

Eschatology

The Plot for the 70th Week The Tribulation Seal Judgments

To develop the plot of the 70th week properly, you must keep in mind what Daniel prophesied in 9:27 and how our Lord Jesus revealed to us the chronology of the tribulation period in his Olivet Discourse (Matt 24: 4-31).

The Plot

The plot begins in Revelation 5 with John looking upon the throne of God Himself and holding a scroll in His right hand. The scroll John saw in God's hand is the title deed to the earth. Unlike other such deeds, however, it does not record the descriptive detail of what Christ will inherit, but rather how He will regain His rightful inheritance. It will occur by the divine judgments that are about to be poured out on the earth.

Beginning in chapter 6, the seals begin to be broken and the beginning of God's judgment begins to unroll. While the scroll is a scroll of doom and judgment, it is also a scroll of redemption. It tells how Christ will redeem the world from Satan and those who follow him.

Important Note:

The seven seals are the major events, or time periods that cover the 70th week. And out of the seventh seal will come a series of events described as seven trumpets, and out of the seventh trumpet will come a series of seven bowls of wrath: judgments on the world just preceding the Second Coming.

The effect is a crescendo of judgments coming with increased severity and in increasing tempo as the Second Coming of Christ approaches.

The Seals (Revelation 6: 1-17; 8: 1-6)

Each of the scroll's seven seals represents a specific divine judgment that will be poured out sequentially on the earth. The seals encompass the entire tribulation, ending with the return of Christ.

The first four seals take place during the first half of the tribulation, the fifth seal stretches from the first into the second half (7:14), and the sixth and seventh taking place during the last half of the tribulation period.

The unfolding of the seven seals parallels Jesus' chronology of the tribulation events found in His own message in Matthew 24:

Jesus' Words	The Seal	Its Contents
Matt. 24: 4-5	1 st Seal	False peace
Matt. 24: 6-7	2 nd Seal	War
Matt. 24: 7	3 rd Seal	Famine
Matt. 24: 7	4 th Seal	Death
Matt. 24: 9	5 th Seal	Divine Judgment
Matt. 24: 29	6 th Seal	Terrifying Fear
Matt. 24: 37ff	7 th Seal	Trumpet and Bowl Judgments

The first four seals involve horses and riders. Horses in scripture are associated with triumph, majesty, power and conquest (Rev. 19, Job 39, Proverbs 21:31).

There is debate as to whom the 1st rider represents. Since the 2nd, 3rd and 4th riders represent impersonal forces (war, famine and death), it's best to view the first rider as a force as well.

1st Seal: False Peace

The white horse represents false-peace.

There will be a time of world peace (on the surface). The rider will not conquer by military force, but by deceit (2 Thess. 2:9-11). His conquest will be a peace won by agreement, not conflict (Dan. 9:24-27). This false peace will be present even as the final doom of the world approaches.

2nd Seal: War

The red horse (color of fire and blood) depicts war.

The rider and its horse will have the authority to create worldwide war. This will begin the process of exposing the false-peace of the first rider.

3rd Seal: Famine

The black horse and rider represent the worldwide famine that will occur as a logical consequence of worldwide war. Jesus predicted this in Matt. 24:7. God has used famine in the past as a means of judgment, but nothing in human history will compare to this one.

The color black is associated with famine (Lam. 5:10).

4th Seal: Death

The horse's color "ashen" describes a sickly, pale, yellow-green color that portrays the death characteristic of a decomposing corpse. The rider who sat on him had the name Death. Death on a massive scale is the inevitable consequence of widespread war and famine. John was taken back by this scene because he also saw Hades following with Death.

5th Seal: Divine Judgment

This seal marks the mid-point of the tribulation, bridging the gap between the beginnings of God’s wrath in the first half and its full fury revealed in the second half. This seal is commonly referred to as martyrdom. This is inaccurate because the seals depict God’s wrath and judgment on the evil of the world, not His children. This seal involves three elements that need further discussion to fully understand its significance.

1) The Persons (vs. 6:9)

The “souls” under the alter are the martyrs, killed during the time of the tribulation.

The “alter” John saw is most likely comparable to the alter to the alter of incense in the OT (Ex. 40:5), because of the association of incense with prayer (Psalm 141:2; Luke 1:10).

2) The Petitions (vs. 6:10)

The force (similar to the first four seals) is the prayer of the tribulation martyrs for God to enact vengeance on their murderers.

3) The Promise (vs. 6:11)

God’s response to His martyred children contained two elements:

- **God’s Symbolic Gift:** each martyr received a white robe. These long, brilliant white robes were a reward of grace (Rev. 7:9-14), symbolizing God’s gift of eternal righteousness.
- **God’s Spoken Word:** the martyr’s should “rest for a little while longer.” That is not a rebuke for impatience, but an invitation to stop the cry for vengeance and enjoy heavenly “rest” until God’s wrath arrives. The phrase “for a little while longer” (John 7:33; 12:35) indicates that the time for vengeance will not delay.

6th Seal: Terrifying Fear

Three features describe the overwhelming fear associated with the sixth seal:

1) The Reason for Fear

Unlike the first five seal, each of which involved humans in one way or the other, God acts alone with the sixth seal buy using natural phenomena's that the world has never seen or experienced and can only be attributed to God:

- Great earthquake
- Sun becomes black as sackcloth made of hair
- Moon becomes like blood
- Stars of the sky fall to the earth
- Sky splits apart like a rolled up scroll
- Every mountain and island are moved out of place

2) The Range of Fear

The devastating natural disasters accompanying the sixth seal will be the most terrifying events that human history has ever experienced because they will not localized (as history has experienced), but they will be occurring worldwide.

3) The Reaction of Fear

The reaction of the unbelieving world to the terrors unleashed by the sixth seal will not be repentance, but panic. They will finally acknowledge that the disasters are God's judgment. Yet they will continue to follow the Antichrist. As a result, God will abandon them (2Thess. 2:11-12).

“The great day of their wrath” is another term for the day of the Lord. These terrors precede the coming of the Lord and even anticipate the worst that is yet to come in the seventh seal, which includes the trumpet & bowl judgments.

The scene closes with a rhetorical question: “Who is able to stand?”

To which Jesus previously said to his disciples “Unless those days were cut short, NO life would have been saved.” (Matt. 24:22a).