

## Chapter Seventeen

### The Seal Judgements

*"... John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw."*

*Revelation 1:2*

We have gone over some of the major events in this seven year Tribulation period. Now we will look at the Seal judgements in more detail. They are described for us in Revelation Chapters Six and Eight. As we mentioned before, the seals are each one year long. The figurative descriptions represent what the Apostle John actually witnessed. And this is the first of three keys which unlock the figurative language of the Revelation.

I credit Hal Lindsey with the observation that 43 times we hear John say, "I looked and I saw" or words to that effect.<sup>1</sup> This observation is important because we believe this first century man witnessed 21st century events. And it tells us how to interpret what John wrote.

Can you imagine yourself taken up on a UFO? Never seeing a space ship before, it would all be new. Let's say they take you for a ride around the galaxy. When you get back, you are asked to write about what you saw. How would you describe it? Wouldn't you talk about things you saw in terms of similar things that you know about? If you saw the UFO from afar, you might describe it as a flying saucer. You know, a coffee cup saucer up-side down and whizzing through the air. The inside might look like an airplane cockpit. You get the point.

I think the Apostle John related the same way. He described 21st century events and hardware in 1st century terms.

The second key to understanding the book of Revelation is realizing all the figurative language is defined somewhere in the Bible. Many

times the definitions are in the same book. This means one has to be familiar enough with the Bible to know the definitions of the figurative language. For example, the word "sea" in Revelation 13:1 symbolizes the Gentile nations of the world. We observe that connection in several scripture passages.<sup>2</sup> God intended for us to understand this book because He told John to write and not to seal it up.<sup>3</sup>

The third Key to a better understanding of John's book is to assume that the descriptions of people, events and places are literal happenings in time and space. They are figurative to be sure but nevertheless literal. Many Bible students say the Revelation is symbolic. I would suggest along with Hal Lindsey that it is figurative. The word "symbolic" connotes a non-literal meaning whereas the word "figurative" connotes hidden but literal meaning. Instead of spiritualizing, making non-literal, try to put yourself into the writers place. He is trying to tell you about 21st century events with the handicap of 1st century descriptions.

Let's take for example the description in Revelation 9:18-19.

"A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths.

(19) "For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads; and with them they do harm."

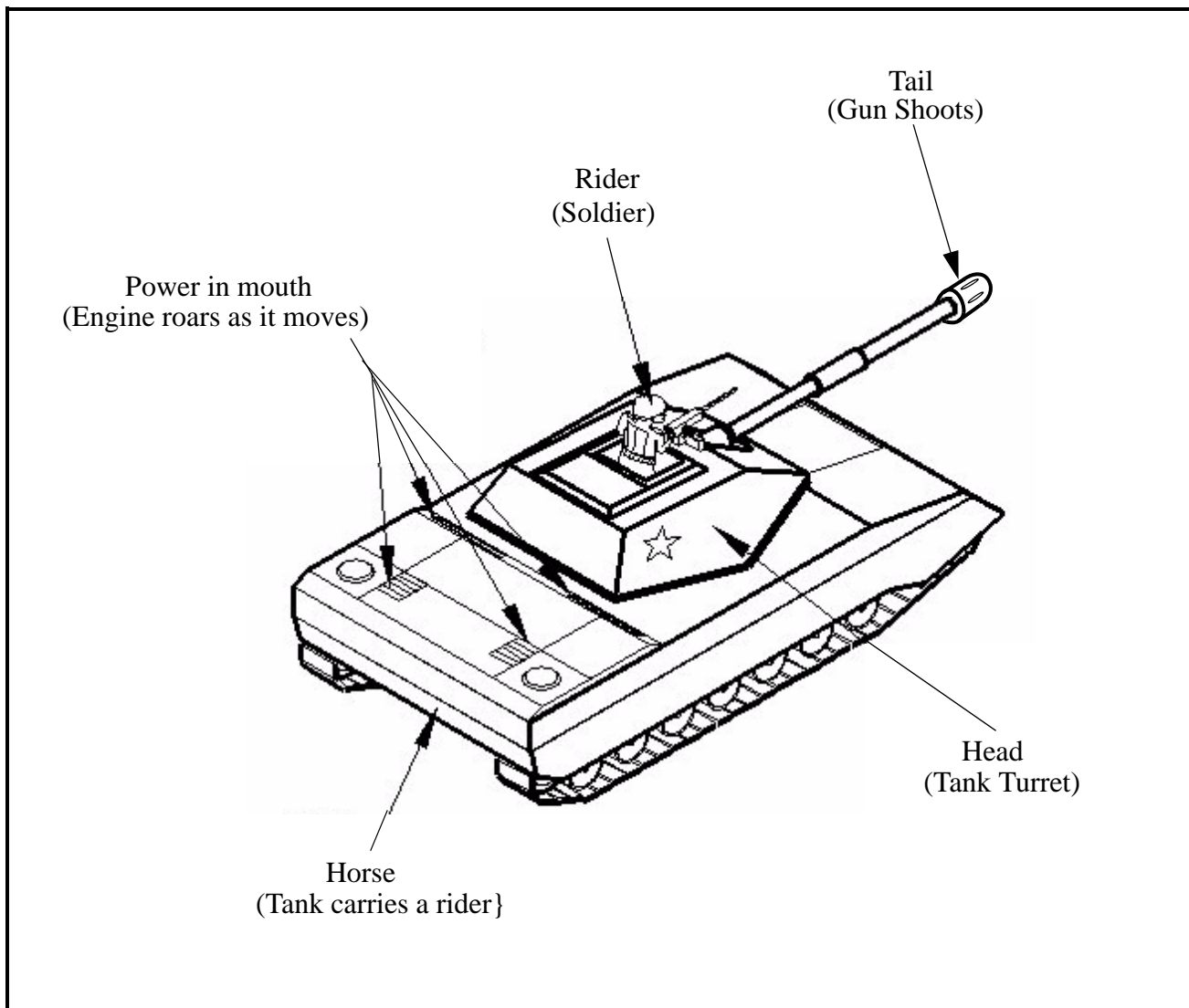
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1. Revelation 1:2,12,19,20; 4:4; 5:1,2; 6:1,2,8,9; 7:1,2; 8:2; 9:1,17; 10:1,5; 13:1,2,11; 14:1,14; 15:1,5; 16:13; 17:1,3,6,8,18; 18:1; 19:11, 17,19; 20:1,4,11,12; 21:1,2,22; 22:1,8

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2. Isaiah 57:20; Ezekiel 26:16; Amos 8:12; Micah 7:12

3. Revelation 1:1-3,11,19; 22:10



### Battle Tank; A Destructive Animal

At first reading, this passage doesn't make much sense but when you use the keys to interpretation, a whole new world opens up. Let's assume for a moment that John is seeing a modern day battle tank. Refer to the illustration above and let's see if the description matches. Sound comes from a mouth in the ears of a first century man. He doesn't have the advantage of knowing noise from modern machinery. So, if he hears noise and sees fire come out, he assumes it is a mouth. After all, sounds are produced, in the natural world, by mouths.

The power he sees as being in the mouth because it produces destruction and movement. When the engine speed varies, moving uphill or downhill, the noise varies. Thus, he could conclude the power is in its mouth.

The tail, like a serpent with a head that

belches fire, solves the mystery of his word picture. A battle tank has a large long gun at the front, with a flash hider on the end, that looks like a snake's head. It fits the description perfectly. So when you put yourself in John's place you can see what he was trying to get across. With that background, let's go on and look at the seals.

### **First Seal, First Year**

The figurative picture is of a rider on a white horse carrying a bow that shoots arrows. Using the Second principle of interpretation, we go to the Old Testament to find definitions. The figurative meaning behind an archer, bowman or hunter is, those Biblical characters typically

have been against God and God against them.

First there was Nimrod, the hunter who founded Babel.<sup>4</sup> He started the pagan religion of worshipping the creation instead of the creator. Therefore, God was against him.<sup>5</sup>

Then there was Esau whom God was against.<sup>6</sup> Esau was a hunter with the bow, and he despised his birthright; thus showing he did not care about God's blessing.<sup>7</sup>

The First Seal rider is given a crown, and he sets out to take over other countries.<sup>8</sup> Many people see this rider as Antichrist because white designates holiness but conquering other countries is unholy. Therefore, they see a false christ. I agree with that evaluation. However, there is more that I see Antichrist doing.

The rider-archer that goes out to take over three countries gains control of the CIS also. We know from Revelation 13 that the country represented by the "Bear" becomes a part of the Antichrist's empire, and that Russia is the Bear.<sup>9</sup> So the question becomes: when does it happen?

In Zechariah 6:1-8 we read about four charioteers similar to the four horseman of the seal judgements in Revelation 6:1-7. In Zechariah 6:6, the prophet describes two charioteers, the white and the black, going to the north country. Then in verse eight, we hear God say, "See those who are going to the land of the north have appeased My wrath on the land of the north." That sounds just like Ezekiel talking about God appeasing His wrath on Magog (Russia).<sup>10</sup>

Ezekiel 39:6 picks up where God is telling how He is going to "send fire upon Magog" (Russia, now the CIS).<sup>11</sup> We previ-

ously suggested the U.S. and Russia would trade ICBM's. So if Russia is crippled it would be easy for the Antichrist to take over and control. This would strengthen his position with Israel since he will promise to guarantee their safety.

From other scripture, we discern that the events of Ezekiel 39 and Revelation 6:2 both occur near the beginning of the seven Year Tribulation period. Here is how. We saw from the Jericho "type" that the First Seal comes at the beginning of the seven year period.

But what about the Ezekiel passage? Does it come at the beginning of the seven year Trib. period? We know that the Antichrist from Europe will take over the world within 3-1/2 years of the tribulation beginning.<sup>12</sup> Also in that 3-1/2 years, Israel must rebuild and utilize the Temple.<sup>13</sup> But in order for the Temple to be rebuilt, The Russian backed arab armies must be neutralized. Why? Simply because the arabs will not allow Israel to build it otherwise. Therefore, in order to have enough time to defeat the CIS, rebuild the Temple, and use it for awhile, the invasion of Israel must come near the beginning of the Tribulation. Therefore, if the Russian invasion of Israel is at the tribulation start, then it is reasonable to believe the First Seal involves Antichrist's take-over of Russia.

This harmony of the Zechariah, Ezekiel and Revelation passages cause me to believe they are talking about the same events. Not only are the horseman alike, but the four spirits of Heaven (Zech. 6:5) are the same as the four winds of heaven (Revelation 7:1).<sup>14</sup>

To sum up the meaning of the first seal, it appears that Antichrist is going out to take over three other countries,<sup>15</sup> and take the CIS after the U.S./ CIS missile exchange.

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4. Genesis 10:8-10; 11:1-9; Micah 5:6

5. Romans 1:18-32

6. Malachi 1:2

7. Genesis 25:27, 34; 27:3

8. Revelation 6:2

9. Daniel 7:5; Rev. 13:2

10. Ezekiel 39:3-6

11. From other studies, by other authors, it is widely accepted that Magog is the modern country of Russia. "Halley's Bible Handbook", p.333; "Apocalypse Next", pp.126-130.

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12. Revelation 13:5 with 13:7,8 and Daniel 9:27

13. Daniel 9:27; 12:11

14. The word "wind" or "breath" is figurative language for the Spirit of God in the New Testament. See Acts 2:2-4.

15. Daniel 7:8

## Second Seal, Second Year

This second seal/year is characterized by war. We read about a rider on a red horse who was granted power to take peace from the earth, and that men should kill one another.<sup>16</sup> If it was granted him to take peace from the earth, then it is reasonable to believe there was peace prior to his taking it away. This is consistent with the concept of the Antichrist making a peace treaty at the beginning of the Tribulation. I see this seal as Antichrist moving in to take over what is left of the United States. He may even invade other countries at the same time.

From the Zechariah six passage we looked at earlier, we notice the white and black horses go to the north country. The dappled horse goes to the south country but Zechariah doesn't say where the red horse goes. There are a couple of probable options; east or west. We know from Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 that Antichrist will control the world within 3-1/2 years. And, he encounters the kings of the east in the sixth year.<sup>17</sup> Near the end, the oriental armies are at full strength. That means there must not have been a previous war involving China. We know they are at full strength because they boast of a 200 million man army now and that is their strength the time the prophecy comes true. And, if year one (white horse) and year three (black horse) travel to the north country, and year four (dappled horse) goes to the south country, then year two (red horse) probably travels west.

Since the U.S. has spent its ICBMs, and is crippled economically, and thus a "sitting duck", it is reasonable to believe Antichrist will try to take over the U.S. If he tried, who would stop him?

Don't we believe from other scripture<sup>18</sup> that the whole world comes under the dictatorship of the Antichrist?

## Third Seal, Following Year

Here we have a rider on a black horse carrying a pair of scales. A voice from among the four living creatures called out, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

Scholars see this rider representing famine.<sup>19</sup> In Bible days, a quart of wheat could last a person for one meal or three quarts of barley, a cheaper grain, could last a person for three meals. However, they each would cost a denarius or the equivalent of one days wages. At that rate, a man would have no money left to buy other things like oil and wine which were considered essential. Hence, we get the idea famine is represented here.

Again, let's look at Zechariah chapter six. Verse six implies the rider on a black horse goes to the north country which we already decided was the CIS (see First Seal explanation). And this makes sense. If Russia is nearly destroyed after the missile exchange with the U.S., then you can expect famine to follow war in that country. That is not to say famine will be absent in other parts of the world. But even before the missiles, Russia had a hard time feeding its people. They buy thousands of tons of wheat from the U.S. each year. God has said He was against Russia (Gog).<sup>20</sup>

Food shortages before war, and famine after, is the natural result of not having God's blessing; especially on the bounty of the land. History has shown the same thing. After World War I, famine nearly consumed Europe. It was years before they recovered. We see the same thing here only worse.

It is also reasonable to believe the U.S.A. will have food problems because of missile damage. However, we have traditionally been an exporter of food. It will be bad here but nothing like Russia and her satellites. The Soviet plight will be the perfect opportunity for Antichrist to step in and take over.<sup>21</sup>

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16. Revelation 6:3,4

17. Revelation 16:12

18. Daniel 7, Revelation 13. See this book Chap. 5.

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19. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ", p.129.

20. Ezekiel 38:3;39:1

21. Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 (the Bear)

## The Fourth Seal

John looked and saw a rider on an ashen-grey dappled horse whose name was "Death". Following behind was a being called Hades (holding place of the unsaved dead). And authority was given to them over one-fourth of the earth to kill by the sword, famine, pestilence and with wild beasts of the earth.

The location of these judgements gives us a clue to what is happening. Once again referring to Zechariah 6:3-6, we see the rider on the grey-dappled horse go to the "south country". Africa is south of Israel (the center of the world).

Africa has the greatest wildlife population of any continent. Thus this prophecy can be fulfilled by their ready source of carnivores. It comprises about one-fourth of the world's land mass. And it has a population of 800 million of which 100 million are Christian (before rapture count). Antichrist will exploit the rich mineral resources but not want to put up with any trouble. Many of the native tribes people will be of little value to the world dictator except as slave labor. He will not care for the people or the land, and so he will not help. Africa will suffer as no continent has ever suffered because no continent has ever been abused like Africa will be abused.

## The Fifth Seal

"And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'"

"And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while

longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, should be completed also."

In the year and a half after Antichrist invades Israel he will slaughter Jews and Christians by the thousands all over the world. Every person will have the option to bow down to the image and take the mark thus swearing allegiance to him or face execution by guillotine.<sup>22</sup>

The time of grace will end with the Rapture. After, because they have waited, they will be in the same position as Israel. Everyone must prove their loyalty. God's promise is: "... Be faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life." (Revelation 2:10)

This, my brothers and sisters, is the only way to God after the Rapture. Post-rapture converts must *not* take any mark. They must *not* bow down to any image. They must choose to die before bowing down or taking the mark. To take the mark or bow down is to renounce God from their life. To renounce God is blasphemy. To blaspheme God is to choose Hell.

Joshua faced death just before Israel entered the battle of Jericho, and God gave him this advice:

"Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

"Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.

"This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do all that is written in it; for then you will

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22. Revelation 20:4

make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."<sup>23</sup>

Jesus faced the same situation in the garden of Gethsemane. He prayed for hours before the priests and soldiers came to take Him away. When they started to take Him, Peter intervened and tried to save Him by attempting to kill the priests servant. Jesus' response was, "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"<sup>24</sup> Jesus braved the Cross, and during the Tribulation men must also brave death to secure salvation. But you can be sure that God will be with you and give you the strength to endure to the end, if you ask Him.

## The Sixth Seal

This seal is ushered in by a world wide earthquake. Apparently, it is caused by, or at least accompanied by, volcanic action. The volcanic action spews tons and tons of dirt and ash into the air which partially blocks the sun from sight. The heavy haze causes the moon to look red. Even today, smog causes a red sunset. So it is easy believe how it will be then.

Verse 13 of Revelation, Chapter Six says, "And the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind." What did John actually see?

If they were really stars as in planets, the whole earth would be turned to dust. So what John saw was probably pinpoints of light falling to the earth. Just such a light would be made by an ICBM reentering the earth's atmosphere. This interpretation implies nuclear war. In the next verse, we read: "And the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their

places."

Hal Lindsey describes a nuclear explosion as the sky rolling back on itself raising the atmospheric pressure as it progresses outward. Upon spending its energy, the air rushes back into the vacuum crushing a second time the debris left from the initial blast. John's vivid description is consistent with what you see in such a powerful bomb.

He goes on to talk about how the world leaders hide in caves (bomb shelters?), and the common people hide among the mountain rocks. Certainly, this is what you would expect in a nuclear attack.

At the end of the sixth seal, we observe a short, quiet period of one week. The calm before the storm. This quiet period separates the six seal judgements from the trumpet judgements which come out of the seventh seal.

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23. Joshua 1:6-9

24. John 18:11