There is another reason to believe that the sealed book in the hand of God is the history of the world and of every individual. When Christ begins to break the seals, events that transpire on earth are revealed. The rider on the red horse, under the second seal, takes “peace from the earth” (Revelation 6:4). Under the fourth seal the pale horse has “power over a fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth” (Revelation 6:8). Under the fifth seal we are shown the martyrs of earth (see Revelation 6:9). Under the sixth seal we are shown an earthquake and strange happenings with the sun, the moon, and the stars (see Revelation 6:12-13). Also under the sixth seal we see the terror of the unrighteous of earth at the second coming of Christ (see Revelation 6:15-17).

As each seal opens we are shown events that happen on earth. This reveals that the contents of the book is the history of the world—every person’s name and life history; every war, every evil plotting, every secret vice; every act of love, every deed of compassion, every decision for good; each person’s choice to follow Christ or to rebel against Him—all is recorded with unerring accuracy and perfect detail.

Jesus shed His blood to save every man, woman and child. He earned the authority and obtained the wisdom to judge each person by His hatred for sin and His love for the sinner are poised with perfect balance on His scepter. He alone can open the book and deal justly with its long and complicated chronicles. With perfect compassion, born of His own experience as a man of sorrow and temptation, He will weigh all the varied circumstances of each life. The inherent strengths and weaknesses; the cultural setting and time; the privileges and opportunities; the obstacles and disadvantages; the light of truth within reach—all will be taken into account as Jesus pronounces the destiny of every person. Calvary persuades us that we can trust His verdicts with absolute confidence.

When each chapter of the book is finally acted out and each destiny is settled, “every creature which is in heaven and on earth” will proclaim, “Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever” (Revelation 5:13). It is your privilege to join the glad chorus on that day. The One who was, and who is, and who is to come will possess the everlasting kingdom. And we will never doubt His love again.

In this study we will learn the contents of the book and why Jesus alone is qualified to understand and deal with the information in the book.

The Backdrop

The prophecy of the book with seven seals is presented in a setting of expectancy. All the created intelligentsia of the fallen universe long for the day when God will possess His kingdom without a rival, His right to reign will soon be unchallenged. The archenemy of the Almighty Creator of the universe, Satan himself, will ultimately be conquered. The perfect harmony of love and righteousness will be established, nevermore to be disrupted.

This backdrop is brought to view in Revelation chapter four. The four living creatures that dwell in the throne room of the universe proclaim day and night: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come” (Revelation 4:8, NKJV). The twenty-four elders...
respond to the enlightened praise by saying, “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created” (Revelation 4:11, NKJV).

The phrase “who was and is and is to come” occurs three other times in Revelation (see Revelation 1:4, 8; 11:17). It is not a statement intended to speak of God’s eternal existence, for it announces that He “shall come.” If the four creatures had meant to make a statement of God’s eternal existence, they would have said, “who was and is and shall be,” not “shall come.” Rather than a statement of God’s eternal existence, the four creatures are announcing God’s eternal, sovereign reign over the universe. They are not saying, “God has existed in the past, does exist now, and will exist in the future,” although that would be a true declaration also. What they are saying is that God has reigned supreme in all ages past, He does self-claimed lord of the universe to ponder the vision of the sealed book.

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