of the first truths the Spirit of God would like to loose understanding on is that the Holy Spirit is a militant spirit. Those who have the Holy Spirit are never content, in the sense that they have never seen God do enough. They have never seen enough people saved; there are never enough people who have come to the truth. There is always more ground to gain, more souls to conquer. As long as anyone is lost, the Holy Spirit is not satisfied; as long as anyone is out in sectarianism, He is not satisfied; as long as anyone is sick, He is not satisfied. That is why when that first beast (the lion) came on the scene, his message was, "**Come and see.**" He had lit eyes. He was a living creature. He was walking in this new and living way, and he knew if he could get others to "**come and see**" what he saw and hear what he heard, their souls would be conquered by the Holy Spirit too.

The morning-time brethren understood this, and that is why they conquered the then-known world for Christ. They were never satisfied. The Apostle Paul was not satisfied while in prison. In Colossians 4:3 he told ones to pray that the door of utterance would be opened to him. There is a world full of people under the power of the enemy. God has ordained that we, as the church, be liberation forces to a world that is ensnared, in bondage, under the power of the enemy. Satan only understands one thing—defeat. If we do not go on the offensive and go out as a militant force, endeavoring to liberate the lost from the clutches of Satan, it will not be long until he will have all of them; then he will start in on us. God's people would not have such a hard time defending if they would go on the offense. The best defense is still a good offense. God does not want the saints in the trenches, but He wants them to go "**forth conquering, and to conquer" (Revelation 6:2)**.

The Rider of the White Horse

Next, let us find out *how* the Holy Spirit in the morning time was able to be so militant. The Holy Spirit cannot do much by Himself. **Revelation 6:2** says, ". . . and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." We must establish who it was that sat on the "**white horse.**" Who is "**he that sat on him**" and "**had a bow**" a representation of? A rider who sits upon a horse is in a position where he is upheld by that horse. Here is a flesh and blood representation of the One who was upheld by the Holy

Spirit. Revelation, Chapter 19, shows us a glimpse of this horse again, and we are given a clear insight as to who it was that sat upon this white horse.

Revelation 19:11 says, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him." Notice the similarity in the phraseology. **Revelation 6:2** says, "**And I saw, and behold a white horse,**" and Revelation 19:11 says, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse." Then **Revelation 6:2** speaks of "**he that sat on him,**" and Revelation 19:11 also speaks of "**he that sat upon him.**" Here is almost identical phraseology. We also see a portrait of the same militancy. In **Revelation 6:2** we find that He goes "**forth conquering, and to conquer,**" and Revelation 19:11 tells us "in righteousness he doth judge and make war." In both verses there is the same portrayal of militancy.

Who is it that "**sat on him**"? Revelation 19:11 calls Him the "Faithful and True." Who was that? Jesus made it plain in Revelation 3:14. He said, "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness." Jesus was speaking here. So, the "faithful and true witness" is Jesus Christ. Revelation 19:13 says, "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called the Word of God."

Who bears the name of the Word of God? Who is the Word of God personified? To understand this we must go back to John's gospel. John 1:1 states, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Verse 14 tells us, "And the Word was made flesh [an incarnation], and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of [whom?] the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Verse 17 tells us who that is: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The Word of God is Jesus Christ. When Revelation speaks of this One who sat upon the "**white horse,**" who had the name "Faithful and True," who had His "vesture dipped in blood" and was "called the Word of God," it is a figurative expression of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 19:12 describes the vesture of the One who was upon the "**white horse.**" It says, "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself." Look at Revelation 19:16, which says, "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Verse 12 says that "his eyes were as a flame of fire," and verse 15 tells us that "out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword." Revelation, Chapter 1, reveals who those features identify with. Revelation 1:14 says, "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a *flame of fire.*" This is the same phrase used in Revelation 19:12.

Revelation 1:16 says, "And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." Again, this verse uses the same phrase as Revelation 19:15. So, who was this a representation of? Revelation 1:11 tells us that it is the One who said, "I am Alpha and Omega." That same term, "I am Alpha and Omega," is employed again in Revelation 22:13. In Revelation 22:16 He identified Himself as "I Jesus." Every one of these are verifications of the fact that it was Jesus Christ who was the rider upon this "**white horse.**"

Psalms 45:3-4 says: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things." Biblically speaking, who is the right hand that rode in majesty? Exodus, Chapter 15, and Revelation 15:3 talk about people singing the song of Moses. Exodus 15:1-6 states: "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea [again, here is a verification of the fact that the horse denoted militancy]. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

"The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy." Who is the right hand that brought this great military victory? Who is this right hand that dashed the enemy into pieces?

The Psalmist caught a glimpse of it, when he wrote, "O sing unto the LORD a new song [David was not talking about his day, for a new song was not available in his day]; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory" (Psalm 98:1). Where does victory come from? How do you and I get a new song? First Corinthians 15:57 says, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory [how?] through our Lord Jesus Christ." The Psalmist said that victory comes through the right hand. Paul said that it comes through the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the right hand is Jesus Christ, the One who rode on the "**white horse**" with majesty.

Isaiah 53:1-3 tells us: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? [One question answers the other. The arm of the Lord is revealed to everyone who believes the report. You are not going to see it, until you believe it, and to everyone who believes the report, the arm of the Lord is revealed.] For he [now the arm of the Lord is this 'he'; this 'he' is a prophecy of Jesus Christ] shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men" Verse 3 is referring to Jesus Christ. So, the arm of the Lord, the right hand, is Christ.

The Bow Represents a Covenant

Let us look a little further at the description of "**he that sat**" on the "**white horse.**" In **Revelation 6:2** we read that "**he that sat on him had a bow.**" Christ came in His first advent to usher in something that had never been ushered in before. This bow is a picture of the covenant. Christ came to usher in a covenant. Biblically, the bow has always represented the covenant. After Noah came off the ark, offered up a sacrifice, and worshiped God, God established a covenant. How did He symbolize that covenant? With a bow (Genesis 9:13-15).

The bow was a figure of the covenant. Every rainbow that you and I are familiar with has an equal distribution of seven prismatic colors. If you study a rainbow, you will find it always consists of the same seven prismatic colors, and they are always in the same formation. White light, when passed through a prism, will separate into the seven colors of the bow. Also, if you run the seven prismatic colors back through the prism, they combine to produce pure white light. Each of the colors is a representation of different features of the new covenant. These colors represent attributes necessary for the saints to have holiness—a pure white experience.

When we are introduced to this bow (Revelation 4:3), the Scripture says, "And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, [There is nothing new about a rainbow. It is as old as the covenant with Noah. However, the next phrase lets us know this is something new.] in sight like unto an emerald." Here is a bow that had a totally different appearance about it, a bow that is new to man. The bow typifies the covenant, and since this is a different, new bow, it represents the new covenant, or the New Testament. The first covenant was inadequate, so Christ came to establish a new one. The first covenant was merely a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24).

The New Covenant

In Hebrews 8:6-10 we read: "But now hath he [the preceding verses tell us that is Christ] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant [the old covenant, the Old Testament] had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Here is a totally new covenant with a whole different aspect than the old covenant.

The old covenant was written on tables of stone, but the new covenant is written on the fleshly tables of the heart (2 Corinthians 3:3). It is something new and distinct from the old covenant. The people under the new covenant, or in the New Testament age, are distinct because God said, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts" (Hebrews 8:10).

Let us look at why the new covenant in Revelation 4:3 was like "in sight like unto an emerald." Emerald is a soft green color, symbolic of mercy. The main distinction between the old covenant and the new covenant is mercy. He that is "rich in mercy" (Ephesians 2:4) is in this new covenant. Under the old covenant they "died without mercy" (Hebrews 10:28). But the new covenant is in "sight like unto an emerald" (Revelation 4:3). This is because the prevailing spirit of the new covenant is a spirit of mercy. Christ sits on David's throne showing "the sure mercies of David" (Acts 13:34).

Second Corinthians 3:3 says, "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." The old Law was received on Sinai and engraved on tables of stone. People might get away from the tables of stone and forget what the Law says. However, in this New Testament dispensation, God's law is engraved on the fleshy tables of the heart. How do you forget what is in your heart? This is a totally different type of a covenant.

Christ Established One Body—His Church

Let us look again at **Revelation 6:2**. It says, ". . . and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." How did Christ go forth to conquer in this morning period of time, from A.D. 33 to A.D. 270? He had literally passed off the stage of action. He had ascended into Heaven (Acts 1:9). Hebrews 10:12 lets us know He is now in the presence of God, sitting "on the right hand of God." So, how did He "**go forth conquering, and to conquer**" in this first period of time? He did it through a people who took hold of the covenant, the truth. He worked through people who allowed Him, through salvation, to write the Word on the fleshy tables of their hearts. They became new creatures in Christ Jesus. The personification of Christ took place in the people who made up His body, the church (Colossians 1:18).

This "**he that sat on him**" (**Revelation 6:2**) initially in the first seal was Christ. However, in time it took on an even more vivid flesh and blood representation. As people embraced the covenant, took hold of the truth, and became the people of God, then those who took the bow and let the Spirit of God (the horse) uphold them, became His flesh and blood representation. You cannot separate Christ from His body.

Certainly, it was Christ going "**forth conquering and to conquer**," but how does Christ "**conquer**"? Through whom does He work? Go to Colossians 1:27 to see where Christ is. It says, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Christ is now in everyone who has taken hold of the truth. When people in the morning era of the Gospel Day took hold of the truths of Christ's Word, He wrote those truths on their minds and hearts. They became living epistles; they became Christ's representation. They became His body and went forth to conquer a world for Christ.

If you will read Ephesians, Chapter 2, you will understand the "**he that sat on him**" was not only Christ, but after Christ literally left the stage of action, it became Christ's body. Ephesians 2:13-15 reads: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he [Jesus] is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments [here is Christ taking the old out of the way] contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man . . ." The "*himself*" is Jesus Christ. The one new man whom Christ made, that one body in Christ Jesus, is a picture of the church.

"He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Hebrews 10:9). Christ, in His own self, in His own body, took away the law of commandments, the old covenant as it were, and established "one new man." We know that is a figure of the church, because Ephesians 2:16 says, "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross . . ." That verse is not just talking about His literal body, that was slain on the Cross, but He reconciled Jew and Gentile, bond and free, Barbarians and Scythian, to all come together in the body of Christ, the church. To understand what the body is, turn to Ephesians 1:22-23. It says: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body . . ." The body is the church, and it is the same thing, as Ephesians 2:15 states, as the "one new man."

Since Christ has ascended back into Heaven, the saints are His representatives, His ambassadors. We are here in His stead, just as the saints were in the morning-time church. Look at 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, which states: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us [notice, he said 'us'; he was not just speaking of himself but of the saints, the church as a whole] the ministry of reconciliation; [If you are reconciled to God, the one commission that every saint has is to try to reconcile somebody else to Christ. If He saved you, He left you here for one purpose—to help others to be saved.] To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." If you go back to 2 Corinthians 1:1, you will find that Paul was addressing "the church of God which is at Corinth." He has given to the church that ministry of reconciliation.

We read in 2 Corinthians 5:20, "Now then we [everyone who has been reconciled and has this ministry of reconciliation] are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead" The church is here in Christ's stead. Ephesians 5:30 makes it plain that we are His fleshly representation. It says, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." We are His fleshly, human representation. We are His ambassadors in this world. That is why it refers to us as the body of Christ. If Christ wants to speak to someone, He only has one mouth to use—the mouth of the saints. If He wants to take the Gospel to someone, He only has one set of feet to use—the feet of the church.

Christ did not move off the stage of action until He had instituted and implemented a bow, or a covenant. The people who took hold of that covenant became His body. God has ordained for Christ to be visualized through a people taking hold of the truths of this covenant and putting them on. God wants the world to see a reflection of His Word in the church. When they look at the church, they are to see Jesus Christ. If Christ conquers the world, it is not going to be Christ alone, but it is going to be the people of God motivated by Christ.

Galatians 3:27 says, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." The way to put on Christ is by being baptized. That does not mean water baptism. Water baptism is a symbol of something that has already occurred. This baptism into Christ means to be submerged, to be identified with Him. It is through salvation that we are immersed into Christ. In John 15:5 Jesus said, ". . . He that abideth in me, and I in him" The Christian is immersed into Christ. We abide in Him, and His words abide in us as we immerse and submit ourselves unto Christ. When we put on the truth as He brings it to us, that is how we put on Christ. Paul wrote in Romans 13:14, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh." In other words, live in the Spirit, let the Spirit of God direct you and dominate you, let Him write the Word on your heart and mind.

In **Revelation 6:2** we find that what "**he**" (the church directed by Christ) is sitting upon is the "**white horse**," which is the Holy Spirit. Here are a people being upheld by the Holy Spirit. In Psalm 51:12 David said, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit." Here is a picture of one being upheld by the Spirit. These people who had embraced the new covenant were being upheld by the Spirit of God. That is why they were so effective. They did not go in their own strength. Peter tried in his own strength when he took a sword and cut off a man's ear (John 18:10-11). He did not show Christ by doing that. He was fulfilling the desires of the flesh. Later, that same Peter, when he was guided, dominated, directed, and upheld by the Holy Spirit, stood right up on the Day of Pentecost and preached spiritual truths (Acts 2:14-40).

The Bow—A Two-Fold Symbol

Let us look a little deeper at this "**bow**." This "**bow**" is a dual figure, a two-fold symbol. It was not only symbolic of the new covenant, but there was another reason why Christ used the figure of a "**bow**." In addition to a bow being a rainbow, it was also a weapon of warfare. Just as the horse denoted militancy, the bow also denoted militancy. The bow was an active article of warfare. By being a dual figure, the "**bow**" denotes the militancy and the aggressiveness of the morning-time church.

In Zechariah 10:3-4 we read: "Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle. Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow" Here the battle bow is connected with the horse in the battle letting us know that it is a dual figure. It is not only portraying the new covenant, but it is portraying the fact that these ones who embraced the new covenant came forth with a militancy. Someone who really gets saved wants to see somebody else get saved, and he is not satisfied until he does. There is a certain militancy, a certain aggression that comes with truth. To settle back on our "lees" (Zephaniah 1:12), or to be complacent and indifferent, is totally foreign to one possessed by the Holy Spirit. It is a militant Spirit, and a people who take hold of the covenant will turn that covenant into a battle bow. They will use the very covenant that saved them as a weapon of warfare to save others.

All the way through the Scriptures, the bow and arrows represent militancy, aggression, and warfare. There is a real message behind these symbols. Let us lift a few Scriptures. In Psalm 7:13 we read, "He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors." Here we find that arrows were active instruments of warfare. Psalm 45:4-6 reads: "And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. [What was one of the terrible things?] Thine arrows

are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre."

That prophecy concerning the scepter and the kingdom is picked up in Hebrews 1:8. It states, "But unto the Son [Christ] he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Here he was teaching that these arrows, which are sharp in the hearts of the king's enemies, are nothing more than the truth that would be ushered forth during this New Testament dispensation. Truth would come when Christ would have the scepter of righteousness, and the Kingdom of God would be a reality. These arrows are spiritual arrows.

Psalm 64:7 says, "But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded." These arrows are truths. We read in 2 Samuel 22:14-15: "The LORD thundered from heaven, and the most High uttered his voice. And he sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them." These arrows are a picture of militancy, a picture of aggression.

When we come back to **Revelation 6:2**, we see a picture of this "**bow**," not only symbolizing the new covenant, but letting us know that God has ordained for this same covenant to be a militant article of our warfare. It is a militant article able to shoot the arrows of truth that strike and pierce the hearts of those who are searching for truth. This is how the morning-time church conquered the then-known world. Truth will pierce the heart of the honest. One might not understand in his head, but there is something in the heart that perceives it.

The Crown of Life

Revelation 6:2 continues, telling us that "**a crown was given unto him**." What does this "**crown**" symbolize? The "**crown**" that Christ wore was a crown of glory and honor. In Hebrews 2:9-10 we read: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." What is the crown? He was crowned with glory and honor by the grace of God (Hebrews 2:9).

Since Christ tasted death, what does the grace of God do? The grace of God (Hebrews 2:10) brings many sons to glory, and the "**crown**" that is on His head is the glory and honor that comes when you and I yield ourselves to Him as sons. Not only is Christ to have a "**crown**," but He left a provision for us to have crowns as well. Go to James 1:12. It states, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried [not *after* he is tried, but *when* he is tried], he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." This "crown of life" is just that—the crown is life. People who, when they are being tempted, refuse the temptation and prove their love to Christ have a victorious, crowned life.

This is one reason the morning-time church could go forth "**conquering, and to conquer**." They were very heavily tried. They died at the edge of the sword. They died by crucifixion and many other means. However, they praised God right in the midst of their trials and proved their love to Christ. They showed that they had a victorious, crowned life and God used that to captivate hearts. Those truths that the unsaved saw portrayed in the saints were like arrows that pierced their hearts, and they conquered unsaved people for Christ.

In Revelation 3:11 Jesus said, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast [present tense], that no man take thy crown." Here is a crown we can have while we are living. The message in **Revelation 6:2** is that He went "**forth conquering, and to conquer**." It is portraying the church in her militant phase. Daniel 2:44 says, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." That which goes "**forth conquering, and to conquer**" and breaks in pieces all these other things is the Kingdom of God, or the people of God. How are they able to conquer? Look at the wording in **Revelation 6:2**: "**He went forth**." "**He**" (the rider) that sat and had a "**bow**" and a "**crown**" went forth. The church was victorious in their militancy because they were the body of Christ that took hold of the covenant and went forth to conquer for Christ and truth. They realized that the victory was in Christ and without Him they could do nothing (John 15:5).

The battle still belongs to the Lord. First Samuel 17:47 declares, "And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear [or in a literal manner]: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands." The morning-time church never forgot that it took the Lord to give the enemy into their hands. Second Chronicles 20:15 says, "And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king

Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's."

CHAPTER SIX

THE SECOND SEAL (A.D. 33-270)

Revelation 6:3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

The Second Beast

Revelation 6:3 begins, "**And when he had opened the second seal . . .**" What does it mean for these seals to be opened? Christ, after the Resurrection, was expounding to the disciples. Luke 24:45 says, "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." When Revelation 6:1 says that "the Lamb opened one of the seals," it means that He opened their understanding. How is that accomplished? Through the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is the One who enlightens, or opens, our understanding. Ephesians 1:17-18 says: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." Who enlightens your understanding? The Spirit does.

So, when **Revelation 6:3** says, "**And when he** [the Lamb, according to Revelation 6:1] **opened the second seal,**" it is simply saying that the Lamb, Jesus Christ, loosed the Holy Spirit and gave Him authorization to bring understanding of the Scriptures and of scriptural truths that applied to these people. Christ did this so that they could have understanding of what they were being confronted with in that era of time. The "**second seal**" occurred from A.D. 33 to A.D. 270, the same as the first seal. When the Holy Spirit was loosed, people embraced the truth. Being upheld by that Spirit, they were going "forth conquering, and to conquer" (Revelation 6:2). Needless to say, just as soon as truth came on the scene, an opposing spirit rose up to work against it. Truth has never been without foes and never shall be until time reels into eternity.

When the Lamb had opened the "**second seal,**" **Revelation 6:3** says, "**I heard the second beast say, Come and see.**" Let us look at the "**second beast.**" The original Greek word is *zoon*, which means "a living creature." Thus, this "**second beast**" is not a hideous beast. Revelation 13:11 says, "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth." The word "beast" used in this text is the Greek word *therion*, which means "a wild beast." The beasts found in Revelation, Chapters 4, 5, and 6, were totally different from these wild beasts. Ezekiel caught a vision of much the same thing, and he called them "living creatures." Ezekiel 1:5 says, "Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures." Paul made plain the reason why they are styled as "living creatures." In 2 Corinthians 5:17 he said, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." When you become a new creature, Romans 6:4 says you have "newness of life." You are a new and living creature. You walk, according to Hebrews 10:20, "by a new and living way." These "living creatures" are a picture, in figurative expression, of the redeemed of all ages.

A Calf-Like Nature

What was the second living creature? To understand, we must go back to Revelation, Chapter 4. Revelation 4:7 says, "And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf . . ." Here the redeemed take on a totally different nature. A calf was a sacrificial animal. It was not long into this morning of time until people who had stood for truth as a lion, became as a sacrificial animal, and they laid down their lives on martyr blocks.

Leviticus gives insight to this introduction of the second living creature, showing what type of spirit was working under the "**second seal.**" It was a spirit that made martyrs of the saints. Leviticus 9:2-3 says: "And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the LORD. And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin offering; and a calf and a lamb, both of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering." A calf represents a sacrificial animal, one who gave its life as an offering.

As we begin to study this red horse and the spirit that it represents, we will find that, because of the spirit working in that **"second seal,"** the people of God took on a sacrificial, calf-like nature. **Revelation 6:4** says, **"And there went out another horse that was red."** The first seal, represented by the white horse, was a picture of the Holy Spirit. The **"second seal"** is represented by a red horse. These horses are figurative vehicles depicting various spirits. Horses are used to represent spirits because a horse is a militant animal, and these spirits are militant spirits. These militant spirits are out to conquer the souls of God's people. Just as they worked in the morning time, they are working in this evening of time. If you give vent to the spirit of unbelief, it will change you from white and purity to red and sinfulness.

We read in Zechariah 6:1-5: "And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains [Mount Sinai, representing the Old Testament, and Mount Zion, representing the New Testament]; and the mountains were mountains of brass. In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. [These are the same horses as described in the Revelation: white, red, black, and pale. Zechariah received the same prophesy, only he gave a few more details.] Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord? And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth." So, we see that these horses represent spirits, and the type of spirit depends on the color of the horse. The color portrays the nature. They were the "four spirits of the heavens," which means that every one of them was a religious spirit.

Zechariah 1:8-10 says: "I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white. Then said I, O my lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these be. And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth." Let us get an understanding of who most of these spirits represent. First, we need to find out who it is that walks "to and fro through the earth." Then we will begin to catch a vision of what kind of spirits these are, predominately.

Job 1:6-7 states: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." In Zechariah's vision of these spirits, he said they "walked to and fro through the earth" (Zechariah 6:7). That is just where Satan said he was. That tells us these spirits are motivated and prompted by the devil. They may be religious, they may take on different manifestations, but behind every one of them (whether it is the red, the black, or the pale) is the devil. Each of those spirits has one purpose: to deceive souls.

As we study this red horse, we must realize that it is a spirit of the heavens, meaning it occupies an exalted, heavenly position in ecclesiastical realms. It is a religious spirit, and back of it is the devil. Each religious system correlates with the spirit that motivated it. The spirit of the red horse is the spirit that motivated the system of the "great red dragon" (Revelation 12:3). The people in that system were very religious. There were temples all over the Roman Empire. However, in spite of that the Romans were a ruthless, bloodthirsty, and sinful people.

When the spirit of the red horse began to work, it produced a system that became an opposer to the morning-time church. Revelation 12:3 says, "And there appeared another wonder in heaven [this red horse produced the system that raised itself up, not just as a political system but as an ecclesio-political system, a religious system that began to work in opposition to the church]; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns . . ." This was Rome in its pagan form. The seven heads represent the seven heads of government that Rome had in its pagan form. The ten horns represent the ten minor kingdoms that made up the Roman Empire.

Look at the nature that the people of God had to take on when this spirit was loosed. In Revelation 12:11 we read, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." The people of God had to take on the nature of a calf; they had to yield up their lives. Revelation 12:17 says, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Jesus prophesied of this in Matthew 24:9, saying, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." In John 16:2 Jesus said, "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." This spirit is deceptive. When religious people will kill someone and think they are doing God service, they are deceived. These old religious spirits can make people do the most mystifying

things and yet think they are right. So, this second seal portrays the spirit that produced a period of martyrdom. There was a spirit loosed that caused the Roman Empire to put many Christians to death.

The Spirit of the Red Horse

What kind of a spirit could produce such atrocities? Revelation 6:2 speaks of a "white horse." Since white denotes purity and holiness, this horse represents the Holy Spirit. By stark contrast, in the same period of time is a red horse, which is drastically different than the Holy Spirit. Red is a portrayal of two things: bloodiness and sinfulness. Sinfulness through the annals of time, as well as in the Scriptures, has been portrayed as scarlet. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's book *The Scarlet Letter*, scarlet was used to portray sin. In Isaiah 1:18 we read, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." So we see that red represents sin, and this red horse represents a sinful spirit.

What *type* of sinful spirit does the red horse represent? First, let us look at what the cardinal sin is. (The word "cardinal" comes from the Latin word *cardo*, which means "hinge." What is the sin on which all other sins hinge? What is the sin of all sins? Let us look at how it is employed in the Scriptures.) There is a sin that is the root of all sins. John 1:29 says, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away *the* sin [singular] of the world." Not "the sins," but "the sin."

Jesus came to take away "the sin." Now what is "the sin"? John 9:35-41 says: "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; [This was the blind man whom Jesus had healed. When the council asked him who made him to see, he told them about Jesus. They did not want to hear about Jesus, and finally, they threw him out of the temple.] and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your *sin* [singular] remaineth." What sin was it that remained? What did Jesus ask this young man? In verse 35 He asked, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" This man believed, but the Pharisees did not. The sin was unbelief. It is the sin of all sins, the cardinal sin.

People do not go to hell because of the sinful habits of life by which they are bound. They go to hell because they do not believe in the Son, Jesus Christ. John 16:8-9 tells us what the Holy Ghost would deal with when He came: "And when he [the antecedent of 'he' is the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, according to John 14:26] is come, he will reprove the world of *sin* [not sins, but sin in the singular], and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin [what sin?], because they believe not on me." He reproveth the sin of unbelief. When the sinner gets over his unbelief, the tobacco habit, the drinking, the cursing, and the worldliness will go. All of that is the result of the sin of unbelief.

The spirit of the red horse is the spirit of unbelief. That is the first opposition that the morning-time church faced when Christ came forth with truth. Unbelief is a spirit that is still loose today. John 3:16-18 says: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him [it is not just a one-time believing; that word *believeth* is in the continual and present tense] should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already . . ." Where is the condemnation? Where does sin enter in? It is through unbelief. It is this sin of unbelief that makes people guilty of blood. It is unbelief that produces the bloodiness, the martyrdom.

Look at the account of Jesus before Pilate. Matthew 27:22-23 and 25 states: "Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. . . . Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children." Unbelief produced the blood. Pilate said, "What shall I do with Jesus which is called the Christ? Shall I crucify your king?" Their answer was, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15). It was unbelief that caused the Jews to become a bloody people, to become guilty of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Unbelief Was a Predominate Morning-Time Spirit

Unbelief was working in the second-seal time period. Christ came on the scene in that first century, and the first thing He was confronted with was unbelief. To understand how unbelief was working, look at the account of Christ's seizure in the garden. When they came to the garden, in John 18:4 Jesus said, "Whom seek ye?" Verses 5-6 say: "They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. . . they went backward, and fell to the ground." Here was Jesus—an itinerant preacher, with no education, who was raised in a carpenter's shop—standing, and the Roman army was lying on their backs, with their spears and swords laying all over the place. That ought to have told them something. He never lifted a finger; He just said three words, "I am he." There is power in those words. When they finally got back to their feet, they still arrested Jesus. They were filled with unbelief.

Unbelief was one of the predominant spirits in this morning of time. Jesus was confronted with it more than once. There was unbelief in Nazareth, His own hometown. Matthew 13:57-58 says: "And they were offended in him. [People still get offended in Him today. There is something about the truth that tends to rub the flesh wrong, and people get offended.] But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there [why?] because of their unbelief." Here was a Man who could raise the dead, heal the sick, cleanse the leper, and save the soul. Yet, He had to leave Nazareth with all of that power untapped because of unbelief.

In Mark's gospel you can read the narrative of the demoniac son brought by his father to the disciples, but they could not help him. Mark 9:21-24 tells us: "And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but *if* thou canst do any thing [here are doubt and unbelief], have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Jesus went right to the root of the problem. Help cannot come until you get rid of the unbelief.

Often the reason people have things they are not getting victory over is because they have some unbelief. As long as you are exploring other options, thinking, "Well, if this does not work, I can always go this other way," you are not going to get anything from the Lord. James 1:6-7 says: "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." When you are just tossed to and fro like a wave of the sea, James says you are not going to get anything from God because of unbelief. Jesus put it straight to this father. Mark 9:24 states, "And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

Another example of unbelief is found in Luke 22:66-68, which says: "And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe [they were filled with unbelief]: And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go." The red horse portrays a sinful spirit, the sin of unbelief. Unbelief is the besetting sin.

Hebrews, Chapter 11, is the famous faith chapter. Throughout the chapter the sacred writer talked about faith. Let us look at a few examples: "by faith Abel" (verse 4), "by faith Enoch" (verse 5), "by faith Noah" (verse 7), "by faith Abraham" (verse 8), "through faith also Sara" (verse 11), "by faith Isaac" (verse 20), "by faith Jacob" (verse 21), "by faith Joseph" (verse 22), and "by faith Moses" (verse 23). Then Hebrews 12:1 says, "Wherefore [Meaning, because of these things. To rightly understand what the writer was referring to you have to read and understand the preceding chapter.] seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses [the witnesses are people who made it through by faith: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and the others mentioned in Chapter 11], let us [now it is up to us] lay aside every weight, and *the* sin [all through Chapter 11, the penman talked about faith; so, the sin that can strip faith from us is unbelief] which doth so easily beset us . . ."

Unbelief is a militant spirit. This was not written to the pagans (the Roman Empire) but to the saints. In Hebrews 3:12 we read, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you [speaking to the brethren] an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." The spirit of unbelief is out to cause you to depart from the living God. If you are not careful, this spirit will sow doubt in your mind about the Bible and about the truth. It is a religious spirit, and it can explain away sound Bible reasoning with palatable and seemingly intelligent arguments.

Hebrews 3:17-19 tells us: "But with whom was he grieved forty years [speaking of those who sojourned in the wilderness forty years]? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom

sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in [why?] because of unbelief." When Israel came up to Kadesh-Barnea, they had traveled a very short amount of time. They could have gone right on into Canaan. Yet, unbelief caused them to send out spies to see if the land was as God said it was. Of the twelve spies, only two came back with a good report, and the people believed the majority. However, the majority is almost always wrong. Ten spies came back with an evil report, in essence saying, "It is a land that eats up the inhabitants. We cannot go over there. We are grasshoppers in our sight." Looking through natural, human eyesight, rather than through the eyes of faith is what produces unbelief. Those people had seen the Red Sea part and that same water drown their enemies; at Mount Sinai they had heard God speak personally. Yet, the spirit of unbelief had hold of them.

God's people today may feel, "Oh, God has done so much for me. I could never get filled up with unbelief." Nevertheless, unbelief is a spirit, and regardless of what kind of an experience you have, how close to God you have been, or how much truth you have seen, if it gets hold of you, it will blind your eyes so fast you will be deceived. That is why these spirits must not be played with. They will damn you. This spirit can move in on you easily, but it does not move out easily. You can take in a spirit just as you take in air, but God in His faithfulness will reveal it. Yet, too many times when God reveals what is working, people do not want to own it. Ephesians 2:2 says, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Here the spirit is correlated with air, showing that you can take in a spirit just as you take in air. That is why you need the washing of water by the Word to cleanse you from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit (Ephesians 5:26 and 2 Corinthians 7:1). Another spirit can begin to try to work on your spirit. When you are exposed to people with various types of spirits, it is really easy for your thinking to get tainted; the enemy will begin to work to cause your spirit to be defiled.

The Power Is in Believing

The spirit of unbelief began to animate a system, and that system rose up and became an opposition to the morning-time church. The system that it motivated was the Roman Empire in its pagan form. That same spirit is animating systems and governments yet today. It is also working in an even more subtle manner among the camp of the saints, trying to sow unbelief. It is much more damnable and deceptive than it was back in the morning time. Isaiah saw there would be trouble with this spirit. In the atonement chapter he said, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" (Isaiah 53:1). Here he asked the first question, letting us know that unbelief would be a problem when Christ came. Then he asked the second question, and the second question answers the first question. The arm of the Lord is revealed to everyone who believes the report. The power is in believing. The power is in faith.

What does it mean to believe the report? Romans 10:13-16 states: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" To believe the report is to obey the Gospel.

Every time the sons of God, the saints of God, assemble themselves together, these spirits appear. Right when the Gospel is going forth, while God is trying to sow it in the saints' hearts, the devil will try to reason it away. The spirit of unbelief is a very deadly, very damnable spirit. In our day it does not manifest itself as it did back in the morning time, through outward persecution, suffering, and martyrdom. There may be an element of that, but in this evening time it is working like a frog (Revelation 16:13-14). A frog is something that is hard to get hold of. It is slippery and slimy. You will think you have it, then it gets away from you. That is just the way these spirits are working today. They are so deceptive, but truth will expose them so that God's people do not let any of these spirits make an inroad.

How can a saint keep these spirits from working? The only place that a frog will dwell is in a stagnant pool. They will not dwell in fresh-moving water. If you keep the water of life moving, keep the connection between you and God going, you will not have to worry about these spirits. If they try to move in, the Holy Ghost will move them right out. However, if you get a little cool in your experience and let your experience stagnate just a little, things will begin to work. Stagnant water will develop algae and other kinds of fungus and become a breeding ground for these spirits.

The Dragon Made War With the Saints

Let us consider how the spirit of unbelief manifested itself in the morning time and the type of system it animated. Revelation, Chapter 12, is the beginning of a series, and it starts in the beginning of the Gospel Day as well. It describes, in figurative expressions, an introduction to the morning-time church in her pristine glory. Revelation 12:1-2 says: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: [Here we are introduced to the morning-time church in her parental phase. She is ready to become a mother.] And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." Galatians 4:26 says that the "Jerusalem which is above [the heavenly Jerusalem, the church] is free, which is the mother of us all." Again, here is a picture of the church in her parental phase.

As soon as the church came on the stage of action in the morning of time, Revelation 12:3 says, "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, [This great red dragon was the system that was motivated by the spirit of the red horse. The horse depicts the spirit, but the great red dragon portrays the system that was animated by this spirit.] having seven heads and ten horns . . ." This is a picture of the pagan Roman Empire. The great red dragon was the emblem that the Roman soldiers wore on their shields. This dragon had seven heads, emblematic of the seven different heads of government. The reason it had ten horns (horns in the Scripture denote political power) was that the pagan Roman Empire was made up of ten minor kingdoms, or ten political powers. Just as soon as this opposing force came on the scene, Revelation 12:7 says, "And there was war in heaven." This opposing force, motivated and animated by the spirit of the red horse, began to work against the morning-time church.

Let us look at one way that Rome worked against the saints. Revelation 12:4 states, "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." As soon as people were born again, if Rome found out about it, they would attempt to make martyrs of them. Revelation 12:11 says, "And they [the brethren] overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." They sealed their testimony with blood. They took on a calf-like nature and yielded up their lives. Revelation 12:4 also portrays a spiritual reality as well. The dragon was motivated by the spirit of unbelief. The phrase to "devour her child" also teaches us that the spirit of unbelief works to devour our experience and take our spiritual life from us.

We read in Revelation 12:17, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." This great red dragon made war with the saints and martyred many. Jesus told us this would take place. In Matthew 24:8-9 He said: "All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." The beginning of sorrow took place in the beginning of the Gospel Day. Jesus said in John 16:2, "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." That time certainly came.

So we see that the second living creature equated with the second seal was a calf. During this time, when the red horse was loosed in such a feverish manner, God's people, who started out like a lion going forth conquering and to conquer, ended up being a calf-like people. Nero was emperor of Rome at this time, and he was a fierce and terrible emperor. He had Rome set on fire; then he fiddled while Rome was burning. Later, he blamed it on the Christians and had them hunted down like animals. Nero had Christians dipped in wax, their hair stood on end, and lit them like candles to light his garden for him. They sealed their testimony with their blood. They loved not their lives unto death. Some Christians were thrown to the lions, and others were sent out to fight the gladiators. When the gladiator had them down with a sword drawn ready to thrust them through, he would look to the emperor. Thumbs up meant let him live, and thumbs down meant kill him. *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* is a verification of these accounts.

The Rider of the Red Horse

Revelation 6:4 says, "**And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.**" The red horse portrays the spirit of unbelief, and that spirit motivated a system—the pagan Roman Empire. This system had a flesh and blood representation—"him that sat thereon"—that was being upheld by that spirit. Who was this representation? **Revelation 6:4** tells us that "**power was given to him,**" revealing that this flesh

and blood representation was best personalized by a person or an office to whom power was given. The red horse was the spirit that motivated and conveyed the rider; it carried and supported him. The spirit was portrayed by the red horse, but the rider was the flesh and blood representation that was upheld by that spirit. Who was the rider? The rider does not represent an individual, but the office that the individual held. In this particular age the reins of control of this system were in the hands of the leaders of the pagan Roman Empire, the Imperial Caesars. So, this rider on the horse portrayed the Imperial Caesars.

History tells us that there were ten seasons of severe persecution under the reigns of the emperors. Nero beheaded Paul. Domitian tried to boil John in oil, and when the oil would not boil him, he banished John to the Isle of Patmos. The other eight emperors were Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Septimius Severus, Maximus, Decius, Aurelian, Valerian, and Diocletian. By almost every means imaginable, Christians were slaughtered by the pagans. Hundreds of thousands of saints gave up their lives for Christ's sake.

Look again at **Revelation 6:4**. It says, "**And power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth . . .**" Man can touch the earthen vessel, but he cannot get to the soul. All that Nero could do was sever Paul's head from his shoulders. He could not separate Paul from the love of Christ. Paul said in Romans 8:35, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" Verse 37 answers that question by saying, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Caesar could take peace from the earth, he could take peace from their flesh, but he could not take peace from their soul.

What is this earth a representation of? Second Corinthians 5:1 says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle . . ." Paul was talking about the human tabernacle made of clay, the earthly house. Second Corinthians 5:4 says, "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." The tabernacle is our mortality, our body. This is why Jesus taught in Matthew 6:10 to pray in this manner: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done *in* earth [not *on* earth, but *in* earth; the kingdom comes when you let God's will be done in your earthen vessel], as it is in heaven."

Matthew 10:28 states, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Through persecution Roman paganism could only take peace from the earthen vessel. Matthew 10:16-18 says: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake . . ." This prophecy was fulfilled during the second seal.

Matthew 10:19-23 tells us: "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." Jesus told of persecution that was going to take place, the persecution that our lesson is talking about.

The Sword of Civil Authority

Revelation 6:4 says that "**there was given unto him a great sword.**" In the Scriptures many times the sword represents God's Word, but this spirit was the spirit of unbelief. These people did not embrace God's Word. God's Word, the sword of the Spirit, cannot operate with unbelief. Unbelief will prohibit you from wielding the sword of the Word. So, this sword must be something distinct and different from the sword of the Spirit. This is not God's Spirit, but the spirit of unbelief. Since it is a totally different spirit, it must be a totally different sword.

The Imperial Caesars had the sword of the state. Even today the government wields a sword. In the morning time, when the pagan Caesars were dominated by this spirit of unbelief, they wielded this sword that God had entrusted to them. As officials of government, God entrusted the sword to them to use in civil matters. However, because of the spirit of unbelief, anyone who would not burn a pinch of incense once a year and say "Caesar is lord" was executed by the sword of state.

In Romans 13:1-4 we read: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers [speaking of civil authorities]. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power,

resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers [the higher powers] are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he [the ruler] is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain [here is the sword that the rider on this red horse had—the sword of state, civil authority]: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

God has given the state a sword to wield, because there are times when executions must take place. Capital punishment is still God's will. God's Word tells us that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. That was a moral law before God gave the Mosaic law. God said in Genesis 9:6, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." That is a moral principle. That is justice. So, we find that the state has the sword, and in this morning-time era this sword was used against the saints of God. They were using the sword of state to take the lives of the saints of God who would not bow down to the Imperial Caesars. In Acts 12:1-4 we read: "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword [here is the sword of state]. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him."

John 19:6-7 says: "When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him [speaking of Christ], they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." The Jews could not kill Him because they did not have the civil authority. Pontius Pilate used the sword of state. The spirit that motivated this sword of state was the spirit of unbelief. This spirit raised right up against Paul. Acts 23:1-3 states: "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council [Jesus foretold this in Matthew 10:17], said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. [How come? It was because of unbelief. He did not believe Paul's testimony.] Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" Ananias did not even believe the law he was representing; he acted contrary to it.

Later, Paul appeared before Festus and King Agrippa. Acts 26:23-24 tells us: "That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." Festus did not believe people could be raised from the dead. Ultimately, when Paul appeared before Nero, he was not guilty of any capital offense, but because Nero did not believe Paul's testimony, he had him beheaded.

Persecution Did Not Hinder the Church

The first opposition to the morning-time church was motivated by the spirit of unbelief. This spirit motivated the pagan Roman Empire, as personalized by the Caesars, to raise up the sword of persecution against the church. Nevertheless, persecution was of no avail to stop the progress of the church. In every period of time, when the church was subject to persecution, it flourished. Persecution has never hindered the church. Throughout the Dark Ages, the church was not a visible body, but as far as gaining converts and convincing a world, there were fifty to sixty million martyrs. So, they must have been successful in convincing many. Although they were subjected to suffering and martyrdom, Revelation 12:11 says, "And they overcame him [the dragon] . . . [because] they loved not their lives unto the death." It is hard to stop a man by threatening him with death when death is nothing more than a sweet release and a speedy entry to Glory.

In World War II it was hard for the Americans to fight the Japanese. The Japanese kamikaze pilots were believers in emperor worship. They worshiped the Emperor Hirohito. They believed there was no higher calling than for a man to die in service to his Emperor, which was his god. If they could die in service, they believed that was a straight ticket to the glory world. When they flew the planes, they did not care if they were shot down, as long as they could crash on the deck of an enemy ship. It is hard to fight men like that. They did not care whether they lived or died. That was the way the morning-time brethren were. They loved not their lives unto death. Death was not a penalty but a relief, and because of that, persecution did not stymie, or stagnate, the growth of the church.

The saints endured martyrdom in such a way that it wrought converts. Look at the story of Stephen, the very first Christian martyr. Acts 7:55-60 says: "But he [speaking of Stephen], being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly

into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." The stoning of Stephen had a great bearing on that young man named Saul. He never got away from the way that Stephen died. Although we do not live in an age of martyrdom, such as it was in the second seal, the spirit that promoted it is still loose. If it were not for the laws of the land, there are many who would kill the saints today just as they killed Stephen.

Drinking the "Cup of Suffering" With Joy

The way the church overcame was by the way they endured such suffering. The same spirit of unbelief that brought persecution to the morning-time church is still working in the evening time. Revelation 16:13-14 says: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs . . . which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world . . ." One way we are going to convince the gainsayer is the same way they did in the morning time: by the way that we handle persecution and opposition. When they rail at you, if you rail right back at them, you are not going to convince them of a thing. If they give you evil, and you render evil for evil, you are never going to convince them of a thing. In Romans 12:14 we read, "Bless them which persecute you." Sometimes persecution is just a test to see if you have got the goods. A child of God does not turn his wrath on the instrument of his suffering. Jesus did not. Luke 23:34 tells us what His attitude was: "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He manifested a right spirit. There was something about His Spirit that after He died the hardened Roman centurion said in Mark 15:39, "Truly this man was the Son of God." Why did he say that? Because Jesus died differently than anyone else the centurion had ever seen die. When Stephen was being stoned to death, he said in Acts 7:60, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

Romans 12:14-21 tells us: "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate [as long as Christians do not want to get their hands dirty, they are never going to save others]. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil [two wrongs do not make a right]. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." In the face of persecution, when people are mistreating you, look for an opportunity to do something good to them. You will be surprised by the effect it will have on them.

Go with me to Matthew 20:22. It says, "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Now, what cup was He talking about? What baptism was He speaking of? In the garden Jesus prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matthew 26:39). The Bible margin says that it is the "Cup of Suffering." When Jesus asked the disciples, "Are you able to drink this cup? Are you able to be baptized with this baptism?" He was speaking of the "Cup of Suffering."

When Jesus was being seized, John 18:11 says, "Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" This is a clear indication of all the suffering that lay ahead for Him. The morning-time church overcame because they were willing to drink of the "Cup of Suffering" joyfully, not begrudgingly. Though the cup may have seemed bitter, there was a sufficiency of grace that enabled them to drink the cup with joy. That joy showed forth and pierced through many hardened hearts, causing them to humble themselves and gain the experience those martyrs had. God uses the sufferings of His people as an avenue to show the world the grace of God. Oppositions are opportunities for the church to show the world something different.

Sufferings perfect spiritual character. The true steel of great men's souls has been forged in the heated fires of adversity. In 1 Peter 5:10 we read, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." We, in our humanity, are constantly trying to escape anything that is uncomfortable for the flesh. However, God sends adversity to perfect us

and to convince the world. By going through severity and hardship with a Christian attitude and spirit is how God's people overcome the spirit of unbelief. The world does not believe because they have seen so many phonies. Therefore, God allows the church to go through these things to convince the world and rid them of unbelief. God does not want His church to escape suffering. He wants us to have sufficient grace to show to the world. In 2 Corinthians 12:9 Jesus said, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." The morning-time church did not look for the way of ease, the way of least resistance, but they stood firm.

Revelation 12:13 says, "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth . . ." He was cast down from that exalted position. Unbelief was cast down out of the minds of people who were saturated with unbelief. It is really easy for people to be full of unbelief when they have not seen anything. However, when the world sees the grace of God on display, the Gospel lived out by people who are sold out and willing to pay the utmost price, it is hard for unbelief to thrive. The second-seal church cast out unbelief by giving people something to see, something to believe in. Every time Christians look for a way of ease, they lose something. God lets suffering and opposition come our way to help us and to prove our faith to others. When we, as God's people, let sufferings and trials work as they ought to work, they will strengthen and prepare us and convince others. That is how that spirit of unbelief can be cast down. This is how the morning-time brethren overcame this system, represented by the great red dragon, that was motivated by the spirit of unbelief. May God help us to overcome the unbelief of this spirit in our day and truly give an unbelieving world something that they may see to heal the power of unbelief.

CHAPTER SIX

THE THIRD SEAL (A.D. 270-530)

Revelation 6:5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

The Third Seal Portrayed by the Black Horse and His Rider

The Book of Revelation is written in symbolic language. When **Revelation 6:5** speaks of a "**black horse**," it is not speaking of a literal horse. This "**horse**" is merely a symbolic representation to convey a spiritual truth. In this third seal there is a rider who sits upon this "**black horse**," with "**a pair of balances in his hand**," and he measures out at a starvation rate: "**A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny**." John was not talking about literal "**wheat**" and literal "**barley**." These are figurative representations of truths.

This third seal begins in **Revelation 6:5**, which says, "**And when he** [The antecedent of the word *he* refers back to Revelation 6:1, which talks about the Lamb. The Lamb is the noun that the pronoun '**he**' refers to down throughout these passages of Scripture text. Thus, only the Lamb, Jesus Christ, has the ability to loose the seals, or loose the understanding of these precious truths.] **had opened the third seal . . .**" As we begin to consider the "**third seal**," first we need to affix the time setting. The first seal was represented by the white horse—a picture of the Holy Spirit; the second seal, as portrayed by the red horse, represented the spirit of unbelief that motivated the system of the pagan Roman Empire. The "**third seal**" is portrayed by the "**black horse**" and his rider. It actually began in a transitional period, this period from A.D. 270 to A.D. 530, the Smyrnaen age. It was a transitional age because it was a period of time of going from spiritual light to darkness. It was the time of the decline of the pagan Roman Empire, which was cast down by A.D. 270. Rome had been divided into ten minor kingdoms. (*Wickersham's Church History* verifies this fact.)

As pagan Rome began to decline, there was another force the enemy put in its place—papal Rome. It was a force and power to be reckoned with. However, the reins of control were not firmly established until A.D. 530. This system was at its zenith from A.D. 530 to A.D. 1530. (Note: there is some overlapping in the workings of these spirits. You cannot pull a page off of the calendar and say, "This is the day it started." Before each system was ever actually formulated, there had to be a spirit working that would give rise to the system. The rise of the system was the full implementation of the spirit, influencing and working on people until they formed a system.)

Previous to the Smyrnaen age, the brethren had overcome the dragon "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and [because] they loved not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12:11). They were able to cast that dragon down. That dragon lost not only its spiritual hold on the people but its civil hold also. It became a power that was no longer as viable and as influential as it once was under the Caesars. Thus, Rome broke up into the ten minor kingdoms. That is why the great red dragon had seven heads and ten horns. Crowns were upon the heads (Revelation 12:3) because Rome in its pagan form had seven different heads of government.

When the papal beast arose, it had the same seven heads and ten horns. However, the crowns moved from the seven heads to the ten horns (Revelation 13:1). Why? Because the political power was vested in those ten minor kingdoms rather than being centralized in a Caesar. The political power was spread amongst the ten minor kingdoms that comprised that empire. It then became the "holy" Roman Empire under the influence of the popes of Rome. The "**black horse**" portrays the spirit that gave rise to this system, and by A.D. 530 papal Rome had become firmly entrenched and had effectively seized the reins of power.

In A.D. 530 Boniface II was regarded as the first universal bishop with universal sway and authority. Thus began the more particular rule of Roman Catholicism, headed by the Pope who was revered in a worldwide manner in A.D. 530. How do we know that this third seal has any correlation with the Dark Ages? First of all, when we study these seals, keep in mind that the seal is the Spirit of God giving understanding. Each of these horses portrays spirits, and the very color depicted by the horse denotes the type of spirit that was working and the message it proclaimed. So,

when we begin to consider this "**black horse**," we see there is a correlation between the "**black horse**" and the Dark Ages.

The spirit that this "**black horse**" represents is the same spirit that produced the Dark Ages. This spirit was actually working from A.D. 270 to A.D. 530. It was working before the Dark Ages ensued because this was the spirit that promoted and produced the Dark Ages. So its proper placement is in the second period of time because this series is not dealing predominately with the systems but rather with the spirits that produced these systems. Every system of religion is produced by a spirit. First Timothy 4:1 declares, ". . . giving heed to seducing spirits [this occurs first], and doctrines of devils." This is the outgrowth of what these spirits produce—doctrines, or doctrinal systems.

What is the spirit that is being portrayed by this "**black horse**"? We need to know because we are confronted by that same spirit working now in the evening time. The spirit that produced that dark age is loose today in the form of one of the "three unclean spirits like frogs" (Revelation 16:13). Look at our Scripture text. **Revelation 6:5** states, "**And when he [the Lamb] had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say [the Greek actually says the 'third living creature'] . . .**" This verse gives insight as to what the prevailing conditions were that the church had to contend with.

The Third Living Creature

Let us go back to Revelation, Chapter 4, to see what the third living creature was. The King James version calls these living creatures "beasts," but the actual Greek word is *zoon*, which means "living creature." Ezekiel, Chapter 1, refers to them as "living creatures." They are a figurative expression of the redeemed of all ages. Revelation 5:8-9 tells us: "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints. [If these beasts and elders had the prayers of saints, what does that make them? It makes them saints, because there is no one who has the prayers of saints but the saints.] And they [Who? The four beasts and four and twenty elders.] sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us . . ." So, these four beasts, or living creatures, are a picture of the redeemed.

Revelation 4:7 identifies these four living creatures. It says, "And the first beast was like a lion [a type of the church in the morning time], and the second beast like a calf [representing the time when the people of God had to take on a sacrificial, calf-like nature, a time when they were under persecution], and the third beast had a face as a man . . ." Here was an era of time when the church was subjected to *man* rule, a time when men would usurp authority. As our Scripture text declares, they took the "**balances**" out of God's hands and placed them in their own hands. They took control of the nominal church. This era of time is best represented by a man.

Second Thessalonians, Chapter 2, warns that in this period of time, that would ultimately lead to the Dark Ages, the people of God were fighting against a spirit that would develop a system to where there would be a man sitting in the temple of God, opposing and exalting himself above all that was called God, and saying that he was God (2 Thessalonians 2:4). For a thousand dark years, from A.D. 530 to A.D. 1530, the saints had to contend with that prevailing condition. The cry of the day was "be Catholic or die." For years part of the Latin mass was the phrase *Dominus Deus Nostra Papa*, which means "Our Lord God the Pope." So the church became subjected to a period of time when the prevailing, predominate condition was man in control.

The Black Horse

To understand why a "**black horse**" is used to portray this spirit, let us go to Zechariah 6:6. It says, "The black horses which are therein go forth into the north country . . ." Here is another reason why we know that this third seal began to work in the second period of time. The second candlestick age was a transitional period, a time when apostasy was well on its way to instituting spiritual coldness and deadness by completely eradicating the voice of the Spirit. Yet, this did not fully happen until they reached the north country and the Dark Ages commenced.

The north country represents a cold condition. Geographically, as you move into a colder climate, conditions tend to become more barren. The farther you go north and the colder it becomes, the more barren it becomes. After one is in this condition for a while, one can adjust to it, and that is exactly what happened during the transition period. People became adjusted to a cold spiritual condition, and a dark age came in. Rather than rise up against it, they became

comfortable with it. Malachi 4:2 says that Christ "the Sun of righteousness [would] arise." Jesus said, "I Jesus . . . am . . . the bright and morning star" (Revelation 22:16).

When the morning came forth, it came forth with the brilliance of dazzling morning glory. However, Amos' prophecy spoke of an eclipse at noon. The sun became darkened in a clear day, and the sun went down at noon (Amos 8:9). Here was a picture of a spiritual eclipse. If an eclipse takes place for a very long period of time, coldness moves in; life is hindered; fruitfulness is effected. This is what happened when this clear day, the Gospel Day, became darkened. In this dark age, a cold spiritual condition had set in, and barrenness began to work.

When Zechariah 6:6 says that "the black horses which are therein go forth into the north country," it is telling us that this is a spirit that produces coldness and deadness. If this spirit gets hold of people, it will take them to the north country. Zechariah 6:8 says, "Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country." Here we gain insight as to how this spirit takes people into spiritual darkness. The Holy Spirit is the Agent that brings light and understanding. When people allow another spirit to work on them that quiets God's Spirit, it will not be long until they will be in darkness.

Let us consider this "**black horse**." Nothing is darker than black. The color of this horse portrays darkness. It was the spirit of apostasy. That spirit of apostasy is the spirit that tries to quiet God's Spirit. The reason this spirit wants to quiet God's Spirit is that the Spirit of God is the Agent that brings light and understanding. Jesus, speaking in John 6:45, said, "It is written in the prophets [Isaiah 54:13], And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Jesus said that "they shall be all taught of God." To see what agency God uses to teach His people, go to John 14:26. It says, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he [the Holy Ghost] shall teach you all things." The Christian is only taught of God as the Holy Ghost teaches him.

John 16:13-15 states: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth [John 15:26 calls Him 'the Comforter'], is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." The Holy Spirit is the Agent that God uses to teach His people.

The Holy Spirit is actually God. The Triune Godhead consists of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Every one of them is God. The Holy Ghost is as much God as any other personality of the Godhead. Look at Acts 5:3. It says, "But Peter said, Ananias, why hast Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" Then Acts 5:4 states, "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." In verse 3 Peter said, "You have lied to the Holy Ghost," and in verse 4 he said, "You have lied to God." That shows that the Holy Ghost is God.

The Holy Spirit has a job, and John 16:13 tells us what that job is: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak" As long as Jesus Christ continues to speak, the Holy Ghost is going to continue to convey it to hearts and give understanding. As long as time stands, the Holy Ghost is going to keep speaking to the church. This is why seven times in the Revelation Jesus said, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

God's Spirit is the source of light. When people quiet that Spirit, they are going to be in darkness. The first record of the Spirit of God moving on the scene is found in Genesis 1:1-2: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And *the Spirit of God moved* upon the face of the waters." The Spirit of God was brought on the scene when there was darkness. Genesis 1:3 says, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Now, this was before the sun and the moon were created. They were not created until the fourth day. What was the light for the first three days?

Ephesians 1:17-18 tells us: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." To properly see, physically, light has to fall on the object and on the eye. The Holy Spirit sheds light on the object, which is the Word of God, and then enlightens our understanding to where we can perceive the truth of it. The real light is contained in the Word, but we are enlightened through the Holy Spirit. First Corinthians 2:13 says, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." The Holy Ghost is the Teacher.

This spirit, portrayed by the "**black horse**," is black not because the Spirit of God was not speaking but because in this era of time people had quieted God's Spirit. He was enlightening them, but they would not walk in the light. So,

a dark night set in. This particular spirit is portrayed as a "**black horse**," because there is no greater darkness than having once had light. There is no greater darkness than losing the light after having once been able to see. This "**black horse**" portrays the spirit of apostasy, and the reason it is so black and so dark is that it represents a people who once had glorious, bright light. Yet, they refused to keep pace with that light, and they refused to measure to those truths. Nevertheless, they wanted to keep professing religion right over top of it. Thus, they quieted God's Spirit and took on a spirit of apostasy.

John 12:35 tells us, "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light [why?], lest darkness come upon you." Light is progressive. It is ever unfolding. The Holy Spirit continues to speak; as He continues to speak, we need to continue to hear; as we hear, we need to walk. There is a sin unto death that John says there is no use praying for (1 John 5:16). In the Old Testament, Saul got to that point. God came to Samuel and said, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?" (1 Samuel 16:1). In other words, God was saying, "Quit your mourning." God can get fed up to where He says, "That is enough!" In Luke 11:35 we read, "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness."

The very light that God has ordained to save us, if we do not walk in it, can damn us. It can cause us to be in greater darkness than we ever would have been because we were privileged to have had light. The Prophet in Joel 2:2 called the Dark Ages "a day of darkness . . . a day of . . . thick darkness." In Exodus, when the plague of darkness came, the darkness was so thick they could feel it (Exodus 10:21-22). Also, the Dark Ages were so dark that there was not a man, woman, or child who did not feel its effect.

Roman Catholicism Came Up Out of the Sea

The spirit of the "**black horse**" is actually a spirit of apostasy. The results of this spirit was a people who failed to listen to the Spirit of God. Instead of wanting divine direction, the people of this era wanted to direct their own course. The spirit behind this apostasy, which produced the system of Roman Catholicism, was working in 3 John 9-10. It says: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence [The system of Roman Catholicism is built on a spirit of preeminence. The priests are all preeminent to the people. Then over the priests are the bishops, over the bishops are the archbishops, over the archbishops are the cardinals, and over the cardinals is the Pope.] among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church."

Two prominent things that are found in Roman Catholicism were working right back there: preeminence and excommunication. John was a man of God; he was that beloved disciple who leaned on Jesus' breast. He received the Revelation on the Isle of Patmos. Yet, when John felt impressed of the Spirit to come to that congregation, Diotrephes said, "You are not coming." He quieted God's Spirit when he refused to allow John to come.

Go to Revelation 8:8. It reads, "And the second angel sounded [this angel was in this transition period, A.D. 270-530], and as it were a great mountain [here is a dual figure; Hebrews, Chapter 12, talks about that great mountain burning with fire, which was Mount Sinai—a place where the presence of God was and where the trumpet was sounded, a place where they heard the voice of God; then, verse 22 speaks of Mount Sion, a figurative expression of the morning-time church] burning with fire was cast into the sea." If a literal mountain burning with fire is cast into the sea, the sea extinguishes the fire. In the Revelation the sea is a symbolic representation of people (Revelation 17:15 and Isaiah 57:20). Anytime people control things, it will put the fire out. When a pastor is controlled by the people, there will not be any fire left. When people control the church, an apostasy is the end result.

Revelation 8:8 is a picture of the morning-time apostasy. From the sea that this great mountain was cast into came the papal beast (Revelation 13:1). Most of that church which had once been on fire, enjoying the presence and power of God, and hearing the voice of God in a clear, plain manner fell out of the control of God's hands and into the hands of men. Out of the minds of these men came the religious system known as Roman Catholicism. Roman Catholicism did not come *down* from God out of Heaven, but it came *up* out of that same sea that the mountain burning with fire was cast into—an apostasy. Roman Catholicism claims to be the Church of God. That is partially right for they are the backslidden Church of God.

Revelation 8:8 describes this mountain as "burning with fire." The symbol of fire is representative of God. Hebrews 12:29 tells us that our God is a consuming fire. Moses saw a bush on fire (Exodus 3:2)—a symbol of the presence of God. When Elijah wanted to prove who the Lord was, he called down fire (1 Kings 18:37-38).

How did that which had been the morning-time church fall out of the hands of God and into the hands of men? It happened the same way anyone, individually or collectively, backslides. They quit listening to the Spirit. When He tried to speak, they quieted Him. To fall away from truth, people have to step over the Holy Ghost. There is no one who does wrong without first being confronted by the Holy Ghost. To apostatize and keep professing right over the top of it, people must have "their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:2). Apostasy is a defection from the truth; in reality, backsliding, but being under a deception by the spirit of apostasy to where one continues to profess and is deceived into thinking that he or she is all right. That is how these people became infected with the "**black horse**" spirit. This is how they could do terrible things supposedly in the name of Christianity.

Of all the sins in the world, the only sin that is unpardonable is the sin against the Holy Ghost. In Matthew 12:31 Jesus said, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." Blasphemy is claiming equality with God. Jesus was accused of blasphemy because He claimed to be the Son of God (John 10:36). Although their definition of blasphemy was right, their object of blasphemy was wrong because Jesus was the Son of God. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is refusing to walk in the way He shows us, claiming equality, claiming that we know as well or better than He does what we should do, how we should live, and what course, or stand, we should take.

People can grieve the Holy Ghost to the place where they seal themselves. John said there is no need to pray when someone gets to that point, for it is a sin unto death. Read 1 John 5:16: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. [In other words, he has not sinned beyond redemption's point. He has not blasphemed the Holy Ghost. If he will humble himself and ask to be forgiven, life can be given back to him.] There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."

This is dealing with men who have committed the unpardonable sin. In reality, they are just the same as dead and in hell; they have already crossed the line. There is no use to even pray for one in that condition. In Malachi 1:2-3 God said: "I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau." Esau sought with tears for a place of repentance but did not find one (Hebrews 12:17). He sinned a sin unto death, and God was done with him. Genesis 6:3 tells us, "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." God's patience was just about done. At the end of that 120 years, He destroyed the whole world with the exception of eight people. History tells us there was about eight million people in that day. So, only one out of a million was saved.

Saul also went past the point of no return. First Samuel 16:1 tells us, "And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite . . ." God had rejected Saul. Belshazzar was told in Daniel 5:27, "TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." Did he have another chance or opportunity? No! Daniel 5:30 says, "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain." He had passed the point of no return. Israel, as a nation, did the same thing. Jesus, speaking to them in Luke 19:44, said, "And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." They were never visited again as they had been visited with Christ.

Apostasy Begins Within

Next, let us look at how this darkness, or apostasy, began to work. How could people who once had light be content with darkness? The Apostle Paul prophesied of this in his farewell to the Ephesian brethren. In Acts 20:29-30 he said: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Many times an apostasy begins when people, right in the midst of the true church, who should have a knowledge and understanding of truth, begin speaking "perverse things" (Acts 20:30).

What causes people to start speaking perverse things? Before anyone ever begins to start speaking things that are false and contrary to truth, something has to take place internally first. People do not just do perverse things. They do what they do because of the spirit that motivates them. Their spirit has to be perverted first. Go to 1 Timothy 4:1. It says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times [and we are in them] some shall depart from the faith

[why?], giving heed to seducing spirits" Often people are seduced without even knowing it. They think they are standing for truth; they think they are just like they always were. But they are just like Samson. He "wist not that the LORD was departed from him" (Judges 16:20).

Notice how this apostasy began to work. It did not start from *without* the church. No force that has ever come against the church from without has been successful. Every time the enemy accomplished anything, it was because of something that started from *within*. It worked through people who had influence, people who at one time knew truth, but their spirit changed. Paul, prophesying in 2 Timothy 4:3-4, said: "For the time will come [and the time has come] when they will not endure sound [healthy, wholesome] doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

Before they ever turned from truth to fables, their spirit had to change. That is how this spirit of apostasy began to work. All the brethren who wrote the epistles saw it coming. Peter saw it, and he wrote in 2 Peter 2:1, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you [Peter was addressing the Church of God], who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them" They denied the Lord by refusing His lordship in their lives. It was their lives that denied Him. Titus 1:16 declares, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him." It is not with the words that they speak, but it is with their actions, by the lives that they live that they actually deny Him. They do not deny His existence, but they deny His lordship—His claim on their lives—by the way that they live.

Spirit of Apostasy Portrayed by a Black Horse

Second Peter 2:2-3 says: "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." When this spirit of apostasy, portrayed by the "**black horse**," was loosed in a feverish manner, it gave rise to a system, and that system worked through words and teachings to make merchandise out of the souls of mankind.

Jude 3 says, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Notice that Jude employed the past tense: "once delivered." Why? Because there was a spirit of apostasy loose when Jude wrote this. God delivered the truth to the saints, but the move of an apostate spirit came along and tried to say that God gave truth only to the priests and the Pope. This system took the Word of God out of man's hands and chained it to the pulpit for a thousand years. During this dark age, from A.D. 530 to A.D. 1530, the common man could not have a Bible. Even if he could get hold of one, he could not read it for it was written in Latin. When Martin Luther, a monk, wanted to read the Bible, he had to go to the library where it was chained to a pulpit.

Christ delivered the truth to the saints (Jude 3), but when this spirit of apostasy moved in, the Catholic Church took it away from the saints. They told them, "You cannot understand it. There is no use of you reading that." So, the priests and the popes took a preeminent position and started teaching things that were feigned words. They began making merchandise out of the souls of men. We read in Jude 4, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, [These men who crept in had a change of spirit or nature. They were turning the grace of God into a license for loose living.] and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Through their works, through the manner in which they lived, they denied His lordship of their lives. One cannot have Jesus as Lord and then live loosely. His lordship will do away with looseness, or looseness will do away with His lordship. I want you to see why this spirit is portrayed by this "**black horse**."

In reference to these ungodly men who crept in, Jude 13 calls them, "Raging waves of the sea, [They are always raging. They always have a pet doctrine that they have to peddle. They always seem to have more understanding than everybody else. However, it does not line up with truth.] foaming out their own shame; wandering stars [they are wandering stars because you never know where they are going to be; you never know where they are going to stand], to whom is reserved the blackness" Here we are back to this black spirit of apostasy.

Hebrews 6:4-6 says: "For it is impossible for those who *were once* [past tense] enlightened and *have tasted* [past tense] of the heavenly gift, and *were made* [past tense] partakers of the Holy Ghost, And *have tasted* [past tense] the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance

... " It is impossible to renew people who have fallen away because they still think they are new. It is impossible to help someone who does not think that he needs any help. Before one can ever be saved, he must first realize that he is lost. This is why it is an unpardonable sin, for they think they have no sin from which they need pardoned.

The words "fall away" in Hebrews 6:6 are translated from the Greek word *parapipto*, which means "to fall aside" or "apostatize." Paul prophesied of a falling away in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. He said, "Let no man deceive you [all that a deceived man can do is deceive someone else] by any means: for that day [speaking of the Second Advent] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, [Falling away in the Greek is *apostasia*, which means, 'a defection from truth' or 'an apostasy.' It is the root word of the English word *apostasy*. An apostasy is defined as 'an abandoning of what one has believed in, as a faith.'] and that the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." This refers to **verse 5** of our Scripture text, which says he "**had a pair of balances in his hand.**" If we look at what *he had* and what *he does*, we can see who *he is*. Just as a natural horse upholds and conveys its rider, the rider of the "**black horse**" is the human representation upheld by this spirit. First of all, the "**balances**" did not belong "**in his hand.**" That in itself is a result of the apostasy.

God never ordained that any man put people in or out of the church. Certainly, God has order in the church, but when it comes to the spiritual structure of the actual body of Christ, man cannot put you in it and man cannot put you out. Salvation makes you a member, and sin puts you out. Yet, here was one who presumed to take the "**balances in his [own] hand.**" If people did not do what he said, they were put out. They called it *excommunication*.

Third John 9-10 says: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come [it made no difference whether Diotrephes wanted him or not, if God said go, John was going to go], I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." Here is the first biblical record of excommunication. Notice that it came from a man who had a preeminent spirit.

Although God puts men in authority, a true man of God does not take any delight in exerting that authority. He will do it very reluctantly, only when he has to. However, these men were of a totally different spirit. They loved preeminence. That same spirit worked in the Pharisees. They loved to stand on the street corners "and for a pretence make *long prayer*" (Matthew 23:14). Jesus said to not let any man call you "Rabbi" or "father" (Matthew 23:8-9). However, this very spirit that produced the system of Roman Catholicism insists on people calling the priests "Father."

The Balances Belong in God's Hand

The very fact that the "**balances**" are in the rider's "**hand**" is the outgrowth of an apostasy. They did not belong in his hand. The "**balances**" do not belong in any man's hand. God has a divine order, and the "**balances**" are in His hand. Those whom God puts in divine positions act in response to the measurement that God measures and reveals through discernment as to who is who and what is what. In 1 Samuel 2:2-3 we read: "There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him [God] actions are weighed." The "**balances**" are in His hand, and He looks past man's attempts and failures to the intent of the heart.

In Proverbs 16:2 we read, "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes [often there is no one who thinks he is doing wrong]; but the LORD weigheth the spirits." Ananias and Sapphira sold their land and brought the money to the Apostles. They thought they were really something, but God had already weighed their spirits. Their spirits, their motives, and their intentions were wrong. God had already weighed them, pronounced sentence, and put judgment on them (Acts 5:1-11).

Proverbs 16:11 says, "A just weight and balance are the LORD'S: all the weights of the bag are his work." God is the One who needs to weigh because He is the only One who is truly just; He is the only One who has all the facts. When this "**he**" (**Revelation 6:5**) took the "**balances**" out of God's hand and put them in his, he was taking the place of God. That is exactly what the popes of Rome have done. They have set themselves up in God's place, and God is against it. Now, I am not speaking with disrespect to the man, but I am speaking of that office that he holds, that system that he represents, and the spirit that motivates him. All of that is contrary to God's Word, and it is damning millions of souls. That system is the wealthiest religious system on the face of the globe. Yet, it does not have any light, or truth, in it.

Isaiah 26:7 says, "The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just." Who weighs the path of the just? The "most upright"—God. We read in Daniel 5:27, "TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." Belshazzar was weighed in the balances and found wanting. Who measured it out? Who weighed the balances that night? God did. Biblically speaking, the **"balances"** belong in God's hand.

In our Scripture text we find a man who had the **"balances"** in his own **"hand."** Now, who is this man? He is the one whom Paul referred to as the "man of sin" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). One of the Pope's titles is *God*. History tells us that Tetzal came selling indulgences in the sixteenth century, saying, "The Lord God has ceased to reign, and given all power over to the Pope." That is a lie! The Revelator said, "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Revelation 19:6). He has never abdicated His throne nor given His power to anyone.

Revelation 13:18 says, "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast [what is it?]: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." Many are looking for some antichrist to come in the future. Many believe that unless you have a number on the forehead and on the hand, you are not going to be able to buy groceries and other things. However, that is not what this Scripture text is teaching. The number is a number of a man. *One man* wears this number, not everybody else. Read Revelation 13:17 closely, and you will see there is a distinction between the *mark* and the *number*. They represent two different things.

"A False Balance Is Abomination to the LORD"

Let us look at the number 666. On the front of the triple crown that the popes of Rome wear is an inscription that says in Latin *VICARIUS FILII DEI*. This translates as Vicar of the Son of God. If you ascribe Roman numeric expressions to each letter, V or U equals five; I equals one; C equals one hundred; L equals fifty; and D equals five hundred. (Some letters have no numerical signification.) The numerical designation of *VICARIUS FILII DEI* comes out to exactly 666. Only one man is allowed to wear that crown, and he is the Pope of Rome. So the number of the beast is the number of a man, the Pope. He is the head of a system that is damning millions.

| | |
|---------|---------|
| V = 5 | F = 0 |
| I = 1 | I = 1 |
| C = 100 | L = 50 |
| A = 0 | I = 1 |
| R = 0 | I = 1 |
| I = 1 | D = 500 |
| U = 5 | E = 0 |
| S = 0 | I = 1 |
| 112 | 554 |

Total: 112 + 554 = 666

So we see that this man of sin, the man who usurps authority and presumes to take the **"balances in his [own] hands,"** is a picture of the Pope of Rome. He has a **"pair of balances in his hand,"** but it is a *false* balance. He is not using them correctly. How do we know he is not using the **"balances"** correctly? Look at **Revelation 6:6**. It says, **"And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny . . ."** The actual Greek says, "A Chenix of Wheat for a Denarius, and three Chenices of Barley for a Denarius" (The Emphatic Diaglott). What this is actually showing us is a famine, food being sold at a starvation rate.

The **"penny,"** or the Greek *Denarius*, was the ordinary wages of a laborer for a whole day. Matthew 20:2 says, "And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard." This **"measure,"** a *Chenix* of wheat, was the usual daily allowance of food for one man. To work all day to buy enough food for one man for one day is an inflated rate, a starvation rate. How could a man feed his family if he had to work all day just to make enough to barely sustain his own self? This shows an enormous price placed on the necessities of life (about twenty times greater than normal).

The false balance, produced by this system, places an undue and unfair burden on men. It then makes merchandise out of them. One way that is done is by telling the people, "I can hear the screams of your dear, departed loved one in purgatory." Because the people do not have enough spiritual understanding (they do not understand that there is no purgatory), they believe this lie. Then the supposed church begins placing demands on the people. They say, "We will light some candles and we will pray and maybe we can get them out of purgatory. If you will pay money, then we will have a low mass." Often the priest goes through the motions, then he comes back and says, "I am really sorry. I tried, but I still hear them screaming in purgatory. The low mass did not work. We will have to have a high mass." High mass means more money. Thus, because the people do not have an understanding of truth, "they with feigned words make merchandise" out of the souls of men (2 Peter 2:3).

Job 31:6 says, "Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity." God's balance is an even balance. He knows what an individual is capable of, and He will not require any more than that. He will never ask you to do what you cannot do. Proverbs 11:1 states, "A false balance is abomination to the LORD." Divers, or different, weights are holding people to a different standard because of who they are. Jude talks about it in this way. Jude 16 says, "These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. So, because some people can do more for the supposed church than someone else can, a different weight, or balance, is used for them.

Proverbs 20:23 goes on to say that "a false balance is not good." Why are the "**balances**" that Roman Catholicism and the popes hold false? and are we sure it is the papacy that holds them? Hosea 12:7 states, "He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress." The "**balances**" are false because they desire to deceive. They are merchantmen, and their intent is to make merchandise out of the souls of men. Hosea said, "He loveth to oppress." If you study the Dark Ages, you will find that the cry was to "be Catholic or die." In that era of time, somewhere between fifty and sixty million people were martyred. Through the years men who dared to try to translate the Bible into the common language were executed as criminals in the most horrible ways.

Making Merchandise Out of Men's Souls

These "**balances**" are false because the spirit behind it is the spirit of a person who is deceived, and all a deceived person can do is deceive someone else. Amos 8:4-5 states: "Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy [this religious system swallows up the needy], even to make the poor of the land to fail, Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small [here is another reference to the wheat being measured in small quantities], and the shekel great [this is what this religious system is truly interested in—making the shekel *great*; they are not interested in truth, but gain], and falsifying the balances by deceit?" They deceive souls so that they can make merchandise of people. Hosea 12:7 says, "He is a merchant." Is he? Is this system truly making merchandise of people?

We read in 2 Peter 2:3, "And through covetousness [or greediness] shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." Peter was prophesying of the very system that the Pope is back of, a system that makes merchandise of the people and spiritually starves them. To be sure of that, all you have to do is study a little history. In the 1500s, the Roman Catholic Church wanted to build what is now called Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. They needed to derive the revenue to build that great edifice. So they raised that money by selling *indulgences*.

A man named Johann Tetzel went throughout Germany selling indulgences. He told people, "If you will buy one of these indulgences, it will forgive your sins, and if you pay enough, we will even forgive the sins you are going to commit." He played on people's sympathies, saying, "If you have a relative in purgatory, if you pay the money, your relative will come out of purgatory." They even had a little saying: "When the money into the can does drop, then the souls from purgatory will hop." That is a lie to the core! That is making merchandise out of the souls of men. In essence, they were saying, "If you pay enough, we will not only forgive what you have done, we will even give you a ticket to go and sin some more." That is what stirred Martin Luther to commence the Reformation. He hung the ninety-five theses from the church door in Wittenberg, Germany.

The cost of Saint Peter's Basilica was the souls of men. It was built with blood money. There is not a beautiful thing about it when you consider that people put their trust in indulgences and when they died, they went deceived into a Christless eternity. Let us look where souls rank in importance in all of this. Revelation 18:12-13 tells us: "The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet,

and all thine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and [last of all] souls of men." They are not interested in the souls of men. They are interested in what they can gain monetarily.

When John talked about **"a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny"** (**Revelation 6:6**), he was talking about a spiritual famine in the land. Notice a couple of things about this Scripture passage. There was three times as much falsity as there was any truth. Only one **"measure of wheat"** to three **"measures of barley."** This famine of the Word started when they "quieted my Spirit" (Zechariah 6:8).

We read in Amos 8:9-11: "And it shall come to pass in that day [a prophetic expression of the Gospel Day, this Christian dispensation], saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day: And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD."

There was a spiritual famine in this dark age. The Word of God was put out at a starvation rate. They took unfair advantage of the people and thus made merchandise of them. The indulgences are only one example. By using the desire that people had for spiritual security, by pilfering them of their money to build Saint Peter's Basilica, they were using a false balance.

What does the Bible mean when it talks about making merchandise? Merchandise is a means to an end. In business, merchandise is for one thing: to make money. Sad to say, that is the way this system uses people. They are not really interested in the people's spiritual welfare, but they view them as a way to make money. Even today they have more bingo games than prayer meetings.

God's True Measuring Stick Is the Word

The Bible calls the system that was promoted and produced by this spirit a "beast" because of its nature. The spirit has never changed. It does not have any tolerance for truth. If you and I measure our own selves, it will be a false balance. Second Corinthians 10:12-13 says: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you."

We are not to measure ourselves by ourselves but by "the rule which God hath distributed" (2 Corinthians 10:13). God has given His Word to measure man. That is the rule; that is the measuring reed like a rod. Revelation 11:1 tells us, "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise and measure . . ." To understand what this reed like unto a rod was, go back to Revelation 10:9. It says, "And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey." The "reed like unto a rod" was this little book.

What was this little book? Go back to Ezekiel 3:1-4. It states: "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll [the Hebrew says 'scroll'], and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. And he said unto me, Son of man, go get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them." The scroll, or the book, that John was told to eat was God's Word. Micah 6:9 says, "The LORD's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod . . ." The rod is the Lord's voice, the Word. That is how God measures—with the Word. Micah 7:14 states, "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage." What was he to feed the flock with? The Word. So the rod, God's true measuring stick, is God's Word.

The last part of **Revelation 6:6** says, ". . . and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." That tells us even in the midst of this dark night of apostasy, **"the oil and the wine"** (the Spirit and the Word) could not be hurt. The true church was not eliminated. Revelation 12:6 tells us that "she hath a place prepared of God" where He hid her—in the catacombs and caves. We know God had a people during this time, for fifty to sixty million saints were martyred. The opposition could not stop **"the oil and the wine."** It may have gone underground, but they could not stop its flow.

Let us look at the interpretation of "**the oil and the wine.**" Oil was used to anoint kings in the Old Testament, and it is typical of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. After King Saul was anointed, the Spirit of God came upon him, and he became another man (1 Samuel 10:1-9). Oil, in the Old Testament tabernacle, was what kept the lights burning, and it is that golden oil, the Holy Spirit, that keeps hearts and lives spiritually on fire, acting as lights to a lost and sin-benighted world. Wine is that which is produced by the vine. Jesus said in John 15:1, "I am the true vine." So this "**wine**" is a picture of that which Christ produced for man to partake of, the food for the soul, the bread from Heaven, the Word of God.

Although Rome tried to destroy all the Bibles, God preserved His Word and handed it on down to us. God still had a plan. Even when it seemed that the enemy was fully in control, God still had a plan, and He preserved a people through that period of time. For 1260 years the two witnesses, the Word and the Spirit, were in sackcloth; yet they kept right on going, filling their role (Revelation 11:3).

Who does the Bible say these two witnesses are? Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness" (Matthew 24:14). The Roman letter teaches that "the Spirit itself beareth witness" (Romans 8:16). Those two witnesses are the Word and the Spirit, the two true vicars of the church. Revelation 11:4 says, "These are the two olive trees." Zechariah saw a picture of the church in the symbol of a golden candlestick. (The candlestick is the church—Revelation 1:20.) On each side of that golden candlestick were the two olive trees pumping the golden oil to keep the golden lampstand, the candlestick, shining (Zechariah 4:2-3). The two olive trees that kept the church functional were the Word and the Spirit. Right in the midst of this apostasy, God had a church, a people, hid away. It was not visible during this time; it was not in public view, but the people were being sustained.

In Revelation, Chapter 12, is a picture, in symbolic expressions, of the church being hid away. Verse 6 tells us, "And the woman [a picture of the morning-time church] fled into the wilderness [representing a place of special, divine, providential protection and revelation], where she hath a place prepared of God, that they ["**the oil and the wine,**" the Spirit and the Word] should feed her there [how long?] a thousand two hundred and threescore days [or from A.D. 270 to A.D. 1530]." God had a special position prepared to feed and nourish the church. Revelation 12:14 says, "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle [they thought they had her down, but she mounted up with wings of an eagle], that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished" What is she nourished with? "**The oil and the wine.**" The Spirit and the Word are what nourishes the church.

This "**third seal**" (verse 5) represents the period of time A.D. 270-530, a time symbolized by a "**black horse,**" a time when the spirit of apostasy was loosed and working. That gave rise to a period of time that became known as the Dark Ages.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FOURTH SEAL (A.D. 530-1530)

Revelation 6:7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

The Fourth Seal Represented by the Pale Horse

The opening of the "**fourth seal**" introduces the "**pale horse**." This is a very important seal. The appearance of this "**horse**," or of this spirit that it represents, is most deceptive because it appears to be close in its appearance to the white horse, which portrays the opening of the first seal. There is not much deception in the black horse for its appearance is 100 percent in contrast to the white horse. As we begin to study the spirit represented by this "**pale horse**," we will see that it is a most deceptive spirit. It has an appearance that looks right; it has teachings that sound right; it has manners of operation that appear right. Yet, the end result of it is spiritual death.

In our Scripture text, Christ was trying to convey a most important lesson through the figure of this "**pale horse**." In **Revelation 6:7** the writer declared, "**And when he had opened the fourth seal . . .**" The antecedent of that word "**he**" reverts us right back to Revelation 6:1, which says, "And I saw when the *Lamb* opened one of the seals . . ." Understanding only comes through the Lamb, Jesus Christ. Understanding does not merely come through reading or hearing this book. It might be well to be reminded that in the Revelation we are dealing in terms that are symbolic expressions. Revelation 1:1, speaking of this Revelation message, says that "he sent and signified it," which means "revealed by signs," or by symbols.

These horses do not represent physical horses, and these swords do not represent literal articles of warfare. They are representing spiritual truths. They are representing a message of truth that Christ is trying to convey to you and me by using the vehicle of symbolic representation. There is a message here for us, because the spirit of this "**pale horse**" is loose yet today, and sad to say, it works right around too many Church of God congregations. Unless God's people understand what this spirit is and how it works, we can fall prey to that same spirit. Many people over the world already have.

As we look into **Revelation 6:7**, bear in mind this opening of the "**fourth seal**" merely means that Christ was the One who prevailed to loose the "**seal**." He was the One who gave the authority and said that it was time. The "**seal**" is the Holy Spirit of God. Let us see who the Bible says the "**seal**" is. Ephesians 1:13 says, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit . . ." What is the "**seal**"? The "**seal**" is the Holy Spirit. Paul reiterated the same truth in Ephesians 4:30, which says, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed . . ." Again, the "**seal**" is the Holy Spirit.

When Revelation talks about the "**seal**" being "**opened**," it means nothing more than a portrayal, in figurative expressions, of the Spirit of God bringing understanding. Jesus plainly stated in John 16:13-14: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." The Lamb opens the seals when He sees the time is right for truth to go forth and understanding to be given. Jesus told His disciples in John 16:12, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." In other words, the time was not right. It was still truth, but the time was not right for them to understand that truth. When Christ saw that the time was right, then He spoke, and as He spoke, the Holy Ghost heard. Then, as the Holy Ghost heard, He "shall shew it unto you" (John 16:14).

The Apostle Paul declared in Ephesians 1:17-18: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened . . ." When do the eyes of your understanding become enlightened? When the Spirit of revelation brings it to you. When does He bring it to you? When Jesus Christ sees that it is time for your understanding to be opened.

When understanding is opened, what does He open it for? What does He open understanding concerning? Referring to Jesus walking with the brethren to Emmaus, Luke 24:32 says, "And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he *opened* to us the scriptures?" When Christ sees the time is right, He looses the Holy Spirit (who is the "**seal**"), which in this case was personified in Jesus Christ, to open an understanding of the Scriptures. We can be sure of that because Luke 24:45 says, "Then *opened* he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures."

"The Fourth Beast Was Like a Flying Eagle"

When Christ, in the fullness of each era of time, saw that it was time for understanding to be given, He loosed the "**seal**," the Holy Spirit. Then the Holy Spirit revealed the truth that was needful for people to understand concerning the conditions they had to labor with. We need to understand that the people did not receive light on the "**pale horse**" in the dispensation in which the "**pale horse**" reigned. That is why **Revelation 6:7** says, "**And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast** [the Greek actually says 'the fourth living creature'] **say, Come and see.**" These were not hideous beasts. These four beasts were a figurative expression of the redeemed of all ages.

Why did John refer to the "**fourth beast**" as the one that brought understanding? To understand what this "**fourth beast**" represents, back up to Revelation, Chapter 4. Here is a portrayal of these four living creatures. Revelation 4:7 says, "And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle." This fourth living creature, portrayed as a flying eagle, is a picture, in symbolic representation, of those who were the true saints. The true church had understanding about this spirit that was loosed, and they did not have to succumb to that spirit.

What does the Scripture mean when it talks about this creature being like a flying eagle? Throughout the Scriptures the thought of an eagle is a picture of divine intervention to aid those who were being assaulted, to raise them to a position of victory. God, speaking to those in the Exodus in Exodus 19:4, said, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." Here was a picture of a people whom God delivered from Egypt. Egypt not only portrays sin, but it also serves as a very vivid type of sectarian bondage.

Revelation 11:8 says, "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." This mention of Egypt brings into focus the thought of bondage. God's people were held in bondage down in Pharaoh's land. Israel went down to Egypt in Joseph's day because of a famine in the land (Genesis, Chapters 42-50). This is a parallel of the Dark Ages. In the third seal this black horse, the spirit of apostasy, had a rider with a pair of balances in his hand. There was a famine in the land, and he was meting out a measure of wheat for a penny and three measures of barley for a penny. He was meting out things at a starvation rate. In Amos 8:9 God said, "I will cause the sun to go down at noon." This was a prophecy of a dark age, and in that dark age there was "a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD" (Amos 8:11).

During the Old Testament famine, Joseph had his family brought to where they would not have to die in that famine. This is a type of God keeping the church in the midst of the dark age. After Joseph moved off the stage of action, there was a Pharaoh who did not know Joseph (Exodus, Chapter 2), and the people of Israel, who had been brought to Egypt as guests, ended up being oppressed and enslaved. Egypt, becoming a place of spiritual bondage and literal oppression, is a picture of sectarian religion, which also holds God's people in bondage.

In literal Egypt God called a man named Moses and commissioned him to go and preach the message: "Let my people go" (Exodus 5:1). That is the same message that the Church of God preaches today, only the wording is, "Come out of her, my people" (Revelation 18:4). In other words, "Let God's people go so that they can leave spiritual Babylon and come to Zion to worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth." Egypt is not only a type of sin but also a type of sectarianism. When God brought His people out of Egypt, He said, "I bare you on eagles' wings" (Exodus 19:4). He caused them to rise above the conditions of bondage, and He brought them safely out.

This fourth beast (Revelation 4:7) is a picture of the nature the saints took on as the evening-time church. In Matthew 24:28 Jesus said, "For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." Wherever there is a dead carcass, wherever there is dead religion, wherever there is a body that does not really have spiritual life but has only a form of godliness, God will have some eagles. In this evening time God will always have a people that He will call out, that will rise above that condition and be gathered together as a living, working, viable body of Christ.

This living creature that was like a flying eagle is a picture of the evening-time saints rising above the mingled hills of spiritual Babylon. Until the evening-time church received some understanding, they could not truly see the "**pale**

horse," the spirit that produced Protestantism. This spirit is a hellish, devilish spirit. It is not the Spirit of God. Now, it looks like it. They talk about Christ; they talk about the Word of God; they talk about the Spirit of God. But back of it is a spirit that is *contrary* to the Spirit of God.

We must bear in mind that these horses are representative of spirits. Zechariah 6:5 says, "And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits . . ." To understand what they are, back up to Zechariah 6:2-5, which says: "In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay [which corresponds with the '**pale horse**'] horses. Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord? And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits [every one of these horses—the white, the red, the black, and the '**pale**'—represents a spirit] of the heavens . . ." Every one of them is a religious spirit. That is why those that are devilish are so deceptive.

The reason horses are employed is that every one of these spirits is militant. They are all out for souls. Zechariah 10:3 says, "Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle." These spirits are portrayed by horses to convey the truth that these spirits are out to capture people's souls. The church is in a spiritual warfare, and the stakes are getting higher because time is getting shorter.

The Pale Horse Represents a Mixture of Light and Darkness

Let us find out just exactly what kind of a spirit this "**pale horse**" represents. Look again at Zechariah 6:3. It says, "And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses." If you go back to Zechariah 1:8, you will read, "I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white." Now, the horses that are called "grisled and bay horses" (Zechariah 6:3) here are called "speckled horses." What is being conveyed in the form of symbolic expression? In the Hebrew the words "grisled and bay" mean "dappled strong." The *Greek English Septuagint* calls it "piebald and ash colored."

What does it mean when it talks about a piebald or dappled-colored horse? *Strong's Hebrew Chaldee Dictionary* tells us the word "grizzled" in the Hebrew is *barod*, which means "spotted or grizzled." The word for "bay" in the Hebrew is *amots*, which means a "strong color." This word *barod*, according to the *Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to The Old Testament*, means "sprinkled with spots." This horse is a combination of sprinkled with spots; yet, it has a strong color. Zechariah 1:8 says that it was "speckled, and white." In other words, it was a white horse with some speckles, or spots, on it. This spirit is just as deceptive as the beast that it gave rise to in Revelation 13:11, that came "up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and [he had features like a lamb; however, when he opened his mouth and began to teach] he spake as a dragon." This dragon was paganism, and here is a picture of the spirit that gave rise to the religious system of Protestantism.

This "**pale horse**" is a mixture of light and darkness, of truth and error. That is exactly what the spirit behind Protestantism is made up of. It is a mixture. They have some light, but they have a lot of darkness. They have some truth, but they have a lot of error. This spirit of the "**pale horse**" is actually a spirit of error, a spirit of compromise. This system tried to make the whiteness and purity of those who had the Holy Spirit compatible with the spots and speckles of man's ideas, man's teachings, and human reasoning.

At a distance this "**horse**" may look just like a white horse. The speckles do not show until you look at it closely. Just as when you look at a speckled and white horse at a distance, the predominant color you see is white, at a distance these organizations look like Christianity. However, if you look a little closer, you will find that they made an image to the beast. Protestantism arose after brethren came out with the sixteenth-century reformation preaching truth. God gave them a truth. He told Roman Catholicism, in Revelation 2:16, "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." They did not repent, so He turned the sword of His mouth, the Word of Truth, loose.

Martin Luther preached the truth, found in Romans 1:17, that "the just shall live by faith," rather than salvation by works taught by Roman Catholicism. This laid a deadly wound to that beast (Revelation 13:3). Then the reformers turned right around and built an image to that beast. An image is something just like the original. They were against one man having the say so; they were against one man setting himself up, but they made earthly heads of their own organizations. They were against the power of the state enforcing Roman Catholicism, yet they embraced the power of the state of Germany to enforce Lutheranism. In England, the power of the state enforced Anglicanism, or the Church of England.

Roman Catholicism has Saint Paul and Saint Peter; Protestantism has Saint Paul and Saint Peter. Roman Catholicism has bishops and creeds, and Protestantism has bishops and creeds. Roman Catholicism has Lent; Protestantism has Lent, and the list goes on. What happened to cause this? The spirit of this "**pale horse**" actually belongs between A.D. 530 and A.D. 1530, because that is when the spirit of this "**pale horse**" began to work. As soon as the reformation began, this spirit started sowing human, sectarian ideas about religious organizations. We know this because the rider of the "**pale horse**" was "**Death,**" and nobody can die without once having lived.

Roman Catholicism could not preach enough truth to produce any spiritual life. This is a picture of people in sectarian bondage who hear enough truth to get saved, and then they are killed with the very "**sword,**" the Bible, that was supposed to be giving them light (**Revelation 6:8**). The Bible yet today, without the Spirit of God, will still spiritually kill people. One can take the Bible and whip people to death. You can try to win them and actually cause death. If you tell them, "Well, the Bible says this and the Bible says that," and the Spirit is not in it, you can kill them with the "**sword.**"

Earthly Thinking Produced Spots

In the "**fourth seal**" is a "**horse**" that was a strong color. While the word *grisled* means "spotted," the word *bay* means "a strong color," and there is no stronger color than white. When the color white is passed through a prism, it comes out as seven colors. If you run the seven colors back through the same prism, they come out as white light. There is no stronger color than white, and there is no stronger message than walking in the light, having a pure experience, and living right in the sight of God in holiness and righteousness.

A few years before Martin Luther began preaching Romans 1:17, he made a pilgrimage to Rome. He was in bondage to that dark system of Roman Catholicism. On his knees he was climbing the *Scala Sancta*, which is Latin for the "Sacred Stairs." Roman Catholics believe that those are the stairs that went up to Pilate's judgment hall, and somehow they were miraculously brought from Jerusalem to Rome. As Martin Luther was scaling those stairs, trying to do good works, a lightning bolt of truth came from Heaven and struck his soul. God told him, "Martin, the just shall live by faith." Up until that time he thought the just had to do good works. However, when God got hold of him, he saw that salvation was not by works but by faith. God put a sword of truth in his hand, and Martin Luther took that sword of truth and laid a deadly wound to the beast of Roman Catholicism. His followers were people who, while walking in what little light they had, were white; they were pure.

There was a true message sounding forth, and the trumpet was being blown. God was in the reformation, but God was not in Protestantism. God broke the light and gave understanding that brought about the sixteenth-century reformation. Nevertheless, the sixteenth-century reformation was short-lived. The people took hold of a spirit and became just as sectarian as the system they came out of. Though Protestantism has features like a lamb, though it appears white, it has spots and some speckles. That system, which had some light, in time became speckled with spots. A danger that faces the saints is in trying to make truth compatible with our own ideas. That is exactly what they did in this era, and it gave rise to a beast. The spirit that they took hold of convinced them that error was compatible with truth—that human ideas were compatible with the divine. Thus, what had been white and pure became speckled and spotted.

What are spots a picture of in the Scriptures? In Ephesians 5:27 we read, "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." A spot is the opposite of being holy. If one is holy, he would be without spots. So, if spots are the opposite of holiness, then they must be sinfulness. James 1:27 says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Here we find that spots are not only sinfulness, but they are also worldliness. If "pure religion" is "unspotted," then *spotted* is vain, or false, religion.

In Jude 12 we read, "These are spots in your feasts." Well, what were these spots? Back up to Jude 10, which says, "But these speak evil of those things which they know not [just because they did not understand it, they spoke evil of it]: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts . . ." In other words, "what they know on the natural, beastly, animal level." They were not regenerated. Those men were spots. A spirit had hold of them to where they thought they could mix truth with error, light with darkness. They put their reasoning, their thinking as natural brute beasts, up against God's eternal Word, and it caused spots to be produced. This gave rise to a system that was contrary to God's eternal Word.

An Earthly Religious System

Revelation 6:8 states, "And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the *beasts of the earth*." The spirit of this "pale horse" gave rise to "beasts of the earth." Revelation 13:11 says, "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." First of all, we need to identify the "earth" that this beast came up out of. Second Corinthians 4:7 says, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels." What are these earthen vessels? We read in 2 Corinthians 5:1, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle [What tabernacle? This physical body.] were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Second Corinthians 5:6 says, "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." The earthly house is our body, our flesh. This beast that came up out of the earth is nothing more than a corrupt religious system that came up out of men's minds, or out of the minds of earthen vessels. It was not divine. God never told man to start these institutions. These institutions are products of natural, human understandings, what people understood naturally as brute beasts. Thus, when Revelation 13:11 says a "beast coming up out of the earth," it means the earth is man. Man is nothing more than the dust of the earth. When the Scripture talks about a beast, it is talking about man.

In 1 Corinthians 15:32 Paul said, "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, [What kind of beasts was he talking about here? What was he fighting? The manner of men; these beasts were men.] what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?" He was fighting with them over truth. It was a spiritual battle, and because they could not understand spiritual truths, they dwelt on the natural, beastly, human level. Peter thought that same way before he was filled with the Holy Ghost.

In Matthew 17:1-8 we read: "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias [*Elias* is the Greek word for the Hebrew word *Elijah*] talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias. [That is what human understanding thinks. 'Let us build three churches—one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' God had to speak out of Heaven and rebuke Peter for his human thinking.] While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

"And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only." God did not want a church for Moses or Elijah, and if He did not want a church for men such as Moses and Elijah, He does not want one for Luther or Wesley or any other man. That idea came from minds dominated by human thinking, people who did not follow the direction of the Holy Ghost but followed their own natural, human instincts.

These spots on the horse are symbols of sin and worldliness and things that are not right. That is why John called it a "pale horse" in **Revelation 6:8**. It is described as a "pale horse" because it is a mixture of light and darkness, a mixture of truth and error. The sad consequences of such a spirit that produces false systems are that this type of message can only produce one thing—spiritual death. This period of Protestantism is referred to as a cloudy day because it is a mixture of light and darkness. First, there was a dark age; then that was followed by a cloudy day.

Physically, a cloudy day is sometimes light and sometimes dark; sometimes it is bright and sometimes it is dreary; it is a mixture. The Protestant era is referred to in just that way. Joel 2:2 called it "a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness." This Scripture refers to two things: a dark age and a day of clouds. When Catholicism's power was broken to where they no longer held worldwide sway, the devil did not go out of business. He just changed clothes and used another religious system that was even more deceptive. Jesus taught about "false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15).

This Protestant system seems to be Christian. This spirit is so deceptive because it has an appearance like a lamb. It is a wolf in sheep's clothing. It may look like a sheep, but it does not make sheep tracks. All you have to do is watch how it is going, watch the way it walks, and you will find out that it is not a sheep. Jesus said in John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Sheep walk in His light; they walk in His path. This "pale horse," or speckled and white as Zechariah called it, is a picture of the spirit of compromise. It is so deceptive that people often say, "Oh, they have some good ideas." Yes! There is some light, but you had better watch, for it will not

be long until they slip you the darkness. You may not have enough discernment to know when they are slipping in human understanding because they do it in a most subtle way. It is a day of clouds, a day of gloominess.

Ezekiel 34:12 says, "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all the places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." The cloudy time is holding more people under deception than any one other power. That is one reason it is hard to help people in this religious system. This spirit of the "**pale horse**" has them deceived. Many people say, "Oh, I have been a member of a church since I was twelve years old." That spirit has them deceived. While some say they are saved yet continue the sinful habits of life, there are other religious organizations that are even more deceptive. They hold a biblical standard: they dress, look, and talk right. Yet, the spirit is still wrong. When people stay in that system, that spirit will continue to work on them until they are infected with that spirit and become just like that system.

The "**pale horse**" is an incompatible reality of trying to mix truth with error, light with darkness. There are pulpits all over our world where a good salvation message is preached. Then they spend the next fifty-one Sundays telling the people they cannot live it. The "**beasts of the earth**" kill them with the "**sword**." Bear in mind, the riders represent the flesh and blood manifestation of these spirits, and that is why the flesh and blood representation of this spirit is death.

Some religious organizations have enough truth to produce salvation, but then the spirit that motivates that system takes away that light. People are lulled into a false sense of carnal security, thinking that because they made a certain move they are fixed for time and eternity. In reality, many in these systems are on their way to "**Hell**" under a deception. There are many so-called holiness movements that can lay forth good, scriptural teaching concerning salvation and holiness. Nevertheless, the spirit that motivates that system is false, because it will not line up with the unity of the body of Christ, the headship of Christ, and many other teachings. They have set their own human thinking in place of biblical doctrines.

A glass of ammonia, bleach, or arsenic can be smelled from a distance. You would not begin to think about drinking it. However, a little bit of ammonia, bleach, or arsenic can be diluted with some other things until one cannot smell it. Yet, it is still there, and it could still work against you. That is exactly like what Protestantism has done. The spirit behind it is a spirit of compromise. It is a spirit of "Let us not bring up our differences. Let us just fellowship everyone. Let us just agree to disagree." That is not in the Bible. This Protestant system looks white from a distance, but if you look at it a little closer, you will see the specks and the spots. You will see the spots of church membership, human headquarters, human heads, false doctrines, and religious spirits. They say, "Oh, we are saved; we are saints." However, it takes only one spot to keep you out of Heaven. This is a spirit that will make people think they are right when they are wrong.

The Spirit of the Pale Horse Produces Death

Every one of these religious systems came to a point of truth that they did not want to measure up to, so they stopped right there and built an image to the beast. Zechariah 14:6 tells us, "And it shall come to pass in that day [the Gospel Day], that the light shall not be clear, nor dark." A day that is not clear nor dark is a cloudy day. The people have some light; they can see some truths, but it is not clear. It is a mixture of light and darkness, a mixture of truth and of error. This spirit gave rise to the system of Protestantism. Bear in mind that these horses in the Revelation portray religious spirits, and this spirit is portrayed by a "**pale horse**."

Let us look at what this spirit produces. **Revelation 6:8** states, "**And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him** [how does this spirit produce death?]. **And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth . . .**" Notice this Scripture says he "**that sat on him was Death**," but "**power was given unto them**." We go from "**him**" to "**them**." There are a lot of "**them**" producing death. The "**them**" that are producing death are the sectarian bodies of religion. It does not matter which sectarian body one is in, the end result of it is death. What kind of death is it? What kind of death causes a person to go to hell? Spiritual death. This is a system produced by a spirit that results in spiritual death.

The "**pale horse**" started out white in color, but it ended up speckled and spotted. It did not stay with the truth. When God called Martin Luther out, he was given a pure, clear message of truth. However, it was not too long until that clear message of truth started getting cloudy. The very things that Martin Luther had been protesting against in Rome, in time when his spirit changed, began to be practiced in Lutheranism. Revelation 14:20 says, "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse [singular] bridles

[plural]." Here we have one horse and several bridles. That is telling us that it was one spirit—a false spirit—that motivated Protestantism. It was a spirit of compromise, a spirit of error. Yet, coming from that same spirit there are many bridles. Many people have the reins of control. It is human organization; there are many earthly headquarters. One spirit produced it all—the spirit of this **"pale horse"**—but there are many bridles; there are many religious, man-made systems that are produced by this spirit.

How did this spirit produce **"Death"**? Look again at **Revelation 6:8**, which says, **"And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword."** The **"sword"** is the Word of God. Second Corinthians 3:6 says, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." How were they killing with the **"sword"**? They were killing with the letter without the Spirit. They did not have the Spirit of God; they had the spirit of Protestantism. They had the spirit of this **"pale horse,"** and because of that, they were using the very Word, that was supposed to give life when the Spirit administered it, to kill and take lives. This **"sword"** is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Go to Ephesians 6:17. It says, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." By using the Word of God without the Spirit they were causing people to lose their spiritual lives. By misapplying Scriptures, by teaching them in a wrong way, at a wrong time, under the wrong application, they were using the letter to kill. They are still doing it today. They will take a verse that says "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10) out of its context, misapply it, and use it to spiritually kill someone.

Revelation 6:8 goes on to say that people are being killed **"with hunger."** There is still a famine in Babylon. People are still starving for the truth. A false preacher cannot be a true pastor; he cannot feed souls. In Jeremiah 3:15 God said, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." A man who is a false preacher, who is wresting the Scriptures, is a wolf in sheep's clothing. He has a spirit of compromise and a spirit of error. He cannot feed people with understanding. Thus, the people are spiritually starving. That is why people who truly get saved and stay in that system, in time, shrivel up and die. Why? Because there is nothing to eat down there. God did not put any spiritual food down in Babylon, so there is **"hunger,"** which leads to **"Death."**

Truth and Error Cannot Be Combined

What else causes this **"Death"**? **Revelation 6:8** tells us that it is **"the beasts of the earth."** These **"beasts"** are nothing more than men walking after their own understanding. They are not following the Spirit of God. God never told them to build a human organization. He never told them to make room for sin and worldliness. Every bit of that comes from men's natural minds. Let us look at it.

Second Peter 2:10-12 says: "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, [The problem is, since they have never been cleaned up and delivered themselves, how are they going to preach to anyone else about being cleaned up and delivered? When they preach that everyone has to sin, they are preaching their own experience.] and despise government. Presumptuous are they, [For one thing, they presumptuously sin. Psalm 19:13 talks about presumptuous sin. In other words, when they get up in the morning they plan on sinning, and they plan on praying that night for the Lord to forgive them. They are very presumptuous.] selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. [Matthew, Chapter 13, talks about the seed that was sown and how the fowls came and devoured the seed. Those fowls are false preachers. Often when God sows a little truth in one's heart, one of these false preachers will pluck it up by saying, 'No! That is not necessary.']

"Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption." All they understand is what they understand on a natural, brute beast level. That is how they bring **"Death"** to souls. They take the Scriptures, the letter without the Spirit, and they wrest it. Because of that, they cause people to lose their lives. The reality is that there is not an acceptable blend of truth and of error.

If your experience is governed by the Holy Spirit, if you have the Spirit of the white horse, it has to stay white for that Spirit to keep working and operating as God ordained. If you let the first spot or speckle work its way into your experience, it will mar your whole experience. There is no acceptable blend of truth and error, no acceptable blend of light and darkness, and when you start thinking that there is, this spirit is getting hold of you. When the Spirit of God asks you to do anything and you try to compromise, this spirit is working on you.

God has told us in His Word how He wants us to dress and how He wants us to live. However, if we are not careful, human reasoning will start to work on our experience. That is the spirit of the "**pale horse**" (which gave rise to Protestantism) trying to work, trying to convince us that there is an acceptable blend. When we let the enemy make us feel that there is an acceptable blend of right and wrong, light and darkness, truth and error, then we are ready for deception. There is no blend!

From A.D. 530 to A.D. 1530, this era of time when God was stirring men's hearts in preparation for the sixteenth century reformation, the message was clear and plain: "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). God used that truth as a sword to wound the beast of Roman Catholicism with a deadly wound. Then the spirit of compromise began working to cause them to build a human system, and this led to the development of Protestantism. The very things they would not tolerate in Roman Catholicism, they duplicated in Protestantism.

Today if God's people are not careful, they will do the very things that they criticize in others. This spirit can make you feel as though you are an exception. Those brethren whom God had His hand on felt like this: "God is working with us; we are God's people. We have the truth, and we are an exception." There are no exceptions. Whenever the enemy can make people feel that there is a proper blend of right and wrong, truth and error, light and darkness, then conditions are ripe for this spirit to deceive. The end result of this spirit is "**Death, and Hell.**" This spirit is nothing to give any consideration to. False religion is nothing to trifle with. It is a militant spirit, out to damn people's souls, and it will if we do not "give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard" (Hebrews 2:1). It can work on us. A lot of what came out of Protestantism was human reasoning and human understandings—what seemed to be logical. Today we call that spirit humanism, but humanism is not a new thing. It is as old as the ages. It began when the serpent told Eve in the garden, "Ye shall be as gods" (Genesis 3:5). That is still the basic spirit of humanism, a spirit that makes you feel as though you know what is best, that you are a god. However, the end of this spirit is "**Death, and Hell.**"

This "**fourth seal**" (verse 7) symbolizes the period of time from A.D. 530 to A.D. 1530, a time when the "**pale horse**" (verse 8), the spirit of compromise, began to work and ultimately produced a religious system known as Protestantism.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FIFTH SEAL (A.D. 1730-1880)

Revelation 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

The Wesleyan Era

In the "**fifth seal**" is a variation. In the first four seals, every one of those predominant spirits was portrayed by a horse. However, in the "**fifth seal**" period of time there is no such portrayal, and there is a very valid reason for that. The four horses are symbolic of four spirits: the Holy Spirit, the spirit of unbelief, the spirit of apostasy, and the spirit of compromise.

Our Scripture text begins with the opening of the "**fifth seal**"—a picture of Christ loosing the Holy Spirit to bring understanding in a certain period of time. We need to understand exactly what the message was, what the burden was, and what actually took place in this period of Gospel history. This particular "**seal**" is very commonly misunderstood. Almost every commentary or reference material says that this Scripture text is talking about martyrs and martyrdom. However, that is not the message that was being conveyed in this Scripture text. Martyrdom was not a predominant move in the "**fifth seal**" age. We must ever be reminded that the Book of Revelation is written in symbolic expressions. Thus, a martyr cannot represent a martyr. If it did, that would not be consistent with symbolic language.

Let us begin to study this "**fifth seal.**" **Revelation 6:9** says, "**And when he** [The antecedent of *he* refers back to Revelation 6:1, which states, 'And I saw when the *Lamb* opened one of the seals.' Thus, the antecedent of *he* is the *Lamb*, and if any understanding is given, the ultimate source of it is Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the Agent who brings it; He is the '**seal,**' but it is Christ who looses the Spirit.] **had opened the fifth seal . . .**" What is the time frame for this "**fifth seal**"? The first seal was at the dawn of the Christian day, A.D. 33-270. The second seal (represented by the red horse, which symbolized the spirit of unbelief) was in this first period of the Gospel Day as well.

A.D. 270-530 was a transitional period, a time when an apostasy was beginning to work, but it was not fully formulated and developed until the rider of the black horse took the scales in his hands (a picture of the office of the popes of Rome). This happened in A.D. 530 when Boniface II became the first universal Pope. This spirit of apostasy was in full sway, and a dark age ensued. The spirit that gave rise to this system was in the third seal era, A.D. 270-530. After that came the pale horse—a mixture of light and darkness, truth and error, right and wrong—a picture of the spirit of compromise that gave rise to Protestantism, when the cloudy day began in A.D. 1530. So, that fourth seal era was A.D. 530-1530. Keep in mind that the spirits produced the systems. Therefore, they must historically precede them.

We are now up to the "**fifth seal,**" which is from A.D. 1730 to A.D. 1880. Some may ask, "Why was there not a seal from A.D. 1530 to A.D. 1730?" One reason is that each one of these spirits preceded the systems it produced. The spirit of Protestantism was already working preceding this time, and there was no successive spirit, or system, to arise. Truth began to be restored during the Lutheran era, from A.D. 1530 to A.D. 1730. After that came the Wesleyan era, from A.D. 1730 to A.D. 1880.

How do we know that the time frame for our Scripture text was during the Wesleyan era? The Wesleyan era's message was holiness. Previously, God gave Martin Luther the truth of Romans 1:17, which says, "The just shall live by faith." He gave Luther understanding concerning justification by faith rather than by works, penance, sacraments, rites, and rituals of the Roman Catholic organization. When God raised up John and Charles Wesley, in the seventeen hundreds, their message was different; it went further. The sword of truth struck deeper than merely dealing with justification by faith. It went on to a holiness message.

To see exactly what the message of this **"fifth seal"** was, look at **Revelation 6:11**. It says, **"And white robes were given unto every one of them."** This shows us in a very clear figure that the message of holiness was the predominant message. Everyone who embraced the truth in this era of time embraced the holiness message, and a **"white robe"** was given to them.

Let us consider whom the **"white robes"** were given to and what they represented. **"White robes"** are only given to one class of people—overcomers. In Revelation 3:4-5 we read: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis [the Sardian letter parallels the same era of time—A.D. 1730-1880—the **'fifth seal'**] which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white [why?]: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment . . ." Only one group of people wears this white raiment—those who do not defile their garments, those who walk in the beauty of holiness. We need to understand this because our whole lesson revolves around the ones who are wearing **"white robes,"** the ones who are **"under the altar,"** the ones who are crying out for judgment and vengeance. It is needful to understand who these people are and who or what they represent.

This white raiment represents a people living a righteous, holy life. It is a picture, in symbolic expression, of the holy, righteous experience of God's people. Job 29:14 says, "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem." The clothing was righteousness. So what was this robe? It was righteousness and judgment. That was what Job was clothed with. Even when he was sorely afflicted, what did he tell his miserable comforters? He said, "I will not remove mine integrity from me" (Job 27:5). In other words, he said, "You can say what you want to. You can accuse me, question my motives, and say that I am wrong, but my righteousness still clothes me. I may be in rags literally, but I stand clear before God."

Isaiah 61:10 states, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me [with what?] with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." This robe of righteousness is the wedding dress that the church wears. It is the only acceptable dress. Righteousness and holiness are the only things that God will accept. There is no other standard, no lower standard, that God will accept.

Revelation 19:7-8 says: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come [not *going to* come, but *is* come], and his wife [the Lamb's wife is the church] hath made herself ready [how did she get ready?]. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." If the linen is the righteousness of the saints, it only stands to reason that the ones who are in the linen are the saints. In this **"fifth seal"** is a picture of a holiness people. **"White robes"** would not have been given to them if they did not enjoy salvation, if they were not righteous, if they had not made their preparations.

The Bible says to "make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10). These were people who made some preparation. Because these white robes are a picture of a holiness people, that lets us know that the **"fifth seal"** definitely has its time setting during the Wesleyan era. From the morning-time apostasy to A.D. 1730, holiness was completely lost sight of in the sense of being a publicly declared message. That does not mean that God did not have a holy people, because God has had a people in every age. He had a seed, a remnant. Certainly, they had to go underground in the catacombs and caves during the Dark Ages, but in the face of it all, God still had a people who walked in what light they had.

The message of holiness was lost sight of until John and Charles Wesley began to herald it in A.D. 1730. It was such an unpopular message that, even though they were Church of England ministers, they were not allowed in the Church of England pulpits. They had to preach in cornfields; they had to preach anywhere they could form a pulpit. The Church of England would not lend them a pulpit.

Real Bible holiness is not a popular message for the flesh. That is why these people are portrayed as those who were **"slain for the word of God."** A real holiness message will cause honest people to find a place where they can die out to sin and be crucified with Christ, to where it is not they that live but Christ. Thus, when we study these **"white robes"** in **Revelation 6:11**, it lets us know the time setting is definitely during the Wesleyan era. Not only does this give us the proper time setting, but it also gives us a great insight to the message and spiritual condition of that particular time period itself.

The Altar Is Christ

In **Revelation 6:9** we read, "**And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God . . .**" Again, this message is not speaking of martyrs or martyrdom, but rather it is speaking of an age when complete consecration was being preached. When people finally heard the Gospel, it gave them a place to spiritually die out. Let us begin to consider what this "**altar**" is. The Scripture says, "**I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God . . .**" What is the "**altar**" a reference to? An "**altar**" would be a strange thing to be "**under**." Sacrifices were not put "**under the altar**," but they were put *on* the altar. There were no Old Testament sacrifices that were performed "**under the altar**."

To understand what "**under the altar**" actually means, first we need to find out what the "**altar**" is. The wooden rail in a church building is not the altar. Hebrews 13:8-12 says: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with diverse [or different and strange] doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace [if you receive grace, it comes from Jesus Christ]; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar, [What is the altar? Where does one get this grace? The Altar is Jesus Christ.] whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle [speaking of the old literal tabernacle]."

"For the bodies of those beasts [the old Levitical sacrifices], whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also . . ." The writer was making a comparison between the old Levitical sacrifices and their altar and our Sacrifice and our "**altar**," which is Jesus Christ.

Let us look again at Hebrews 13:10-13. It states: "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. [The literal Jew cannot find anything to eat in the New Testament era. However, we can eat of this Lamb, eat of this Altar, and gain spiritual strength.] For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also [referring to verse 10—our Altar], that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." Verse 15 tells us, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." Jesus is our "**altar**," and these sacrifices, thanksgiving, and glory unto God are to be made to our "**altar**."

If the Altar is Christ, what does it mean when it talks about being "**under the altar**"? It is simply saying that being under Christ is being in submission to Christ. When these people, in the seventeen hundred's era, began to hear a message on holiness, a message was preached and an experience portrayed before them that had not been heralded publicly since the morning-time apostasy. When one is in submission to Jesus Christ, he is in submission to everything that God has put in divine order—His Word, His Spirit, and His ministry. There will not be a bit of contradiction. This spirit is a submissive spirit.

The ones who were in submission to Christ were a very submissive people. They were so submissive that even though they saw the errors of sectarianism, they stayed in it until God told them it was time to leave. They saw a greater truth than what the sectarian organization they were in had to offer. However, they did the right thing about it. They did not talk; they prayed. They talked to the One who could do something about it. So, "**under the altar**" is merely a phrase meaning the people were under, or in subjection to, Christ.

"They Cried With a Loud Voice"

Let us look at what was in subjection to Christ. **Revelation 6:9** says, "**And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar [in subjection to Christ] the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.**" First of all, we need to establish who these "**souls**" were. They were not disembodied spirits; they were not literal souls; they were not souls in paradise. We can know they were not souls in paradise because **Revelation 6:10** says that "**they cried with a loud voice.**" There is not going to be any crying and praying in Heaven, or paradise. The crying and praying is in hell. The people who do the crying and praying after death are not the ones who are wearing the "**white robes**," but they are the ones who are in torments.

In Luke, Chapter 16, we see a picture of paradise and Hades, or hell, uncapped by Jesus. Luke 16:22-24 states: "And it came to pass, that the beggar died [the Greek says 'the poor man'], and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell [the Greek says 'Hades'] he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried [Who did the crying? The soul that was

in hell, not the ones in the '**white robes.**' There is no record to show where the man who was in Abraham's bosom did any crying or praying. The rich man could see Lazarus; that added to his torment. Yet, we have no record where Lazarus had any knowledge or vision of the rich man. That would mar the bliss of paradise.] and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me" The rich man in hell was the one who did the crying and the praying. We find no mention of Lazarus doing any crying or any praying. As a matter of fact, Luke 16:25 says that Lazarus "is comforted." Lazarus was oblivious to anything but the joys of the Lord.

When **Revelation 6:10** says "**and they cried,**" it is a figurative expression of prayer. First Kings 8:28 tells us, "Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day." What is the cry? It is a picture of prayer. These people who were wearing "**white robes**" and were "**under the altar**" in submission to Christ cried and prayed. Anyone who has a real holiness experience is a praying person. Second Chronicles 6:19 says, "Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee." Crying is a picture of praying. In Psalm 39:12 the Psalmist said, "Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry."

These "**souls**" who were "**under the altar,**" who had "**white robes,**" who were crying out for vengeance were not disembodied spirits over in the glory world somewhere looking back and asking God to get even with those still here. First of all, people who have that attitude are never going to see the glory world, and there is no biblical record that those who are in paradise are aware of what is going on back on earth. This cry is a picture of people praying. Look at Psalm 40:1-3. It states: "I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my *cry* [to understand what kind of a cry it was, look at what it produced]. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." What kind of cry brings about an experience of salvation like that? A cry of prayer.

Let us look a little more at how we know that these "**souls**" who were "**under the altar**" were not disembodied spirits in Heaven, or paradise. First of all, there is no Bible to substantiate that there will be any crying or praying in Heaven, or paradise. We can read where the rich man in hell prayed, but we do not have any record of where Lazarus prayed. In John's Gospel, Jesus prayed about the glory He had before the world was, but there is no record of where He prayed after He returned. The last verse of that old song *Sweet Hour of Prayer* says, "Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer! May I thy consolation share, Till, from Mount Pisgah's lofty height, I view my home, and take my flight: This robe of flesh I'll drop, and rise To seize the everlasting prize; and shout, while passing through the air, *farewell, farewell sweet hour of prayer.*" There will no longer be a need to pray when we go over to the other side.

Second, the Bible does not teach that those in Heaven, or paradise, know what is going on here on the earth. If they could see the good things, then they could also see a lot of bad things. If people could see their children get saved, what happens if they backslide? Is God going to continue to let them think their children are saved? If they know their loved ones are lost, would that be paradise? Let us put it under sound Bible reasoning. Would it be bliss to know all the trouble that is going on in the earth?

Let us look at **Revelation 6:9-11** literally for a moment. It says: "**And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.**"

Would that be a glorious message to get over in paradise? In the literal it sounds as though people in paradise are praying for vengeance, for God to get even. Then God says, "Now, wait a minute. All of these other people are going to have to suffer and be tortured and martyred just as you were." Would that encourage and inspire saints in paradise to know that others have to go through what they went through? No! This is not what He was saying at all. That is certainly not the biblical view of paradise.

What is another reason this is not disembodied spirits? Are people over in paradise going to have vengeful thoughts in their minds? Look at the prayer in **Revelation 6:10**: "**How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?**" In the literal that sounds bloodthirsty. However, the saints of God are not bloodthirsty. They are not crying out for God to get even with someone. If a person has that attitude, his

or her spirit is wrong. What was done against you does not even enter into it. Look at what Judas did to Jesus, yet Jesus called him "Friend" right in the garden (Matthew 26:50).

If these were not a disembodied people over in the glory world crying for vengeance, what were they crying for? They were crying for judgment, for truth, to be poured out on a false religious system that came up out of the earth—Protestantism. They were wanting God to turn His truth and His judgment loose on that system so that people would not have to endure the things they had to endure.

Let us look a little closer at these "**souls.**" These "**souls**" are a figurative expression for people. When people say, "Poor old soul," they are not talking about the soul. It is just an expression. The term *soul*, in the Scripture, does not always refer to the internal man. Sometimes it is referring to the person as a whole. Look at Genesis 12:5, which tells us, "And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan"

Genesis 46:26-27 states: "All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six; And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten." This Scripture is not talking about literal souls but about people. Genesis 46:15 says, "These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padanaram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three." Again, it is talking about people. Genesis 46:18 tells us, "These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter, and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls." Verse 25 says, "These are the sons of Bilhah, which Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and she bare these unto Jacob: all the souls were seven." Thus we see through these examples that the term *soul* does not always mean that internal portion of man. Sometimes it just merely means *people*.

Finding a Place of Rest

What was the testimony, or the message, that this era held forth? **Revelation 6:11** tells us by the "**white robes**" that holiness was the testimony they held. They had a holiness experience. **Revelation 6:9** refers to them as being "**slain.**" They had died out to sin (Romans 6:11); they had a sold-out experience; they were dead with Christ (Galatians 2:20). Being slain for the Word of God merely means that a holiness message had come forth, and they no longer had to be in subjection to popes, bishops, and cardinals or even the dictates of the Church of England. Instead they had the privilege of having a personal experience with Christ. They found a place where they could die out to sin, die out to self, die out to the world, and wear a white robe.

What kind of "**rest**" is **Revelation 6:11** referring to when it says that "**they should rest**"? What kind of "**rest**" does one get when he receives a "**white robe**"? It is a "**rest**" from sin. These were a people who had entered into a place where they could "**rest**" from the labors of sin. Go with me to Hebrews 4:1-2. It states: "Let us [speaking of the New Testament brethren] therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them [speaking of the Old Testament brethren]: but the word preached did not profit them [God's Word can be sent and anointed, but if people's hearts are not in the right condition to receive it as it is, it will not profit them], not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

If you take faith in what you hear, Hebrews 4:3 says that you "do enter into rest." These people who had "**white robes,**" who were told to "**rest,**" were a people who rested from the labors of sin. It was a spiritual "**rest.**" It was a "**rest**" that Jesus talked about giving to men who were weary. The galling yoke of sin had become too heavy for them.

Jesus said in Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The "**rest**" that He gives them is a rest from sin. When **Revelation 6:9** says they "**were slain for the word of God,**" it is a picture of people yielding their lives and being crucified with Christ. In Matthew 10:38-39 Jesus said: "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Here is a picture of people being spiritually slain for the Word of God. They were indeed dead unto sin. That is why they had a "**white robe,**" and that is why they could "**rest.**"

Go with me to Romans 6:11. It says, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:3 says, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" They died out to everything that Jesus Christ died out to. This is a picture of a consecrated life. Colossians 2:20 says, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ [free] from the rudiments of the world

[being free from the rudiments of the world means that this world no longer has any hold on us], why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to the ordinances."

If you are really dead with Christ, you will not let worldly things control you; you will not pattern your life after the world. Paul was saying that if you are dead with Christ, then you are free from the world. When **Revelation 6:9** talks about people being "**slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held,**" it is a picture of a people in the Wesleyan era who had embraced a message of holiness, of consecrated living.

True Holiness Yearns for Unity

Let us look a little further. If these people had rested from their labors of sin, if these people were in submission and in subjection to Christ, under Christ's authority, then what were they praying about? Well, look at **Revelation 6:10**, which reads, "**And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?**" Here is a contrast between the honest saints, in this "**fifth seal**" period of time, and the corrupt system of worship that they had to contend with. There was a beast that came "up out of the earth" (Revelation 13:11), and it made an image to the first beast.

These saints were adorned in "**white robes,**" representing a holiness experience, and they did not want to give homage to this beast. What is the lesson? Sectarian walls had drawn lines of division between the saints of God. Some went to one organization, and some went to other organizations. Yet, people who have a true holiness experience yearn for one thing—unity. Everyone who has a holiness experience wants to have unity and fellowship with everyone else who has a holiness experience. However, sectarian walls would not permit that. The hearts of the true saints were burdened about such a condition, and in essence, they prayed, "How long, O Lord? When are You going to turn judgment loose on this thing to where that we can have freedom, to where that Your people are not all divided up, to where we can have unity, have harmony, and be able to worship in one body with all the saints of God? When are You going to do that, Lord?"

Let us look again at **Revelation 6:10**, which says, "**And they cried with a loud voice** [they had a heavy burden about this; they wanted God to hear them], **saying, How long** [they thought it had gone on long enough], **O Lord, holy and true,** [In essence, they were saying, 'You are a God of holiness. You are a God of truth. How long is it going to be before You turn Your judgment and truth loose?'] **dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?**" The words "**them that dwell on the earth**" are a picture of the Protestant system of religion. Revelation 13:11 says, "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." This beast coming up out of the earth is a picture of man-made religion because earth is a symbol of man. Second Corinthians 4:7 says, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels . . ."

Second Corinthians 5:1 begins, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved . . ." So we see that earth is a symbolic representation of man. Sectarian organizations came up out of the minds of men. Yet, they decked these organizations with some truths to make it look like a lamb. It looked like Christianity; it looked as though they really had some truths until it opened its mouth. Then it spoke like a dragon. Just as the dragon is motivated by the spirit of unbelief, Protestantism is also full of unbelief. In these systems, seemingly good holiness people raised up with unbelief when they heard the message on the church, the unity of God's people, the oneness of the body of Christ, and the unity of believers.

While some people may hold a holiness standard of dress, often they do not practice other doctrines, such as feet washing. It is in the Bible, so why do they not practice it? It is due to unbelief. That is just one example. The spirit of Protestantism speaks like a dragon. They will not believe and accept the whole council of God. From a distance Protestantism looks like a lamb; it looks like Christianity. However, it is full of unbelief and dominated by the spirit of the pale horse—compromise. It attempts to mix unbelief with supposed belief, darkness with light. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church." He mentioned only one, but Protestantism says, "Go to the church of your choice."

The people crying out in **Revelation 6:10** were true saints who had embraced the truth and holiness message of their era, but they were bound in that Protestant system of religion. They were bound by "**them that dwell on the earth,**" and that system was hindering their testimony and hindering their effectiveness and dividing the saints. It was causing the blood that was applied to their hearts to not have the full effect that it should. Thus, they were crying out to God to take vengeance on that ungodly system and turn truth loose. They were crying for more truth; they were

groaning for the sixth seal to be opened, and God let them know that it would happen just as soon as some more people truly sold out and were willing to pay the price.

The next thing you see is the sixth seal being opened (Revelation 6:12), and there was a great earthquake. The message of unity shook up all of false religion. God had to get a people in position first. An earthquake does not come without some conditions being met. Before God sends the truth and turns some things upside down, He has to find a people who are willing to sell out, willing to die out, willing to lay down their thoughts, their feelings, and their opinions in subjection to Christ. God needs a people who will say, "It does not matter how I think or how I feel or how I am hurt. I just want to see the work of God prosper. Whatever it takes, Lord, that is what I will do."

A Sold-Out People

The saints prayed, in essence, "Lord, when are You going to turn Your judgment loose on this thing? Don't you think it has gone on long enough?" and **Revelation 6:11** says, "**And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them** [here is the answer to their prayer], **that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were . . .**" What does "**as they were**" mean? The other ones were "**slain for the word of God**"; the other ones had found a place where they could die out, where they were crucified with Christ. No price was too great, and God said, "As soon as I can get enough people in a place like that, I will answer your prayer," and He did answer their prayer.

You can read in Revelation 6:12, "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake." Just as soon as God's people were in position, God shook up false religion. It was just like when Paul and Silas were in jail. They were bound, but when God sent that earthquake (Acts 16:26), all the bonds were loosed, and they were free. When God sent the evening-time earthquake in the sixth seal (A.D. 1880), people who were bound up in sectarian religion had their fetters fall off, and they were unbound. They were free and able to come home to Zion and worship in Spirit and in truth. These saints had cried out to God to remedy anything that was causing schisms, divisions, or hindrances. They were sold out. They wanted more truth than what they were seeing. They wanted to have unity. They were laboring against a spirit of division. These people were crying out for vengeance on that ungodly religious system. They were groaning for the sixth seal to be opened, and God heard their cry and opened it up.

Why did the people have to be sold out before God opened the sixth seal? If you study about the pioneer brethren in the sixth seal who came preaching about the one church, you will learn that they had rotten tomatoes and eggs thrown at them. This message on the one church will bring out some spirits from under cover. People who stand for this message on the church had better be sold out because there are some strong spirits that will come against them.

The saints in the "**fifth seal**" thought they were ready to take hold of more truth, but God said, "Just hold still and rest." God needed enough people completely sold out so that when this truth was loosed, they would stand for it. It is one thing to say you want truth. Many people have said they wanted truth, but when they heard truth, it was a whole lot different from what they thought it would be. Not everyone who said they wanted it really wanted it. Unless you are really sold out, this truth will rub you the wrong way. It will ruffle your feathers. You cannot change the message. You just need to change your direction.

When God opened the sixth seal, there was a shake up. People had been used to doing basically what they wanted, believing what they wanted, and going to whatever organization they wanted to. Then God raised up a few Church of God preachers, and they said, "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:21). They preached that all other ways are wrong. People began to get stirred up. Their attitude was, "Well, who do they think they are? I am not going to listen to man." If God's people ever get to Heaven, they are going to have a man of God tell them every step of the way how to get there. If they will not accept that, they are not going to make it through. Everything God has for us comes through His ministry. When people do not submit to God's man, they are not submitting to God's plan. If God did not want to have His people listen to a man, He would have never put a man in His plan. However, all through the Bible when God wanted to get truth to someone, He used a man.

In Acts 8:26-39 the Spirit told Philip to leave Samaria, go down to Gaza, and join himself to the chariot where a man was reading Isaiah, Chapter 53. Why didn't the Holy Spirit reveal it to him? Because it was not God's plan. The Ethiopian said, "How can I understand except some *man* show me?" So, Philip preached to him. In Acts 10:1-48 the angel came to Cornelius. Why didn't the angel preach the Gospel to Cornelius? It was not God's plan. God said, "Send for Peter." He did, and Peter came and preached the Gospel. God's plan is to work through a man. The spirit of

lawlessness causes people to think they do not have to listen to the man of God. You can refuse to listen if you want to, but it is at your own peril. God had to have a people who were ready for this spiritual earthquake to take place, because when that shaking started, it was not only the wrong things that were going to get shaken. Everything was going to get shaken—the wrong and the right.

When an earthquake occurs, it does not shake only the sinners' homes. If the saints' houses are on the same road, they will be shaken also. When a spiritual earthquake takes place, God's people are going to have to have a settled experience or they will get shaken off. They must be settled enough that when the shaking comes, they are ready for it.

As soon as God had a people ready, or in position, He opened the sixth seal. This fifth seal, from A.D. 1730 to A.D. 1880, is not a picture of martyrdom but a picture of a holiness people in the Wesleyan era who had heard enough of the Word of God that they were "crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20). They were a holiness people who were groaning for the sixth seal, the unity message, to be loosed. People who love truth want more truth. True holiness yearns for unity. The "**fifth seal**" brethren prayed for it and labored for it. When God got a people in position, light broke at last, the message came out on unity, and the sixth seal was opened.

CHAPTER SIX

THE SIXTH SEAL

(A.D. 1880 - 1930)

Revelation 6:12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

False Conceptions of the End of Time

We are now down to the opening of the "**sixth seal.**" Literalists teach that this Scripture lesson is speaking of the end of time or of the last day—the Judgment Day. There are varied teachings concerning this text, but many people take this text and tie it in with Matthew, Chapter 24, and teach that these are occurrences that are going to take place at Christ's second advent. Let us examine some of the claims that false religious advocates make so that we can dispel the falsities and the false conceptions and understand truth in a clear and plain manner. When these claims are examined alongside the light of Bible truth, they cannot stand that examination.

One of the primary quotes literalists use is **Revelation 6:16**, which says, "**And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.**" Those who are of the dispensational persuasion (who teach that there is going to be a rapture) teach that this will be the scene on that final day. They say that when Christ comes back, there will be people crying for the "**rocks**" and the "**mountains**" to "**fall**" on them and "**hide**" them "**from the face of him that sitteth on the throne.**" They teach that people will try to flee, run, and attempt to hide. Let us begin to examine this and see if there is any Bible to substantiate such a teaching as this.

There are those who tell you that after the rapture has taken place, then the tribulation period will be ushered in. Others present it as being the last day, that great day of the Lord. As we begin to rightly divide the Word of Truth to see if there is any Bible to substantiate such teachings, the answer is absolutely not! Sound Bible teaching refutes such thinking. We read in 2 Peter 3:10, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." When Christ comes in His second advent, when He splits the clouds, people will supposedly cry out for the "**rocks**" and "**mountains**" to fall on them. However, there will be no "**rocks**" or "**mountains**" to fall; there will be nowhere for them to hide; there will be nothing for them to cry to.

There will be no secret rapture, or a secret stealing away in the midst of the night, because when Christ comes and splits the clouds, it will be with a *great* noise! If you think it is noisy in this world now, just wait until Christ comes on the scene. When He comes with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God, there is going to be a *great* noise. The "**rocks**" or the "**mountains**" are going to melt with a fervent heat. False preachers say "burned over," but the Bible says "burned up." God is not going to renovate this earth, He is going to destroy this time world. It will be burned up. Second Peter 3:11 tells us, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." A dissolved mountain or a dissolved rock will hide no one. Verse 12

reads, "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

I want to lay to rest the thought of literalism regarding **Revelation 6:16**. When Christ comes again, everything will be instantaneous. We read in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye . . ." That is how quick and instantaneous it will be when Christ comes on the scene in His second advent. In that moment the elements will melt, the earth will be burned up, and we will be instantaneously changed. The mortal is going to put on immortality.

Again, 1 Corinthians 15:52-53 says: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." First Thessalonians 4:16-17 reads: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, [That does not sound like a secret stealing away, as one coming as a thief in the night. There are not many thieves who shout as they break in and steal. This does not sound like a secret stealing away of the church.] with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air . . ." We are going to meet Him in the air because the earth is going to be burned up.

False teachers say that a terrible event is coming on this time world, a time when the "**sun**" will become "**black**," the "**moon**" will become as "**blood**," and men will cry for the "**mountains and rocks**" to "**fall on**" them and "**hide**" them. They support this with Matthew, Chapter 24. Let us look at that because there are some portions of that chapter which parallel our Scripture text. False ministers list these as rapture texts. Matthew 24:17 states, "Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house." If you were truly being raptured, you would have no time to go down to your house. Matthew 24:18 says, "Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes." Would you need clothes in Heaven?

Matthew 24:20-21 is often used to teach of a great tribulation. It says: "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Matthew 24:19 reads, "And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!" If this were speaking of a rapture or a tribulation following a rapture, why would it say, "And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days"? If this were after the rapture, would not the innocent children have been taken, because Jesus said in Mark 10:14, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God"? This lets us know that if a rapture would occur, the children would be taken.

Thus, we need to drop the thought of literalism when we look at **Revelation 6:12-13** and **16**. There are several things that reveal to us the truth in this text. First of all, we know it is not a period of time following this time world because Christ is still a Lamb. Look at it in **Revelation 6:16**. It tells us, "**And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.**" Here Christ is still denoted as a Lamb, letting us know the setting is in this time world, while salvation is still offered and the plan of redemption is still operable. Keep in mind that all seven seals were opened while Christ was a Lamb.

Time Setting for the Sixth Seal

We read in **Revelation 6:12**, "**And I beheld when he** [according to verse 1, '**he**' refers to the Lamb] **had opened the sixth seal . . .**" The time setting for this "**sixth seal**" is not when Christ comes again and ushers in eternity, but is while time is yet standing, while salvation is still offered and while Christ is still the Lamb of God. What is truth in Revelation will be truth in Gospel and in prophecy. We find in this lesson the same picture that Christ gave the disciples when He took them through the Gospel Day in Matthew, Chapter 24. Matthew 24:29 says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven . . ." This lets us know it has nothing to do with the tribulation, because Matthew 24:29 says, "Immediately *after* the tribulation . . ." Those who teach that these things occur *in* the tribulation are teaching contrary to what Jesus said. The tribulation we read about in Matthew 24:21 is not something that will take place at a future point in time, but it happened in A.D. 70 when Titus and the Roman army brought a terrible tribulation against the people of Israel with the desolation of Jerusalem.

Let us read Matthew 24:29-31: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven [the *sign* of the Son of man, not the *Son of man*]: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Jesus was giving the same lesson that we have in our Scripture text. When Jesus said in Matthew 24:30, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man . . ." what was He talking about? Go to Revelation 15:1. It reads, "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." In Matthew 24:30 Jesus called it "the sign of the Son of man," and in Revelation 15:1 it is called a "sign in heaven." Here is a picture of a ministry (angels) who had plagues—the wrath of God, or the judgments of God.

Let us see what this judgment message actually was. Matthew 24:30 states, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven." That sign was the ministry with a special message. They had the seven vials full of the seven plagues. What are the plagues? They are a type. It refers back to Egypt, back to the plagues that God sent by Moses in Exodus, Chapters 8-12. What was the message Moses had? "Let my people go" (Exodus 8:1). What was the message these brethren had in the "**sixth seal**" (A.D. 1880-1930)? It was a message to those who were down in Babylon: "Come out of her, my people." The ministry put a plague on false religion and said, "Let my people go." Again, we read in Matthew 24:30, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn [earthen religion does not like truth poured out on them; it causes them to have a heaviness and to mourn], and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." How is this going to occur? Matthew 24:31 reads, "And he shall send his angels [His ministry] with a great sound of a trumpet [the preaching of the Gospel], and they shall gather together his elect [His people] from the four winds [the winds of doctrine], from one end of heaven to the other." This is how the saints of God were brought together.

The Opening of the Sixth Seal

A great work was accomplished in this sixth-seal period of time. The message heralded by the ministry was, "Let My people go," and the people of God were able to come together. God gathered His elect from all the forces of false religion, and He brought them together. This is a picture, as Matthew 24:30 says, of "power and great glory." It is something to behold when people get the understanding of the sixth seal.

Let us again read **Revelation 6:12**. It says, "**And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal . . .**" In the fifth seal there was a holiness people who found a place to die out. They had heard enough truth and Gospel to find a place where they could have a sold-out experience. They were walking in true holiness. They had white robes, and as true saints of God, they were desiring unity with everyone else who had a holiness experience. However, sectarian walls separated them from being united with their brethren. Christ told them to hold steady and rest for a little season. As soon as He could get more people in place (in a sold-out experience), He said He would open the "**sixth seal**."

When Christ opened the "**sixth seal**," there were some things that happened. **Revelation 6:12** says that "**there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.**" That ties right in with Matthew 24:29, where Jesus said, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." Then **Revelation 6:13** says, "**And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.**" So we find there is a great connection between these two texts.

Jesus gave a little more insight as to how these things took place. What does it mean when it talks about the "**sun**" being darkened? The "**sun**" is a figurative expression of the New Testament light. Revelation 12:1 says, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman [the New Testament church] clothed with the sun [New Testament light and truth] . . ." The "**sun**" being darkened, put in simple terms, means that if you do not walk in the light that God shows you, you are going to go into darkness regardless of how much light you have had. When you have more light than you will walk in, you will go into darkness.

When the sixth-seal brethren started preaching the truth concerning the unity of God's people, there were people who had walked in the light, who had embraced holiness, who had accepted truth up to that point, but when the message came on the one church and on God's people coming out of Babylon and on the coming together of one visible working body of Christ (the truth that Christ is not divided, that God is against sectarianism, and that division and sectarianism are sin), there were people who would not take that light. Thus, the light that was in them became darkness.

Symbolic Expressions

This is a good place to start clearing up some of these symbolic expressions in Matthew 24:31, which reads, "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect [celestial angels do not gather anyone from anywhere]" Celestial angels do not know what to preach. They could not pastor at all. They would not have the first idea of what the needs were. God was not speaking of celestial beings in this verse.

Let us find by the Bible who these angels are. We read in Galatians 1:8-9: "But though we, or an angel [the Greek word is *aggelos*, which means, 'a messenger, or minister'] from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach" Verse 8 says "angel," but verse 9 says "man." This teaches us that the angel he was speaking of was not a celestial being, but it is a man whom God called and equipped as a messenger, or a minister. Galatians 4:13-14 tells us: "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." Here Paul said, "I preached," and they received him as "an angel of God," an *aggelos*, a messenger, or a minister. So, these angels are God's messengers, or His ministry.

God did not send these angels out without equipping them. God does not send out anyone whom He does not equip. If God calls you, He will equip you. One of the best ways to tell whether a man has been called to preach is that he can preach. Matthew 24:31 says, "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet" To understand what this trumpet represents, look at the words of Isaiah 58:1. It reads, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." This trumpet is equated with preaching the truth, showing people their conditions, preaching the Gospel, and uncovering people's needs. That is what the Apostle Paul was speaking of in 1 Corinthians 14:8-9, when he said: "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words [that is what the trumpet is] easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air."

The trumpet symbolizes words being sounded forth, but not just any kind of words. When Christ comes back, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" This shows us that the trumpet is Christ's voice. All of these expressions are interchangeable terms, signifying various attributes of the voice of Christ. This verse is not talking about a literal trumpet but "the voice" of "the Lord himself." A minister preaching God's Word is Christ sounding forth His voice. It is the sounding of the trumpet.

Let us again look at Matthew 24:31: "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, [They are equipped with a message of the Word of God, and when they sound it forth, it is not just their idea. They are preaching God's Word, and it is the very voice of Christ. To see what kind of a message they had, we must look at what the results were.] and they shall gather together his elect" His elect needs to be gathered because they were scattered through the dark and the cloudy day.

Ezekiel 34:11-13 says: "For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country."

The Sixth-Seal Message

The sixth-seal brethren were equipped with the message of Revelation 18:4: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." They were equipped with a message of truth to tear down sectarian walls and walls of division that had separated the saints. God was seeking them out from where they were in the dark day of Catholicism and the cloudy day of Protestantism, and He was gathering them together in the evening time.

When D. S. Warner and other brethren were called, they were equipped with a message that man had not preached since before the morning-time apostasy. Many wonderful songs were written during this time. The special message, or trumpet, that God gave them had been lost sight of through the dark and cloudy day. God especially called those brethren and gave them a special preparation to "gather together his elect" (Matthew 24:31).

Next, we read that the ministry is going to gather them from "the four winds." Let us see what the winds are. We read in Ephesians 4:14, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine . . ." The winds that God was gathering His people together from were the winds of doctrine that had scattered them during the dark and cloudy days. The four winds correspond with Revelation 7:1 (which we will deal with more exhaustively in the next chapter): "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth [that is figurative language, for the earth does not have four corners], holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree."

What were the four winds God was going to gather His elect from? We read in Revelation 8:8 that "a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea." Much of what had been in the morning-time church fell out of the hands of God and into the hands of men. That is what the "sea" represents. (A sea is just a massive body of water, and sadly, it was a massive move.) Revelation 17:15 says, "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Then Isaiah 57:20 says, "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." These verses teach us that the sea is wicked people. The morning-time apostasy took place because much of that which had been the morning-time church fell out of the hands of God (where it was on fire) and into the sea, or into the hands of wicked men. To see what came up out of that sea, read Revelation 13:1. It says, "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea . . ." A beast (Roman Catholicism) came up out of that sea.

One of the doctrines that the angel was going to gather people from was the sea. God was going to gather people, those who had "an honest and good heart" (Luke 8:15), out of Roman Catholicism, which had power in two periods: A.D. 270-530 and A.D. 530-1530. Revelation 13:11 speaks of the earth, saying, "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." What beast was this? It was Protestantism. It had two horns, symbolizing its power in two eras: the Lutheran era (A.D. 1530-1730) and the Wesleyan era (A.D. 1730-1880). It also symbolizes the two political powers that supported it: Germany and England. These brethren had a message that was calling people out from the false doctrines of this earthen organization of Protestantism.

Revelation 7:1 says, ". . . nor on any tree." The trees in this setting are a picture of people in general who are held with false thinking, thinking that is not biblical. God is calling all mankind (whether they are under paganism, papalism, Protestantism, or any other "ism") out and gathering them together to stand on one thing—truth. That is why God sent forth His ministry to bring His people together from the four winds—from all the various false winds of doctrine and the spirits behind them and from all the teachings and sayings of men.

We need to remember that these events transpired during the "**sixth seal**" (**Revelation 6:12**), that period of time from A.D. 1880 to A.D. 1930. In January 1880, D. S. Warner began to lay forth a message concerning the oneness of the body of Christ and the unity of the believers. God did not want His people separated and scattered, but He wanted them together.

Earthquakes

Let us look again at **Revelation 6:12**: "**And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake.**" Three earthquakes are mentioned in the Revelation. An "earthquake" is a very traumatic event,

and the one that chronologically occurred first is mentioned in Revelation 8:5, which reads, "And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." This is a figurative expression of the Day of Pentecost. The fire is the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:3-4), the altar is Christ (Hebrews 13:8-10), the words "filled it with fire of the altar" show us that He (Christ in this instance, since He was performing an high priestly role) was filling it with the Spirit of Christ. When that happened, there were voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an **"earthquake."** All of that is recorded in Acts, Chapters 2 and 3.

We read about the second earthquake that occurred in **Revelation 6:12**. It says it was **"a great earthquake."** This **"earthquake"** was in the sixth seal, and the third and final earthquake is in the seventh seal, the very day and time in which we live. Revelation 16:18 states, "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, . . . so mighty an earthquake, and so great." Let us look at this sixth-seal **"earthquake."** First, we need to consider what this figurative expression of an **"earthquake"** represents. An earthquake is a shaking time. It is a time when things are upset, things are broken loose, the earth is shaken up, and the things that are hooked to the earth are shook loose from it. It is a time when things are rearranged.

This sixth-seal **"earthquake"** is a picture of the mighty unleashing and manifestation of truth and the Word of God that these brethren began preaching in 1880. They preached that God had only *one* church. When they told people down in sectarianism, "You need to come out of that organization," it shook up people. When the saints started rapidly responding to the call of the Gospel, when people came leaping and shouting home to Zion, when they put the truth on those earthen systems of religion, it caused a shaking time. It caused an upset. Things broke loose, and people broke loose. It was such a drastic deviation from everything that had been preached through the dark and cloudy day that it caused a major upset. Yet today when God's man preaches the true Gospel, people get upset—not the saints, just people who are hooked into earthen organizations.

The Prophet Joel prophesied of this in Joel 3:16-17: "The LORD also shall roar out of Zion [Zion is a figurative expression of the church, according to Hebrews 12:22-23], and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more." Joel spoke of a time when the Lord would roar out of Zion, when He would utter His voice from Jerusalem, when once more there would be a visible, working body of Christ, and when this message would cause a shaking.

In Exodus, Chapters 19-20, you can read of when God came down and met with Israel at Mount Sinai. When His voice spoke, it shook the earth. The presence of God and the voice of God shakes things. Hebrews 12:18-21 tells us: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)."

The voice and the presence of God brought about this quaking. The **"earthquake"** in our text (**Revelation 6:12**) was prophesied of and foretold by the Prophet Joel in Joel 2:10-11: "The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining [the same expressions we find in our Scripture text]: And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" Remember, we are dealing in symbolic language. What does it mean when it says "the earth shall quake"? The "earth" is not this terrestrial earth but people who are earthen vessels, whose lives are not built on the sound teachings of God's Word. Truth can shake them.

Hebrews 12:27-28 says: "And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved . . ." If you build your experience on solid truth, then truth will not shake you. When Joel said, "The earth shall quake before them," he was talking about systems and organizations that came out of men's minds. That is the earth on which God sent judgment.

We read in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels . . ." What is this earthen vessel? Second Corinthians 5:1 says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved . . ." He was

talking about this natural body. So, when the Revelation says that the earth shall quake, it is talking about putting judgment on man and the things that men's minds have devised that are contrary to God's eternal Word. Truth will shake up men's thinking.

Revelation 13:11 says, "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth." This beast came up out of the minds of men. They thought it was a good idea to draw up their Articles of Faith. They decided where to have a headquarters and decided who ought to be the head. There were many things that were out of place. Therefore, God had to turn His truth loose and send an **"earthquake"** to upset things.

Only God can send an **"earthquake."** Man can do lots of things, but he cannot send an **"earthquake."** Man can make many moves, build things, and put things in certain places and positions, but if God sees they are not what He wants, He can send an **"earthquake"** and rearrange them in a moment of time. When God looked on in A.D. 1880, He saw that a lot of things were out of place and out of position. The only way to rectify it was to send a good **"earthquake."** In Acts 16:16-40 you can read where Paul and Silas were bound up in prison (man had them bound). What did God do? He sent an **"earthquake"** and opened all the doors. That is exactly what He did in 1880. There were people bound up in false religion, bound by sectarian systems of men. Thus, God sent an Holy Ghost **"earthquake"** and opened the door and made a way of exodus so that the people could be let go and come to Zion and worship God in Spirit and in truth.

The Horses and Their Riders

This sixth-seal period of time immediately succeeded an era dominated mostly by the beast of Protestantism that came up out of the earth, but the sixth-seal message on unity and the church was (and still is) a powerful message. In Zechariah 6:1-8 we read about the horses and their riders. Each of those horses symbolizes different spirits and how militant, powerful, and dominating those spirits were. Each of the riders was the flesh and blood representation that best exemplified the system that spirit produced. We can see how powerful this message on unity is because of what happened to those horses and their riders. That is why the devil is so against unity yet today.

We read in Haggai 2:21-22: "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth [speaking of a time when an earthquake was going to take place]; And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother." In this evening time when God sent the **"earthquake,"** He said that every one of those horses (these spirits) and their riders (their flesh and blood representation), who were in an exalted position in the minds of the masses, would be brought down by the sword, or by the truth. The message of truth will still bring down unbelief, apostasy, and compromise yet today.

Look at the wording the Prophet employed in Haggai 2:22. It says, "And I will overthrow [this great message is out to overthrow everything that does not line up with God's Word: any individual, spirit, or system] the throne of kingdoms [a throne is an exalted place where one reigns; anything that reigns and is contrary to God's Word, God is out to dethrone it and overthrow it], and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots"

If you go back to Zechariah 6:1-8, you will find those horses had chariots. Just as a chariot follows a horse, something follows those spirits. When a spirit is loose, it produces something. Chariots are manmade. Those spirits will cause some man-made things to be produced and follow behind them. But the truth (the sword), Haggai 2:22 says, "will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother." What is the sword? Hebrews 4:12 tells us, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword" The sword is the Word of God. The horse and the rider are brought down by the sword. John 17:17 says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." They are brought down by truth.

Stars Are a Picture of the Ministry

Revelation 6:13 says, "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth" We know this is not speaking of literal stars because the Bible says that a literal star has never fallen (Isaiah 40:26). Some people talk about seeing falling stars, but it is not so, for they do not fall. Every one of them that God hung up there is still hanging. Just as the natural

stars illuminate a darkened sky and give direction at night, the **"stars" (Revelation 6:13)** in a figurative sense are God's spiritual luminary agents that God lifted and put in an exalted position to give men guidance and direction. These **"stars"** are a picture of the ministry. Revelation 1:16 says, "And he had in his right hand seven stars." What are these seven stars? Jesus, speaking in Revelation 1:20, said, "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels [messengers, or ministers] of the seven churches." So, these **"stars"** portray the ministry. God has placed His ministry as His luminary agents. He has lifted them to an exalted position and made them a special light to shine and guide men to Christ.

Revelation 6:13 states, **"And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."** Those **"stars"** fell because they were **"shaken."** When this **"earthquake"** took place, the **"stars"** were shaken by a **"mighty wind."** This **"mighty wind"** is a picture of Acts 2:2 and 4, which read: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost . . ." When this spiritual earthquake took place (A.D. 1880), there were good men of God (**"stars"**) who were **"shaken"** by that **"wind."** When they would not measure up to the message, their star (ministry) fell from a heavenly position down to an earthly position, and they lost out, spiritually.

There have been men who saw the truth, but they said, "If I leave, I will lose my pension." So they stayed, kept their pension, and lost their souls. They might have been good men of God up to that point, walking in all the light they had, but when further light came, when God sent the **"mighty wind"** (the Holy Ghost) with a revelation of truth—"This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:21)—they would not walk. Their star fell from heaven to the earth. They were no longer God's men. They were that earthly system's men. There are people today who see truth, but they say, "Well, I cannot preach that, because if I did, my people would rise up against me. They would never stand for it. I am liable to lose my congregation." Pastor, if you do not preach it, you will lose your soul. If you do not walk in the truth the Spirit of God reveals to you, you will no longer be one of God's **"stars of heaven,"** but you will be bound by an earthen system.

Again, **Revelation 6:13** says, **"And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."** That **"mighty wind"** was the Holy Ghost revealing truth to God's people. When they failed to walk in more light, the precious light they had became darkness to them. In order to be a light, you have to continue to walk in light. You must continue to receive light from the Source of light. God is the source of light (1 John 1:5), and all light projects from that Source.

First John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another . . ." Just as soon as we quit walking in the light, or understanding, that God has given us, we lose fellowship with the One who is light. Then the light goes on and leaves us in darkness. This is exactly what Jesus was talking about in John 12:35 when He said, "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." Many brethren had preached beautiful messages on holiness, but when Christ spoke the truth to them on the one church and on coming out of those systems, too many of them had more allegiance to a system than to the truth. Although they had once been greatly used of God, their star fell to the earth. They became an operative of that earthly organization, and the precious light they once had became darkness. Truth is progressive. Just because we are walking in truth now does not mean we will be walking in it a year from now. We must be willing to walk in the light and keep pace with truth.

The Sun Became Black

Revelation 6:12 reads, **"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood."** We have read this same expression in similar terms back in Matthew's Gospel as well as in prophecy. What does the phrase **"the sun became black"** mean? We need to understand what the **"sun"** is in the natural realm. There are two basic lights. Genesis 1:16 says, "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night . . ." The greater light is the sun (Psalm 136:8), and it was designed to rule the day. When Jesus came on the scene, Malachi 4:2 says, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." When did the Sun arise? When did a new day dawn? Second Peter 1:19 tells us, "We have also a more sure

word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

Who is the "day star"? Revelation 22:16 says, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." The day star is Jesus Christ. He is the Sun of righteousness, and when He came, He ushered in a new day. There had been a dark night, but when Christ came on the scene, a new era commenced. Christ is the "**sun**," the greater light, and the greater light was given to rule the day—this Gospel Day, the New Testament era. The New Testament is what Christ gave us; it is His will and testament to rule this Gospel Day. So, the "**sun**" symbolizes the New Testament.

The "**moon**" is the lesser light, and it rules the night (Psalm 136:9). The light of the "**moon**" is a reflection. The "**moon**" gets all of its light from the "**sun**." The "**moon**" does not have any light of its own. Hebrews 10:1 tells us, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come . . ." The Old Testament, the old law, was just a shadow, or a reflection, of the light that came from the New Testament. The Old Testament was that lesser light which ruled the dark Jewish night. They looked for the dawning of a new day, a new era; they looked for a Messiah to come and usher in a new dispensation. Until Christ came, the Old Testament was that shadow which ruled the Jewish night in Judaism. The night came first and then the day. In Genesis each time it says "the evening and the morning," the night is listed first. (Read Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31.)

When we come back to **Revelation 6:12**, we see that the "**sun** [the New Testament] **became black**." What was this darkness? It was the darkness of death. It became not only "**black**" but "**black as sackcloth of hair**." Often, when we think of "**sackcloth**," we think of it as being a symbol of repentance. However, "**sackcloth**" also portrays death. Before 1880 people had been walking in New Testament light. They had embraced the Lutheran era's truth about salvation, and they had embraced the Wesleyan era's truth concerning walking in holiness. But when the New Testament light came on the oneness of the body of Christ, the unity of believers, and the one church, many would not walk in that light. Thus, their "**sun became black**," and a spiritual death took place.

We read in 2 Samuel 3:30-31: "So Joab, and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle. And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David himself followed the bier." This sackcloth was associated with death. Ephesians 2:1 speaks of those "who were dead in trespasses and sins." When people would not walk in the light and would not obey the truth, they died spiritually. This spiritual darkness was the terrible consequence of refusing truth when it came.

The Moon Became as Blood

Next we read in **Revelation 6:12** that "**the moon became as blood**." In other words, the Old Testament became as "**blood**." What does that mean? People could no longer derive any true light, even from the Old Testament. Every time they kept looking back into the Old Testament, it kept pointing them to one thing: Jesus Christ. Jesus said in John 5:39, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." Every time they tried to look back into the Old Testament, it pointed them back to the true source of light, back to the "**blood**." Why did they need the "**blood**"? Because they were again in sin. If you do not take truth, you will go back into sin. When you go back into sin, you need to do as Revelation 2:5 says: "Repent, and do the first works." You must do your first works over again. You need to start right back with the "**blood**" to get your sin taken care of.

When the message of the church came out, people who did not accept it did not backslide outwardly. They kept right on practicing religion—preaching and teaching. The Book of Hebrews tells us that when people fall away, or apostatize, but continue to profess, "they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:6). That is another reason why the "**moon became as blood**." Just as the Old Testament Jews were guilty of crucifying Jesus Christ, many who were New Testament Jews would not accept the truth, just as old Judaism would not, and were guilty of crucifying Christ afresh. They were as guilty as the old literal Jew.

One Church, One Body

The sixth-seal message was the unity of the faith and the message on the one church. Does our text teach this? **Revelation 6:14** reads, "**And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together.**" The "**heaven departed**" symbolizes the people of God moving from division to unity. The thought of being "**rolled together**" is a picture of God's people coming together to compose one working body, or unit. The Prophet spoke of it in Isaiah 34:4, saying, "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved . . ." The "host of heaven" he was talking about were those things that the people in that era of time worshiped. They worshiped the sun and the host of heaven; this is a picture of false religion. Isaiah was prophesying of a time when false religion would be dissolved to where there would not be anything for it to stand on. In other words, they would not have any basis of truth at all. People would be able to see through the falseness of it. Isaiah 34:4 states, "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll." This precious evening-time truth dissolved and did away with all the denominational boundaries, and God's people came together as one, "**as a scroll when it is rolled together.**" When this "**scroll**" was "**rolled together,**" **Revelation 6:14** says that "**every mountain and island were moved out of their places.**" In the Revelation, mountains are a picture of places of worship. There is only one true place of worship, one true church—one true mountain—and when this earthquake took place, it moved all the other mountains and islands out of their place. The place they once held, they no longer were able to hold. Why? Truth had been turned loose, and once truth has been turned loose, falsity can never hold the place in our heart and mind that it once held. There is only one church, or "**mountain,**" and Colossians 1:18 says, "And he is the head of the body, the church." It is exclusive. First Corinthians 12:13 tells us, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . ." The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 4:4, "There is one body . . ." What is this one body? It is the one mountain. Hebrews 12:22-23 says: "But ye are come unto mount Zion [what is 'mount Zion?'], . . . To the general assembly and church of the firstborn . . ."

John wrote in Revelation 21:9-10: "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain . . ." The only true mountain is the church, and when the truth of the one church went forth, "**every mountain and island were moved out of their places**" (**Revelation 6:14**). Biblically speaking, there is only one true mountain. These other mountains were false mountains, and when truth came, they were moved. They never again held the place in people's minds that they once held.

Revelation 6:15 reads, "**And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains.**" Again, there is only one rock (Christ), one mountain, one true church. You can read in 1 Samuel 2:2, "There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God." Psalm 18:31 says, "For who is God save the LORD? or who is a rock save our God?" There is only one real rock: Christ Jesus. First Corinthians 10:4 tells us, "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

People Are Hiding in the Rocks

What were these people doing in **Revelation 6:15** who "**hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains**"? The first part of **Revelation 6:15** tells us who these people were: "**And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man . . .**" Those who tried to hide themselves were people who had come in contact with this precious message of truth. The truth of this earthquake had shaken them. Their sectarian covering had been shaken off, and they were shown what they truly were, where they were, and what they needed to do. But they would not take the truth. Instead of coming out (Revelation 18:4) as God wanted them to do, they went right back into those systems and tried to hide themselves in their former creeds.

Isaiah 28:17 and 20 tells us: "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. . . . For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." Once judgment has been

laid to the line and the truth has overflowed your hiding place, the bed is too short and the cover is too narrow. In other words, there is no place to hide after God has gotten truth to you.

In these verses there is a contrast laid out: those who would take the precious truth (**Revelation 6:14**) and those who would not (**Revelation 6:15**). The only people who will take this truth are the ones who have honest hearts. Out in denominationalism God is seeking them out. They are hiding in the dens and caves and rocks of Babylon, but God is hunting them out. Jeremiah 16:16 reads, "Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them [those who are unsaved]." Jesus said in Mark 1:17, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." God's people are to fish for others; they are not trying to hide in things, but Jeremiah 16:16 continues, ". . . and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks." This is a picture of people who are hiding in things that have no Bible basis—in teachings that will not stand up under the onslaught of God's Word. God is sending forth hunters to hunt them out and bring them out of those false systems. This judgment in the "**sixth seal**" is not speaking of the Judgment Day but rather of a time of preliminary judgment that started in A.D. 1880. The last phrase in **Revelation 6:16** talks about the "**wrath of the Lamb**." Again, this is not talking about the Judgment Day, because on that day Christ will not be a Lamb. This is a day when the "**wrath**" can move one to a correct position.

Judgment Is Loosed

The "**wrath**" we read about in the "**sixth seal**" is judgment being turned loose when the evening time commenced. God turned His judgment loose on every false, earthly system. Revelation 15:1 confirms this: "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." Revelation 16:1-2 also speaks of this wrath: "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first one went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image." This "**wrath**" was the judgments of God being poured out on earthen systems, or religions, that held men bound. It was not the Judgment Day, but it was commencing an era of preliminary judgment. Peter said in 1 Peter 4:17, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." First Timothy 3:15 tells us that "the house of God" is "the church of the living God." This "**wrath of the Lamb**," was judgment coming forth from the Church of God against those earthen systems that held men bound.

Isaiah 28:17 says, "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies [the only thing that can sweep away lies is truth; thus, this judgment is solid truth], and the waters shall overflow the hiding place." Truth causes honest men and women to come from their religious hiding places and go where they can hear the unadulterated truth and be able to worship God in the manner in which God ordained. This is what the Revelation writer and the writer of the Gospel of Matthew were teaching. This was an era of time when Christ sent forth His ministry to gather back His people from where they were scattered in the winds of doctrine through the dark and cloudy day. Thank God, those who came out had power and great glory. Jesus said that those who did not come out went into darkness and blackness as sackcloth and ended up in a pitiful condition.

May God help us to ever be very careful how we handle the truth as the Spirit of God presents it to us, for we are choosing either our salvation or damnation according to how we respond to the truth.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS AND VISIONS RESTORED IN THE SIXTH SEAL (A.D. 1880-1930)

Revelation 7:1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

5 Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

The Time Setting of This Text

Revelation, Chapter 7, begins with the conjunction "*And*," which in this context immediately reverts us back to the preceding verses (Revelation 6:12-17). These verses deal with the period of time known as "the sixth seal" (Revelation 6:12). **Revelation 7:1** begins, "**And after these things I saw . . .**" After the sixth seal was opened, or understanding had been given in that period of time, the Revelator declared, "**I saw.**"

The "he" spoken of in Revelation 6:12 ("he had opened the sixth seal") is Christ. The preceding noun is found in Revelation 6:1, which tells us that "the Lamb opened one of the seals." The figurative expression "of the Lamb" refers to Jesus Christ, according to John 1:29. The word "opened" in Revelation 6:12 portrays the opening of spiritual understanding to a people, or in this case during an era of time. The brethren who traveled to Emmaus said in Luke 24:32, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he *opened* to us the scriptures?" The Amplified Bible renders it thus: ". . . and as he opened and explained to us [the sense of] the Scriptures?" So, this firmly places the time frame of our Scripture text in the sixth-seal period of time.

Four Angels

What did John see or receive understanding concerning? **Revelation 7:1** reads, ". . . **I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth . . .**" Again, we must be reminded that the nature of the Revelation is figurative, or symbolic. If we did not know that from any other text, we would know that from this passage. Why? Because there are not four literal corners of the earth. The "**four corners of the earth**" is a common expression representing all directions: north, south, east, and west—the entirety of the earth. It is an all-inclusive statement. It implies universality or entirety. What does it signify spiritually? It must have a spiritual connotation, because there is an angel associated with it. Let us examine it closely: ". . . **I saw four angels** [These were not celestial beings. The Greek word is *aggelos*, meaning 'messenger or minister.' These four angels represent a ministry. To understand who this ministry is, notice what they were doing and where they were located.] **standing on the four corners of the earth . . .**" Here is a picture of a ministry with a level of understanding that was not very high. They were "**standing**," or occupying, an earthly position. This is in distinct contrast to Revelation 10:1-2, which speaks of "another mighty angel . . . [who] set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth." He intentionally set his feet there for a purpose. In **Revelation 7:1** the angels were merely "**standing**."

John saw those same "**four angels**" in Revelation 9:14. It states, "Saying to the sixth angel [this is the same time period: 1880-1930] . . . Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates." Those "**four angels**" were bound in the "great river Euphrates." What does this river represent? The "great river Euphrates" flowed through the midst of old literal Babylon and was Babylon's lifeline. Ancient Babylon was divided into two parts by the Euphrates river. According to *Holman's Bible Dictionary*: "The Euphrates was known as the great river (Genesis 15:18 and Joshua 1:4). The Euphrates is the largest and most important river in western Asia. Many significant cities were located on the Euphrates; Babylon being the most important."

Euphrates symbolizes being right in the midst of spiritual Babylon. Where were these "**four angels**"? Revelation 9:14 tells us they were "bound in the great river Euphrates." In other words, they were bound right in the midst of spiritual Babylon. When **Revelation 7:1** says the angels were "**standing on the four corners of the earth**," what does this portray? "**Earth**" is a picture of man (2 Corinthians 4:7 and 2 Corinthians 5:1). "**Four corners**" denote entirety or in all directions. Babylon (Revelation 18:4) represents religious confusion. Put it all together, and you will see this is speaking of the entirety of earthly, man-made religious confusion. These "**angels**" were a ministry of the prior periods, and though they had some light and truth, the predominate condition was that they were bound by the Euphrates. Life in Babylon had them bound.

The Four Winds of the Earth

What limited their understanding and caused those "**angels**" to be holding "**the four winds of the earth**"? Go back to Daniel 7:2-3. It reads: ". . . the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another." This sea is the same sea John saw in Revelation 13:1. *Holman's Concordance* defines *sea* as simply "a body of water." The Scriptures verify this. Genesis 1:10 says, "And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of waters called he Seas." *Seas* is the gathering together of waters. In prophetic, or Revelation, language, what is water? Revelation 17:15 says that the "waters . . . are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Water represents people, and a sea is just a gathering together of a mass of water, representing a mass move, or a great number of people.

What did Daniel see in Daniel 7:2, when he spoke of "four winds"? These "**winds**" are the spirits that gave these systems life. "**Winds**" is a dual symbol. First, we want to consider them as representing spirits. Look at Jesus' words

in John 3:8: "The wind bloweth where it listeth . . . : so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Here Jesus equated the wind with the Spirit. The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:2 of "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit." Look at what Ezekiel said concerning the **"four winds"** in Ezekiel 37:9: ". . . Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." Those **"four angels"** were the ministry that originated during the dark and cloudy day. They were the rulers of sectarianism, those whose understanding was bound by Babylon. A false spirit was using the ministry to promote systems and give life to systems that were not scripturally sound. Those **"angels"** were holding, or in control of and promoting, many false doctrines. It was the promotion by those spirits that gave these false systems life.

Let us look at the second part of this dual symbol. **"Winds"** represent false spirits, but they also represent that which the false spirits gave rise to: "every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). False spirits give rise to false doctrines. This is what starts false systems. A false spirit always precedes a false doctrine. This is why you must "take heed to your spirit" (Malachi 2:16). By those men failing to walk in light, they created systems and devised teachings that were promoted by spirits. Those spirits held them bound in Babylon and caused them to hold forth their doctrines to men in their period of time. This is why **Revelation 7:1** tells us that **"the wind [the Holy Spirit] should not blow,"** or have free course in false religion.

These **"four angels"** were the previous trumpet angels: the first was from A.D. 270 to A.D. 530; the second was from A.D. 1530 to A.D. 1730; the third was from A.D. 1730 to A.D. 1880; and the fourth was from A.D. 1730 to A.D. 1880. They were the second, third, fourth, and fifth trumpet angels. The true Spirit was, as Revelation 11:3 declares, "clothed in sackcloth," or in mourning. Why was the Spirit in mourning? Revelation 11:2 says, ". . . the holy city [the church, according to Revelation 21:2 and Hebrews 12:22-23] shall they tread under foot forty and two months." The message on the church as a visible, separate, unified body was obscured, and the church went out of public view during this period of time ("forty and two months"). If you give thirty days to a Jewish calendar month, thirty times forty-two equals one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

By giving prophetic time reckoning of each day for a year (Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34), twelve hundred sixty days equals twelve hundred and sixty years, which is the time from A.D. 270 to A.D. 1530. This was the Dark Ages, a time when the church was obscured from public view. During the time period of A.D. 1530-1880 (the Protestant era), Revelation 11:8 says, "And their dead bodies [the Word and the Spirit] shall lie in the street of the great city" Revelation 18:10 tells us it is "that great city Babylon." To understand why, go back to our text in **Revelation 7:1**, and you will read that **"the wind [the Holy Spirit] should not blow"** during this time (the papal and Protestant eras). Men gave gifts to one another. Revelation 11:10 says that they "shall send gifts one to another" rather than allow the Holy Spirit to give the gifts.

Why was this a dark and cloudy day? Look at **Revelation 7:1** again: ". . . **that the wind should not blow on the earth** [Revelation 13:11 tells us the 'earth' is Protestantism], **nor on the sea . . .**" Revelation 13:1 tells us the beast that came up out of the "sea" was papalism. The "sea" was papal rule—A.D. 270-530 and A.D. 530-1530—and the "earth" was Protestantism—A.D. 1530-1730 and A.D. 1730-1880. Sadly, during these periods of time, truth was not loose. When the "vine of the earth" was portrayed as being reaped (Revelation 14:19), the length of what was being reaped was revealed as "a thousand and six hundred furlongs" (Revelation 14:20), or approximately A.D. 270-1880. The Holy Spirit was not able to work in full capacity during those times.

Verse 1 continues, ". . . **nor on any tree.**" Jesus reduced all humanity to either a good tree or a corrupt tree in Matthew 7:17. So, regardless of which one they were during the dark and cloudy day, there were truths that no "tree" saw or understood. But in our text, this was getting ready to change. Under this sixth-seal ministry, we first saw conditions as they were in sectarianism and as they had been in the dark and cloudy day. Then John saw another scene. In **Revelation 7:2** he said, **"And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God."** Here was **"another angel,"** separate and distinct from the **"four angels"** in **verse 1**. Notice that this **"angel"** came after the first **"four angels."** This different and distinct **"angel"** that succeeded them was the sixth angel, or the sixth-seal ministry.

Notice that this **"angel"** was not "bound in the great river Euphrates" (Revelation 9:14). He was not bound by Babylon, bound to teach what they taught or approved. He was not holding forth false systems to men. He came **"ascending from the east" (Revelation 7:2)**. "East" is the direction from which the sun rises, the direction from which light ascends. Here was a ministry that had light, or understanding. Light is synonymous with understanding. Psalm 119:130 says, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." Here was a

ministry who had light, ascending light, not just some truths but progressive truth. Therefore, several things became clear, and several things occurred during this ministry.

The Seal in Their Foreheads

We read in **Revelation 7:1-3**: "... four angels standing on the four corners of the earth . . . and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels . . . Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." What is the lesson? In his prophetic writings, Ezekiel spoke of a time when an end would come to these systems and judgment would be put on them. (Look at Ezekiel 7:1-9.) Ezekiel 7:2 reads, "An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land." Ezekiel prophesied that an end would come to the rule of man; judgment was coming.

Ezekiel 7:3 says that "I . . . will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations." Certainly, Babylon (false religion) is full of abominations (Revelation 13:6; Revelation 17:4), but our text says something must happen first. **Revelation 7:3** tells us this will not happen "till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." What is the seal a figure of? Ephesians 1:13 speaks of being "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise," and Ephesians 4:30 warns us to "grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed." The seal is a picture of the Holy Spirit bringing a revelation of truth, or as Ephesians 1:18 says, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened."

Notice that **Revelation 7:3** says they were "sealed . . . *in* [not on] their foreheads." What is "*in*" our foreheads? Our minds. Remember, we are speaking figuratively. Look back at Ezekiel 3:8-9: ". . . thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead." They were not going to have a head-butting contest. God was warning Ezekiel to not let their rebellion and their apostasy change his mind or his thinking. Child of God, keep your mind as solid in truth as a flint is solid.

Revelation 7:4 says, "And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." What is this an expression of? What was the light this ministry had? This ministry was back to the light of the morning time in regards to a clear message concerning the church. They saw a clear vision of the church. The body of Christ is singular and the entirety of the saints compose its members. This is why John said, they have "sealed the servants" before they "hurt the earth and the sea." The Spirit must give ones a divine revelation of truth concerning the church before judgment can be put on falsity and people can be called out. Without first getting the seal "*in their foreheads*," without understanding of the Apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42) and without a revelation of the words of Jesus in Matthew 16:18 and without an understanding of what God desires, it is difficult to lay judgment out and call people out of falsity. Before the sixth-seal brethren were ready to give Babylon a cup, or pour out judgment on her, God had to get them back to the light of the morning concerning the message on the church. Thus, the scene changed and John saw the "**hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel**" (**Revelation 7:4**). This represents a revelation of truth that had been lost sight of since the morning time. It was a picture, in figurative expressions, of the institution of the New Testament church and its successful transition from the old Jewish economy to the New Testament economy.

Revelation 14:20 tells us they were "without the city . . . by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." This was approximately sixteen hundred years, from A.D. 270 to A.D. 1880. During this period of time, a vision of the New Testament church as a sealed, separate, distinct people who have a knowledge of truth and operate as a distinct visible entity had been lost. This clear message and vision of the church had to be restored. The sixth-seal ministry first received a vision of the New Testament church concerning when and how she was originally instituted. Remember, we are dealing in symbolic language. John spoke of "**all the tribes of the children of Israel**" (**Revelation 7:4**) as emblematic of that entity which incorporates all the children, or people of God, in the New Testament era—the church. They were receiving a clear vision of the institution of the church and its origination.

The Hundred and Forty-Four Thousand

We read in **Revelation 7:4-8**: "And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed

twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand."

As we begin to consider these verses, we are first introduced to "**the number of them which were sealed**" (verse 4). This "**number**" has great significance, but unfortunately it has also been the object of much speculation and confusion. We must ever be reminded that the Revelation deals in symbolic expressions. It is written to convey spiritual truths, not give literal expressions. Who were "**them which were sealed**," or what he enumerated as "**an hundred and forty and four thousand**"? Revelation 14:1 also speaks of "an hundred forty and four thousand" and says that they "stood on the mount Sion." Then Revelation 14:3 tells us that they were redeemed. Are these 144,000 literally all who are going to be redeemed? Certainly not! After this initial scene of the "**sealed**," the Revelator declared in **Revelation 7:9**, "**After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues . . .**" So, this portrayal of "**an hundred and forty and four thousand**" (**Revelation 7:4**) does not literally represent all who will be redeemed, or saved. Rather, it serves as a figurative representation to convey a truth.

Why the number "**an hundred and forty and four thousand**"? Why was this seemingly odd numerical expression used? The reason is that one hundred forty-four is a multiple of twelve, and twelve holds a special place in the Scriptures. There were twelve sons of Jacob, or Israel (Genesis 35:22). There were twelve tribes of Israel (Genesis 49:28). There were the twelve Apostles (Matthew 10:5). There were twenty-four courses of the Levitical Jewish priesthood (1 Chronicles 24:1, 4). Also, there are twelve months in a year.

Let us look at each of these examples. Genesis 35:22 tells us that "the sons of Jacob were twelve." This represented the complete, or entire, male lineage of Jacob. The twelve tribes represented the entirety of Israel, the complete nation. The twelve Apostles represented the entirety of the Apostles of the initially instituted New Testament church. The twenty-four courses of priests were *all* the Levitical priesthood. In each case it was the *entirety* of them, or the complete number. Twelve months comprise a complete year. Therefore, twelve is a figurative expression of completeness, entirety, or perfection.

One scholar said: "The number one hundred forty-four thousand stands not for limitations, but it stands for completeness and perfection. It is made of twelve multiplied by twelve, the perfect square, and then rendered even more inclusive and complete by being multiplied by one thousand. So far from being a limited and selected number, this number, in Jewish imagery, is the number that is inclusive, perfect and complete."

Literal Israel Broken Off

Revelation 7:4 says, ". . . of all the tribes of the children of Israel." The "**tribes of the children of Israel**" represent all of God's people, the chosen people, those who in the Old Testament economy enjoyed God's favor and His presence. They were the ones with whom He made covenants, to whom He revealed Himself, and to whom He gave the promises. But when Jesus, the promised Messiah came, something happened. A transition took place. John 1:11 says, "He came unto his own [the Jewish nation], and his own received him not." To whom did He come, and to whom was He sent? In Matthew 15:24 Jesus said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Overall, what was the response of the leaders of the Jewish nation? Luke 19:14 tells us, "But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." By the time of the Advent of Christ, Judaism was so corrupted that Jesus said in Matthew 15:8-9: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Conditions were so adverse that Jesus cleansed the temple twice. In John 2:13-17 we read of the first time He cleansed the temple. He said in John 2:16, ". . . make not *my Father's house* an house of merchandise." The second time He cleansed it is found in Matthew 21:12-13. Verse 13 reads, "*My house* shall be called the house of prayer."

The third and final time Jesus left the temple, He wept and made that fateful pronouncement in Matthew 23:38: "Behold, *your house* is left unto you desolate." Notice the transition. It went from "*my Father's house*" to "*my house*" and then to "*your house*." And with that fateful pronouncement, the exclusive position of the Jewish nation ended.

Ephesians 2:11-14 tells us: ". . . ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh . . . [who] were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one [Jew and Gentile], and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." As a nation, old literal Israel was broken off because of their unbelief. Romans 11:21 declares that "God spared not the natural branches," or the natural Jewish lineage. Why? Romans 11:20 says it was "because of unbelief they were broken off." Today, if they want to enjoy this New Testament experience, they must come the same way all come: "For through him ['Christ Jesus,' according to verse 13] we both [natural Jew and Gentile] have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:18).

Jesus prophesied that this would occur. He said in Matthew 21:43, "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you . . ." Whom was He addressing? Matthew 21:23 and 31 read: "And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him . . . Jesus saith unto them . . ." Verse 45 tells us, "And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them." Those men were representatives and leaders of the Jewish nation.

An All-Inclusive Nation

Notice what Jesus said in Matthew 21:43: "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you [the old Jewish nation], and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Remember, the Kingdom of God is not a literal entity, but rather a spiritual reality. Luke 17:21 tells us that "the kingdom of God is within you." Romans 14:17 says, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink [not literal or temporal]; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is a spiritual reality. Go back to Jesus' words in Matthew 21:43. He said the kingdom would be "given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." What are these fruits? John the Baptist spoke to the same kind of people in Matthew 3:7-8: "Pharisees and Sadducees." He told them in verse 8, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."

When Jesus spoke of "a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof," He was speaking of repentance. In other words, this "nation" are those who repent. Matthew 21:44 says that those who "fall on this stone shall be broken." Psalm 51:17 says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." What is the picture? When one comes in old-time Bible repentance, falls on the Stone (Jesus Christ, according to Acts 4:10-11 and Ephesians 2:20) with a broken and contrite spirit, and really brings forth the fruit, it produces an experience to where the "kingdom of God shall be . . . given" (Matthew 21:43).

Let us look a little closer at this nation to see who it is comprised of, what it is, and who it consists of. Matthew 21:44 tells us it is "whosoever." Therefore, the nation actually is all inclusive. It is not to a literal or biological race or to those who experience a literal birth, but rather it is for those who have met the conditions for a spiritual experience, or spiritual birth. When one meets the conditions and gains this kingdom experience, he or she becomes a part of that "nation" (Matthew 21:43).

What is this "nation"? The Apostle Peter referred to it in 1 Peter 2:9 as "an holy nation." To read what this holy nation is, go to Paul's words in Galatians 6:15-16: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision [in other words, the literal condition is not important, or not an issue here], but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, [What is the rule? Being a new creature.] peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

What constitutes a new creature, or being in Christ? Look at 2 Corinthians 5:17. It states, "Therefore if any man [notice it is all inclusive: 'any man'; Titus 2:11 says, 'For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared *to all men*'] be in Christ [a portrayal of the intimate oneness with Christ that can only come through salvation], old things are passed away [a reference to the things of the old Jewish economy—2 Corinthians 5:16]; behold, all things are become new." A new day has commenced. Second Corinthians 6:2 calls it "the day of salvation." A new era has begun. The literal condition, circumcision or uncircumcision, is unimportant. What is important? Becoming "a new creature" (Galatians 6:15). Galatians 6:16 says, "And as many as walk according to this rule [referring back to verse 15, the rule of being a new creature], peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." Who is the Israel of God in this New Testament dispensation? Those who "walk according to this rule" of being a new creature are the Israel of God.

The Israel of God

Who is this "nation" (Matthew 21:43), or "an holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9)? Galatians 6:16 tells us it is "the Israel of God." To understand what the term *Israel* actually means, go back to when it was initially used (Genesis 32:24-30).

I might digress momentarily to dispel a common misconception concerning Genesis 32:24-30. It is commonly accepted (and I have even seen portraits portray this) that Jacob wrestled with an angel. Please examine this passage. Nowhere is the term *angel* mentioned or even remotely alluded to. Jacob said in Genesis 32:24 that he "wrestled a man." Who was this man? Notice the special qualities he had. Genesis 32:27 tells us, "And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob," which means "supplanter or trickster." This man drew Jacob out to confession. Then, Genesis 32:28 says, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel." Here we see a conversion, or a change. This is a type of salvation. What makes one an "Israel"? He wrestled (portraying conviction), then confessed of who and what he was, and then was converted.

What does *Israel* mean? Genesis 32:28 tells us, ". . . hast thou power with God . . . and hast prevailed." The name *Israel* in the Hebrew literally means "prevails with God." Thus, "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16) are those who walk according to this rule of being "a new creature" (Galatians 6:15), or those who have wrestled (or been convicted), confessed, and ultimately been converted; those who have had power with God and have prevailed.

With whom did Jacob wrestle? Who makes conversion possible? In Genesis 32:30 Jacob cried, ". . . I have seen God face to face . . ." Now, no one can see God the Father and live (Exodus 33:20). So, who did Jacob see? Genesis 32:24 says it was "a man," and Genesis 32:30 says it was "God." Jacob saw God, the "man": Jesus Christ. Who else can bring conversion to a man? Acts 4:12 tells us only Jesus Christ can. This account in Genesis is a clear type of salvation. So, "Israel" includes all those who walk according to this rule: become a new creature and have power with God.

Romans 2:28-29 says: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." It is not a natural lineage that makes you part of "Israel," but a divine birth, a divine experience. Galatians 3:29 reads, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." I trust that you can understand that when **Revelation 7:4** speaks of "**all the tribes of the children of Israel**," we are actually seeing a vision of the church. James 1:1 tells of "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." Acts 8:1 explains, saying, "And at that time there was a great persecution against the *church* which was at Jerusalem; and they were all *scattered abroad* . . ."

The famous Scottish expositor, Dr. William Barclay, wrote concerning this passage: "It is the church which is the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16). It is the Christians who are the real circumcision, those who worship God in the Spirit, who rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:3). Even if this passage is stated in terms of the twelve tribes of Israel, the reference is still to the Church of God, which is the new Israel, the Israel of God."

The lesson in these verses is that there was a successful, complete, and entire transition from the old economy to the new and how that the transition was complete and entire. Just as God had a nation in the old economy that represented the entirety of His people, so He does in the new. This vision of oneness, of entirety, of God's people being one nation, a compacted people, had been lost sight of in the dark and cloudy day. Before the sixth-seal ministry could begin to herald a call against Babylon and before God could lead them on to other divine revelations, God had to bring them again to Zion (Isaiah 52:8) and give them a divine revelation of these blessed morning-time truths.

The Twelve Tribes

Let us read **Revelation 7:5-8**: "**Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.**" As we view this particular reckoning of the "**tribes of the children of Israel**" (**Revelation 7:4**), we notice that this is unique and singular. In no other place throughout the Scriptures are the "**tribes**" reckoned, or listed, in this

manner. Now, as with everything in the Revelation, there is a reason and a significance in this. This listing is singular and unique because it represents something singular and unique.

When James penned his epistle to "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (James 1:1), whom was he addressing? In James 1:2 he wrote, "My brethren." We also read "My brethren" in James 2:1 and in James 3:1. What "brethren" was he referring to? James 2:1 reads, "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." James addressed his epistle to those "which are scattered abroad" (James 1:1). To see who was "scattered abroad," look at Acts 8:3. It says, "As for Saul, he made havock of the church . . ." Also, Acts 8:4 says, "Therefore they [the church] that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." So those "scattered abroad," or the "twelve tribes," are a representation of the church. This representation shows a complete and entire transition from the old economy to the new. Since this description of the tribes is singular and unique, it serves as a very apt representation of the church, which also is singular and unique.

Why this particular listing of the "**tribes**"? Why is "**Judah**" listed first although "**Reuben**" was older? Why the omission of Dan and the inclusion of "**Manasses**"? First, let us look at why "**Judah**" is first. This tribe is listed first because this is the tribe from which the Messiah came. Revelation 5:5 refers to Christ as "the Lion of the tribe of Juda."

Notice that in this listing the tribe of Dan is omitted. What significance does this hold? It must be remembered that much of the imagery of the Revelation is Hebrew imagery, and to the Hebrew Rabbins, Dan symbolized idolatry and evil. We read in Judges 18:30, "And the children of Dan set up the graven image." The golden calves that were idols set up before the people were, as 1 Kings 12:29 declares, set in Bethel and the other in Dan. So in Rabbinic symbolism, Dan stood for idolatry and evil. Some Jewish teachers have used Jeremiah 8:16 to teach that an antichrist would spring from the tribe of Dan. Since this tribe of Dan, to the Hebrews, represented idolatry, evil, and to some an antichrist, needless to say, it could not be used to represent any portion of the New Testament church. Certainly, in the New Testament church, there is no idolatry, there is no evil, and there is certainly no antichrist. Hence, no tribe of Dan is found in the reckoning of the tribes.

In this listing of the "**tribes**," notice that the absence of Dan is replaced with "**Manasses**." Manasseh was the son of Joseph (Genesis 41:51). Just as with all Hebrew names, the name *Manasseh* had a significance. The actual meaning of the name is "forgetfulness." Each of the names of these tribes represents characteristics and attributes that are found in the New Testament church. Daniel 9:9 declares, "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses . . ." Micah 7:19 declares, ". . . thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." This attribute of forgetfulness portrays God's graciousness and forgetfulness towards "sins that are past" when we take "faith in his blood" (Romans 3:25). Each of these "**tribes**," a part of old Israel, represents a part of the church.

The Evening-Time Message

In **Revelation 7:9** John penned, "**After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number . . . clothed with white robes . . .**" The scene before John changed, and he declared "**after this**," letting us know that we have now progressed on to a time *past* the morning time. John was very familiar with the morning-time church, and when he received this vision of the institution of the church in the morning time (**Revelation 7:4-8**), he never raised a question. However, when the scene changed (**verse 9**), John saw "**a great multitude . . . clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.**" Here was a group of people he was not familiar with, a group he did not recognize. In **Revelation 7:13** John asked, "**What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?**"

Why did John not recognize them? After the sixth-seal brethren got a vision of the pattern, a vision of that which was "from the beginning" (1 John 1:1), they set out with a message that produced the evening-time church. Here John was seeing the result of their message: the evening-time church. Let us examine it. First, what produced this "**great multitude, which no man could number**" (**Revelation 7:9**)? This was not a localized truth, but rather an all-inclusive, universal message. For **verse 9** continues, "**. . . of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues . . .**" Is the message of the church—the oneness of the body, of the one fold—a universal message? Certainly so! Look at Jesus' words in John 10:16: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." Then Isaiah 56:8 says, "The Lord GOD, which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him."

Look at Ezekiel 34:6-15. It says: "My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

"As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD." Is this a universal message? Certainly so! The clarion call of this age, even as our age, is found in Revelation 18:4, which says to "Come out of her, my people." This message is to all of God's people everywhere.

What else do we see about this evening-time message? It produced "**Salvation**" (**Revelation 7:10**) and victory in holiness. How do we know? They had "**palms in their hands**" (**Revelation 7:9**). Raised hands portray victory and agreement. Also, Nehemiah 8:6 reads, "And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD . . ." We know that they also had a clear holiness message, because **Revelation 7:9** tells us that they were "**clothed with white robes.**" **Verse 13** says that they were "**arrayed in white robes.**" What does this represent? Revelation 19:8 states, "And to her [verse 7 tells us this is the Lamb's wife] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." Here we receive understanding of several truths. In **Revelation 7:9** "**white robes**" represent righteousness. If the "**robes**" are the "righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:8), then it is safe to conclude that those in the "**robes**" are the saints. So this "**great multitude, which no man could number**" (**Revelation 7:9**) refers to the saints.

What else do we see about the message they had? They had salvation, they had the holiness message, and they had the truth concerning the church. Was it a clear message? Look at **Revelation 7:9**, which tells us a "**great multitude . . . stood before the throne, and before the Lamb.**" They realized that there was nothing, other than the message, between a man and Christ. No pope, priest, preacher, or system stood between. First Timothy 2:5 tells us that "there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

Man's Accountability to God

The sixth-seal brethren had a clear message of man's accountability to God. Concerning man's soul, they clearly saw man's position: nothing between his soul and his Savior. They also saw a clear message on divine order and church government. John saw the "**throne**" (**Revelation 7:9**), the "**angels,**" "**elders,**" and then the "**four beasts,**" or the saints (**Revelation 7:11**), showing a definite structure to the church. How do we know that this is the evening-time church? Look where they came from. **Revelation 7:14** reads, ". . . **These are they which came out of great tribulation . . .**" What immediately preceded the sixth seal? The Protestant era. What was the "**great tribulation**" they came out of? Remember, we are dealing in symbolic expressions. It represents sectarianism and sectarian rule. The greatest "**tribulation**" an honest heart can ever experience is to be bound by a system and unable to enjoy full truth and fellowship with the rest of the saints. This was the tribulation that souls under the altar were experiencing in Revelation 6:9-11. This is why they were crying for judgment to be poured out (Revelation 6:10).

How do we know that this particular reference to "**great tribulation**" (**Revelation 7:14**) refers to sectarianism? One reason is that the acceptance of the message produced a full deliverance from sin and a clarity on holiness. In **Revelation 7:14** we read that they "**washed their robes.**" Embracing this message had a spiritual quality that they were not receiving in Babylon, or they would not have needed to be washed. If nothing else, they needed cleansed from

the sin of division. When they **"came out"** (the call of this era, according to **Revelation 7:14** and Revelation 18:4), look what they came to. **Revelation 7:15** tells us, **"Therefore are they before the throne of God** [back to a position where a man can live in the presence of God], **and serve him day and night** [not in eternity, but here and now, while time is still standing] **in his temple."** What does the **"temple"** signify? The church.

In 1 Corinthians 3:16 we read, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God . . . ?" Who is the "ye" that he was addressing here? First Corinthians 1:2 tells us Paul was writing "unto the church of God." Hence, the **"temple"** is the Church of God. Read 2 Corinthians 6:16. It says, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God." Again, whom was Paul addressing? Second Corinthians 1:1 tells us it was "the church of God." I trust you can see that the **"temple"** is a reference to the church (**Revelation 7:15**). We find in **Revelation 7:16-17**: **"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."** This merely portrays the spiritual benefits enjoyed when one is in a true congregation of the Church of God.

Revelation 7:16 reads, **"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more."** There is no famine where the truth is, as there is in Babylon (Amos 8:11-12). It is Canaan land, a land that flows with milk and honey, or the Word and the Spirit. People can lie down, be satisfied, and receive all that their souls stand in need of.

According to our text, all of this took place during this sixth-seal period of time. We know this is true because the next chapter begins with, "And when he had opened the seventh seal . . ." Therefore, Revelation 8:1 begins with the seventh seal, letting us know that **Chapter 7** deals with that period of time known as the sixth seal, from A.D. 1880 to A.D. 1930.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SEVENTH SEAL (A.D. 1930 - Second Advent)

Revelation 8:1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

The Seventh Seal Was Opened While Christ Was Still a Lamb

Here we have a very abbreviated passage of Scripture text. Yet, this text conveys volumes of spiritual truths pertaining to the day and time in which you and I live. As we begin to view our text, we can see that we are down to that seventh and final seal. If you will go back to Revelation, Chapter 5, you will read that the book was sealed on the backside with seven seals. This book is God's eternal Word. The significance of "seven seals" is that through the form, or the vehicle, of these seals John took us down through the seven periods of time that comprise this Gospel Day, or Christian dispensation.

In this chapter we want to consider the opening of the "**seventh seal**," and thereby complete our study of this very vital seal series. Although **Revelation 8:1** begins a chapter, we must realize that the Bible in its original form was not broken up into chapters and verses. Man did that many years subsequent to its writing merely to give you and me a ready reference. Notice that our text (**Revelation 8:1**) begins with a conjunction: "**And**." That word unites **verse 1** with the preceding verses and chapters, letting us know it is a continuation of the preceding portion.

Let us examine this Scripture text. **Revelation 8:1** says, "**And when he had opened the seventh seal . . .**" The antecedent of this pronoun "**he**" reverts us right back to the beginning of the seals series in Revelation 6:1. It says, "And I saw when the *Lamb* . . ." Here the word "Lamb" has a capital "L," denoting that this is a proper noun. That becomes very important when we study this "**seventh seal**." Why? There are some who teach that the "**seventh seal**" is not for this time world; it is not for the here and now; it is for the eternal realm.

Some people say, "The seventh seal corresponds with the seventh trumpet, and the last trump is the one that Christ will blow when He comes again." There is only one thing wrong with that. All seven of those seals were opened when Christ was a "Lamb." When He comes again, He will not be a "Lamb." He will come the second time, Hebrews 9:28 says, "without sin unto salvation." He will not come as a sacrifice, to deal with sin, but He will come as a judge. He will no longer be the "Lamb of God."

Christ opened all seven seals while time was still standing, while redemption was still being offered, and while He was still the "Lamb of God." The reference in Revelation 6:1 to "the Lamb" is a biblical figure of Christ. When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, [How long is He a Lamb? Only while He is taking away . . .] the sin of the world" (John 1:29). When Christ comes the second time, He will not be taking any sin away. When time reels into eternity, He will not be the Lamb of God; He will not be dealing with sin.

It is important to understand when the "**seventh seal**" was "**opened**," for this takes on significance in this particular "**seal**." First Peter 1:18 talks about being "redeemed." How are you redeemed? Verse 19 says it is "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb." However, when time reels into eternity, there will no longer be any blood to cleanse; there will be no remission for sins. He is only a Lamb while He takes away the sin of the world. Right now Christ is our advocate (1 John 2:1). But in His second advent, when He splits the clouds, He will not be a lamb, a sacrifice for sin, but rather He will be our judge. The Bible tells us that He is now on the mercy seat showing the sure mercies of David (Isaiah 55:3-4). But on that day, Paul said in Corinthians, He will be on the judgment seat. He will be changing positions. We read in 2 Timothy 4:1, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge [who? the Lord Jesus Christ] the quick [the alive] and the dead at his appearing . . ." At His appearing, He is going to appear as a judge. I trust that you can see the time setting for our lesson in **Revelation 8:1-2** is here and now, while time is yet standing.

The Opening of the Seal Brings Understanding

Revelation 8:1 tells us that **"he"** (the Lamb) **"opened the seventh seal."** We know from previous chapters that the seal is the Holy Ghost. (Read Ephesians 1:13 and Ephesians 4:30.) Christ is loosing the Holy Spirit of God to bring understanding to a people in a particular era of time. Ephesians 1:17-18 confirms this by saying: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." It is the Spirit of God who brings revelation to you and me by opening our understanding. One rendering says, "He illuminates our minds, where we can perceive and see truth, and when we see and perceive and see truth, as revealed by the Spirit, using the Word, then we can see things in a more clear manner and view them as God views them."

In the opening of every one of these seals, Jesus was actually letting the Holy Spirit help people to see conditions in their particular day as God saw them. If there is anything we need today, it is to see conditions working as God sees them. God is the only One who sits in a position where He can behold all (Isaiah 40:22). He is the only One who can see all and knows all, and He knows all for every age.

The Need of the Seventh Seal

As we look at the opening of the **"seventh seal,"** we see that the **"seal"** is the Spirit and the One who opens it is Christ. The period of time we are now studying is from A.D. 1930 through to the Second Coming of Christ. As we look at this text, the first question that looms to mind is, "Why did He have to open the **'seventh seal'**?" In the sixth seal there was a great earthquake. God finally moved His people into a position to where He could shake things up. The sixth-seal brethren had a glorious message. It swept the globe. Why, with all the glory and majesty of the sixth seal, did Jesus have to open the **"seventh seal"**? The answer is found in our text. **"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven . . ."** Why did Christ have to open the **"seventh seal"**? Why was the sixth seal not final in itself? Because a condition had taken hold to where **"there was silence in heaven."** This is not speaking of God's Heaven, for there has never been **"silence"** in God's Heaven. If you make it to Heaven, you will find people shouting, leaping, praising, and glorifying God. This **"silence"** is not referring to God's Heaven. There was never **"silence"** there, and there never will be **"silence"** there.

A Third Heaven

There are three heavens in the Word of God. Let us go back and look at them. The very first heaven mentioned in God's Word is found in Genesis 1:1, which reads, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." To find out what this heaven is, drop down a few verses to Genesis 1:7-8: "And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven." The first heaven mentioned in God's Word is the firmamental heaven, where the moon, stars, and sun are hung. Another heaven is mentioned in Ecclesiastes 5:2. It says, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven . . ." Solomon was not talking about the firmamental heaven here, because God is not in the firmamental heaven. This verse is speaking about the celestial Heaven, the place where God dwells. It is in the eternal realm.

The Bible mentions a third heaven in 2 Corinthians 12:2, saying, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven." Paul talked about a third heaven, a place that is so glorious, at times you cannot tell if you are in the body or out of the body. What is this third heaven? Ephesians 2:6 tells us it is an ecclesiastical heaven, an exalted position in Christ Jesus. The Greek translation, according to The Emphatic Diaglott, says, "and raised us up together, and seated us together in the HEAVENLIES, by Christ Jesus." That is right in the midst of the church. We are lifted up above the realms of this old time world. It is an ecclesiastical heaven where one receives "visions and revelations of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 12:1).

When John spoke of a **"silence in heaven,"** it was something that transpired in this ecclesiastical heaven. Now, the **"seventh seal"** comes right after the sixth seal, and the message of these sixth-seal brethren was, "Come out of her,

my people" (Revelation 18:4). God's people began coming out of earthly organizations, leaping and shouting back home to Mount Zion, the true church. They had a glorious message; they held truth in an exalted position. The people who embraced that truth were moved from the earthen condition they had been in (Protestantism) to an exalted position in truth.

Soon following all this glory and power and manifestation of the glory of God, something happened. At one time you could go to the campground at Anderson, Indiana, and visit a trophy room. There you could see the wheelchairs and crutches that people no longer needed since God had healed them. Cancers that had fallen off peoples' faces were in bottles of formaldehyde. They once had a whole room filled with trophies of what the power of God could do when people held truth in the exalted position that it ought to be held in.

Today Anderson does not have a trophy room. Today they have a college. The emphasis is on higher education, and men who do not believe God's Word are teaching those who are supposed to become ministers of the Gospel. Yet, the teachers do not subscribe to, adhere to, or teach the truths held by the original sixth-seal brethren. Something has happened. A "**silence**" moved right into this heavenly position.

Silence on Strong Points of Truth

As we look at **Revelation 8:1**, let us break it down. The truth portrayed here transpired in that ecclesiastical heaven, or in other words, in heavenly places, in an exalted religious position. This should be a caution to us today. If you are hearing the truth today, that does not guarantee that fifty years from now people attending the same congregation you now attend will be hearing the truth. How long truth continues in any locality or in any life is totally based on what you and I do with this truth. Just as soon as God sees we will not take it, He will move on down the road to someone else and leave us alone. It is up to us as to whether we keep truth or have "**silence**." The sixth-seal brethren once had truth. Some of these brethren had more power with God than some of us have seen in our lifetime. That ought to cause us to be fearful and cautious.

What produced this "**silence**"? What was occurring? Toward the end of the sixth-seal period of time, God had so honored those brethren and the message had been such a success that they had amassed a large number of people. I have seen pictures of the Anderson camp meeting where the audiences numbered in the thousands. God had so blessed them and honored their message that they had become very successful. They had amassed many people, a good amount of finances and facilities, and favor with people. Because of this success, to keep favor with the people, they began to "**silence**" on some of the more offensive points of the message.

The message on separation was not as clear and distinct and pointed as it once was. When those brethren came out with the sixth-seal message, they had a clear-cut message of separation—God's people were to be separate and distinct from all other religious bodies and all other systems. They were to come out and be separate. Yet, when one had a little money behind him, a few people in the pews, and gained a little social standing, that became an offensive message. So a spirit began to work to cause them to ease up, take some of the sharpness off, and cut a corner here or there. However, when one cuts a corner, he is cutting off the power. We need to stand for the truth whether anyone likes it or dislikes it, for that does not change truth one iota. If you are a saint, you will love it just the way it is.

The sixth-seal message on separation from Babylon started to become blurred. Second Corinthians 6:17 says, "Wherefore come out from among them [all the previous systems of religion that you were raised in, exposed to, and trained by, you are to leave them behind], and be ye separate . . ." That means come out, stay out, leave it alone, and do not touch it. Because if you do so, you are an abomination to God. Truth still draws some pretty fine lines, and if you step over them, you are wrong.

If God has called you out, He does not want you going back. It is no better than when you left. As a matter of fact, it is probably worse. You do not need to go back to their meetings, revivals, camp meetings, services, or be reading their literature and buying their tapes. The real message on separation is still sharp and straight. Look again at 2 Corinthians 6:17. It reads, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . [how separate?] touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." God was saying, "If you meet these conditions, I will receive you. But if you do not meet these conditions, then do not expect Me to receive you." If you are not living according to the truth, do not be surprised if you do not get an answer to your prayers.

The sixth-seal brethren preached these truths plain, straight, and strong. But something began to work, and they eased up on them. There is always that temptation. No one, not even the most stalwart preacher, likes to stir people and have to deal with them after he is finished preaching. Yet, truth will not upset the saints. Dear one, if there is something about truth that upsets you, maybe you are an "ain't" instead of a saint.

Unfaithful to the Old Paths

Revelation 18:4 reads, "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, [Some of God's people are down in Babylon, but they are not going to stay saved if they do not get out of there. Why? Read on.] that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Anyone who stays in a system that is contrary to God's Word can only stay a short time until he or she becomes just like that system. Why? Because you are what you eat. If you eat something that is wrong, that is poison; you are going to end up wrong.

Near the end of the sixth-seal period, the message on separation was not as clear, as distinct, and as pointed as it once was. The clear denunciation of Babylon was not as uncompromising as it had once been. When these brethren first came out, look at their message: "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Revelation 18:2). That is a sharp denunciation of Babylon! When they came out preaching it strong and pointed, without any compromise, denouncing Babylon for what she was, people could see the truth. Even though they were ignorant and unlearned men, when they put out the truth unvarnished, without painting it up or doctoring it up, they circled the globe with the truth.

A Cry for Societal Acceptability

Then something began to happen. First, as the older brethren died off, the younger brethren did not remain true to the old paths. As the older brethren pass on, the younger brethren have a weighty responsibility to stand faithful and true to the old paths. There is always a tendency, if God does not help, for second and third generation saints to not realize the preciousness of this truth. Those who are first generation, those who came out of Babylon, know what Babylon is. Babylon does not hold any attraction for them. However, those who have been raised in the truth, and have not heard anything but truth, many times do not truly have the full understanding and appreciation of what God has given to us. Therefore, if younger ministers are not very careful, they will be susceptible to failing to hold the standard as high as it has been held before. Why? Because they do not see the necessity of it.

As the older brethren died off and younger brethren stepped into the ranks, a cry began for an educated clergy and for societal acceptability. D. S. Warner, H. M. Riggle, W. A. Wilson, and others—men whom God called and used in a mighty way—were farmers, grocery store clerks, and all kinds of common men. Today those "common men," no matter how anointed and powerful they might have been, would not be allowed to preach in some supposed Church of God pulpits. Why? Because now, the minister has to be educated. He must go to college and get a degree. Well, that would leave out Jesus, Peter, and John, because they were "unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts 4:13). Yet, all those educated ministers together could not accomplish what Peter and John did. The power is not in education; it is in inspiration.

A cry started: "We have a lot of people now. The eyes of the world are on us. Don't you think we ought to polish this thing up a little bit? We need an educated clergy. We should have a school so they can be taught." The Holy Ghost is the Teacher, and you are not going to get Him on any payroll. The very things in the ranks of Protestantism they once cried out against, they became infected with themselves. They began to do the very things that they had preached against.

What was one of the things they did in Protestantism? Revelation 11:10 says, "And they that dwell upon the earth [speaking of sectarian religion, this earthen Protestant beast that came up out of the earth when Protestantism had full sway] shall rejoice over them [the two witnesses—the Word and the Spirit—laid dead in the streets; Protestantism would not allow them to operate in sectarianism, and they still will not allow them to work today], and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another."

What does it mean "shall send gifts one to another?" For example, to someone who looks presentable, dresses nicely, and speaks well, people say, "You would make a good preacher." They give gifts one to another. They go through school, pass the test, and answer the questions correctly, so the church says, "We will ordain you and make you a preacher." They are giving gifts one to another. Nevertheless, Christ is the Only one who is to give the gifts. If you want a gift, do not go and find a Bible college; you need to get down on your knees and get hold of the Holy Ghost. If He sees you are a fit candidate, He will give you the gift.

You may ask, "How can you be sure of that?" Go to Ephesians 4:8. It says, "Wherefore he saith, When he [verse 7 tells us 'he' is Christ] ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." What did He give the gifts for? To fill the offices of the church. Ephesians 4:11 reads, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Who gave them? Christ gave them, not a college or a seminary, but Christ. When the Anderson Movement started its downward move, they started giving gifts one to another. To pacify the old brethren, such as F. G. Smith and H. M. Riggle, they made them Doctors of Divinity. They became Dr. Smith and Dr. Riggle. I am not speaking against those older brethren. I am just describing what occurred to produce this "**silence in heaven.**" They were giving gifts one to another. That was the spirit that worked in Protestantism. Just as Protestantism was an image to the beast, the Anderson Movement turned around and built an image to Protestantism. Protestantism gave gifts; Anderson gave gifts. Protestantism had colleges; Anderson had colleges. Protestantism had a headquarters; Anderson had a headquarters. They were no longer like the original brethren who came out with this truth.

Glory Given to the System Instead of to God

Acts 4:13 says, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, [They were not theologians. They did not have Doctor of Divinity degrees hanging after their names, but they were bold.] they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." What is necessary is that one has been with Jesus.

So we see that things began to get out of divine order. This is something we have to be careful of. When we preach against or take a strong stand against anything, we will be tempted in that very area. It has often been said: "A chain always breaks at its weakest link. You will always be tempted in your weakest area." No, that is not true! You are expecting to be tempted in your weakest area, but where the devil hits you is where you are not looking, where you think you are strong. The things you testify about and stand for strongly is right where the enemy wants to take you down. Why? If he can get you to let down on these points, he proves God to be a liar.

The Anderson Movement was no longer comprised of ignorant and unlearned men who gave God the glory, but rather they placed their honor and allegiance to that system. Go with me to Revelation, Chapter 16. Here are the seven vial angels. All seven of them were poured out in the evening time—the sixth and seventh seals. The first three were poured out in the sixth seal. Let us look at the fourth seal, which is poured out in the very day and time in which we are living. Revelation 16:8 states, "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun." Earlier we found that the "woman clothed with the sun" (Revelation 12:1) is a picture of the morning-time church. Judgment being poured out is what this vial represents. (Read Revelation 15:1 and Revelation 16:1.) This vial was filled up with judgments of God. The fourth angel, during this seventh-seal period of time, poured out his judgment on the *sun*, on that which had been the New Testament church, the Anderson Movement of the Church of God. Again, I am not speaking of them as a people, but I am dealing with the system.

Revelation 16:8-9 tells us: "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory." What happened? When education, college, and the school took precedence, they no longer gave God the glory. Their pledge, their allegiance, and their glory went to that system. If you would try to put truth on them, all that would happen is they would become scorched and burned up. They still will not repent to give God the glory. They will just get hot (angry) at you.

Silence in Heaven

As the message began to be compromised and diluted to become more socially acceptable and less offensive to sectarian brethren, the shouts and praises to God left the camp. A **"silence in heaven"** set in. If you quiet any part of the message, a condition of silence will move in. To keep the praise of God, the shouts of God, and the presence of God in the camp, you must sound forth the unvarnished, plain, unadulterated truth of God's Word. Whether you want to believe it or not, we are still suffering from the effects of this **"silence"** today. Some of the older brethren would ride the old buckboard wagons, and before they could even see the camp grounds, they could hear the saints shouting. Church, we have lost something. Many are too proper to shout. It goes right back to social acceptability. One may say, "What will everyone think if I shout?" What does it matter what anyone thinks? If God tells you to shout, you had better get to shouting. If you do not do so, you are quenching the Spirit. Church, collectively we have not recovered all that we should have. This **"silence"** is still affecting us.

When the sixth-seal message was first heralded, there was some praise and shouts and songs. Isaiah 35:10 says, "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." That is the way God's people came to Zion. They did not come to Zion crying: "I have to leave my family. I was raised up in this organization; I put my money into it for years; and I hate to leave it." No! When they saw the truth, they came leaping and shouting, with singing and praises. They were so glad for truth that they forgot everything and everybody.

I want you to see what was there before the **"silence"** set in. Isaiah 51:11 reads, "Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; [One of the ways those brethren evangelized many communities was to get on an old buckboard wagon and, as they headed into town, start singing. By the time they got to the other end of town, they had drawn a crowd, and one of the brethren would stand upon the wagon and start preaching. There had to be something to attract them.] and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: [Why do they have everlasting joy? Revelation 14:6 speaks of the 'everlasting gospel,' and since the Gospel is an everlasting Gospel, the joy is an everlasting joy. It lasts as long as the Gospel lasts.] they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

What is the "sorrow and mourning"? It is those people in the fifth seal who were under the altar, mourning the conditions, crying out, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Revelation 6:10). In other words, "How long before You avenge or turn judgment loose on these systems of men?" Once the judgment was turned loose and they could get loose from the systems of men and come back to Zion, they no longer had to mourn over conditions.

The Glory Has Departed

When the saints first heard this evening-time message, they came leaping and shouting home to Zion. Back in the days of the judges, when the presence of God was in the camp, there was great shouting. First Samuel 4:5-6 says: "And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that all the earth rang again. [Shouting will do something. When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they knew what it meant.] . . . they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp." They knew that shouting meant that the presence of God was there.

Just as with the sixth-seal brethren, something happened in the camp of Israel. Disobedience had been working, and because of that, the ark of God was taken; the presence of God was no longer in their midst. All of a sudden, the shouting was silenced. They had not honored God's Word, and a great slaughter took place. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain, and the ark of God was taken. When the runner came back to tell Eli about it, he fell off the porch backwards, broke his neck, and died. Phinehas' wife was with child and went into labor.

First Samuel 4:21-22 states: "And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken." What is the lesson? When disobedience enters into the camp of God's people, the presence of God leaves, the shouting is silenced, and the place becomes "Ichabod." Many supposed churches today that have the name Church of God ought to replace it with "Ichabod," for God is not there. The glory has departed.

The Ministry Began to Fight Against Truth

Some of the ministry who led people *out* of Babylon turned and *warred against* the same message and the same people they had led out. We do not have to go back too far to see this spirit working. Some of the same people who once helped with truth, shed light on our pathway, and stood for truth have had a spirit change. They now work against the very things they once taught. That is exactly what produced this "**silence**." It is the antitype of the ram and the he goat. They fit right between the sixth and seventh seal.

What is the lesson of the ram and the he goat? Let us read it in Daniel 8:5: "And I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, [West is the opposite of the source of light. This was a picture of darkness coming, something that was against light.] and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes." Now, there is a literal fulfillment of this prophecy. Daniel 8:20-21 tells us that "the ram [is] . . . Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia." That is the literal rendering of this text, but there is also a spiritual type here.

We read in Daniel 8:6, "And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power." The Medo-Persian Empire, portrayed by the beast in Daniel, Chapter 7, was before the Grecian Empire. So when we are talking about this "he goat," or the Grecians, we are talking about something that succeeded, or was after, Medo-Persia. Now that is the literal. But I want you to catch the lesson. When we see the he goat coming against the ram, the he goat was something that came up after the ram.

The ram represents something that was acceptable to God. In Genesis, Chapter 22, Abraham took Isaac up to offer him as a sacrifice. He drew back the knife and would have killed him (the Hebrew letter says he slew him in his heart and God raised him in a figure), but the angel told Abraham not to do it. Abraham did not slay Isaac. What did he find as an acceptable sacrifice? A ram caught in the thicket. This ram portrays the people of God, people who were acceptable to God, a people who embraced the sixth-seal message. After these people had embraced the sixth-seal truths (Church of God truths) that had been taught to them and become acceptable to God, the same ministry who had preached these truths turned around and fought against them.

Let us read Daniel 8:7. It states, "And I saw him come close unto the ram [the people], and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns [this ram, the people of God, had two horns—the Word and the Spirit]: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand." This sixth-seal ministry took the people from a position of having two horns, the Word and the Spirit, and brought them down to the ground, back to an earthen level with an earthen system.

You can read about this he goat in Daniel 8:10, which says, "And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground . . ." The stars are the ministry. These stars had fallen from their heavenly place. Christ said the stars were in His hand (Revelation 1:16 and Revelation 1:20), but here they are being cast down to the ground, cast from their exalted position in Christ down to an earthen level. What caused that? The "he goat." It is a picture of a fallen ministry, and it ties right in with Revelation, Chapter 12, where the tail of the dragon, the spirit of unbelief, took hold. The ministry in this time period began to feel that some of the old truths were unnecessary. They began to think it was unnecessary to preach on the separation of the church and to hold the standard as high as it once was. That spirit of unbelief caused them to fall from their lofty position down to the ground.

Reading on in Daniel 8:11, we find, "Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down." What had once been the temple of God—the Church of God—a people who held to the precious truths was cast down and became just as every other religious system. If you were to go to one of their camp meetings (and I do not recommend it), you would be unable to tell the difference between that and a sectarian meeting. Their sanctuary has been cast down. They are no longer in an exalted position. They no longer hold to these truths.

To back up on light breaks fellowship. First John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship . . ." If you do not walk in the light or truth, your fellowship is broken. Fellowship cannot be forced. Our fellowship is not with people. My fellowship is not with you, and your fellowship is not with me. First John 1:3 says that "our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." If I am clear with God and walking in everything

Jesus has shown me, my fellowship is hooked into Him in Heaven. If you are in the same condition, then your fellowship is hooked into Him in Heaven. Thus, our fellowship meets in Heaven. Fellowship is divine.

When fellowship is broken, by not walking in the light, it brings darkness. John 12:35 tells us, "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." When we are not walking in light, or truth, and we are in darkness, it is sin. This is why "**silence**" came in on the camp. Sin had come in. If you do not take hold of light, understanding, and knowledge when they come, sin comes. James 4:17 reads, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." These people knew truth. We know they knew truth because they preached it so that others could know and stand for it. But then they failed to keep pace with it because of societal pressures, ease of living, finance, retirement programs, and other things. There were people who saw the truth of this seventh-seal message, and they knew that they should have left the Anderson Movement, but they said, "If I leave, I will lose my pension." So they stayed and lost their souls.

This "**silence**" we are studying about (**Revelation 8:1**) was produced by sin. To see what this "**silence**" is, go to Jeremiah 8:14. It says, "Why do we sit still? [If you truly have the glory of God ringing the joy bells in your soul, you will find it hard to sit still. You will want to be on your feet; you will want to shout; you will want to praise God; you will want to run the aisles. You will want to do something. Not everyone expresses it the same way, but everyone expresses it. If it is there, it will come out. Some people sit and cry, others laugh, and some shout or run the aisles. However, when sin enters in, suddenly people sit still.] assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there [why?] for the LORD our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink [why?], because we have sinned against the LORD." This was why there was "**silence in heaven.**" People had silenced on the message and on the truth. They backed up on what they knew, for various reasons, and it was sin because they knew better. This is what brought "**silence.**" Someone may say, "Well, I am not going to say anything; that way I will not get in trouble." You might lose your soul by keeping quiet. If God tells you to say something or tell the truth and you do not do it, you can lose your soul by being silent. If He tells you to testify and you do not, you can lose your soul. Thank God, He is faithful. He will not just write you off the first time you fail to obey, but if you persist, it will not be long until you will be on the outside looking in. You can only quench the Spirit for so long before He becomes grieved and leaves you. That is what many of the sixth-seal brethren did.

"The Space of Half an Hour"

Revelation 8:1 continues by telling us that "**there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.**" Why is it denoted in this manner? What is the significance of "**the space of half an hour**"? Revelation, Chapter 18, tells us that God prophetically gave one hour for judgment to be poured out on Babylon. We read in Revelation 18:10, "Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come." Here God broke down in prophetic language all the judgment on Babylon to one hour. "**Half**" of that hour, or half of that judgment, was to be poured out in the sixth seal. The other half hour, or the other half of that judgment, was to be poured out in the seventh seal, the day and time in which we live. Revelation 18:6 verifies that, saying, "Reward her [Babylon] even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double." God wants a double cup put on Babylon. How? The first cup in the sixth seal and the second cup in the seventh seal. That is how He wants judgment put on her. Those sixth-seal brethren poured out truth on Babylon. They gave her a cup. But today, in the day and time in which we live, we are to give her a double cup, or give her another cup.

By backing up on the message, the sixth-seal brothers undid the very work that God sent them to do. Church, we cannot allow any spirit to cause us to hush up on any part of the message. If we compromise or disobey, we will lose the presence of God, "**silence**" will set in, and we will end up with a solemn assembly that God hates. All the work we have done, no matter how many years we have worked at it, will be undone. You may have lived for God for thirty years, lived clean and straight, built an influence, a reputation, and caused people in your community to have confidence in you, but one wrong step can undo thirty years of righteous living.

For fifty years, or for half an hour, they preached a message of come out, be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. Then they built again the things they once destroyed. The Apostle Paul spoke of that in Galatians 2:18, saying,

"For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." They had preached being separate, but today the Anderson Movement is cooperating with the World Council of Churches. They have built again the things they once destroyed. They transgressed, and by so doing, they have undone the message they preached. They have even made it harder for us to preach it, because people confuse us with them.

Again, if we disobey or compromise, we will lose the presence of God. **"Silence"** will set in, and our assemblies will become solemn. Isaiah 1:13 says, "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting." God hates solemn meetings. He likes the praise and shouts. Heaven will be filled with shouts and praises for all eternity. Matthew 7:22 states, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [What will Jesus say?] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me . . ." What did Jesus mean by that? They could not have cast out devils if they did not know Christ, for Jesus said in Matthew 12:26, "And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?" Why did Jesus say to those who cast out devils, "I never knew you"? When you back up on truth and apostatize but go right on with a profession of religion, God forgets all the good you have done. That is exactly what happened to those sixth-seal brethren.

Ezekiel 18:24 tells us, "But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die." God forgets it. It is a fearful thing to back up on truth! When these events transpired, the Lord **"opened the seventh seal."** You can read of how these events were working. In a 1913 camp meeting, H. M. Riggle warned the brethren that some of these things were coming. By 1930 it had fully developed. God had to set His hand and open the **"seventh seal."**

A Second Remnant

In the sixth seal God gathered a remnant out of sectarianism, but in the **"seventh seal"** He set His hand a second time. Now God is gathering a second remnant, a remnant of the remnant. That is why we do not have great, swelling ranks. Isaiah 11:11 says, "And it shall come to pass in that day [a prophetic expression of this day], that the LORD shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people . . ." God has set His hand a second time and is calling a people, not only out of Babylon but also out of the very system that He once used to call people to from out of Babylon.

What is the message of the seventh seal age? Look at **Revelation 8:2**. We who are in this seventh seal have a very unique position in human history. There are no other people who have occupied the position nor had the tremendous responsibility that we have today. Look at our text: **"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets."** **Revelation 8:1** begins series number three, which is the trumpet series, the sounding of the **"seven trumpets."** As you read down through this chapter, you will realize that these **"seven trumpets"** did not all sound in the **"seventh seal."** But **Revelation 8:2** says, **"And I saw,"** teaching us that the seventh-seal period of time is the time that God has given for you and me to be able to see, as no other people in human history have ever seen, the entirety of the message. We can also understand what took place all the way down through these seven periods that make up the Gospel Day. The seventh-seal period is unique. It is the only period that will have complete understanding.

In this seventh-seal period of time, we see the truths of all the previous periods of time, as well as the truths for our day. What a glorious time in which to live! If you read F. G. Smith's book on the Revelation and other writings, you will find that they understood this. In the preface of his books, you will read: "We understand that we do not have all of the truth yet. We understand that, if time stands, God will unfold greater understanding and make clearer the mysteries." We now live in that time, when Revelation 10:7 says, "the mystery of God should be finished." God has given complete understanding today concerning the message. No other time period could use a chart to show the whole Gospel Day. They did not even have charts like ours. They only saw it as four major epics: morning, dark night, cloudy day, and evening time. But in this fullness of time, we see a complete picture. We have the light of all the previous periods of time, as well as the truths of our day.

Full and Complete Understanding

Speaking in prophetic language, Isaiah 30:26 says, "Moreover the light of the moon [the Old Testament] shall be as the light of the sun [the New Testament], and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." We are the only people in human history who have the light of seven days. Someone may say, "Don't you wish you could have walked the shores of Galilee when Jesus walked them?" No! There is no period that has been any more glorious or has had any more of a revelation of truth than the day and time in which we are living. We are living in the fullness of time. We have understanding, as **Revelation 8:2** says, of "**seven angels** [and the] . . . **seven trumpets.**" "**Seven**" in the Scriptures is a number of completion. We are down to that complete period of time, when understanding is being completed and fulfilled.

Revelation 10:7 reads, "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel [the day and time in which we are living], when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." We are living in that time when God is finishing the mystery and things are becoming clear. God has given us full and complete understanding. This does not mean that if time goes on, there will not be more understanding, for there will. The Bible is the Living Word. But we are in the fullness of time. The next major scene after this is not a seal being opened, but it is eternity. God is revealing truths today that have never before been revealed.

Romans 16:25-26 tells us: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." Things that have been hid since the world began, God is now making manifest. How does He make His Word manifest? Paul wrote in Titus 1:3, "But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching . . ." Things are being preached today that have never been preached in human history. If time stands, there will be even more. We can see things as they really are. That is part of this time of fulfillment spoken of in Revelation. In Matthew, Chapter 13, there are seven parables that correspond with the seven periods of this Gospel Day. The seventh and last parable, the parable of the net, deals with our day, the seventh-seal period we are studying about.

Matthew 13:47-48 says: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full [or complete], they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away." What is the lesson? The net is the Gospel. We are living in a time when the Gospel is so plain; we are not just working and fishing blindly. We are getting it right up into the light, where God's Word is separating the good and the bad. You may think you really have a load on as long as that net is under the water. But you get it up in the light and you might find you have all kinds of rubbish. We are living in a time when revelation is coming forth, a time when we can see things as they truly are. We have the light and truth of all the previous eras, plus the beauties of the truth of our day.

Glories of the Seventh Seal

What are a few of the glories of the "**seventh seal**"? They are each a study in themselves. In Revelation 15:5 John talked about "the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened." The temple is the church, and God is bringing the church out into a clear position, where people can see her plainly. What is another beauty of our day? Speaking of the sixth vial, which is in this seventh seal, Revelation 16:13 says, "And I saw three unclean spirits . . ." You may ask, "Is it a beauty to see foul, devilish spirits?" It is a beautiful thing to have a revelation and a clear understanding of what is working, so you do not have to give in to it. We have a view of spirits working: what these spirits are, how they are working, and what they work through. We can see things in a clear manner and see things for what they are. In this day when false spirits are so thick, it is a real blessing to be able to have a revelation and have some discernment to understand what they are.

Revelation 16:18, dealing with the seventh vial, talks about "a great earthquake . . . so mighty an earthquake, and so great." It tells us that it was "such as was not since men were upon the earth." God is shaking and rearranging, trying to get men's attention. He does it with truth. In Revelation, Chapter 19, there are two great gatherings: those who gather

to eat the "true sayings of God" (Revelation 19:9) at the marriage supper of the Lamb and those who come to eat the "flesh of the kings, . . . captains, and . . . mighty men" (Revelation 19:18). In Revelation 20:9 we see the defeat of falsity and a clear vision of truth. It says, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." In our day and time, God is loosing the fires of His Word (Jeremiah 23:29). Truth is triumphing over error. Revelation 22:4 states, "And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads." He was not speaking of the eternal realm but of a position we can hold in the church, where we can see truth clearly.

Keep in Step With the Truth

Prophetically, there are yet many things on the horizon. I, personally, do not feel that we have yet seen the real depth of this earthquake. I do not feel the temple has yet been opened as plainly as God would like for it to be opened. The two gatherings are not yet complete. The defeat of falsity and the fire of God's Word being loosed in such a clear manner is something that yet looms on the horizon. This is why it is vital that we do not quiet down on the message. If we are ever going to be able to enjoy what God has in store for us in His Word, we have got to keep the message coming forth, plain and clear. We must continue to do what the Apostle Paul said in Galatians 5:1: "Stand fast." For you and I to be recipients and enjoy this truth, we have to do our part, fill our role, and shoulder our responsibility. How are we to do that? Stand fast! Do not quiet up on the message. Isaiah 58:1 says to "Cry aloud, spare not." We cannot spare things that God's Word does not spare.

This is a glorious time in which to labor. Let us put our hands to the plow and not look back. There are some people who cannot do anything for the present, because their minds are always in the past. What did Jesus say about that? Luke 9:62 reads, "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." We are going to have to forget what is behind us. Quit looking back! Do not look back to the "good old days." If you are truly honest, they were not so good after all. The wise man said in Ecclesiastes 7:10, "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire *wisely* concerning this." Let us keep our eyes on what is before us. Let us go straight forward.

When Ezekiel saw those four living creatures, a picture of the redeemed of all ages, every one of their feet went straight forward (Ezekiel 1:9). Ezekiel 1:12 tells us, "Wither the spirit was to go, they went." If we will do that, it will keep our feet straight too. Saint of God, you have every reason to be encouraged. We have the clearest message of any people in human history. Daniel S. Warner wrote the song entitled *Brighter Days Are Sweetly Dawning*. He described it well in verse 1: "*Brighter days are sweetly dawning, O the glory looms in sight! For the cloudy day is waning, And the evening shall be light.*"

May God help us, as seventh-seal Church of God people, to lay hold to these precious truths that God has entrusted to us. For if we miss the mark, there are no more seals. There are no more opportunities. This is the time that God has given us. The next scene is eternity. That makes you and me tremendously responsible. May God help us, as the Apostle Paul said, to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1). The seventh-seal message is a glorious message. It is up to us to put it on, live it out, and carry it forth. God's Word will still not come back to Him void, but "it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11). Press on, my brother, sister!