

The Book Sealed with Seven Seals, IV

The 5th Seal

1. The opening of the first 4 seals occurs while Jesus is ministering in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, shedding the benefits and blessings of the new covenant partially, whereas the opening of the 5th seal takes place after Jesus moves to the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, to begin a work of investigative judgment and cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary in an effort to make a full and complete application of the new covenant blessings;
2. That the opening of 5th seal coincides with the change of ministration of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary, can be deduced from the text of the 5th seal:
 - a. **Rev 6:10:** *“How long, O Lord, holy and true, shall thou not **judge** and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”*—the 5th seal opens with an appeal and a call to begin a work of (investigative) judgment on the persecutors of God’s people; according to Daniel’s timeline of events in Daniel 7, this work of judgment begins after the little horn power comes and leaves the stage of action; therefore, the beginning of the investigative judgment must be located after 1798;
 - i. The listing of the chronological order of events found in **Daniel 7** is reflected in the timeline of the opening of the seals, and shows that the beginning of the work of investigative judgment immediately follows after the rise and fall of the Papal power
 1. **Lion**—Babylon
 2. **Bear**-Medo-Persia
 3. **Leopard**-Greece
 4. **Non-descript beast**-pagan Rome (1st and 2nd seals)
 5. **Little horn**-papal Rome (3rd and 4th seals)
 6. **The Ancient of days**—investigative judgment (5th seal)
 7. **The Son of man given dominion and glory and a kingdom**—second coming of Jesus (6th and 7th seals)
 - b. **Rev 6:11:** *“and **white robes** were given unto every one of them”*—the white robe of Christ’s perfect character is the benefit of the cleansing of the sanctuary, a work that was prophesied to begin at the end of the 2,300 years prophecy of **Dan 8:14**
3. The question naturally is, why is there no clearer indication in the text about the change of ministration at the opening of the 5th seal?
 - a. The ministration of Christ in the second apartment was foretold in Dan 8:14 and belong to the time of the end; as such it was sealed up until the time of the end (**Dan 8:14, 26; Dan 12:4, 9; AA 585**)

- b. Paul would not speak about the work of Jesus in the second apartment of the sanctuary particularly when he wrote the book of Hebrews in 65-66 AD, because it was still sealed in his time (**Heb 9:5**)
- c. When referencing the same events covered by the opening of the 7 seals in **Matthew 24**, Jesus makes no reference at all to His closing work of ministration in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary
 - i. The 1st seal in Matthew 24—the gospel preached (**Matt 24:14**)
 - ii. The 2nd seal in Matthew 24—Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted. . .(**Matt 24:9, 15-20**)
 - iii. The 3rd seal in Matthew 24—many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many; for there shall arise false Christs and false prophets. . .(**Matt 24:11, 24**)
 - iv. The 4th seal in Matthew 24—for there shall be great tribulation such as there was since the beginning of the world. . .(**Matt 24:21-22, DA 630**)

From the destruction of Jerusalem, Christ passed on rapidly to the greater event, the last link in the chain of this earth's history,—the coming of the Son of God in majesty and glory. Between these two events, there lay open to Christ's view long centuries of darkness, centuries for His church marked with blood and tears and agony. Upon these scenes His disciples could not then endure to look, and Jesus passed them by with a brief mention. "Then shall be great tribulation," He said, "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." **For more than a thousand years such persecution as the world had never before known was to come upon Christ's followers. Millions upon millions of His faithful witnesses were to be slain. Had not God's hand been stretched out to preserve His people, all would have perished.** "But for the elect's sake," He said, "those days shall be shortened." **DA 630.**

- v. The 5th seal in Matthew 24—NO REFERENCE
- vi. The 6th Seal in Matthew 24—immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light. . .(**Matt 24:29**)
- vii. The 7th seal in Matthew 24—Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in the heaven. . .(**Matt 24:30-31**)

Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man's hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. **EW 15.**

The 6th Seal

- 4. The 6th seal opens with signs in the heavens heralding the imminent return of Jesus and reaches until the time of the outpouring of the 7 last plagues---the wrath of God and of the Lamb (**Rev 15:1, 7; Rev 19:15**)

5. Considering the greatness of the wrath of God and of the Lamb, the question is posed when the 6th seal is opened: “Who shall be able to stand” when that day comes?
6. **Revelation 7** is inserted to disclose two groups of people who will be able to stand and endure the horrors of the outpouring of the 7 last plagues during the great time of trouble; in other words when the curses of the covenant are applied in full strength without mercy; they are the 144,000 and the great multitude;
 - a. **Two groups of people are mentioned:**
 - i. **144,000**—described as taken out of the 12 tribes of Israel and having the seal of God on their foreheads
 - ii. **The great multitude**—described as without number from nations and kindreds and people and tongues, clothed white robes and palm branches in their hands
7. In **Rev 7:13-14**, the question is asked, “Who are these?” These (144,000 and the great multitude) are the ones who come out of the great tribulation;
 - a. **Rev 7:14-17** and **Rev 15:3** applied to the 144000 (**GC 648-649**)

Upon the crystal sea before the throne, that sea of glass as it were mingled with fire,—so resplendent is it with the glory of God,—are gathered the company that have “gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.” With the Lamb upon Mount Zion, “having the harps of God,” they stand, the hundred and forty and four thousand that were redeemed from among men; and there is heard, as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of a great thunder, “the voice of harpers harping with their harps.” And they sing “a new song” before the throne, a song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb—a song of deliverance. None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience—an experience such as no other company have ever had. “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.” These, having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as “the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.” Revelation 15:2, 3; 14:1-5. **“These are they which came out of great tribulation;” they have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob’s trouble; they have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God’s judgments. But they have been delivered, for they have “washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” GC 648-649.**

Rev 7:14-17 applied to the Great Multitude (**ST May 2, 1895**, par 6)

The garden of the promises of God has been presented before us, and by the precious promises of God we are to lay hold on faith, hope, and love. Through these graces the church may shine forth in the righteousness of Christ. Living faith grasps the hand of divine power, and faith is an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil. John says, “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” **He describes the great multitude** who shall stand before God as overcomers, and says, “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." The palms signify that they have gained the victory, and the white robes that they have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Thank God that a fountain has been opened to wash our robes of character, and make them as white as snow. And they "cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 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 worshiped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen. 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 unto 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. 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. 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." **ST May 2, 1895**, par. 6

- b. **Rev 7:14-17** and the song of Moses and the Lamb applied to the great multitude (**AA 602:3**)
- c. **Rev 15:3** applied to the great multitude (**CC 93**)

8. Why two groups? And why does John make the distinction? The distinction between these two groups is not along ethnic lines, but along differences in experience;
- a. **The 144,000**--are spiritual Israelites who are distinguished from the rest of the redeemed by their superior knowledge and understanding of the truth and also by their peculiar experience (**Rom 3:1; Rom 9:4-5; John 4:22**); their Sabbathkeeping (**Ezek 20:20**), which is the sign between them and God and distinguishes them from the rest of the world;

I saw that the holy Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers; and that the Sabbath is the great question to unite the hearts of God's dear, waiting saints. **EW 33.**

- b. **The great multitude**--are those do not have as much knowledge of the truth as the 144,000 and have been formerly deceived by spiritual Babylon into observing the false day of worship; these come out of Babylon when the third angel's message is given with a loud voice and endure persecution with the 144,000;

I saw that God had children who do not see and keep the Sabbath. They have not rejected the light upon it. And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully. This enraged the churches and nominal Adventists, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth. And at this time God's chosen all saw clearly that we had the truth, and they came out and endured the persecution with us. I saw the sword, famine, pestilence, and

great confusion in the land. The wicked thought that we had brought the judgments upon them, and they rose up and took counsel to rid the earth of us, thinking that then the evil would be stayed. **EW 33**

The 7th Seal

9. **Silence in heaven for half an hour**—God “speaks the day and the hour and Jesus’ coming,” also “delivers the everlasting covenant” and “pronounces the everlasting blessing” on those who have gotten the victory over the beast and his image (**EW 34**);
- a. The “**silence**”—is explained in **EW 15** as the short indefinite time when Jesus as He approaches the earth, is examining the garments of the saints to see if they have been kept them pure and spotless during the time when the plagues are falling and there is no intercession in heaven; it is the silence of suspenseful expectation;
 - b. “**half an hour**”—not to be taken literally (30 literal minutes) or prophetically (7 days), but figuratively;
 - i. **Rev 14:7**—the “hour” of judgment that is come is not literal or prophetic but an indefinite period of time;
 - ii. **Rev 17:12**—the kings receive power “one hour” with the beast cannot refer to either literal or prophetic time;
 - iii. **Rev 18:10, 17, 19**—the time frame here for the fall of Babylon cannot be interpreted literally or symbolically to make sense
 - iv. Consider also what the Spirit of Prophecy said about time no longer being definite after 1844;

Time has not been a test since 1844, and it will never again be a test. **EW 74**.

Again and again have I been warned in regard to time setting. There will never again be a message for the people of God that will be based on time. **1SM 188**.

- c. “**in heaven**”—the people of God are pictured as dwelling in heaven even though they are physically down here;
 - i. **Rev 13:5-6**—the people of God are the dwellers of heaven who are persecuted for 42 prophetic months;
 - ii. **Rev 11:1**—the people of God are the worshippers of the temple in heaven who are measured;
 - iii. **Rev 14:6**—the people of God are pictured as angels flying in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach on them that dwell on the earth;

Conclusion

10. **Isa 24:1-6**—Reasons given why the inhabitants of the earth are wasted by the covenant curses:
- a. Transgressed the laws
 - b. **Changed the ordinance**
 - c. Broken the everlasting covenant

11. **Deut 11:27-28**—the curses of the covenant are the sure result of turning aside from obeying the covenant, one of which is attempting to alter the provisions of the covenant
12. **Changed the ordinance**—this means there is an attempt on the part of the disobedient to change the provisions of the covenant; the 10 commandments are the basis of the covenant; covenants usually have provisions that contained warnings against making changes after they have been sealed and ratified
 - a. **In Deut 4:1-2; Deut 12:32**, ample warning is given to the Israelites are warned against trying to tamper with the provisions of the covenant
 - b. **Deut 5:22**—after giving the terms of the covenant (in **Deut 5:3-21**), God Himself added no more to the covenant; in other words, God Himself will not tamper with the covenant by adding or subtracting from it once its provisions have been laid down;
 - c. **Rev 22;18**—warning repeated against tampering with the provisions of the covenant
13. **Dan 7:25**— presuming to have authority to make a change in the law of God, spiritual Babylon is represented as being guilty of breaking the covenant; she will be visited with plagues as a result (**Rev 18:4-5**)
14. To be guilty of “changing the ordinance“ or “adding or diminishing from it,” one does not have to directly make alterations in the wordings of the 10 commandments; one only needs to teach that the law of God cannot be kept, and the result is the same—breaking the commandments of God!
15. **Matt 5:19**--To teach that it is impossible to keep the Law of God is to “diminish” or subtract from it; indeed, so many do this without realizing that they have become guilty of “changing the ordinance!”
16. The seal of God can never be placed on our foreheads while we minimize the Law of God because it leads to commandment breaking and continuous sinning;
17. On the contrary we need to be elevating the standard, pointing people to go higher still, holier still, “the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” should be our constant cry, if we are to receive the seal of God on our foreheads and be counted worthy to stand when the covenant curses ravage the earth in the falling of the plagues, total victory over sin should be our goal; perfect Christ-likeness our desire—always remembering that what God requires, He Himself provides!

I also saw that many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. **Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully.**

I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of “refreshing” and the “latter rain” to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God.

Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. But there will be no time then to do it and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father. Before this time the awfully solemn declaration has gone forth, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." **I saw that none could share the "refreshing" unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action.** We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that **preparation** necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let all remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence. **EW 71.**

We may talk of the blessings of the Holy Spirit, but unless we **prepare** ourselves for its reception, of what avail are our works? Are we striving with all our power to attain to the stature of men and women in Christ? Are we seeking for His fullness, ever pressing toward the mark set before us—**the perfection of His character? When the Lord's people reach this mark, they will be sealed in their foreheads.** Filled with the Spirit, they will be complete in Christ, and the recording angel will declare, "It is finished" (The Review and Herald, June 10, 1902). **6BC 1118.**