

January 2006 Broadcast Notes

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Title: Revelation Commentary
The Seven Seals - Part VII

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Begin Text:

Today, we will continue with our study on the seven seals. So far, we have examined several key elements about the Book of Life and the seven seals that keep its contents a secret. For example, we know that God solved a big problem before there was a problem.

He wrote the Book of Life before life was created. He did this so that when the Book of Life is opened up at the end of the 1,000 years, He can prove several things:

First, He will demonstrate that has perfect foreknowledge. The contents of the book of life will be identical with the books of record that were recorded in real time by "camcorder angels."

Second, God will prove that He can be fully trusted. He will NEVER use His foreknowledge to manipulate the choices or behavior of His children. Even though He knows our choices and behavior in advance, He will not control our choices or behavior under any circumstances. This is why we are responsible for our choices and behavior.

Last, God will also prove to the universe that Jesus Christ is fully God -- that is, Jesus has the same attributes and powers as the Father. (This is why the last book in the Bible is called "The revelation of Jesus Christ....")

We have studied these matters in detail and we have reviewed the evidence showing that Jesus received the Book of Life in 1798 and that He began opening its seals at that time.

We have studied seals 1, 2 and 3 and I have compared the breaking of each seal as a campaign.... Each campaign brings about a new understanding of Jesus and His ministry on behalf of mankind....

We also know that when each seal is broken, a new revelation of Jesus occurs through out the Earth! Today, we will examine the purpose, the meaning and the timing of the fourth seal.

When the fourth seal is opened, the awesome authority of Jesus Christ will be revealed.

I hope you will give today's topic some very serious consideration because the fourth seal is the next seal to be opened. When Jesus breaks open the fourth seal, the Great Tribulation will begin. When Jesus breaks open the fourth seal opens, the judgment of the living will also begin.

When the fourth seal is broken, a series of punitive judgments will commence and 1.75 billion people will perish! When the fourth seal opens, the whole world will undergo a religious meltdown -- and a huge paradigm shift.... (a paradigm shift is a complete change in thinking)

Jesus Christ will be redefined, even among Christians! When Jesus breaks open the fourth seal, life as we now know it will permanently change. The opening of the fourth seal will turn the whole world upside down.... because this is the best way that Jesus can speak to a world of hundreds of diverse cultures and seven antagonistic religious systems....

Billions of people are about to painfully discover that their religious views are faulty and inadequate. They will also discover that their religious leaders know nothing about the book of Revelation nor the revealing of Jesus Christ.

Many Christians will bitterly turn against their religious leaders when God's judgments begin. They will say to their pastors, "We trusted you. We paid you well to be our spiritual guide. If you truly understood God's Word, you would have warned us about these coming events! But we now see that you know very little about God and His Word."

The breaking of the fourth seal marks the beginning of a time of wrath. Everyone, including you and me, will suffer wrath. Those who submit to God's authority will suffer the wrath of Babylon. Those who submit to the authority of Babylon will suffer the wrath of God.

God's Babylon's
wrath --> man <--wrath

Remember these texts?

Dan 8:19 He [Gabriel] said: "I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end."
Dan 11:36 "The king [of the North] will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place."

Why is a time of wrath coming? Paul wrote,

Col 3:5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

Col 3:6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming."

Jesus is angered when He looks down on Earth. He sees the rapid growth of hatred, injustice, sexual immorality, greed and dysfunctional families. Jesus hates the results of sin, and he hates those who make sin attractive because sin quickly reduces the quality of life for succeeding generations.

The breaking of the fourth seal will produce a powerful statement to the whole Earth that Jesus has lost His patience with sin and those who love it. Jesus is about to send four judgments of wrath.

The Great Tribulation will be started by these judgments, and as the infrastructures of Earth collapse, life will get much worse for everyone. To put this huge subject in perspective, we need to first understand a few basic things.

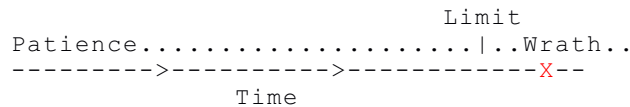
First and foremost, I must remind you that Jesus is reluctant to impose wrath on anyone. He is patient and long suffering beyond comprehension. He is not willing that one person should perish!

But.....

Jesus' patience with wickedness and rebellion has a limit. God's throne is based on justice and mercy and the divine balance between justice and mercy is called "love."

Sometimes, God's love for oncoming generations demands the destruction of the present generation! This happened in Noah's day. For God so loved the generations that would live on Earth after Noah, that He wisely and thoughtfully destroyed the antediluvians so that they could not ruin the future of unborn generations with their evil and vile behavior.

Justice demands that God send wrath when patience no longer produces a redemptive effect.



The point here is that when God's wrath is released in the fourth seal, His actions will be just and during these redemptive judgments, His hand will be stretched out to save survivors who have not had a chance to understand His righteous demands.

Please consider this profound point:

An omnipotent and omniscient God **does not** get impatient and angry as we do. Yes, God experiences the emotion of anger, but the basis for His righteous indignation is not self centered. When a majority of people willfully violate the moral values that are necessary for the well being of society, God becomes angry at that generation because He knows that succeeding generations will be forced to live in a world of increased suffering and moral decadence.

Furthermore, God knows that a society cannot lift itself out of moral degeneracy once sin has metastasized and overcome its majority. This fact explains why God required ancient Israel to kill every man, woman and child in various nations. Those nations had become so evil that corporate redemption was not possible. Is it possible that some who perished in ancient times will be saved? Yes, of course!

We have to understand that God deals with mankind on two levels: corporate behavior and personal behavior. (Remember there were two altars in the temple: The altar of Incense was for corporate sin, the Altar of Burnt Offerings was for personal sin.)

When it comes to society, it is well observed by historians that subsequent generations don't rise to a higher and more noble standard of conduct than their parents. (Children may make more money, but they rarely embrace a higher standard of conduct than their parents.)

In other words, children are typically more decadent than their parents.... And their children and grandchildren tend to treat God with more indifference

than their parents....

As generations pass, society slides down the slippery slope into deeper sin and sin doesn't bring joy. It produces suffering, agony and death. There comes a point in man's descent into sin that brings out God's wrath. When extended patience cannot produce a redeeming effect, God rises up in wrath to deal with the problem.

The neat thing here is that what God is not been able to achieve through patience, He will achieve through wrath! Jesus will save a large number of people from sin after He displays His wrath! How this occurs is an amazing story. I need to make a few comments about a particular text.

Some Christians interpret 1 Thess 5:9 and Romans 5:9 to mean that Christians will not experience the wrath of God during the Great Tribulation:

1 Th 5:9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom 5:9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

The problem here is that God has three types of wrath:

1. Consequences for wrong doing.
2. Judgments (redemptive and destructive)
3. Death by execution (the penalty for sin)

Let's examine each type of wrath.

1. Wrath comes as consequences for wrong doing:

If we ignorantly or willfully violate a physical or moral law, we will suffer consequences for our actions (the consequence for violating law is the wrath of the law). Paul wrote, "Because [the violation of God's] law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no [possibility of] transgression." (Romans 4:15, insertions mine)

For example, if a person accidentally falls off of the roof while cleaning the gutters, he will suffer (wrath) because the law of momentum will propel that man -- head first toward the ground with enough force to break his neck and other bones.

If someone engages in adultery (a violation of the seventh commandment), that person will suffer wrath from his spouse for wrong doing and innocent people such as children and family members will also suffer. (If the adulterer isn't caught by the spouse, the wrath for wrong doing may be delayed, but it will surely come. Furthermore, the adulterer will suffer guilt because a person can't sin and escape wrath.) Paul wrote, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction [wrath]; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life [joy]." (Galatians 6:7,8)

A violation of law produces consequences and consequences are a form of wrath that comes in the form of guilt, loathing, sorrow, suffering, pain, sickness and death. So, one form of God's wrath is the consequences for violating law...

2. God's wrath also comes in the form of redemptive and destructive judgments

If a nation angers God through persistent rebellion, God will send wrath upon that nation through redemptive judgments. The purpose of His redemptive judgments is to get the survivors to repent and reform! If that nation continues in rebellion, God will send His **destructive** judgments.

God warned Israel at Mount Sinai, "But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, then I will do this to you: I will bring upon you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and drain away your life. You will plant seed in vain, because your enemies will eat it." (Leviticus 26:14-16)

The point here is that when the limits of God's patience is reached, He deals with rebellion. His wrath comes in two phases: redemptive judgments and destructive judgments. (In the book of Revelation, God's wrath is delivered to the world in the seven trumpets (seven redemptive judgments) and the seven bowls (seven destructive judgments).)

3. The wages of sin is eternal death. This is the ultimate wrath.

When Adam and Eve were put in the Garden of Eden, they were placed under the obligation of law. God said, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for **in the day** that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:17, KJV)

Adam and Eve were to be **executed the very day** they ate the fruit of the forbidden tree because the penalty for sin is **immediate death by execution.**

(**Note:** The immediate execution of Adam and Eve was stayed because the Father accepted the offer of Jesus to die in man's place. The intercession offered by Jesus on that very day prevented the execution of Adam and Eve and their descendants. This stay of execution will be lifted at the end of the 1,000 years and it will be imposed on the wicked.)

The point here is that the penalty for sin is death by execution. This fact is proven by every sacrifice in the Old Testament. **Every** sacrificial lamb was **executed** on the altar, a sacrificial lamb could not die of natural causes such as old age or disease. In fact, every sacrificial lamb had to be in perfect health when it was presented at the altar or it would not be permitted to die as a sacrifice!

Now, hear this: The death that is common to all mankind at the present time **IS NOT** the **penalty** for sin. No! Death from old age and disease occurs as a consequence of sin! (Common death is caused by wrath #1.)

The penalty for sin (wrath #3) will be imposed upon the wicked at the end of the 1,000 years when God executes the wicked with fire from Heaven. Because the penalty for sin is death by execution, Jesus was **executed** on the cross. (1 Thessalonians 2:14,15) Other than Jesus who became sin for us (2 Cor 5:21), no wicked person has **yet** experienced the penalty for sin (wrath #3).

Yes, billions of wicked and righteous people have died from the **consequences** of sin [**cancer, heart attacks, car wrecks, electric chair, etc.**], but the penalty for sin -- death by **execution** -- is still coming for the wicked!

OK, so there are three types of God's wrath:

1. Consequences for wrong doing.
2. Judgments (redemptive and destructive)
3. Death by execution (The penalty for sin)

"When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, Come!' I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named **Death**, and **Hades** was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to **kill** by **sword**, **famine** and **plague**, and by the **wild beasts** of the Earth." (Revelation 6:7,8)

One does not have to be a Bible scholar to understand that the fourth seal is deadly. In fact, the rider's name on the pale horse is called "Death" and the grave (Greek: *Hades*) like a hungry vulture, follows close behind to consume the dead.

Further, the Bible says that Death and Hades will overtake twenty-five percent of Earth's population. Death will use four deadly judgments: **Sword, famine, plague and wild beasts**. Why is Jesus going to kill 25% of the world's population? The Bible provides the answer, but in order to understand the answer we have to examine some Scripture that explains God's behavior:

Deuteronomy 32 is called "The Song of Moses:"

"Jeshurun [Jeshurun is a poetic name of endearment given to Israel. God used this name to indicate His affection for Israel, as though the nation was a beloved pet.] grew fat and kicked; filled with food, he became heavy and sleek. He abandoned the God who made him and rejected the Rock his Savior.

They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols. They sacrificed to demons, which are not Gods, gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear.

You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth. The Lord saw this and rejected them because he was angered by his sons and daughters. . . .

I will heap **calamities** upon them and spend my arrows against them. I will send wasting famine against them, consuming pestilence and deadly plague; I will send against them the fangs of wild beasts, the venom of vipers that glide in the dust. In the street the sword will make them childless; in their homes terror will reign. Young men and young women will perish, infants and gray-haired men. . . ." (Selections from Deuteronomy 32:15-25, insertion and emphasis mine)

Did you notice God's use of four **punitive** judgments in Deut 32? Sword, famine, plague and wild beasts are to be understood as punitive judgments, that is, judgments sent as punishment.

The following statement was spoken to Ezekiel just before King Nebuchadnezzar was sent to plunder and totally destroy Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

"The word of the Lord came to me: Son of man, if a country sins against me by being unfaithful and I **stretch** out my hand against it to cut off its food supply and send **famine** upon it and kill its men and their animals, even if these three men Noah, Daniel and Job--were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness,' declares the Sovereign Lord. Or if I **send wild beasts** through that country and they leave it childless and it becomes desolate so that no one can pass through it because of the beasts, as surely as I live,' declares the Sovereign Lord, even if these three men were in it, they could not save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved, but the land would be desolate.' Or if I **bring a sword** against that country and say, Let the sword pass throughout the land,' and I **kill** its men and their animals, as surely as I **live**, declares the Sovereign Lord, even if these three men were in it, they could not save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved.' Or if I **send a plague** into that land and pour out **my wrath** upon it through bloodshed, killing its men and their animals, as surely as I

If the fourth seal was broken in ages past, when was it broken? A few Christians have argued the bubonic plagues that swept through Europe in the sixth, fourteenth and seventeenth centuries was a fulfillment of the fourth seal.

Yes, these epidemics were horrible, but the rate of death in each of these cases did not exceed **two million** people per year and these epidemics were **local** to Europe. Was the bubonic plague sent as a **punitive judgment** from God or was the bubonic plague a **consequence** of poor sanitation and standing filth?

Did the ravages of the bubonic plague kill twenty-five percent of the world's population? No -- not even close.

Here's another attempt:

Because the Protestant reformation grew out of persecution, numerous reformers in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries claimed the fourth seal covered a period of a thousand years when the Church of Rome persecuted the saints -- those who refused to obey its laws.

The total number of Protestant martyrs during the Dark Ages (between A.D. 500 to A.D. 1500) has been estimated to be as low as **ten** million and as high as **fifty** million. When 50 million is divided by a thousand years, the rate of martyrdom is about 50,000 people per year.

No student of Protestant history doubts the persecution of the saints during the Dark Ages was horrible, but this interpretation doesn't begin to satisfy the specifications given in the fourth seal for **three** reasons.

First, the Bible indicates that God's four judgments sword, famine, plague and wild beasts, are **punitive judgments**. These four judgments will be directed at **wicked** nations who have filled up their cup of iniquity. These **judgments were not poured out upon God's saints** who are standing firm for God's truth during the Dark Ages. So, the fourth seal can't apply to the saints who were burned at the stake or imprisoned for their faith during the Dark Ages.

Second, the Bible says that when the fourth seal is broken, God's four judgments will kill **twenty-five percent** of Earth. Even if the Catholic Church put fifty million saints to death during the Dark Ages, this cannot begin to meet the specifications of the fourth seal. The scope of destruction presented in the fourth seal is so much larger.

Third, we have already observed that the third seal was broken in 1844, so the fourth seal has to occur after 1844. OK, here's an attempt to put the fourth seal after 1844:

A few Christians have suggested the fourth seal was broken around 1918. At the height of its deadly grip around 1918, the world's worst outbreak of influenza killed twenty five million people in a single year! (For some perspective, from 1914 to 1918, nine million people died from World War I.)

Yes, the 1918 influenza outbreak was horrible, and it was also accompanied by a horrible war, but both of them together killed 34 million people and this did not come close to killing twenty-five percent of the world's population at that time!

In short, history cannot produce a fulfillment of the fourth seal because the scope of the fourth seal is so large that **nothing in the past** can measure up.

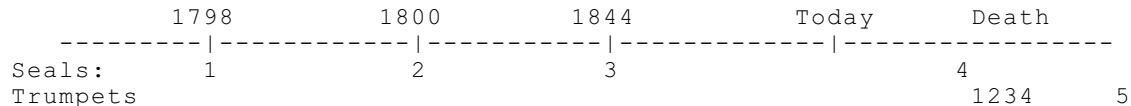
Rule Two says that a fulfillment only occurs when **all of the specifications of a prophecy are met** and there is no event in history -- since the book of Revelation was written -- that meets the **twenty-five percent** specification.

Since there is no evidence of a historical fulfillment, please consider the following solution.

1. We know that Jesus received the book sealed with seven seals in 1798.
2. Jesus broke open the first seal in 1798.
3. Jesus broke open the second seal in 1800.
4. Jesus broke open the third seal in 1844.
5. The breaking of the fourth seal is next and it will mark the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

25% of Earth's population will die as a result of the first four trumpets.

See diagram.....



The breaking of the fourth seal will be "a shock and awe campaign" of redemptive destruction (mixed with mercy) from God.

>>> God's coming wrath will not be a random series of natural disasters, yes God's wrath will come from natural means, but it will not be a natural disaster -- it will be a deliberate and intentional disaster!

The books of Daniel and Revelation indicate that Jesus is about to declare war on Earth. The King of kings is about to impose a regime change on this planet. Jesus is about to release His four deadly judgments against planet Earth because we have become a degenerate world and Earth's cup of sin is full.

When the time arrives and Jesus breaks open the fourth seal, His wrath will break out and twenty-five percent of Earth's population will perish (Revelation 6:7,8) during a short period of time.

Please consider this:

You may recall from our study on the Jubilee Calendar, I believe that God's patience with Earth ran out in 1994 -- at the end of 70 Jubilee cycles.

30 cycles were allotted to the Jews, and 40 cycles were allotted to the Gentiles. In 1994 the four angels of Revelation 7 were empowered to harm Earth. As they departed Heaven, they were told to wait until the 144,000 are selected and sealed.

Since 1994, we have been waiting on God's master clock. When the precise time arrives, (6,000 full years minus 1,335 days) the 144,000 will be selected and sealed, the fourth seal will be broken and the Great Tribulation will commence and the judgment of the living will begin. The Great Tribulation will be caused by global destruction sent from on High.

The first four trumpets will fall upon notoriously wicked places and the survivors of Earth will tremble from fear of God's wrath #2. Later on, three more trumpet judgments will occur and these will be directed against wicked people.

Keep in mind that during the seven trumpets, there is mercy. The seven trumpets are redemptive judgments. The door to salvation will remain open during the 1,260 days of the seven trumpets, but the false religions of the world will unite against God and His Truth and they will attempt to appease God in a way that is contrary to what God demands (just like Cain).

Notice the sequence:

God's wrath will cause the religious leaders of the world to unite in an effort to appease Him. When religious leaders behold the devastation caused by God, they will conclude that God can only be appeased through repentance and worship. Religious leaders will demand that political leaders make and enforce laws mandating repentance and worship, and these demands will be enforced by law. The problem here is that the laws of men will stand in direct opposition to the laws of God! Thus, the wrath of Babylon will come down on the heads of the saints!

For 1,260 days, Jesus will hold open the door of mercy.

There are several reasons for this lengthy time-period, but for now, we will just say that Jesus is not willing that any person should suffer wrath #3 (the penalty for sin). So, all survivors will be given plenty of time to receive Jesus as their Savior. Then, at the end of 1,260 days, the wrath of Jesus will be poured out on Babylon (7 last plagues).

Jesus will avenge the suffering of His saints and those who punished His children for doing what He demanded will be horribly punished! No wonder the Great Tribulation is called, "A time of wrath...."

"I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues--last, because with them God's wrath [wrath #2] is completed." (Revelation 15:1)

Can you comprehend the sudden death of some 1,750,000,000 people? (25% of Earth's population) Can you imagine what the world will be like after the fourth seal is broken? The seven trumpets of Revelation 8 explain how sword, famine, plague and wild beasts will appear.

Reviewing the first four seals (campaigns):

Seal 1: Message: Salvation through faith alone in Jesus

Seal 2: Distribution: The teachings of Jesus distributed through the translation and distribution of the Bible

Seal 3: Judgment: The judgment bar of Jesus begins -- Cleansing Heaven's temple [the judgment of the dead]

Seal 4: Authority: Death and destruction everywhere - the authority of Jesus realized. [The judgment of the living begins]

By putting the world in a prison of wrath #2, Jesus will be able to test and determine the faithfulness of every soul.

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Heb 11:7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Heb 11:8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

Faith in God = Loyalty at any price.

End Text:

