



The Book of Revelation Lesson 5 1Q 2019 The Seven Seals

by Tim Jennings

SUNDAY

We will be referring to Revelation from *The Remedy New Testament Paraphrase* today and I wanted to read the preface to Revelation from *The Remedy*:

In the book of Revelation, I did a little more than paraphrase. I also added some decoding of the symbolism, some of which will be without controversy, such as "Jesus, the Lamb" rather than just "the Lamb," but other places might challenge various traditional views. The reason I decided to do this is not that I want to suggest I have been gifted with some special insight beyond any believer's prayerful study guided by the Holy Spirit, but to stimulate the reader to think. Throughout the rest of this paraphrase, I have used new words to get at the real meaning and move past cliché, such as "Remedy" for "gospel." In Revelation, I want the reader to move past the symbolism to consider a cosmic reality beyond the symbol—a reality in which God is love all the time, and Satan is a real being of complete selfishness, seeking to contaminate our minds with his lies about God. I have no doubt that as the future unfolds, events will require modification and reinterpretation of some of the conclusions I have suggested in this book. The point is not that we need to know with total certainty every detail of every symbol, but to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. You will therefore notice that all of the suggested interpretations always reveal God's character of love—working against Satan for the good of his creation. I hope you will enjoy reading Revelation, and that it will stimulate you with a new appreciation and love for our amazing God.

Some rules of interpretation used in the book of Revelation:

- If one part of a passage is symbolic or metaphor, then the rest is symbolic or metaphor unless clear reasons to be literal are expressed in the text.
- The Bible will be used to interpret itself (i.e. symbol interpretations will use Bible definitions before other definitions).
- The general theme is that of the conflict between Christ and Satan.
- God's character of love never changes, therefore interpretations will never result in God being represented in a character other than love.
- God's law of love never changes, therefore interpretations will always be in harmony with God's law of love.

Read first paragraph, "The events of the seven seals must..." Before we read the seven seals, what is our understanding about the meaning of the information contained in the seven seals?

What is recorded there?



The lesson takes the approach that it can be only one thing, the same information which is covered by the seven churches.

But, Bible prophecy often has more than one application. The lesson acknowledged this with the seven churches—that it had historic application, prophetic application and universal application.

Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24 mixed events about the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world.

So, could the prophecy of the seven seals have more than one meaning?

In last Tuesday's lesson there was a quote from EGW describing what is contained in the book with seven seals:

“the history of God's providences, the prophetic history of nations and the church. Herein was contained the divine utterances, His authority, His commandments, His laws, the whole symbolic counsel of the Eternal, and the history of all ruling powers in the nations. In symbolic language was contained in that roll the influence of every nation, tongue, and people from the beginning of earth's history to its close.” {9MR 7.2}

What do you hear described?

If we value this description then what is contained in the book with seven seals?

Does it sound like it is only God's dealing with human history during the last 2000 years? We would limit our understanding if we take it to mean it covers the same time period of the seven churches.

But the quote suggests something much broader and more encompassing than just the last 2000 years:

- The history of God's providences—which means what?
 - the foreseeing and caring for His creation
 - did that creation include only earth?
- The prophetic history of nations and the church
- His divine utterances and God's law
- The whole symbolic counsel of the Eternal
- The history of all ruling powers in the nations
- From the beginning of earth's history to its close

So, does this sound like just the history of the last 2000 years?

So, what else might be contained within? Could it be a broader revelation of the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan?



Read Revelation 6:1,2:

I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, “Come!”² I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest. (NIV84)

What is the meaning of this? Is it literal or symbolic?

One interpretation is in the second paragraph, “Although symbolic...”

And the lesson goes on to say, “The scene of the first seal describes the spread of the gospel, which started powerfully at Pentecost.”

I can see where they get this, what would be reasons why this might be a less than adequate interpretation?

- Where does this put the starting point of the first seal? 2000 years ago.
 - Would that starting point cut off much of history?
- Would this book with seven seals contain God’s actions with all powers, nations, the whole symbolic counsel of the Eternal if it only covers the last 2000 years?
- Would the book, if it started 2000 years ago, give us the knowledge of how sin began, what the actual problem is, who the enemy is?

So, another interpretation is that the first seal does not represent Christ but represents a being who impersonates Christ.

Does Scripture teach of another being who attempted to take Christ’s place?

- Did that being start his rebellion by open revolt, or by claiming to be concerned for the welfare of others?
- Did that being start out sharing a name of Christ, and appeared similar in many respects as Christ?
 - Lucifer—means light bearer, Jesus is the light bearer
 - Lucifer was a covering cherub, Jesus appeared in form of a covering cherub
- Does Bible represent Jesus and Satan with the same symbolism in other places?
 - Serpent the devil; the brass serpent to heal the people
 - Roaring lion seeking to devour; Lion tribe of Judah
- So, could the symbolism of a rider on a white horse rather than refer to Christ, refer to Lucifer, the light bearer, and the origins of his rebellion?



Here is Revelation 6:1,2 from *The Remedy*:

Excitedly, I watched as Jesus the Lamb opened the first section of God's book of foreknowledge and began to reveal the warfare between God and Satan. I heard one of the living creatures say in a powerful voice that rumbled like thunder, "Come and see!"² So I looked, and I saw that the war began with a rider on a white horse, holding a bow and wearing a crown—symbolizing Lucifer beginning his war in heaven under the guise of righteousness, yet intent on inciting rebellion and war, and achieving conquest.

MONDAY

Read Revelation 6:3,4:

When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!"⁴ Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword. (NIV84)

What does this mean?

Read second paragraph, "The second seal describes..." What are the problems with their interpretation?

- When was peace taken from the earth?
- Was there peace on earth prior to Christ's advent?
- Was there peace on earth during Christ's 33 years?
- Has there been peace on earth since Christ's resurrection?
- When was there peace on earth? In Eden—and when was peace taken from the earth?
- How was peace taken from the earth?

Somehow this rider has power to take peace and cause people to slay each other—would that be the power of death?

Consider this quote:

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil... (Heb 2:14 NIV84)

What is the power of death? Life eternal is that we know God (Jn 17:3) so eternal death is not knowing God, so Satan's power is the lies he tells about God that we believe.

Was there a time when human beings knew and trusted God and lived in a face to face relationship with God?



What changed that state of being? Believing Satan's lies:

- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
- Fear and selfishness result in acts of sin
- Acts of sin damage mind, character, body—a terminal condition

EGW wrote:

Eve believed the words of Satan, and the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors, {RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8}

And what happened after they believed Satan's lies? Cain kills Abel—and by Genesis six humanity was violent and violent constantly.

So, what might be another interpretation that is broader, more encompassing, actually applies to the time when peace was taken from the earth and violence and slaying quickly began to happen between humans?

Revelation 6:3,4 from *The Remedy*:

When Jesus the Lamb opened the second section of God's book of foreknowledge, I heard another living creature say, "Come and see!"⁴ Then I saw a rider on a fiery red horse, holding a large sword symbolic of Satan's lies about God severing the bonds of love and trust and inciting fear and selfishness, and resulting in people killing each other.

Read Revelation 6:5,6:

When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand.⁶ Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!" (NIV84)

What does this mean?

Read last paragraph, "The scene of the third seal..." This version interprets the Greek as "scales" but another equally valid interpretation of that same Greek word is "yoke."

If we interpret using the word yoke instead of scales does that help our understanding at all?

"I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a yoke in his hand."



The rider was holding a yoke, what does a yoke do? It binds two beings together.

If we agree with the GC view of the first two seals as is translated in *The Remedy* does that lead us to any insights in regard to any type of a yoke this rider put upon humanity?

Would it be a yoke of fear and selfishness as a result of believing lies about God and perhaps the subsequent yoke of false religions (paganism) that require the worshipper to do something to pay a legal payment to the offended deity in order to get a blessing?

What would the meaning of the wheat, barley and oil and wine be?

Wheat and barley can be made into bread, which is symbolic of the Word of God.

What is symbolically represented by the high cost of wheat and barley and the famine conditions?

That the truth about God, as represented in His Word, would be scarce and because it would be scarce a famine of truth would occur in which people would be starving for the truth about God.

What would the oil and wine represent? The oil represents Holy Spirit and the wine represents Remedy, the perfect life of Jesus, which Satan cannot damage.

So, from *The Remedy*:

When Jesus the Lamb opened the third section of God's book of foreknowledge, I heard a third living creature say, "Come and see!" I looked and saw a black horse, symbolic of humanity necrotic with lies about God. Its rider was holding a yoke in his hand, symbolic of the spiritual enslavement that occurs when the mind is bound by lies about God.⁶ Then I heard a voice coming from the four living creatures, saying, "A handful of wheat or three handfuls of barley will cost an entire day's pay, but the oil and wine won't be destroyed"—which means that the lies about God will be so pervasive that a famine of spiritual truth will occur, and humanity will be near spiritual starvation; but the oil of truth and the wine of God's Remedy will not be destroyed.

TUESDAY

Read Revelation 6:7,8:

When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!"⁸ 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. (NIV84)



What does it mean?

What is this rider going to bring? Death and what is the basis of death? Lies about God, so this rider is going to bring more lies about God.

What is Hades? It is the grave, the place where there is no life, so it can represent the actual grave and it can also represent the place devoid of God's life-giving presence, principles, laws, truths, love etc.

So, the lies told will lead to systems devoid of God's love and truth and result in death and millions of people ¼ of the world's population will embrace this system of thinking.

What does it mean it has power to kill by sword, famine and plague? Is this literal or symbolic?

What kind of war is going on between Christ and Satan, is it a physical war or a spiritual war, a war of ideas, who and what do we love, are loyal to, trust, and believe?

In a spiritual war, what is a sword? God's sword is the sword of truth, so what would Satan's sword be? The sword of lies. So, one interpretation is that this power has the ability to destroy with lies about God.

What about famine, what would this represent? The ability to starve people from knowing the truth—so by restricting access to the Word of God.

And what about pestilence? What is pestilence? A disease that spreads rapidly and brings destruction—and what could this symbolically represent? Sinfulness of the soul which is selfishness with its fear-based survival drive.

What do beasts represent? Both human nations, which rule on what methods? Coercion, and beasts represent pagan deities—Marduk—Bull, Dagon—Fish Heket—Frog. So it represents by systems of pagan imperialism and coercion.

So, from *The Remedy*:

When Jesus the Lamb opened the fourth section of God's book of foreknowledge, I heard the fourth living creature say, "Come and see!"⁸ Then I saw a pale horse, and its rider was named Death—symbolic of a church fighting against the truth and promoting a false remedy—and the grave was filling up behind him. It had power over one-fourth of the world's population and could destroy by warring against the truth with lies about God; by restricting access to the written word of God and thereby inciting spiritual famine; by indulging selfishness—the pestilence of the soul; and by introducing wild, beastly, pagan traditions.

And has there been any historic events or organizations that have done this?



WEDNESDAY

Read Revelation 6:9-11:

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” ¹¹ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed. (NIV84)

What does this mean?

Is it literal or symbolic? What is symbolized by the altar? The sanctuary, which is a metaphor of God’s plan to heal restore. The altar is a metaphor of hearts and minds that have the Holy Spirit burning within and which praise God, as incense is burned upon it.

What about the souls, what is represented by this?

Read, first paragraph in Wednesday’s lesson, “The word ‘soul’ in the Bible...” They are not wrong in that soul *can* mean what they say. But the lesson has chosen one possible Biblical meaning for the word soul and in fact they have chosen the wrong meaning. The Bible has another meaning for the soul that does not mean the entire being:

- May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1Thes 5:23 NIV84)
 - Does this sound like soul refers to the entire human being or only a part?
- Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (Mt 10:28 NIV84)
 - Does Jesus make a distinction between the body and soul here? So does soul mean the entire person in this context?

Would you conclude from these two passages that the soul represents the whole person or only one part of the whole person?

The Greek word for soul is psuche from which we get psyche, as in psychiatry and psychology and means our unique identity, individuality, personhood.

If we use a computer metaphor a computer has three parts:

- Hardware (body)
- Software (soul/psyche)
- Energy (spirit/pneuma/breath of life)



So, then, if we realize that soul represents the identity, individuality, the software of the person and not the entire living being, what might this mean for this text?

When we die where do the dead go?

- the body returns to dust (see Gen 3:19, Ps 44:25, Ecc 3:20);
- the spirit—life energy—returns to God who gave the breath of life (see Ecc 12:7);
- the soul, software, individuality, are safely stored with Christ in heaven on the Lamb's book of life, the heavenly servers

Thus, Paul writes in 1Thes:

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who **fall asleep**, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that **God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him**. The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first**. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. (1Thes 4:13-18 NIV84, emphasis supplied)

So, we have the recorded individualities of the righteous calling out from under the altar—what does this mean?

And what happens to them? They are purified and given the character of Christ, which is a cleansing, i.e. the cleansing of the sanctuary. This would be describing events after the great apostacy in which the church caused a famine of truth by hiding the Bible from people, perpetuated lies about God, and promoted selfishness—a time when the cleansing of the sanctuary would be happening. When did this begin?

So, from *The Remedy*:

When Jesus the Lamb opened the fifth section of God's book of foreknowledge, I saw an altar, and beneath it I saw the individual identities of those who were killed because they embraced the truth about God's character of love and faithfully revealed his methods, rejecting the lies about God.¹⁰ Their lives called out, "Almighty Lord who always does what is right, how long until your diagnosis of the inhabitants of earth is made known and you set right the wrong done to us?"¹¹ Then they were each given white clothes to symbolize that they were healed to be like Jesus in character. They were told to be patient a little longer, until the rest of their co-workers and friends completed their witness and were martyred for the truth.



THURSDAY

Read Revelation 6:12-14:

I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red,¹³ and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind.¹⁴ The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. (NIV84)

What is the meaning?

Is this literal or symbolic?

The SDA church has taken this literally—to a point, which is strange since all along the rest of the seals are all symbolic and then suddenly these signs become literal?

The historic Adventist view is that this is fulfilled by:

- Lisbon earthquake of 1755
- The Dark Day of May 19, 1780
- The meteor shower over the Atlantic Nov 13, 1833

What is the problem with this interpretation?

First, I am not being dogmatic and saying this absolutely cannot be correct, only questioning it and suggesting an alternate understanding that seems to make more sense.

The problems with this historic interpretation:

- It suddenly shifts from symbolic to literal without any real reason to do so; is there anything in the text that says the seals now contain literal elements?
- If we take the earthquake Sun, Moon, stars literally and apply it to the events above, what about the mountains and islands being moved from their location—how can we ignore those aspects?
- It places the events of the sixth seal before 1844, yet the events which began in 1844 are described in the fifth seal.
- It makes the signs of this event far removed from the generation living at the time of the second advent such that it has no actual impact on the people living in our day

So, what might a symbolic, rather than literal, interpretation be?

Where is the war between Christ and Satan fought? What are the weapons?

So, could this be symbolic of the warfare moving into its final phase before Christ returns?



And throughout human history and Bible history, what has the Sun, Moon and stars always symbolized? The Creator—God. So, could the blackening of the sun, a blood moon and the falling stars symbolize the loss of the belief in God from humanity?

From *The Remedy*:

I watched as Jesus the Lamb opened the sixth section of God's book of foreknowledge. There was a great shaking of ideas in the minds of people on earth: their unshakable confidence in religion was broken, as evolutionary theory—like a black cloth obscuring the sun—covered over their minds. The moon bled dry for believers,¹³ and the stars fell from their high places of esteem, shaken by the mighty wind of changing ideas.¹⁴ The mystery of the cosmos was rolled back like a scroll as science and astronomy advanced; every high place of worship was removed from its place of esteem, and every island of belief was thrown aside.

Read Revelation 6:15-17:

Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.¹⁶ They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"¹⁷ For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?" (NIV84)

What does this mean? How much is literal and how much is symbolic?

What type of war is being fought? What are the weapons? Where is the battlefield?

What is the Biblical definition of wrath? (See Romans 1:18-28)

Why do these people who have rejected God call for the mountains to fall on them and hide them from God?

Why did Judas hang himself?

What does this tell us about sin?

What does sin do to the sinner?

Here is a quote from EGW:

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of



character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, **cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** {1SM 235.2}

What is being described? What law is in operation? Is there wrath being described?

From *The Remedy*:

But the leaders on earth—presidents, kings, princes, generals, rich and poor—hid from the truth in the caves of their own lies and amongst the rocks of the mountain of false ideas.¹⁶They begged for their ideas to be true: they cried out, "Hide us from the truth! Hide us from him who sits on the throne of truth, and protect us from what happens when Jesus the Lamb lets us go."¹⁷For the day when he lets us go has come, and who can stand on their own?"

So, after reading Revelation 6, what picture of God do you have? Do you have a picture of an angry deity, who uses power to coerce and punish, or a loving being who has been working to overcome an infection of thought that breaks love and trust and heal His children?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

February 2-3, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO.

February 22-March 9, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be in Australia speaking in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Avondale, Sydney, Livingston, Perth, and Melbourne.

April 3-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Sophia Bulgaria.