

Revelation

Notes #6B

Seals #1-6

Chapter 6

Seal Description

#1

(1) Then I saw when **the Lamb broke one of the seven seals**, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come." (2) I looked, and behold, **a white horse**, and he who sat on it had **a bow**; and **a crown** was given to him, and he went out **conquering and to conquer**. (Revelation 6:1-2 NASB)

Symbology Meaning(s)

Horse	Strength (Psalm 20:6, 7; Isaiah 31:1); battle (Proverb 21:31; Jeremiah 8:6)
White	Color of triumph, glory, peace, and prosperity
Bow	Weapon of war used by Greeks; no arrow means victory achieved
Rider	Roman leadership; emperors and generals
Crown	Stephanos; victor's wreath or garland

Period Interpretation

96-193 AD Golden Era of the Pagan Roman Empire [RE]

In 31 BC, the Roman army defeated Egypt in the battle of Actium, setting the RE on the path of its great military expansion. In 27 BC, Rome became an Empire, replacing the republic with a military government.

It appears that the rider of the white horse represents the overall victory of the RE that gave it an extended time of relative peace and prosperity that lasted for about 220 years. The only exception to this was during the violent reign of Nero who committed suicide in 68 AD. It should be noted that this was also during the time of the Judean uprising and of God raising up His army, that is, the Roman army to bring judgment on Jerusalem and Judaism for their rejection of the rightful heir of the throne of Judah (Matthew 21:38; 22:7).

However, this seal seems to focus primarily on the last 100 years of this period.

The rider on a white horse with a bow but no arrow signifies Roman emperors or generals who had achieved victory in battle. A military parade often followed a successful military campaign; at which time, the victorious general rode on a white horse while wearing a victor's wreath (*stephanos*). Given this symbology, it is most likely that this seal deals with a period of great triumph and not defeat.

John was on the isle of Patmos at the end of the reign of Domitian who was slain in 96 AD. He was succeeded by Nerva who was of Greek descent of Cretan stock. Cretan's were famously known as great bowmen, so the rider with a bow may signify Nerva, for history records that his reign began a period of unprecedented military triumph and economic prosperity.

This period lasted from the death of Domitian (96 AD) to the accession of the corrupt Commodus (193 AD), and consisted of the reigns of Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, and the two Antonines, and was known either as the Age of Trajan or the Age of the Antonines. But by far, the most prominent figure during this period in regard to military triumph was Trajan who greatly expanded the reaches of the empire, which brought peace and prosperity to the entire RE.

This was known as the **Golden Era of the [Pagan] Roman Empire**.

Seal	Description
#2	(3) When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come." (4) And another, a red horse , went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth , and that men would slay one another ; and a great sword was given to him. (Revelation 6:3-4 NASB)
Symbology	Meaning(s)
Horse	Strength (Psalm 20:6, 7; Isaiah 31:1); battle (Proverb 21:31; Jeremiah 8:6)
Red	Color of blood; no longer victory but defeat
Rider	Emperors and imposters
Great Sword	Civil war; fratricidal bloodshed
Earth	Roman territory, land
One Another	Fraternal; fellow countrymen, not external enemies
Period	Interpretation
193-284 AD	Civil War among Roman leadership

Whereas the previous seal indicated relative peace and prosperity, the breaking of the second seal indicated that peace was being removed and replaced by civil war. Rome experienced one civil war after another during this 89- to 93-year period (commentators vary on the time).

Recognizing that an emperor needed bodily protection, Augustus (27 BC) became the first Roman ruler to recruit a powerful group of bodyguards called the **Praetorian Guard**.

Over time, this elite group took on a more political role in Rome. Being privy to the inner workings of the civil government, they began to grow contemptuous of their leaders who had few morals and became progressively more corrupt. The guard came to see themselves as more powerful than the emperor himself.

The apex of their disdain for the emperors came with the morally bankrupt **Emperor Commodus** (180-192 AD) who was by far the worst of all Roman leaders. However, the Praetorian Guard crossed the line, so to speak, when, in 193 AD, they killed Commodus' predecessor, Pertinax.

At this point, anyone who wanted to become emperor required the consent of the Praetorian Guard.

This merely led to more corruption as men bid for the position, which, in turn, led to internal fighting or civil war; a time of war and bloodshed.

During this period of slightly less than 100 years, there were 32 emperors and 27 imposters (tyrants) who thrust each other from the throne in unceasing civil strife. Of the tyrants, all but two were exterminated by violent deaths. In other words, they wielded a great sword at each other. It was no longer a rider on a white horse with a bow signifying peace (within and without) and prosperity; it was a rider on a blood red horse wielding the physical sword against fellow countrymen.

Seal	Description
#3	(5) When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, a black horse ; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. (6) And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius ; and do not damage the oil and the wine. " (Revelation 6:5-6 NASB)
Symbology	Meaning(s)
Horse	Strength (Psalm 20:6, 7; Isaiah 31:1); battle (Proverb 21:31; Jeremiah 8:6)
Black	Color of mourning, sorrow, despair (Jeremiah 14:2)
Rider	Economy
Scales	Buying and selling
Denarius	Inflated food prices
Oil/Wine	Limitation; not complete famine
Period	Interpretation
250-300 AD	War, inflation, and famine cause RE to mourn

This seal is the result of the previous seal with the two overlapping in a cause and effect relationship. War (**cause**) of any kind, especially civil war, leads to all sorts of hardship (**effect**) on the general population, which leads to mourning. The color *black* is often associated with mourning: Judah **mourneth**, and the gates thereof languish, they sit in **black** upon the ground [**mourned to the earth**]; and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up (Jeremiah 14:2 ASV [YLT]).

The **pair of scales** held by the rider and the measuring of wheat signifies the buying and selling of food; thus, it has to do with the **economy**. If an economy is good and there is ample supply of goods, including food, then food is reasonably priced; but, if it is not, as in a time of scarcity, then the price of food is greatly inflated. Either the wheat, the staple ingredient in bread, or the finished product of bread is meant. There is scriptural precedence for the wheat referring to baked bread: "Son of man, behold, I am going to break the staff of bread in Jerusalem, and **they will eat bread by weight and with anxiety**, and drink water by measure and in horror" (Ezekiel 4:16 NASB; also Leviticus 26:26). At any rate, civil war brought on inflation and famine.

However, damage to the oil and wine was prohibited, indicating that the scarcity was limited. Interestingly, during the reign of **Domitian** (81-96 AD), a **surplus of wine** and a **shortage of grain** upset the **economic equilibrium of Rome**, so he ordered half of the vineyards in Asia cut down. Since the vineyards were a major source of income in this region, the people nearly revolted, and Domitian had to rescind his order. Perhaps the mercy of God prevented a similar move; otherwise, there would have been a total breakdown in the economy of Rome and more would have died. God always gives people a time to repent and turn from their ways.

There was more. During the reign of Emperor Valerian from 253-260 AD, there was turmoil in the eastern region of the RE as the Goths invaded the cities of Asia Minor and Greece. Thebes, Argos, Corinth, and Sparta were no longer able to defend themselves. Shortly after, the Persians invaded from the east, Valerian was defeated at Edessa and taken captive. Then the Parthians began to plunder Asia Minor. And, while this was going on, Rome's bread baskets of Sicily and Alexandria (Egypt) were being decimated by civil conflict, which may have affected Rome more than the invading armies did. The net result of all this was that practically every family of the RE suffered. History says that 5,000 people died daily in Rome. Alexandria lost at least half its population. So, in spite of some limitations, this was a time of mourning.

Seal	Description
#4	(7) When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come." (8) I looked, and behold, an ashen horse ; and he who sat on it had the name Death ; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth. (Revelation 6:7-8 NASB)
Symbology	Meaning(s)
Horse	Strength (Psalm 20:6, 7; Isaiah 31:1); battle (Proverb 21:31; Jeremiah 8:6)
Ashen/Pale	Color of life draining out resulting in death
Rider	Death and Hades
Hades	Unseen state (not place) of the dead
1/4 th Earth	Either 1/4 th of Roman territory affected or 1/4 th of total population of RE
Period	Interpretation
250-265 AD	Sword, famine, pestilence, and disease judge RE

War often produces famine, and famine leads to disease and death. Those who don't die during a famine often suffer from diseases due to malnutrition. Widespread death leads to diseases due to an increase in the population of disease-carrying vermin, such as rats and other rodents, which, in turn, infect the human population. Also, a failing food chain leads to competition for food not only among humans but also among the animal (wild beasts) population. Thus, war can prompt a vicious cycle that will and often does decimate a population. Several examples of this cycle have occurred in our modern day and some are still ongoing, especially in Africa. If famine is not reversed, many die!

We are not specifically told if the fourth of the earth refers to the overall population or simply the territory of the RE. Either way, many were killed.

Without knowing scripture, the historian Gibbons offers some insight into the magnitude of the opening of this seal on the RE. He estimated that close to half of the RE population died of starvation in the 15-year period from 250-265 AD.

"But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present and the future harvests. Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes must, however, have contributed to the furious plague, which, from the years two hundred and fifty to the year two hundred and fifty-six, raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almost every family of the Roman Empire. During some time five thousand persons died daily in Rome; and many towns that had escaped the hands of the Barbarians, were entirely depopulated. Applying this authentic fact to the most correct tables of mortality, it evidently proves, that above half the people of Alexandria had perished; and could we venture to extend the analogy of the other provinces, we might suspect that war, pestilence, and famine had consumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human species."

Diocletian came to power in 284 AD and in 285 divided the RE into East and West, which set the stage for a permanent division a century later. In 292 AD, the RE underwent a further division into four parts with joint-emperors, which led to four palaces and courts, which, in turn, led to increased taxation to support the lavish lifestyle of these four rulers who were now in competition with one another to see who was greater. This additional burden on the population served to exacerbate the famine.

Seal	Description
#5	(9) When the Lamb 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; (10) and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (11) 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, would be completed also . (Revelation 6:9-11 NASB)
Symbology	Meaning(s)
Altar	Place of sacrifice where blood is poured out; place of the martyrs
Souls	Christian martyrs now asleep in Jesus (1 Thessalonians 4:14, 15, 16)
White	Color of saintly righteousness; justification by faith, acts, and crown
Robe	Clothed in glory
Period	Interpretation
303-313 AD	Great Persecution of Christians; Era of Martyrs

At the conclusion of the last seal, Diocletian (284 AD) had divided the RE into four divisions headed by separate co-rulers. Up to this point, the RE had been ruled by military generals symbolized by horses, but Diocletian was a diplomat not a general, thus no horse is in view with this seal. Of the four co-rulers, Maximian and Galerius hated Christians, while Diocletian and Constantius were tolerant of them. However, Galerius convinced Diocletian that Christians posed a grave danger and needed to be destroyed. On February 23, 303 AD, Diocletian issued an edict that required all to offer pagan sacrifices and anyone refusing to do so was to be burned alive. Church property was either destroyed or confiscated. Thus, the fifth seal was opened in 303 and lasted for 10 years until Constantine came to power in 313 AD. The message to the church in Smyrna was prophetic of this time: **You will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life** (Revelation 2:10). Prophetically speaking, a day is a year, so the ten days became 10 years.

The Christians who refused to obey the edict were killed. Metaphorically speaking, they were sacrificed on the altar, and their blood was poured out on the ground. Thus, the blood of the martyr's flowed for 10 years. **The soul is in the blood** (Genesis 9:4, 5; Leviticus 17:11, 14), and the soul is the sensation of the body that is given life by the breath of the spirit. When the body dies, the spirit returns to God who gave it in the first place (Ecclesiastes 12:7), and the soul goes to the unseen, meaning it simply departs, for it has no life apart from the body. The soul is not immortal as the pagans believe(d). Consequently, the martyrs are not alive but asleep in Christ, awaiting the resurrection from among the dead. It is the testimony of their lives that cries out from the grave, just as the blood of Abel cries out. There were martyrs before them and more to follow after them. So the encouragement was and still is to be faithful until death.

These martyrs were justified by **the righteousness from God on the basis of faith, through faith in Christ** (Philippians 3:9). But they also will be rewarded for their righteousness and faithfulness to Christ. To those who conquer, the Lord Jesus promises **white garments** (Revelation 3:5), and His bride is given to wear **bright fine linen** which is **the righteous acts of the saints** (Revelation 19:8). They will wear the victor's **crown of righteousness** (1 Timothy 4:8). In a spiritual sense, they overcame the men wearing the earthly crowns of unrighteousness. Thus, one of the cruelest periods of Christian persecution aimed at wiping out all Christians occurred for 10 years in what is called the **Era of Martyrs**.

Seal	Description
#6 [Part 1]	(12) I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake ; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair , and the whole moon became like blood ; (13) and the stars of the sky fell to the earth , as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. (14) The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places . (15) Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains ; (16) and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; (17) for the great day of their wrath has come , and who is able to stand?" (Revelation 6:12-17 NASB)
Symbology	Meaning(s)
Earthquake	Political upheaval; revolution of political system
Sun	Pagan rulers and worshippers of sun god
Moon	Earthly pagan rulers or the church
Stars	Lesser earthly pagan rulers or Christian conquerors, good figs
Figs	Same as stars
Sky	Paganism thought to be heavenly or Revelation of God
Mountains	Earthly rulers or their kingdoms
Islands	Earthly rulers or their kingdoms, especially European nations
Rocks	Stability, security, foundation
Period	Interpretation
310-395 AD	Fall of Pagan Roman Empire; Rise of Christendom

The sixth seal is the climax of the preceding seals. The Pagan Roman Empire had risen to its height of glory only to spiral downward into anarchy and chaos through internal conflicts and attacks from without. The result was famine and disease that affected a fourth of the empire.

Up to this point, the RE has been referred to as pagan, for they worshipped pagan gods and even considered their emperors as gods. In this light, the empire's greatest mistake was turning on the Christians and killing them with the sole purpose of destroying Christianity and wiping out the name of Jesus from its territory. The blood of the martyrs cried out against the injustice until the day of vengeance arrived. The empire that had participated in the crucifixion of the Savior of the world and the King of Judah now faced the judgment of God that would turn its political system on its head and place Christianity in the lead. A great earthquake unlike any it had faced before was about to come upon the RE with the opening of the sixth seal.

God raised up a Roman emperor to stop religious persecution of all kinds and to even acknowledge and support Christianity. His name was **Constantine** who ruled from 306-337 AD. In 293 AD, his father Constantius, a general, was one of the junior emperors. In 305 AD, he succeeded Maximian as emperor and then died in 306 AD with his son at his bedside in York, England. Constantius' loyal troops proclaimed Constantine emperor, which took him into an 18-year series of battles and wars that led him to become the emperor of the west and then the supreme ruler of the RE by defeating the other emperors, Maxentius (312 AD) and Licinius (324 AD). During this time, six emperors were in competition, each striving to be preeminent over the others. In the end, Constantine not only became preeminent but also the only one left.

Constantine's mother was a Christian, but historians have varying views about Constantine's faith. It seems that the secular historians look for the negative signs that he was not truly of the Christian faith while religious historians look for the positive signs of his faith. In a sense it matters not; what matters is how God used this emperor to send shock waves throughout the RE.

However, prior to his rise to sole emperor, he and Licinius passed the **Edict of Milan** or **Edict of Toleration** (313 AD) that established freedom of religion throughout the RE. This ended the persecution of Christians, legalized Christianity, returned confiscated property, and established Sunday as a day of worship. Without doubt, the church began to prosper, but it also caused many schisms. Constantine called the **First Ecumenical Council** to settle a dispute over **Arianism**, which denied the Godhood of Jesus. This led to the **Nicene Creed**. By personally interjecting himself into this dispute by calling the Council of Nicea (325 AD), Constantine established the RE's unofficial sponsorship of Christianity. In reality, he made the RE into **Christendom** [i.e., a *Christ kingdom* on earth]. Obviously, this was a major factor in driving Christianity and the church forward, as well as in sending shockwaves throughout the land.

But Constantine caused another quake, specifically to Rome itself, when he rebuilt the ancient Greek city of **Byzantium**, named it **New Rome** (324 AD), and set up a Senate and civic offices just like in the old Rome. It was later renamed **Constantinople** in honor of him and gradually became the capital of the RE and remained **the capital of the ERE** until it fell in 1453 AD.

Thus, there is little doubt that Constantine and his actions created a mighty political and religious earthquake that affected the entire empire. 280 years of Christian testing and trial (33-313 AD) came to end with his reign. But what of the symbols that appear with the breaking of this seal?

The **sun** represents the glory of the earthly pagan rulers and their empire that worshipped various pagan gods, including the sun god. With their glory gone, these rulers were in mourning (blackened) as they were overthrown by Constantine. Pagan temples were closed and heathen sacrifices banned (331 AD). He discarded heathen standards held by the Roman army and replaced them with the Cross. He even made changes in Roman law by incorporating Christian precepts. All of this created great mourning from the **enemies of the cross**, for their pagan religion had been defeated, and they fell from political power, replaced by Christians. The RE could no longer be called the Pagan Roman Empire.

Interestingly, there is general agreement on the meaning of the sun and some of the other symbols, but there is some divergence of thought after that. One camp sees everything that follows as referring to the pagans, and another camp sees the symbology as mixed between pagans and the church that became carnal, replaced revelation with the tradition of men, demanded obedience to men over Christ, and took up the physical sword over the sword (word) of the Spirit to deal with any and all disagreements with the leadership of the visible church. Over time, the church became as carnal as paganism. Perhaps there is room for both thoughts, so both are offered.

Pagan Emphasis

According to this interpretation, the sun, moon, and stars represent earthly leaders and aristocracy as great lights in the political and religious realm. Kings and emperors were often likened to the sun, and princes or rulers were often likened to stars (e.g., Daniel 8:10). The figs being cast down are likened to the pagan religious leaders. Thus, all associated with paganism or, as some call it, the "old religion" is seen as falling from their place of power and prominence. The sky being rolled up simply adds to the imagery of paganism being removed from the RE as

a major force. After all the sun, moon, and stars are all part of the heavenlies, and paganism identifies itself with the heavenlies.

As a side note, in 312 AD, Constantine marched into Italy to take on the army of Maxentius in what is called the **Battle of the Milvian Bridge**. Constantine's troops were in need of a morale boost so before the battle he told his men of a vision he had received of a cross in the sky located above the words "**In This Sign, Conquer.**" They put the sign of the cross on their armor and proceeded to win the battle. Constantine pushed Maxentius off the bridge and he drowned. With the death of his co-ruler, Constantine became the sole ruler of the western half of the RE, while Lucinius ruled the eastern part until 324 AD when Constantine became the sole ruler of the entire empire.

There has been some conjecture as to whether Constantine actually saw the sign of the cross or made it up to boost the moral of his troops. At any rate, it worked. However, if true, this would indicate that through him, the Lord rolled up the sky (heavenlies) on paganism and unrolled (opened up) the sky (heavenlies) for Christianity. The Cross was a sign of victory for the Christians.

Now, returning to the symbols; the mountains and islands moving out of their places indicate the realignment of the political structure and power base of the RE, especially the shifting of its capital. Their protection and security had been shaken, even destroyed.

Caves and rocks symbolize stability and security; places and objects that are good protection from falling objects and are not easily moved by quakes. However, none of this offered any protection, for they were naked before the Almighty Lamb of God, the one they persecuted in the person of His body, off and on for 280 years. The pagans were looking for their political system (caves and rocks) to protect them ("**fall on us, hide us**"), but now it was being turned upside down and all their security and protection had departed and was crushing them instead.

Consequently, fear fell on the kings and the great men, the wealthy and powerful pagans of the Roman earth. They were fearful of their future under Christians. After all, in 395 AD, **Theodosius** banned all pagan animal sacrifices, closed pagan temples, and prohibited pagan rites; thus, bringing paganism to a ruin. Even the Roman Senate saw that their future was tied to Christianity, so they "professed" the Christian "religion." They were quaked in their boots or sandals, so to speak

The imagery of this seal is not new as evidenced by Isaiah's prophecy.

(1) Draw near, O nations, to hear; and listen, O peoples! Let the earth and all it contains hear, and the world and all that springs from it. **(2) For the LORD'S indignation is against all the nations, and His wrath against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them,** He has given them over to slaughter. **(3) So their slain will be thrown out, and their corpses will give off their stench, and the mountains will be drenched with their blood.** **(4) And all the host of heaven will wear away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; all their hosts will also wither away as a leaf withers from the vine, or as one withers from the fig tree.** (Isaiah 34:1-4 NASB)

Thus, all the symbology speaks of the fall of paganism and its many leaders of the Roman Empire. The wrath of God had come upon them, and they fell as Christianity rose from the testimony and cry of the blood of the martyrs.

Church Emphasis

The moon represents the church that fell into schism after schism, arguing over minor details of doctrine. That the church needed special councils to settle disputes so soon after getting its freedom indicated a serious problem was developing within the ranks of leadership, and time proved it to be true. Consequently, the Councils became battle grounds for minor details that had no bearing on the life of a Christian; they represented the carnal mind at work, not the spirit mind of Christ.

Soon the intolerance of pagan Rome was replaced by the intolerance of the visible church; as the church became stronger so did its **intolerance** of pagans and anyone who disagreed with leadership's letter of the law. Those who saw things by the mind of Christ and disagreed with the carnality of the church were labeled heretics. One commentator has noted that **love was sacrificed on the altar of doctrinal unity**. The outward form of the church became a religion (*ism*) as it ceased being a way of life. It could be called **churchism**. The dull physical sword of man replaced the sword of the Word and Spirit. The light of revelation began to dim and be replaced with the traditions of men, established and defended by the physical sword and bribes.

Given this view, the **stars** represented the **overcomers** or **conquerors of Christ** who were erroneously and viciously labeled heretics. They became casualties of the rise to power of the carnal church. They fell as **unripe figs**, i.e., died at an unripe age. Jeremiah identified two types of figs, good figs and bad (rotten) figs (Jeremiah 24). The good figs identified those who know, follow, and obey the Lord. Those who do not are rotten figs.

When Jesus walked the earth and died for the sin of the world, the good figs were the early church of Judahites, later united with many from among the nations and the lost tribes of the house of Israel that believed in and followed Jesus, the King of Judah and the holder of the birthright of Joseph. They did not follow the king's of men or of the church (popes, bishops). Thus, three to four centuries after Calvary, when the carnal mind dominated Christendom, the good figs became like stars or unripe figs falling through persecution, no longer from a pagan source but from a source holding to the title of Christ but not the life.

Daniel offered a similar analogy that is called "the wearing down the saints."

'He will speak out against the Most High and **wear down the saints of the Highest One**, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.' (Daniel 7:25 NASB)

The **sky** represents the **revelation of God** that was rolled up like a scroll; that is, it became a closed book. When men prefer the traditions of men over revelation from God, the Spirit of Truth departs and revelation ceases. Even the Bible becomes a closed book, which soon occurred as evidenced by the sounding of the sixth trumpet.

The **mountains and islands** moving out of their places indicated divine order that should have been established by the church was being replaced with man's order, which will lead to chaos and disorder.

At this point in history, as revealed through the opening of the seals, the Pagan Roman Empire was gone and replaced by a Christianized Roman Empire driven by carnally-minded Christians.

To summarize, by the end of the third century, the Christian communities and their bishops had become a powerful force with which to be reckoned. At first, this might have appeared to be a blessing but soon many of the Christians who rose to power ruled by the carnal mind and the traditions of men. In short order, **Christendom** became as vicious as **Pagandom** had been.

Constantine's three sons succeeded him, and they secured their hold on power by murder of relatives and past supporters of their father. The last member of the dynasty was Constantine's grandson, **Julian the Apostate** (355-363 AD), who attempted to restore paganism at the cost of Christianity. Further, the capital being moved to Constantinople set the stage for a formal split of the Roman Empire into the **West** and the **East**, thus bringing about **the two legs of iron** as seen by Daniel (2:33). This occurred in 395 AD when the empire was divided between Theodosius' two sons upon his death.

The stage was set for the trumpets and woes to follow, but first the angels had a special work to perform that was still part of the sixth seal.