

The seven seals

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[0:00] For edification, it is for our survival and our progress as Christians.! The name means an unveiling.

I know that when people say apocalypse, they think it means ending, end of the world. It doesn't actually mean that. Apocalypse means unveiling to show the reality behind the appearance, the truth behind the appearance.

It is in the form of a letter. People talk about the letter to the seven churches or the letters to the seven churches. And it's in the nature of a letter that it has relevance to the person to whom it is addressed.

So, and how many churches is it addressed to? I was just making sure you were awake. The letters of relevance to the hearers. It's also in the form of a prophecy. He calls it a prophecy.

And a prophecy, it does say, telling them the things that will shortly or quickly happen. The word, if I remember correctly, could be translated quickly or soon or rapidly.

[1:06] So, yeah, maybe when we come to that word, we'll try and unpack it a little bit. But what is shortly going to happen.

And it's in the nature of prophecy that the prophet sees the current day in the light of God's big picture. And says, if this is God's big picture and you're here, this is how you should live.

Remember that in Isaiah 2. Isaiah 2, come, O Israel, let us walk in the light of the Lord. He looks forward to what's going to happen. He says, now we've got to walk it now. And that's one of the ways I think this book works for us.

We had various items. Beasts are going to crop up. The beautiful bride. The horrible whore. The Babylon city.

The Jerusalem, the Zion, the new Jerusalem city. And the lamp stands, the seven lamps, which are the seven churches, picking up on symbolism from the Old Testament.

[2:13] The lamp in the tabernacle and in the temple. And Zechariah picks up on this to, I think, show light giving communities.

Let your light so shine that the people see it and give glory to your Father in heaven. Light giving communities. Churches. And we have, how many of these do you know?

We will do the four, they're told the four horsemen of the apocalypse. We'll come look at those. And we have one of these, just one of them. A throne.

Yeah, I'm not quite correct in saying one. There is one throne in the center. And there are around that throne 24 other thrones. And 24 is significant because it's not an arbitrary number.

Why is it 24? 12 times 2. 12 times 2. 12 plus 12. And when we think of 12, we can think of a couple of things. 12 would be the tribes of Israel and the apostles.

[3:19] So it's rather suggestive that the 24 makes up the Old Testament people of God and the New Testament people of God. A lot of these things you wouldn't die on the stake for, but it is very suggestive that that's what it means.

We have the snake, the dragon, who is the adversary, and we have the lamb. And the whole picture really is a picture of conflict.

But we know the end result of the conflict because the lamb wins. And last time, just to recap, we saw the picture in heaven.

And what was the prominent feature because it was repeated in verse after verse after verse after verse. The prominent feature in chapter 4 was the throne. The throne.

Yeah. Well, I think the throne is. And around, everything fits around the throne. And, well, I'm not going to, yeah.

[4:24] Even though there are enemies, let's just say around the throne, there were 24 other thrones. There were four living creatures, which are a little bit like the cherubim. You had the four living creatures and then 24 other thrones around.

And everything is focused on the throne because you're, it falls into place around the throne. And the lamb is upon the throne. And last time we got to this thing.

Anybody guess what I've drawn? It's a scroll. And what? Pardon? Nobody could open it.

Exactly. That brings us up to date. And that's where we'll come to in a minute. Right. What do we do next? We read it.

Yeah. So shall we do as before as reading one verse each? If you're not happy with reading a verse or you can't find the place or anything like that, just nudge your neighbour and then they will take over unless they nudge their neighbour as it were.

[5:27] So, let's take the microphone. We're in chapter six. And if David starts and we'll go along the front and then round the back.

Not missing out anybody on the mixing desk this time. Can we have some volume on the roving mic? That's it?

Okay. Okay. 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.

And I looked and behold a white horse and its rider had a bow and a crown was given to him. And he came out conquering and to conquer. When the lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, Come.

And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth so that people should slay one another. And he was given a great sword.

[6:35] 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. 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. 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.

[7:42] 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. 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?

Then each one 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.

I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like a sackcloth of goat hair.

The whole moon turned blood red. And the stars in the sky fell to earth as late figs dropped from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind.

[9:10] The sky receded like a scroll rolling up and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful and everyone slave and free hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains.

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.

For the great day of their wrath has come and who can withstand it? After this I saw the fourth angel, four angels standing at the four corners of the earth holding back the four winds of the earth

to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or any tree.

Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea.

Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.

[10:43] And I heard the number of them who were sealed. And they were sealed 140 and 4,000 of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

From the tribe of Judah, 12,000 were sealed. From the tribe of Reuben, 12,000. From the tribe of Gad, 12,000.

From the tribe of Asher, 12,000. From the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000. From the tribe of Manasseh, 12,000. From the tribe of Simeon, 12,000.

From the tribe of Levi, 12,000. From the tribe of Issachar, 12,000. 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun. 12,000 from the tribe of Joseph. 12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed. After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count from every nation, tribe, people and language standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.

[11:54] They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice, His salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying, Amen.

Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen.

Then one of the elders asked me, These in white robes, who are they? And where did they come from? I answered, Sir, you know.

And he said, These are they who have come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple.

[13:17] And he who sits on the throne will spread his taint over them. Never again will they hunger. Never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.

For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to the springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

And one more verse, please. When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

Thank you very much. Reading it, you think what tremendous things are described there. I guess we just read them and our eyes glance over them.

But they're awesome things, aren't they? The idea of a day in which people say it would be better to be crushed by a mountain than to look into the face of God.

[14:32] In verse 16, they call to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us, hide on us. Hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?

It is really an awesome thing, isn't it? And it's also unspeakably glorious to think of this multitude. Chapter 7, verse 9, that no one can count in glory, crying out in a loud voice, Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne.

And the angels saying, Amen, praise and glory, wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God forever and ever. And the contrast between the trouble and conflict that these people have been in and the joy and glory that surrounds them when they're in heaven. Who are these? They've come out of great tribulation. They've washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. It's about the gospel, isn't it? It's about what Jesus Christ has achieved for his people.

[15:48] And this great promise there before the throne of God. They serve him day and night in his temple. And he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. Never again will they hunger.

Never again will they thirst. The sun won't beat down on them, nor any scorching heat. The Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear.

From their eyes. It's a really very moving passage, isn't it? And I think no wonder when the next verse says, well, there's nothing more you can say after that.

It's just so, so much to take in. There was silence in heaven for about half an hour. Just taking it in. And sort of having read it, you think, well, perhaps we'd just better have half an hour's silence and then go home because it's, I mean, we're not going to do that.

But it would be, you know, there'd be a certain degree in which that would be appropriate. But let's sing something. Could we sing with harps and with vials, there stands a great throng in the presence of Jesus, who sing this great song?

[16:55] But it doesn't start like that in this book, does it? Is it the Lion of Judah? It's 972. 972.

The Lion of Judah is Jesus, the Lamb, the offspring of David, the Lord I am. So in heaven the elders and creatures all sing and forever give glory to Jesus our King.

Yes, that would work, wouldn't it? The Lion of Judah is Jesus, the Lamb.

Then the offspring of David, the Lord the King. So in heaven the elders and creatures all sing and forever give glory to Jesus our King.

With harps and with vials they join the great throng of the angels with Jesus and sing this new song.

[18:28] You are worthy, you are worthy for once you were slain to redeem all your people forever.

Amen. And those who were sinners, defiled in his sight, are arrayed in pure garments, in praise to unite.

Sing to him who has loved us and cleansed us from sin. To the risen Lord Jesus, glory, amen.

Amen. His love makes the rebel, a priest and a king. He has brought us and taught us this new song to sing.

You are worthy, you are worthy for once you were slain. Every nation shall praise you forever.

[19:38] Amen. How helpless and hopeless we sinners have been. If he never had loved us till cleansed from our sin.

Sing to Jesus who loved us and cleansed us from sin. Unto him be the glory forever.

Amen. Come bow down to Jesus, repent of all wrong. And believing join with us to sing this new song.

You are worthy, you are worthy for once you were slain. And you triumph forever and ever.

Amen. Amen. Let's go a little bit further into trying to understand and grasp these passages.

[20:55] I'd like us to come back to this or to keep coming back to this of his accent. so you remember my example of this is pastor stewart mcrary who preached to his congregation at holland road about fiat and for months people didn't understand what he was talking about fiat saved by fiat justified by fiat because he had a northern irish accent and what he was actually saying was faith english accent southern english accent faith so you've got to understand the accent and you get to know it by listening you think ah justified by now what what could he be saying faith is yes that's what he's saying so let's getting the accent of uh the writer of uh of this book what sort of things do we need to look out for which uh help us to understand what he's saying um so let me start off by saying i think would you agree with me that he used symbolism could you give an example of something symbolic anybody like to volunteer a symbol seals so they're not seals are they they're um yeah okay seals yep uh something that binds something up yes anything else that's a symbol yes the lamb the lamb is a symbol isn't it but we are so used to making the identification between jesus and the lamb we don't we forget that it's a symbolic thing and if the if the writer had said uh the squirrel of god or the badger of god that would be completely different there is a specific content to the symbol of the lamb so he uses symbolism and if i were to say he uses symbolic numbers would you agree with that yeah okay so give me a quick example of a number that's seven

yeah seven if we listen to his accent when when he uses the word seven he seems to use the word seven to mean the completeness of something i mean i'm prepared be prepared to hone that definition but it does seem to imply completeness and we've already mentioned i think somebody would said 12 12 being the number of the tribes and also the apostles so uh and he plays around with that number so you get 12 plus 12 which is 24 and we're going to get 12 times 12 which is oh very good and a thousand which i'm not quite sure i think it just means big uh a big number because did we come across that in the reading yeah we did didn't we 144 000 so lots of 12 000 i think that the thousand probably means big maybe we can improve on that as we go through and um there was a thing that he did about uh the difference between between that and that do you remember the thing that he did that's an ear between hearing and seeing do you remember that bit i think he did it in

um it does say that it says it in isaiah chapter 6 that they'll be hearing and uh but never perceiving or seeing but never noticing something like that yeah that that is that is definitely a thing i don't think it's the thing that he's he's picking up on this can you remember can we have the microphone when he heard that a lion was coming and then he then he saw a lamb exactly yeah well done so it was chapter 5 verse 5 one of the elders said to me um see or behold the lion of judah the root of david has triumphed he is able to open the scroll and it's seven seals so he hears that and then he sees a lamb so the he hears lion and when he turns around to look he sees lamb and i think he does this again i think this is one of the ways in which he talks because there aren't two saviors there isn't a lion and a lamb two different saviors there's one saviour with two different aspects and let me just look at my notes is there anything else that we need to oh yes sorry candles oh yeah well yes they'd be symbols wouldn't they the lamps is that what you meant yeah i mean another thing that he seems to do is angels become part of the action it's it's it's a feature of this style of writing which we will have noticed and perhaps will notice again the other thing i was going to say was this idea of a storyboard do you know you know what a storyboard is it's when they're making a film uh and they want tom cruise to leap off a building and intercept a train and remove the plutonium and that sort of thing they will say when when they before they're making it they will make a storyboard a sort of cartoon of the different features of the action so there's tom cruise um noticing the train here he is there's the train here he is jumping onto the train and um and here he is rescuing the plutonium ray um or whatever so he's just sort of broken down into little little bit of bits of action and i think this is where we come in for on the screen here so can we just go back over this storyboard that was in chapter five the beginning of it which are semi already alluded to because there was nobody able to open the scroll so let's just take it to pieces so first of all there is a question posed so we're in we're we're not in chapter six we're in chapter five and around about verse two so there is a question posed and who quest who who who raises the question please what's the question who raises it a mighty angel that's verse two oh and the question is who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll now actually everybody knows the answer but it's it's told in a storyboard fashion uh so what is the first response so i i'm not going to feel anything in the that was the question posed it was said by a mighty angel and the first answer is no one okay the first answer is no one can open this and it's amplified this tragic answer this

disappointing frustrating answer is amplified by the fact that the writer weeps and weeps this is terrible this is appalling uh there's nobody worthy to open the scroll and then there is a second answer which comes in verse five which is what do yeah there is one don't weep don't cry thank you uh so and who gives this answer one of the elders it doesn't it pardon okay the the uh the the question was who gave that second answer and it was one of the elders who said to me do not weep so it's broken down into um a question to which uh who is worthy the answer nobody's worthy and then a second answer well actually yes there is somebody's worthy he's the lion of jesus worthy because he is by his uh um has triumphed and he is able to open the scroll and its seven seals so in in a sense in a in just a few sentence or two uh there's a backtrack which goes uh which sort of contradicts the first answer the first answer was nobody and then a second answer contradicts that says well actually yes there is somebody it's the lion of judah and if you would like a similar example in in my understanding by the same writer please look at john's gospel sorry a similar methodology uh in john's gospel chapter one in verse chapter one verse 10 talking about christ coming into the

world though the world was made through him the world did not recognize him he came to his own but his own did not receive him so okay nobody receives him yeah next verse but to all who did receive him to those who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of god it's the same sort of thing first of all the answer is nobody and then well actually let's backtrack but to all who did receive him i think this is a sort of feature that john uses to portray sort of subtlety or emphasis uh there's no one worthy except the lamb the only people who received christ are the people that god has chosen to do so so he's sort of giving us theology by this sort of storyboard of uh question answer oh saying to answer something like that do you get the sort of point i'm trying to make about how he does things right i think uh that will be useful and of course that we have the seven seals uh the scroll of the seven seals right so let's just take a look into chapter six we've got horses and i did look this up and i was rather delighted to see this there was a bbc radio four series called history of the world in a hundred objects which is quite a fascinating series they pick up on little objects down through the history of the world to say you know particular points in civilization or particular advances or things like that and they did one on this golden chariot i think it's actually quite small but it looks big doesn't it and i wrote this down for my own benefit as much as anybody uh i copied this off the british museum website the gold chariot comes from a hoard found near the oxus river in central asia it depicts a driver probably a satrap a governor of the persian empire satraps kept the peace regulated the law collected taxes in one of the empire's administrative provinces the persians built many new roads to enable communication and develop the first postal service wow religions freely intermingled in the empire and da da da da uh and he says uh cyrus the great transformed persia from a small kingdom to the world's first superpower and these messengers uh this sort of internet ancient internet system as it were of of horses and chariots was uh key to that and the prophet zechariah prophesies about horses that go to and fro and chariots that go to and fro and this is what he's this is what the the writer of the revelation is picking up on um please don't misunderstand the writer of the revelation is not writing in the time of cyrus the persian that was many many years before but he's picking up on this idea with these four horsemen right um okay so have a look in your bible how many trumpets are that's trumpets how many seals are there seven would you just like to look in your bible uh i tend to mark my bible for things like this you know little little pencil mark or something um can you locate the seven seals just just do it without you don't have to tell us but just look through your bible can you see where the seven seals are have you found them all you've only found five well you might have to go into the next chapter uh there are seven yeah what if your bible hasn't got seven seals please take it and get your money back because that there ought to be you know you've been sold short of you haven't got seven of them what do you notice about the way they're spread out yeah there's four uh and the fifth one comes fairly soon after the fourth that's it seems a bit different it's not it's not associated with a horse horse or horseman that's in chapter 6 verse 9 uh chapter 6 verse 12 is the sixth seal but then there's an awful big gap before you get the seventh seal in chapter 8 verse 1 yeah and all of the others are about a paragraph long apart from chapter 6 which has a long bit and then the did i say that right after seal 6 there's quite a long intervening bit before we get to seal number 7 in chapter 8 verse 1 which is very short so it is an interesting structure so i've tried to do that the lamb is opening the seals who speaks at the beginning of the opening of each seal yeah it's a live one of the living creatures and what does it what it what is the what does the living creature say come now it's an interesting point whether he says come to the horse or whether he's saying come lord jesus and before the coming these other things have to happen i don't know what the answer is i've heard i've heard both of them but it is interesting that he uses the word come and what the horseman doesn't come he goes so there's a there's something happening there so let's see i've got these uh there's the seals there's the horseman and you get one two three four so they're all more or less in parable parallel five is a bit different click six i would say if you read it six is the end of the world would you agree with me that the stars in heaven fell to earth the moon turns to blood the heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up and every mountain and island was removed from its place and the kings of the earth and everybody cower in fear because they say in verse 16 the or verse 17 the great day of wrath has come and who can withstand it that sounds very end of the world-ish to me and you'd almost say well if that's the end of the world but why is there any more chapters in the book because we've already got to the end but i think he does this going back on himself thing but perhaps in a little bit more noticeable way so that last bar is going to be seven where the silence in heaven but in between uh oh well let's i haven't got in between i think there is a a movement where it says i need this don't i there's the end of the

world but hold on hang on hang on there's something else needs to be said and that's said here before before the final before it's all wrapped up as it were do you get the idea a little bit i'll try and persuade you of that we've come to the end of the world here and they said well hold on hold on there's something you need to know and i'll put that in there and then we'll wrap everything up so let's see if we can get to that point see if i can persuade you of that so let's go through the seals um the first one anybody like to put into their own words what sort of thing happens with this rider when this uh agent goes out across the ancient world yeah use a mic and tell us yeah what a differing views some say this is christ because of the white horse and later on it speaks of the right horse white horse and the rider on the white horse others i've read suggest this is uh symbolism of military might and conquest going forward yeah and it can't be christ um so it depends which view you want to

[41:11] yeah i think i would go with that we have the lamb up on the throne so this is a different agent i would say at this point certainly there's the there is a rider on the white horse later but i would say at this point we have the lamb is up on the throne and this is another agent a bit like the horses went out in zechariah if you prepare to with to go with me on that then then let's hold that thought so i put conquest conquest military and the second one uh what would you would anybody like to say what's going on with this second rider war yeah thank you uh any particular sort of war people killing each other um just as a sort of side note they killed one another now please just try and imagine the mechanics of that so does it mean i kill you and you kill me they killed one another or does it mean i kill you you kill me you kill somebody else and they between them they kill one another as they had opportunity and space does that that makes more sense you can't really kill you know your partner each of you can you it must mean i'll just say that again uh he kills me but i will have killed you and you will have killed somebody else something like that it's just the use of this one another and i take it back into ephesians where it says submit to one another if you take that same idea it doesn't mean that everybody submits to everybody else equally it can mean that as you have opportunity and the correct position to do this there is submission going on and if we were in ephesians that would actually be quite a helpful illustration but put that in the back of your mind for another time okay so they kill one another so this might be civil war it's a sort of uh one another killing and uh the internal conflict uh what's the the third one what's going on here anybody like to guess this one or say what they think this one is i could tell you that uh the amount of wheat for a day's wages i believe is the amount that somebody would need to live on famine um yep yeah i mean it it is possible to buy it but you've got to pay everything you own to get it there isn't much left apart from the oil and the wine which are luxury goods this is my understanding of it and no problem with luxury goods so if if we were to say uh economic deprivation and inequality would that work uh i'm just trying to do this in a broad brush really uh deprivation inequality shortage of food have to pay a day's wages to get enough rice to live on for a day you can't feed your family for that if you're the wage earner uh people are gonna starve um and the fourth one death yeah death through what what sort of causes famine and plague disease wild beasts what is the most dangerous wild beast

statistically uh what is the most dangerous wild beast uh on the earth is it that wasn't the expect that wasn't what the answer i was expecting how do you substantiate that uh i thought it was the mosquito yeah it's not it's not the most dangerous amount rat you think rat oh well we've got loads of different views on it i thought i thought statistically the most dangerous beast was mosquito but um we've got other contenders for this when uh i remember teaching on this in sri lanka just uh while the war was reaching its final phase there was a war between the uh uh singalese majority uh government and the tamil separatists tamil separatists and at that time uh the uh it was a it's

obviously a civil war uh the the government were forcing the tamil uh the tamil tigers back towards a lagoon the tamil tigers were taking all the tamil population with them so even if they were trying to be civilians or had no sympathy with the tamil tigers they were driven along and uh the the tamil tigers for women uh whether they were enlisted or not they would cut their hair and if you if you were a woman who had your hair cut you would stand out as not being um a normal um normal singalese woman and you would be marked as if you were a tamil tiger which was a very cruel thing to do it was sort of forcible conscription by the and in the wake of this people were maimed um the normal course of keeping down mosquitoes uh wasn't didn't work there was disease and it was like the four horsemen of the apocalypse were riding out inside of the lecture room war internal conflict economic deprivation and equality and disease and plagues it was it was sort of enacted before one's very eyes yeah can we have the microphone uh fourth as in the number four or fourth as in oh yeah thank you very much yes that's a good uh so the question was in verse eight they were given power over a quarter or a fourth of the earth to kill by sword famine and plague and the wild by the wild beasts of the earth uh so it's a proportion that this horseman is not given free reign to do this to everybody but to a quarter and as we go on we'll find this is another accent thing he uses different proportions he'll go on and he'll say da da da da a third or da da da da da a half and so thank you for pointing us out because as we go through we can pick up on that can you explain why he uses those particular

I guess I don't know why it's a limit yes it's not it's not the whole thing it is proportional it is it is yeah yeah yeah yes exactly held back from doing as much damage as could be done it's just within limits and I think as we look out on the world today we see these things don't we wars rumours of wars Jesus said when you see these things don't be alarmed it doesn't mean that the end is yet it's just part of the ingredients of this this part of world history and I think these are the seals that the lamb is opening he's opening the scroll of world history this is what what it's going to be like does that make sense yeah okay so we did the four four seal the fifth one well I put something up on there which you might or might not have noticed but would anybody like to say what they think is the fifth seal the martyrs yeah martyrs somebody was going to say persecution yeah the persecuted church I mean let me explain the word martyr which you probably know already but in Greek martyr means witness and if you make it into a verb it means to witness to bring testimony and over the years because when Christians gave testimony they got killed it comes to mean to die for your testimony but originally it just means testimony and you get both of these here don't you 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 anybody take it any further about these these people what sort of thing are they saying say that again they're calling out for vengeance yes and how do they phrase it how long yeah how long oh Lord sovereign Lord holy and true till you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood it's a repeated question in the Bible not in every part of the Bible but it does crop up how long oh Lord so when Daniel was taking us through Habakkuk

I'm pretty sure it says that in Habakkuk how long oh Lord there is an unresolved issue in terms of justice in terms of God vindicating his people and it is unresolved until such time as God does bring justice to bear yeah yeah yeah carry on can you turn it up um oh summer it should have the little light should be on oh yeah just a little thing for I just say it's interesting to it's interesting to note isn't it that when the fifth under the altar the souls of those who have been slain suggests to me a kind of a preciousness that their soul should be beneath the altar very precious to God that they had forfeit their lives to him that certainly could be the case it certainly could be the case yeah yeah certainly could be the case uh they're definitely told they definitely ask how long and they're definitely told to wait a little longer until what yeah and there's going to be more but there's a again that's a fixed number isn't it until the full number of their fellow servants who were killed uh until that plan is completed and again again that speaks about a limit doesn't it and uh a plan and uh an end to that okay so I put unresolved christian suffering yeah a white robe does it say somewhere the white robes which are the righteousness of the saints they were given white linen to wear oh oh I'm so glad you're here yeah okay so chapter 19 which verse is it

[53:33] David uh oh um well 19 verse 8 fine linen bright and clean was given her to wear fine linen stands for the righteousness or righteous acts of god's holy people so that's a possibility no I don't think there is um in but sorry I might I might be wrong so our seminar's asked is there a picture in Isaiah of a robe of righteousness and I can't think of that but what I can think of is the bit where it says God clothed himself

with garments of vengeance and the breastplate of righteousness and the um belt of something or other should we look should we is that that might not be the one that you're thinking of let's look it's somewhere in Isaiah on the left hand side of the page um it's around about 61 around there somewhere 61 verse 10 ah right okay yeah thank you very much

I delight greatly in the Lord my soul rejoices in my God he has clothed me with garments of salvation yeah you're right absolutely I apologize yes you're right he arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest and a bride adorns herself with her jewels yes okay thank you yeah clothed with garments of righteousness yeah thank you I need to put that in my notes for future reference let's go back to um where were we we were in chapter 6 of revelation weren't we and we were going to can we go to the sixth seal what what's what would you like to tell us about the sixth seal what strikes us about that destruction if I'm saying destruction of nature would that work so that everything in nature is sort of unraveled verse 12 there was a great earthquake the sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair the whole moon turned blood red stars in the sky fell to earth as figs dropped from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind the heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up and every mountain and island was removed from its place it's complete unraveling of creation isn't it and put with that is the effect on people which people kings and everybody yes there's a list from top to bottom isn't it of all the strata of society if we can put it that way and what effect does it have on these people sorry

Jerome terror it's difficult isn't it as we sit here in a reasonably warm room and comfortable room to grasp the awfulness of what's depicted here the terror of that final day and what is the question that is attached to that final day because there is a question to which we find an answer who can stand it's a little bit like who can open the scroll who can stand and it's I mean what a question that is who can stand on that day who can stand on the day of the wrath of the lamb I think of that incident in I think it was the synagogue in Capernaum where Jesus asks a question about whether it's lawful or appropriate to heal on the Sabbath and the people sitting around seem to not be very keen on this poor guy being healed on the

Sabbath and Jesus looks around angry and distressed at their hardness of heart and I think what it must be for Jesus to be angry we're used to think of Jesus as loving and compassionate and gracious which he is and for him to be angry that must be an awful thing you know if you think about I don't know think about your mum or dad when you were little or whoever was looking after you and if they were kind to you you appreciated that but if they were angry you know somebody who has that sort of kind disposition to be angry with you you must have been in real trouble and here is the wrath of the lamb it is so terrible that he says who can stand it and you'd almost think the answer is nobody except we go back here so this bit deserves more than the five minutes it's going to get but I'm going to just pick out on this in chapter 7 verse 1 here are the angels who are in charge of wrapping everything up you know packing it all away dismantling everything you know it's like when you move out of your flat or something somebody packs everything away and puts it all in boxes and the angels are in charge of packing everything away and another angel because it's always angels involved in this verse too says wait wait wait wait wait no no no no you can't back everything up yet until we've sort of referred to this question who can stand and some people are going to stand who are the people who are going to stand the ones who have a seal on their foreheads there are perhaps we'll go into the identity of these people more precisely next time but these are sealed it's do you know where this is picking up on the idea of sealing on the foreheads it is it is in well in

Ezekiel there is a before the destruction of Jerusalem there is a man that goes around and he has a writing instrument and he makes a mark on top on the foreheads of the people who are not involved with rebellion those who are seeking the Lord and they are spared because they've got the seals on their forehead maybe next time we'll look that one up but these are the people who are sealed and they won't get destroyed could you think of New Testament references to being sealed sealed with the Holy Spirit yeah there is a different sort of mark that sort of counterpoint to this seal which is the mark of the beast but let's stick with the seal I think I've got some references to this anybody find a reference in Ephesians to the seal

[61:41] I did write it down but I can't find why I wrote it so Ephesians 1 verse 13 thank you very much yes that's right you we he says in verse 12 presumably meaning the apostolic group we who were the first to put our

hope in Christ might be for the praise of his glory and you also who are not apostles who are just believers you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth the gospel of salvation when you believed you were marked in him with a seal the promised

Holy Spirit who is the deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession to the praise of his glory he says that when you believed you received the Holy Spirit it's like being marked with a seal and the seal says you will never be destroyed under the wrath of God on the day of wrath you will stand amen you will come through that you will not be washed away wiped away you won't be saying who can save us on that terrible day because you have the seal of God and the church of God is made indestructible through all the turmoil of these judgment I think that's a brilliant thing actually I just spoil wild illustration there's this 144,000 I would like to say that this is the whole church of God I probably need to come back and justify that which we'll try to do next time but 144,000 is a very precise number sorry precise number but it is a number if salvation were something which were entirely down to human free will you couldn't write the 144,000 you couldn't do that because you'd say God makes an offer of salvation but he has no idea who's going to take him up on it he just waits to see whether people will take him up on it and as far as God knows there might not be anybody there really it's down to everybody's free will but I think this goes a lot further than that doesn't it God says you will be in heaven heaven will be full of the people

I want it to be full of and when I was in school we used to have a school photograph which was one of these long thin ones did you ever have that and I remember when I had my first teaching appointment it was a boys school it got all the boys sitting around on chairs and standing in the correct place and this clockwork camera I think it would have been clockwork and it would go like that to get everybody and the naughty boys you know what I'm going to say don't you they would stand at that end and then they get photographed at that end run along behind and then when the camera got around to there they'd be photographed twice that's what they did anyway I've got these school photographs they're clever well yes clever people often are tempted to be naughty yes they creative they were creative probably one of them was called

Elon Musk whatever became of him anyway I've just derailed myself haven't I I've got the photographs there and what we have here is a sort of photograph ahead of time of the people who will be in heaven and if you're a believer your photograph has already been taken in heaven they've already been spotted around the throne and when I wrote these notes first time round I said Doris Pocock has been spotted in heaven most of you won't know Doris Pocock she was a little old lady she had a distorted jaw because when she was in her teens she'd had polio something like that and the doctors had said you're not going to survive into your twenties

[67:08] I mean how old was she 80s 90s something like that she was the most wonderful believer she put her trust in the Lord well she's been spotted in heaven and the guy who mentored me Les Hill all those years ago he's been spotted he's on the photograph!

somewhere and Chris Fry and we do know he's in that photograph somewhere yeah hold on let me finish my illustration yet and if you're a believer your photograph is there you will be there because that's God's sovereign plan to save his elect and bring them all safe home and I think that's tremendous isn't it yeah okay give it a try okay yeah let's have the microphone so we yep no I can't either keep just keep going keep going yeah I think maybe yeah just keep going yeah ah that's better

I can hear that yeah yeah these words really celebrate this the time is coming declares the Lord when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel with the house of Judah it will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them from the land and led them out of Egypt because they broke my covenant there was a husband to them declares the Lord this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time declares the Lord I will put my law in their minds and I will write it in their hearts I forgive their wickedness and I will remember their sins no more Amen thank you very much yes yes yes yes I will remember their sins we should stop let's sing something and then we will finish

I was going to suggest we sang when peace like a river because that has the verse in it the sky will be rolled back like a scroll it is number 804