

Behold | Sermons through the Revelation

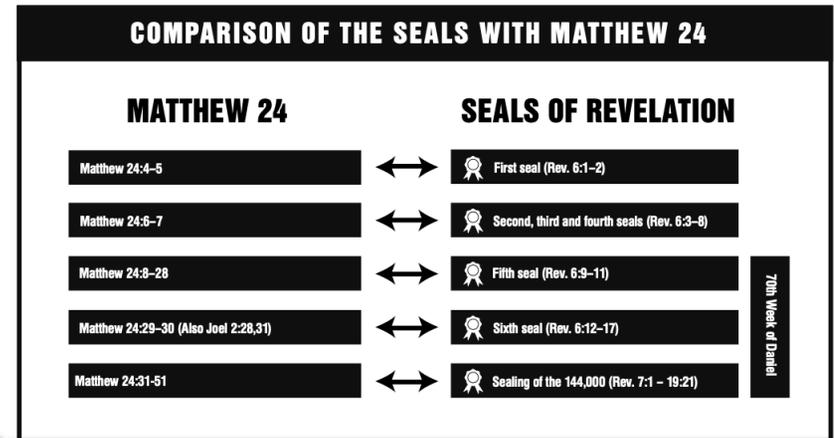
Sermon #12 | Revelation 6:1-17 | Opening the Book

Revelation 6:1-17 | The First Six Seals: their timing

- Amazingly, six of the seven seals are opened in Revelation 6.
- In this sermon, we will get an overview of these six seals. In future sermons, we will analyze each more in depth (to the degree possible with the scant information available).
- The biggest question of the six seals is not so much *what happens* but *when it happens*.
- We are going to take a minority position on the timing of the sixth seals, based on a comparison of the seals with Matthew 24.
- A few comments are in order concerning the timing of the tribulation.
 - The period called “the day of Jacob’s trouble” or “Daniel’s 70th week” is definitely a seven-year period.
 - The Antichrist has a discernable reign of 42 months (Rev. 13:5, see also 11:2), which is only one half of the seven years.
 - Prior to the 42 months (the second half of the tribulation), Antichrist is active but nothing definitive displays his identity beyond a shadow of a doubt.
 - Almost universally, pretribulational theologians put the first seal (Rev. 6:1-2) as the beginning of the 70th week.
 - Scripture does not demand that the 70th week begin with the first seal. However, it has been taught as truth for so long that we have a hard time seeing anything else.
 - According to Daniel 9:27, the first event of the seven years is the confirmation of a covenant.
 - This is assumed to connect with the first seal of Revelation 6, but that is not required by the text.
 - Though the antichrist signs this covenant, it is *not* the first definitive display of his identity; others may also confirm, or the covenant may be confirmed in secret, or by “lost in the news cycle,” etc.
 - The confirmation of the covenant does not need to be associated with the first seal in order to be true to the text.

Comparison of Revelation 6 with Matthew 24

- The comparison of the Olivet Discourse of Jesus in Matthew 24 with the seals of Revelation 6 has convinced me that the first four seals are *not* in the 70th week.
- The first four seals *are* after the rapture but before the 70th week.



Source: *Behold: Study Outlines of the Book of Revelation* – Randy White, pg. 53.

A few important points from the comparison:

- Some of the points are unmistakable in comparison while others are mild in comparison. The whole is convincing.
- Without doubt, we know Jesus is speaking of the tribulation. We would *expect*, therefore, that there should be a comparison between Matthew and Revelation.
- The fact that the *order* of events is perfectly consistent is one of the strongest arguments for seeing these discussions as the same events.
- Both Jesus and John in the Revelation are brief on the first four seals, and nothing is given which can determine any amount of time elapsed.
- If the comparison holds, then the first four seals are **the beginning of sorrows** (Mt. 24:8).
- The seven years begins somewhere after **the beginning of sorrows** thus after the fourth seal.
- The majority of the seven years is, by necessity, within the fifth seal, because the sixth seal is so terrible that life cannot be long sustained.