

5

REVELATION NOW

Seven Seals depicting Tyranny Revelation 6-7

This unit, Revelation 6-7, is the first of four units in the book of Revelation which all work together to build up a picture of 'what must soon take place' for the original recipients of the letter, the churches of Turkey in the late first century A.D. The four units are parallel views from differing perspectives, rather than being sequential. The first unit is structured with 7 seals, the second unit is structured with 7 trumpets, the third with 7 signs and the fourth with 7 plagues.

Having seen the heavenly reality of Rev 4-5, in this study we move to the opening of the seals and the scroll that is held in The Father's hand (Rev 5:1). The Lamb of God (Jesus) is the only one found worthy to open the scroll, which presumably reveals 'what must soon take place' (cf Rev 1:1, 4:1).

Read Revelation 6-7

1. The opening of the first four seals bring forth four horsemen (Rev 6:1-8). What does each one signal? (note: the market prices quoted in v6 are extremely expensive, typical of a time of famine)
2. How is the fifth seal different (Rev 6:9-11)? How does God respond to the cry, "How Long, O Lord, until judgment?" How might this shape our views on justice, vengeance and judgment?
3. Summarize what happens when the sixth seal is opened (Rev 6:12-17). Note: these verses borrow motifs from Isaiah 2:12-22 and 34:4-8. What does v17 call these events?
4. How does chapter 7 answer the question posed at the end of chapter 6?
5. Chapter 7 depicts the whole people of God, especially using the number 12 to refer to the Old Testament community of faith. What is communicated about the New Testament people of God?
6. Like the first century church, our lives are also set against a backdrop of tyranny. Almost daily in the news we hear of oppression, wars, famine and death; sometimes close to home, sometimes in other countries. This seems to be the pattern of life in our world. What encouragements do these chapters have for the Christian? How should we live in such circumstances?
7. What ideas for group prayer emerge from this reading? Pray for these matters now.