

Exploring Revelation 14:

Silence In Heaven

The Final Three: The Last Three of the Seven Seals of Revelation.

The seven seals are divided into two groups of four and three. The first group comprises the four horsemen. Each one is introduced by "a living creature" in the heavenly sanctuary who invites all to behold what each seal reveals. These four horsemen represent four forms of warfare involving the church of God in the great controversy between Christ and Satan.

We now examine the three final seals. The fifth seal deals with the vindication of the martyrs of the church. The sixth seal deals with the preparation of the church in the time of the end, for the second advent of Christ. The seventh seal deals with the deliverance and reward of the church at the Second Advent.

THE FIFTH SEAL: "When he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the sound of them that were, slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice saying, How long O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood upon them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given to every one of them and it was said to them that they should rest yet for a little season until their fellow servants also and their brethren that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled." Revelation 6:9-11.

"I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain" or as the Greek has it, "had been slain for the word of God". This refers to the millions of martyrs slain under the pale horse of the fourth seal."

It refers to martyrdoms in the past, not to a then current period of martyrdoms as is taught by some today. They "cried from under the altar." This indicates that they were already martyred. What is the altar? Weymouth says, "the foot of the altar." The altar was the place in the sanctuary courtyard where the blood of the sacrifices was poured out. In the New Testament the Jewish sanctuary represents the true sanctuary in heaven above. But the court which was outside the sanctuary proper, is where the altar of burnt offerings stood. That altar in the court represented Calvary, which was situated on the earth. The blood of the martyrs was poured out on the earth, and so the altar represents the earth. The blood of the martyrs was certainly in the earth or under the altar of the earth.

What is the significance of the souls, "crying out." Are these disembodied spirits, as many conclude? Such a conclusion gravely misrepresents God. To represent the martyrs as being in the presence of our God, under an altar, crying for vengeance, gives an unfortunate picture of heaven. The word "souls" in scripture is often used to mean persons.

"While the ark was a preparing wherein a few that is eight souls were saved by water." 1 Peter 3:20.

How many people were saved by water at the time of the flood? Eight persons, and Peter described them as of eight souls." If the altar is on the earth, then the above description must represent an earthly scene. This is confirmed by sound Bible scholars, such as Ellicott, Adam Clarke, Albert Barnes, great scholars of yesteryear. These scholars held to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, but they never used these verses to teach that doctrine. Rather they believed that it represented, in a dramatic form, the need of redress of the millions of martyrs who had been slain under the fourth horseman. A similar picture is given in Genesis where the Lord came to Cain after he had slain Abel,

"And the Lord said to Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said I know not, am I my brother's keeper?"

And he said, What has thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood cries to me from the ground." Genesis 4:9-10.

Abel's murder called for redress and so with the murdered millions of martyrs. The fourth horseman had galloped on leaving in his wake the innocent blood of millions of believers. Hardly a hand was raised in their defense. They were victims of the apostate church. As the author of Great Controversy declares, "In the 13th century was established that most terrible of all the engines of the Papacy, the Inquisition. The Prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the hierarchy the mangled forms of millions of martyrs cried to God for vengeance upon that apostate power." Great Controversy, page 59.

It is informative to read in the papers of Leonid Schoner, who was beheaded in Rottenburg, Bavaria, in 1528, the following prayer, as written by him. This illustrated the need of redress for the martyrs.

"We are scattered like sheep having no shepherd. We have been compelled to forsake house and home. We are as night ravens which have flight in the rocks. Our chambers are in holes and crags. The world still rolls and rests not; it revels as if mad. They invent lies against us. They cease not their fires and murders. O Lord, how long wilt thou be silent? Let it come up before thy throne. How precious in your eyes is the blood of the holy ones. Therefore have we comfort in all our need, a refuge in Thee alone, And in none besides. But neither comfort or rest nor peace on this earth but he who hopes in Thee shall never be confounded." Dr. E. Thiele. "Outline Studies In Revelation," page 136.

Many are familiar with the poem by John Milton penned in response to the news of the massacre of the Waldenses in Northern Italy.

"Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold. Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old, When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones, Forget not: in Thy book record their grows, Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold, Slain by the bloody Piedmontese that rolled Mother with infant down the rocks, their moans The vales redoubled to the hills, and they to heaven, Their martyred blood and ashes sow Over all the Italian fields, where still doth sway The triple tyrant; that from these may grow A hundred fold, who, having learned Thy way, Early, may fly the Babylonian woe." John Milton. Secretary of State under Oliver Cromwell. England.

When the martyrs were done to death for their faith, they were clothed as it were, in the blackest garments of infamy. They were pictured by Mother Church as the vilest of criminals. They were spurned by society as scarcely human. They were looked upon as having the bodies of humans but the spirits of demons. They were deemed unworthy of the smallest mercy and deserving of the cruelest of deaths. In some of the museums of Europe, there are paintings of a typical Auto da fe. These were public martyrdoms and they give an idea of what occurred when a martyr was burned at the stake.

The martyr was stripped and tied to the stake while the firewood was heaped around him. A pulpit was then set up and a crowd assembled. A spokesman for Mother Church mounted the pulpit, and proclaimed the glories of Mother Church and the miserable character of the dissenter. The martyr was pictured in the blackest of hues, his guilt was so monstrous that there was more pity shown for the cringing purse snatcher or for the most violent murderer. The majority of the crowd would applaud as the martyr was consigned to the flames. The martyrs were universally regarded as the enemies of God. They were clothed in the blackest of black.

In response to the cry of the martyrs as symbolized in this fifth seal, the Lord vindicated their deaths. How did God vindicate them? It says **"and white robes were given to everyone of them" Verse 11.** What is the significance of white robes? How could white robes vindicate the death of millions of martyrs? White robes,

represent first of all, overcomers. **“He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment”**

Revelation 3:5

White robes also represent the righteousness of saints. **“The fine linen, clean and white is the righteousness of saints.” Revelation 19:8**

In this fifth seal, the evil, vile, heinous heretics are seen to be righteous and godly saints. In what way? How could these martyrs be clothed in white? How were they now seen to be saints instead of sinners? How were they now recognized as righteous instead of reprobates? What events transpired that transformed public opinion so dramatically? It was the Protestant Reformation. And how did the Reformation change the opinion of the world, concerning the martyrs?

In the Reformation Catholic priests and scholars were led to read the Word of God, and as a result, their eyes were opened. They saw the true gospel and then recognized who were the true saints. They were shocked into the realization of the fallen apostate condition of Mother Church. When they studied the prophecies of Daniel, and Revelation, they discovered that Mother Church was not the true church, but the Antichrist, “the man of sin,” “the harlot church,” “the little horn,” “the ten-horned beast.” In other words the enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If Mother Church was the Antichrist, then those who had dissented, those that were martyred, must have been the people of God. They must have been saints. They must have been righteous. Thus the mighty gospel proclamation by the Reformers of the 16th century, opened the eyes of the world, and the martyrs were now seen, not clothed in black, but clothed in white, saints of God. These horrible heretics, so called, were now seen as the favorites of heaven. What a dramatic change! What a reversal of public opinion. Thank God for the glorious Protestant Reformation.

It is interesting to notice the comment here of Dr. Ellicott, “There is also a sense in which a white robe is given to them in the eyes of men. Those whose names have been cast out as evil, have been honored by a repentant posterity with the robe of tardy praise. After generations garnished the sepulchers of the righteous that their fathers slew. The excommunicated in one age, are often the canonized of the next, for the dull world learns slowly and its purest honors are posthumous.” Commentary on Revelation, page 88.

The fifth seal is an exposure of the apostate church through the great Protestant Reformation. As a result, revival and restoration came to the true church.

LATER MARTYRDOMS: The fifth seal concludes by encouraging the martyrs that they, **“Should rest yet for a little season until their fellow servants and their brethren that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled.” Verse 11.**

Will there be further martyrdoms before the close of Probation? In the coming time of trouble, when the worship of the beast and his image is enforced, all those who will not comply, will be threatened with death. Revelation 13:15-17. This experience is confirmed, we believe, by the Spirit of Prophecy:

“When the fifth seal was opened John saw beneath the altar the company that were slain for the Word of God. After this came the signs described in the eighteenth of Revelation, when those who are faithful and true are called out from Babylon.” 7 Bible Commentary, page 968. M. S. 39. 1906.

What are “the scenes described” (not fulfilled) in Revelation 18:1-5 that are referred to in the latter part of the fifth seal? Revelation 18:1-5 describes The Loud Cry, The Call out of Babylon and the ensuing persecution

which climaxes in the death decree (Verse 5). ["Christ's Object Lessons," page 179.] These are the scenes in which the future martyrdoms will occur and for which the martyrs of the Dark Ages are instructed to wait.

"Many who shall be convinced of the truth, will come on the side of God's commandment keeping people. When this grand work is to take place in the battle, prior to the last closing conflict, many will be imprisoned, many will flee for their lives from cities and towns, and many will be martyred for Christ's sake in standing in defense of the truth." 3 Selected Messages, page 397.

The martyrs are told "to rest (or wait) for a little season" until the final martyrdoms are fulfilled. Why are they to wait? Because there is a time appointed when all the martyrs of Christ are to be avenged. **"Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night to him? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." Luke 18:7-8.**

This verse refers particularly to the saints in the time of Jacob's trouble. They will be avenged first of all in the seven last plagues and then at the Second Advent. The wrath of God in the seven last plagues is poured out upon those "who worship the beast and his image." They will have been responsible for the death of the martyrs in the last days. The martyrs of the great tribulation of the Dark Ages will be avenged at the third advent when their persecutors will rise in "the resurrection to damnation" John 5:29.

There are some who claim that the fifth seal applies to the end time. This must be rejected because the end time is covered by the sixth seal. The fifth seal must therefore cover the period prior to the time of the end. The fact that the martyrs who cry for redress in the fifth seal are instructed to rest for a little season until the final group of martyrs meet their fate indicates that they must exist prior to the end time otherwise there would be neither time nor room for the second group of martyrs to exist. The Spirit of Prophecy applies the cry of the martyrs to the past:

"In the 13th century was established the most terrible of all the Inquisition. The mangled forms of millions of martyrs cried to God for vengeance upon that apostate power." Great Controversy, page 59.

There are two statements in the Spirit of Prophecy that need to be examined in connection with the fifth seal. "The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress which the prophets have described as the time of Jacob's trouble. The cries of the faithful, persecuted ones ascend to heaven. And as the blood of Abel cried from the ground, there are voices also crying to God from the martyrs' graves, from the sepulchers of the sea, from mountain caverns, from convent vaults, 'How long O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?' The Lord is doing His work. All heaven is astir. The judge of all the earth is soon to arise and vindicate His insulted authority. The mark of deliverance will be set upon the men who keep God's commandments, who revere His law, and who refuse the mark of the beast or of his image." 5 Testimonies, page 451.

Here the prophet shows when the cry of the saints during Jacob's trouble will be heard and their sufferings avenged. This will commence at the close of probation when God begins to mete out punishment upon the persecutors of His people. The second statement reads, "From garrets, from hovels, from dungeons, from scaffolds, from mountains and deserts, from the caves of the earth and the caverns of the sea, Christ will gather His children to Himself. On earth they have been destitute, afflicted and tormented. Millions have gone down to the grave loaded with infamy because they refused to yield to the deceptive claims of Satan. By human tribunals the children of God have been adjudged the vilest of criminals but the day is near when 'God is judge Himself.' Then the decisions of earth shall be reversed. 'The rebuke of His people shall He take away.' White robes will be given to everyone of them. And they shall call them the redeemed of the Lord." Christ

Object Lessons, page 182-183.

In this statement the prophet again reveals the time when God will avenge His people. The phrases taken from the fifth seal and used in the above settings are not an exposition of the fifth seal. The phrases are borrowed from Revelation 6 and are used out of context in a homiletic sense. Such uses of scripture are allowable in preaching and writing.

THE SIXTH SEAL: We now come to the sixth seal of Revelation. This seal is different from the other six seals because it is couched in literal language, whereas the other six are all in symbolic language.

“I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal and lo there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, even as a fig free casts her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind.” Revelation 6:12-13.

Some attempt to symbolize sections of the sixth seal, but this is inconsistent. Either the seal is symbolic or literal. One commentator gives the first half of the seal a symbolic application, but the second half a literal application. This effectively destroys the impact of the prediction. [Dr. Desmond Ford, “Crisis,” volume 2, page 378.] It turns an orderly, logical exposition of scripture into something that is hazy and uncertain. Why is the sixth seal in literal language when the other seals are symbolic? We suggest two reasons:

1. There would be a problem in trying to symbolize the final cataclysmic events prior to the Second Advent. How would one symbolize an earthquake, the darkening of the sun, the moon turning to blood, and the literal falling of the stars?
2. The events of the sixth seal are couched in literal terms so that God’s people would not fail to recognize them as the signs of the end. Most of the events of this seal were foretold by Jesus in the Gospels. They were given as warning signs of the last days, and of the special need of the saints to be ready for the Second Advent. We believe that God couched them in literal terms so that His people would not fail in recognizing them.

When Jesus described the events associated with the Second Advent, he listed seven events. the darkening of the sun, the moon not giving its light, the stars failing, the powers of heaven being shaken, the sign of the son of man, the mourning of the unsaved, and the actual appearing of Christ. Six of the seven events listed in Mathew 24:29-30 are repeated in the sixth seal of Revelation. Three of the events of Matthew 24 involve the sun, the moon and the stars, in the same order as in the sixth seal. These signs were to occur “immediately after the tribulation of those days” i.e. the tribulation during the papal supremacy. The last martyrdom of that period occurred in 1762 AD. Immediately after that, “the sun would be darkened and the moon would not give it’s light.” This was fulfilled in 1780 AD which was indeed after the tribulation. However in the sixth seal the darkening of the sun was preceded by a great earthquake.

“Did such an earthquake occur that would fitly represent the opening of the sixth seal? In the record of earthquakes between 1600 and 1800 AD approximately 1,800 destructive earthquakes occurred, [“British Association for the Advancement Of Science.”] Of these, the greatest and most spectacular was the Lisbon earthquake of November 1, 1755, 25 years prior to the darkening of the sun. History confirms that the Lisbon earthquake was the greatest known to that time, which had a profound affect upon European society.

“The effects of the Lisbon earthquake, were distributed very nearly 4 million square English miles of the earth’s surface. A most astonishing space and greatly surpassing anything of its kind ever recorded in history.” ‘History & Philosophy of Earthquakes’. J. Nourse, page 334 (1757)

“The great earthquake of 1755 extended over a tract of at least 4 million square miles-it pervaded the greater

proportion of the continents of Europe, Africa and America. All Africa was shaken by this tremendous convulsion. The city of Lisbon contained about 150,000 inhabitants. Mr. Barretti says, 90,000 persons are supposed to have been lost on that fateful day." Robert Sears. 'Wonders of the World,' pages 50, 58, 381.

"Among the earth movements which in historic times have affected the kingdom of Portugal, that of November 1, 1755 takes first rank; as it does also in some respects, in all recorded earthquakes, in 6 minutes 60,000 persons perished." 'Earthquakes' W. H. Hobbs, pages 142-143, (1907).

"By far the most spectacular earthquake of earlier times was that of Lisbon in 1755. This has some claim to be regarded as the greatest earthquake on record. The disaster shocked all Europe and the moralists and the wiseacres were not slow to make capital of it." 'About Earthquakes' G. A. Eiby, pages 141-142 (1957).

"Probably the most famous of all earthquakes is that which destroyed Lisbon on November 1, 1755. Alexander Van Humboldt stated that the total area shaken, was four times that of Europe." 'Earthquakes' Encyclopedia Britannica (1961 Edition) Volume 7, page 848.

This earthquake profoundly affected all strata's of society, "The Lisbon earthquake, put both the theologians and philosophers on the defensive ... for many weeks, as we see in the letters and memoirs of that time, people in distant parts of Europe went to bed in alarm, relieved in the morning to find that they had escaped the fate of Lisbon one night more." 'Life of Voltaire' J. Parton. Volume 2, pages 208-209.

This earthquake indeed was recognized as a sign of the end. "The earthquake made all men thoughtful. They mistrusted their love of the dram and filled the churches instead." 'Life of Voltaire' S. G. Tallentyre, page 319. (1903).

In that very year 1755, Englishman John Biddolf, composed a poem recognizing the Lisbon quake as a sign of the last days.

"Who can with curious eyes this globe survey
And not behold it tottering with decay?
All things created God's designs fulfill,
And natural causes work His destined will.
And that eternal Word, which cannot lie,
To mortals has revealed in prophecy
That in these latter days such signs should come,
Preludes and prologues to the general doom.
But not the Son of man can tell that day;
Then, lest it find you sleeping, watch and pray."

'Poem on the Lisbon Earthquake' John Biddolf, London 1755.

The next events in the sixth seal are the darkening of the sun, the moon being turned to blood and the stars falling from heaven. Verses 12-13. As mentioned previously, this is a repetition of the prediction of Jesus as recorded in three of the gospels. Jesus had predicted that "immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened" Matthew 24:29. The tribulation ceased in 1762 with the death of a Protestant pastor in France. In 1773 the Jesuits, the chief instigators of persecution, were temporarily outlawed by Pope Clement XIV.

The prediction concerning the sun was fulfilled in the famous Dark Day of May 19, 1780, which affected chiefly the north-eastern area of North America. The true cause of this event is not known. It was not the result of an eclipse but it caused consternation in most places where it was observed.

"The Dark Day, May 19, 1780 - so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day extending over all New England. In some places, persons could not see to read cannon print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening songs, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barnyard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o'clock in the morning, and continued till the middle of the next night, but with differences of degree and duration in different places. For several days previous, the wind had been variable, but chiefly from the southwest and the northeast. The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known." Webster's Dictionary (edition 1869).

"That this darkness was not caused by an eclipse, is manifest by the various positions of the planetary bodies at that time; for the moon was more than one hundred and fifty degrees from the sun all that day and as to the moon, she was at that time more than forty hours motion past her opposition." 'Our First Century' 1776-1876. R. M. Deveas. 'The Wonderful Dark Day, 1780.' page 95.

"Dark Day, Men Filled With Awe and Alarm. Refers especially to May 19, 1780, which was very dark in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey, causing great alarm." 'The Universal Cyclopaedia' 'Dark Day' (1900)

The darkening of the sun occurred in the northeast of North America. Why in such a limited area of the world? Scripture does not reveal the reason, but we suggest two reasons why this might have been.

1. The Christian churches of the day had become very worldly, and the truth of the Second Advent was neglected together with the signs that had been mentioned by Jesus. This was especially true of the churches of North America. As the author of Great Controversy declared, "The heavenly signs were given to arouse Christians particularly in North America." Great Controversy, page, 309.

2. A second reason is that soon after, in the area where these sky signs appeared, a remarkable revival of interest arose in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation and these Christians recognized the events as the signs given by Jesus, warning of His return. (7 Bible Commentary, page 779)

Whatever the cause of the darkening of the sun, it certainly occurred at the time predicted and met the specifications of the prediction. [One modern investigator, on the basis of news paper reports of that time, has advanced the opinion that the Dark Day of May 19, 1780 was caused by forest fires. This has led some to seriously question the event as constituting a fulfillment of the prediction. In answer we would suggest that to base a conclusion upon newspaper reports is very questionable and should not be taken very seriously. M. Sprengel. "Adventist Review," May 22, 29; June 5, 1980.] The same night when the moon arose, it was a full moon, indicating that it was not an eclipse, it appeared red like blood. But ere long it completely disappeared from sight and the blackness of the night was so deep that even horses lost their way.

"At night it was so inky dark that a person could not see his hand when held up, nor even a white sheet of paper." 'History of Weare, New Hampshire' 1735-1888. (1888).

"Nor was the darkness of the night less uncommon and terrifying than that of the day; notwithstanding there was almost a full moon, no object was discernible, but by the help of some artificial light." Dr. Samuel Tenney, 1785, 'Collections of Massachusetts Historical Society,' Volume 1, 1792.

"The darkness of the following night was so intense that many who were but a little way from home, on well-known roads, could not, without extreme difficulty, retrace the way to their own dwellings." 'Sketches of the History of New Hampshire' John W. Whiton (1834).

The next event listed in the seal is the falling of the stars. **"The stars of heaven fell to the earth even as a fig tree casts her untimely (or green) figs as she is shaken of a mighty wind." Revelation 6:13.**

This refers not to the fixed stars as such, but to meteors. Did meteors appear after the Dark Day of 1780 in such a way as to constitute a fulfillment of this prediction? Have not there always been falling stars? Meteors have been traced back only as far as 902 AD. Very little was known or understood concerning meteors till 1798 AD. At that time two German students reported their observations and conclusions in regard to meteors. [J.C. Hickey. "Introducing the Universe," Pages 85-86.]

"The first spectacular fall of meteors was in 1799 AD. It was observed mostly in central and South America. ('The Ancient Leonids,' pages 80-82, 84. W. Fisher.)

The most spectacular fall was in 1833. "The most magnificent meteor shower on record." 'The Ancient Leonids,' pages 79-80.

"For nearly four hours the sky was literally ablaze. More than a billion shooting stars appeared over the United States and Canada alone." P. Millman 'The Telescope.' (May-June 1940)

It startled the population and many recognized it as a fulfillment of the prediction of Jesus and of the sixth seal of Revelation. It is interesting to notice the manner in which the stars were predicted to fall. "Even as a fig tree casts her untimely (or green) figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind." The stars were not to fall like ripe figs, directly in a straight line to the ground, but like figs under pressure, which snap off and fly away in the wind. Eyewitnesses' accounts of the falling stars confirm this description.

"It may be doubted, whether any description has surpassed, in accuracy and impressiveness, that of the old negro in Virginia, who remarked 'It is awful, indeed, sir, it looked like ripe crab-apples falling from the trees, when shaking them for cider.'" J.T. Buckingham 'The Meteoric Shower,' pages 47-48 (1834).

"This language of the prophet has always been received as metaphorical. It was literally fulfilled in the phenomena of yesterday, so as no man before yesterday had conceived to be possible that it should be fulfilled. And how did they fall? Neither myself nor one of the family heard any report; and were I to hunt through nature for a simile, I could not find one so apt to illustrate the appearance of the heavens as that which St. John uses in the prophecy." Henry Dana Ward 'The New York Journal of Commerce,' November 14 (1833).

"The observers saw that the meteors' darted away from a single point in the sky; the meteors 'were like the ribs of a gigantic umbrella.'" W.J. Fisher 'The Ancient Leonids' (1934).

With the falling of the meteors, in 1799 and 1833, there commenced a new division of astronomy called "Meteoric Astronomy". It was discovered that these falling stars which were called Leonids, (because they appeared under the constellation of Leo) came in cycles of 33.25 years. The first fall was in 1799. 33.25 years later in 1833 came the next fall, and the third fall came in 1866. This third fall was seen in Britain, Europe, Africa and parts of Asia. Many scientists concluded that the Leonids would appear every 33.25 years. Thus when the next 33.25 years arrived in 1899 there was great expectation. The world was alerted to watch but there was great disappointment.

The Leonids did not appear. They still race through outer space, but there are no regular spectacular appearances. Why is this? We suggest that if the Leonids had come regularly every 33.25 years, they would not have been seen as special signs of a coming event in the history of the world. These celestial events occurred at a particular time as signs, to mark the commencement of the final era in the history of the world, called "the time of the end". This term is derived from the book of Daniel. It began at the close of 1260 years of papal supremacy which concluded in 1798. Around that important date in prophecy the celestial signs occurred. First of all the sun in 1780, then the moon the same night, then the stars in 1799, 1833 and 1866. In

these signs God was telling mankind that the last days had begun. Thus, ever since 1798, we have been in the time of the end, the last days. Christians should have been expecting the second advent ever since 1798.

It is informative to note the correspondence between the events of Matthew 24:29-30 and the events of Revelation 6:12-17 in the sixth seal.

REVELATION 6:12-17	MATTHEW 24:29-30
1. Great earthquake	Not mentioned
2. Sun darkened	Sun darkened
3. Moon as blood	Moon unlit
4. Stars fall	Stars fall
5. Atmospheric heaven departs	Heavenly powers shaken
b. Great earthquake	No mention
7. No mention	Sign of Son of Man
8. Flight and Cry of Unsaved	Populace mourns
9. Coming of Christ	Coming of Christ

Altogether there are nine events and it is enlightening to compare the details of these dramatic awe inspiring scenes of the Second Advent.

We now stand between Verse 13 and Verse 14. The next great event in history, as far as this line of prophecy is concerned is described thus, **“And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.” Verse 14.**

What heaven is this that departs as a scroll? It is not the third heaven, for that is where God’s throne is. Undoubtedly it is the first heaven, or atmospheric heaven. However at the Second Advent other areas of space will be affected. Jesus said, “the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” (Matthew 24:29) This refers to the powers of the second heaven, the sun, moon and stars. Both the first and second heavens will be disturbed when Christ in power and glory streams through space to this planet. The apostle Paul confirms this fact. **“I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.” Hebrews 12:25-27.**

At the Second Advent not only will our planetary system be greatly disturbed, but our planet, it appears, could be affected in its rotation upon its axis.

“The powers of heaven are the sun, moon and stars. They rule in the heavens. The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon and stars will be moved out of their place. They will not pass away but be shaken by the voice of God. Dark heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back, then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God.” Early Writings page 41.

“The heavens departed as a scroll” or “The atmosphere parted and rolled back”. This probably refers to the cloudy atmosphere, not the air that surrounds the planet, otherwise all life would cease. Associated with the awesome atmospheric disturbances is a violent upheaval upon the earth.

“And every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”

This mammoth earthquake is also described under the 7th plague. **“There was a great earthquake, such as**

was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great-and the cities of the nations fell. And every island fled away and the mountains were not found.” Revelation 16:17-21.

What an earthquake! It is the destruction of the world’s civilization. As the author of Great Controversy writes, “The firmament (atmosphere) appears to open and shut. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of the hurricane, like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom and Gomorrah for wickedness, are swallowed up by the angry waters. The proudest cities of the earth are laid low, the lordly palaces upon which the world’s great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes. Prison walls are rent asunder, and God’s people, who have been held in bondage for their faith, are set free.” Great Controversy, page 637-638.

We now come to the actual appearance of Christ in the heavens. As a result of the atmospheric disturbances the world’s inhabitants will be able to see into the vast distance. They behold the **“sign of the son of man, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Matthew 24:30.** The sixth seal then describes the reaction of the unsaved when they behold Jesus Christ coming in the distant heavens.

“And the kings of the earth and the great men and the rich men and chief captains and the mighty men and every bond man and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains,” Revelation 6:15.

Why do they hide? Because they know it is doomsday. And how do they know? Because the message of His coming has gone to every nation, especially in the ‘Loud Cry’ of Revelation 18. All classes of the unsaved, have supported the false church and now in despair they call to the mountains and rocks to **“fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sits upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand.” Verses 16-17.**

This fearful flight of the unsaved, reveals that when Christ returns, He comes gradually to the world. He does not come in a sudden, blinding flash and snatch away His people. For the unsaved to flee to the mountains it would need a certain amount of time, indicating that Christ must gradually approach the earth.

In this fateful final scene is heard the prayer of despair. They have rejected Him, who is the Rock of ages, and now they pray to the mountains and rocks to hide them from His face. “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne.” What a tragedy? Here we have a dramatic demonstration of divine law.

“Be not deceived, God is not mocked for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Galatians 6:7.

These supporters of the apostate church had turned away from the truth of Christ, now they turn away in despair from the face of Christ. They had refused to fall upon the Rock and be broken in conversion, now they plead for the rocks to fall on them. They had hid themselves from the light of God’s law, now in agony they hide themselves from the light of the glory of Christ. They had rejected the call to stand for Christ, now they cry, “Who shall be able to stand?”

They failed to apply “the blood of the Lamb,” now they feel “the wrath of the Lamb”. They despised “the day of salvation”, now they despair, in “the great day of His wrath.”

Seven classes of the unsaved are presented here. These represent all humanity, from the highest to the

lowest. Birth, position, power, talent, mean nothing now, just as they meant nothing with God all along. What a lesson for man today! We dare not look to those admired by the world, for a lead in the things of God. Beware of the opinions and example of the world's leading lights, for one day they will rush to the mountains and rocks in utter despair.

At this hour two intensive prayers will be heard - the prayer of the majority who have followed the popular way - they will pray to the rocks and mountains, and the prayer of the minority - the remnant - who have followed the Lamb, keeping His commandments. Their prayer will be, **"Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for him. We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."** Isaiah 25:9.

How they so patiently waited! They waited through persecution, through the death threat, through the plagues, through pursuit by the mobs; they have waited with tremendous endurance and now at last their Savior finally appears. What unutterable relief that will be? Between the sixth and seventh seals is the seventh chapter of Revelation. Why is this chapter so inserted? Undoubtedly it is placed there to answer the desperate question, "Who shall be able to stand?" All should know the answer to that question - it is the most vital of all questions for earth's last generation, and the answer is found in Revelation seven. John beheld four angels holding back the four winds, denoting the judgments of God. Why are they holding them back?

"I saw another angel ascending from the east having the seal of the living God, and he cried with a loud voice, saying hurt not the earth till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Revelation 7:1-3.

The only man who will stand when Christ comes is the man who has the seal of God in his forehead. A second reason why this chapter is placed between the sixth and seventh seals, is that chapter 7 reveals the final destiny and reward of those who have stood faithfully for Christ.

Thus the close of the sixth seal reveals the fall of the apostate church. By then the apostate church will be worldwide, involving all the unsaved. "All that dwell on the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of Life." Revelation 13:8. On the other hand, it reveals the sealing of those who comprise the true church and assures them of deliverance at the second advent.

SEVENTH SEAL: "When he had opened the seventh seal there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." Revelation 8:1.

What a contrast! A seeming anticlimax. To the contrary, this seal is one of the most thrilling of the seven. Under the sixth seal were tremendous upheavals. The great earthquake, the sun blacked out, the moon as blood, the stars falling to earth, atmospheric disturbances, a second mighty earthquake, the world's population stricken with terrifying panic and then, silence! Why the silence?

There are two reasons for the silence. Normally in the presence of God there is continual music and praise. **"They rest not day nor night, crying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." Revelation 4:8.**

What could bring silence to heaven? Once before there was silence in heaven. Its glorious atmosphere was turned to one of grief. Why the grief? Has sorrow ever afflicted our Heavenly Father? The answer is yes. His heart was afflicted with sorrow when He gave His only begotten Son, when, to save our guilty race, He had to withdraw His presence from His beloved son as He hung upon the cross; when amid the fearful darkness, Jesus, in that agonizing death cry, exclaimed, "My God, my God, why has Thou forsaken me?" Upon the cross, Jesus the beloved Son, died of a broken heart. As the author of "Desire of Ages" declares,

“God suffered with His son. Angels beheld the Savior’s agony. They saw their Lord enclosed by legions of satanic forces, His nature weighed down with a shuddering mysterious dread. There was silence in heaven. No harp was touched. Could mortals have viewed the amazement of the angelic host as in silent grief they watched the Father separating His beams of light, love and glory from His beloved Son, they would better understand how offensive in His sight is sin.” Desire of Ages, 693.

But why the silence at the Second Advent? Will there be any event that could bring sorrow again to the heart of God? Yes. At the Second Advent all the unready, all the unsaved, will meet their doom.

“The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in the saints.” 2 Thessalonians 2:7-10.

The second advent brings about the destruction of the millions of the unsaved. What a shocking and tragic event this will be? And this tragedy will grieve the heart of God.

“As I live, said the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die.” Ezekiel 33:11.

We suggest that this is the first reason for silence in heaven at the Second Advent. But why the half hour? This suggests a second reason for the silence in heaven. This is a symbolic prophecy therefore the half hour is symbolic time. In prophecy symbols extend to the Second Advent. This means that the year-day principle still operates of a day for a year. A half hour is 1/48 of a Bible year. A bible year contains 360 days. Therefore 1/48 of 360 equals 7.5 of our literal days.

THE HALF HOUR OF PROPHECY

A Half Hour	=	1/48 of a Day.
One Day	=	One Year.
A Bible Year	=	360 Days. Therefore
A 0.5 Hour	=	1/48 of 360 Therefore
A 0.5 Hour	=	7.50 Days

This would mean that there is silence in heaven for 7.50 literal days. Some claim that there is no prophetic time of less than one day. This is pure assumption and must be rejected, for there is no suggestion of it in scripture. It is also claimed by some that all prophetic time ended in 1844. “Time shall be no longer.” Revelation 10:6. But this refers to the prophetic periods of the book of Daniel of which there are four, the 1260 years, the 1290 years, the 1335 years and the 2300 years. When it says that “there shall be time no longer,” it is speaking of the great chronological time periods of the book of Daniel. All chronological time ended in 1844. There is no longer any more chronological prophetic time after 1844. In other words there are no prophetic dates after 1844. However in symbolic prophecy, when time is mentioned it is still symbolic time until the Second Advent. After the Second Advent, time then reverts back to literal time. Symbols cease at the Second Advent, and this is why the 1,000 years of Revelation 20 must be interpreted as literal years, not symbolic.

What then is the significance of the 7.50 literal days in connection with the Second Advent? When Jesus Christ returns to this world, heaven will be emptied of its inhabitants, except the Father. [Some claim that God the Father also accompanies Jesus Christ when he returns to this world. However there is no actual scriptural statement that upholds this view. The Second Advent is always associated with Jesus Christ. Surely if God the

Father who is the first person in the Godhead, is coming to this world there would be abundant evidences of it in scripture and/or the S.O.P.] All the angelic host accompany Christ to the world. **“When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.” Matthew 25:31.**

The Second Advent will be the greatest display of power and glory ever witnessed. **“He shall come in his own glory and in his Father’s and of the holy angels.” Luke 9:26.**

All the inhabitants of heaven, and probably the leaders of other worlds as well as others, will accompany Christ. But the Father remains alone, awaiting the return of His Son with the saints. Undoubtedly He waits in silence. There is no praise because none is present to produce it. The sinless universe for six thousand years has intently witnessed the great controversy on earth. Now, in the great climax of the controversy, in the grand finale of the war between good and evil, in the battle of Armageddon the unnumbered hosts of heaven are present to witness the scene.

“The armies which were in heaven followed him and he shall smite the nations and he shall rule (or destroy) them with a rod of iron, and he treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of the mighty God.” Revelation 19:14-15.

We suggest that the Father waits for 7.50 days. Why 7.50 days? The time taken for the cataclysmic events of the Second Advent undoubtedly will be very short, for Jesus said, “Behold I come quickly.” Why then 7.50 days? One answer is suggested by the author of “Early Writings,”

“We were changed and caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. We all entered the cloud together and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns and with His own right hand placed them on our heads, He gave us harps of gold and palms of victory.” Early Writings, page 16.

The reason for the seven day period for the saints’ ascension is not stated but if the saints are to spend seven glorious days on their return journey to the kingdom, that leaves just half a day for the events of the second advent, i.e. Jesus’ journey from heaven to earth, the resurrection of the just, the destruction of the unsaved, and the translation of the living saints. Then the saints of God begin that epic journey of seven awe inspiring days through outer space, back to the Father’s house. What a marvelous prospect! In that great reunion day all the saints will return together to the kingdom. There we shall receive the promised reward.

“I beheld and lo a great multitude which no man could number of all nations and kingdoms and people and tongues stood before the throne and before the lamb clothed with white robes and palm in their hands, and cried with a loud voice saying Salvation to our God which sits upon the throne and to the Lamb.” Revelation 7:9-10.

Imagine the glorious experience when we finally stand before the throne, and see the face of our wonderful God. **“They shall hunger no more neither thirst anymore ...and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” Revelation 7:13, 17.**

“And there shall be no more death, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” Revelation 21:4.