

Doctrinal Summary of The Tribulation: The Seven Sealed Book of Judgments

In Revelation 5:1 John records God as having a book sealed with seven different seals which pertain to the tribulation.

“I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.”

The word “sealed” is translated from the Koine Greek word κατεσφραγισμένον (“kah-tes-phra-gis-meh-non”) which literally means, “having been acted upon in a completed action in the past with results continuing on as a matter of principle to be secured by a seal which designates something as authentic and identifies the authority under which it was sealed.” It describes the book in God’s right hand as having been secured by seven seals. Each seal conceals a different portion of the book until it can be opened. No one except Jesus Christ is worthy enough to open the seals and read from the book’s contents (cf. Rev. 5:5). The sealing appears to be successive based upon how the seals are opened by the Lamb in Revelation 6 and 8. Each seal identifies a period of judgment upon the world during the final seven years of Israel’s stewardship on earth, the tribulation. The first four seals occur during the first half of the tribulation and the final three seals occur during the second half.

The first seal opened by the Lamb releases a rider on a white horse. This represents a period of dictatorship which attempts to bring ultimate peace among man through power politics. Dictators will seek to conquer human nature but will fail to do so despite their political policies and displays of power intended to subdue any conflict (cf. Rev. 6:1-2; 1 Thess. 5:3).

The second seal releases a rider on a red horse. This represents a period of universal bloodshed through war and slaughter. Peace will be removed from the earth and man will slaughter each other (cf. Rev. 6:3-4).

The third seal releases a rider on a black horse. This represents a period of famine and inflation upon the earth. The necessities of life will become scarce and the famine will be so widespread that even luxuries of the rich will disappear (cf. Rev. 6:5-6).

The fourth seal releases a rider on an ashen horse. This represents a period of death through the sword, famine, disease, and beasts of prey. One quarter of the earth’s entire population will be wiped out during this period of death (cf. Rev. 6:7-8).

The fifth seal does not release judgment upon the earth when it is opened. Its focus is on answering those martyred during the tribulation in their cry that God avenge their death by judging those upon the earth. That judgment will come at the right time (cf. Rev. 6:9-11).

The sixth seal unleashes incredibly powerful natural disasters which terrorize those on the earth. Natural disasters will affect the ground, the sun, the moon, the stars, the sky, and the location of every mountain and island. The terror caused by these disasters will be so great that man will cry to be killed by the disasters to avoid God’s wrath upon them (cf. Rev. 6:12-17).

The seventh seal reveals seven trumpet judges that are so horrendously awesome that there is silence in heaven for about half an hour (cf. Rev. 8:1ff).