

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCT 27TH-28TH, 2018 // BOOK OF REVELATION

## THE RIDERS (REV 6:1-8)

### THE BEGINNING OF THE END

The 4 "living creatures" that we read about in chapters 4-5 summon 4 horses with riders on each one after Jesus starts to break the seals on the scroll from chapter 5.

- John says their voices are "like thunder" as they command "come!" to the riders of the horses.

### THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE

John was focused on the rider, not the horse. He records that the rider held a bow and was wearing a crown as he was unleashed to conquer.

- This seal symbolizes military **conquest**. The crown symbolizes victory and the white is not purity, but the promise of peace though war is about to take place.
- Some people think this represents Christ and Christianity conquering the earth. This view is highly unlikely.
- The bow with no arrows could possibly mean intimidation vs. actual brute force.
- Many scholars also believe this is the start of "one world order" and many nations coming under one leader.

### THE RIDER ON THE FIERY RED HORSE

The creature "like an ox" unleashes the horse and rider that symbolize warfare. This rider has the power "to take peace from the earth, so that people would slaughter one another."

- The red can symbolize bloodshed and the fire of weapons in battle after the brief peace from the first horse.
- Many believe this could also represent internal strife in nations; civil wars, rebellions, and revolutions. The "large sword" shows us that the conflicts will be bloody and large in scale.

### THE RIDER ON THE BLACK HORSE

The creature "like a human" unleashes the black horse and rider that held scales. This seal represents famine and possibly economic collapse. Warfare usually leads to starvation and collapse for losing countries.

- Think of refugees from warring nations and the destruction of cities by radicals.
- The scales show us that food will be scarce and must be rationed. It may also mean that prices are inflated and food is being unethically withheld from needy people.
- **The common foods (wheat and grain) may be in short supply, but the finer things (oil and wine) will still be enjoyed by the wealthy and greedy.**

### THE RIDER ON THE PALE HORSE

The creature "like an eagle" unleashes a horse and rider the color of green-gray, similar to a corpse. This rider symbolizes death and Hades, the grave. Wherever there is conquest, war, and famine, death follows.

- The pale green can also symbolize the destroyed vegetation from the previous horses/riders.
- 25% of the world's population dies during this seal. The fact that Hades follows may indicate many people will be eternally lost during this time.
- Ezekiel 14:19-23 mentions that we cannot undo this process, but **Christians will be present to console those left alive and lead many to Christ.**

## THE MARTYRS (REV 6:9-11)

### AN HONOR TO DIE FOR HIS NAME

The 5th seal represents an intensification of Christian persecution. Persecution has always existed, but the 5th seal shows us that **it will get much worse the closer the end gets**. This scene shows all martyrs from history along with the martyrs from the Great Tribulation.

- Jesus said **all believers must be willing to "take up their cross"** (Matt. 10:38).

### THE MARTYRS CALLED OUT FROM UNDER THE ALTAR

The souls of the persecuted believers are symbolically under an altar in heaven (where the blood of OT sacrifices was placed). The martyrs call out and petition the "holy and true" Lord to "judge those who live on earth and avenge our blood."

- Their robes are white (purity), so we know they want justice, not revenge.

### "UNTIL THE NUMBER WOULD BE COMPLETED"

The martyrs ask how long justice will take. The answer is not until all people during the Great Tribulation have been given the chance to repent and all Christians are martyred.

- Jesus said He will not return until the gospel has been "proclaimed in all the world" (Mt. 24:14).

## IF WE ARE GONE, WHY ARE WE STILL THERE?

If one believes the 5th seal takes place during the 7 years of the Great Tribulation, the idea of all Christians being raptured before it doesn't make sense. **If no Christians are present during the 7 years, who teaches the gospel and who is murdered for believing it?**

- **What about 1Thes. 4?** Read N.T. Wright's article *Farewell to the Rapture*.

## COSMIC DISTURBANCE (REV 6:12-14)

### TAKING IT UP A NOTCH

The first 5 seals were acts of humans, though God is in control. The 6th seal will be acts of God that affect not only people, but the earth itself. The 6th seal is so violent that the sky, land, and waters are shaken.

### THE EARTH IS AFFECTED

This is the first of 5 references to an earthquake. The "sun turned to black" is most likely referring to volcanic ash from multiple eruptions. The "moon turned to blood" is more than likely the same thing.

- Joel 2:31 predicts this verbatim.

### THE SKY AND LAND AFFECTED

The "stars of heaven" falling to earth are probably meteorites (shooting stars) that will hit the earth and affect its geology.

- The "sky split like a scroll" is tough to fully understand, but probably alludes to the unraveling of the universe. We will see "Every mountain and island" move from its place before He returns.

### DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS

- **Symbolic:** These are just metaphors for "earth shattering" events.
- **Literal:** The 6th seal is the literal end to life as we know it. Some believe this is the same event as Rev. 16:18.
- **Events since Christ was born:** The idea that these things have been happening between the 2 comings of Christ.

## HUMANITY'S RESPONSE (REV 6:15-17)

### HOW WILL HUMANITY RESPOND?

The last two verses of chapter 6 show us how people will respond to the catastrophic events of the 6th seal. A couple different groups are mentioned: powerful, rich, royalty, slaves, and just average people.

- **All people will be affected. There will be no excuses or ways out of God's judgment.**

### "THEY HID AMONG THE ROCKS"

The first response humanity had to the global disturbance is **self-preservation**. Hiding in the rocks is probably metaphorical for being terrified and looking out for self first. Our natural response to adversity is selfishness.

- **As Christians we're to war against this! Self-preservation is a catalyst to destruction, not a means to avoid it.**

### HIDE US FROM THE "WRATH OF THE LAMB"

The 2nd response of humanity is to **blame God**. Some people believe this passage expresses repentance. They do not. This is outrage and blame because **they believe God is wrong and they deserve better**.

- **Many will go the other route and humble themselves and accept Christ as their Savior.**

### "WHO IS ABLE TO STAND?"

The answer to the rhetorical question of the people that view the seals of God as punishment is "nobody." The only people who will escape God's wrath are those that love and follow Him.

- **Revelation is a wake up call. God doesn't shake the earth because He hates us, but to hopefully get us to turn around!**

## IF WE ARE TO RECOGNIZE GOD

- **Self-preservation assures that God will be elusive in our lives.** Not only are we to "carry our cross" and depend on Him for our "daily bread," but we are to help each other and sacrifice for the greater good of mankind and His kingdom.
- **If we only think of self, we will miss the things of God.**
- We must also take ownership and responsibility if we're going to be saved. Though life is hard, **ultimately our choices and the consequences** they bring belong to us.
- When we own our mistakes, God gives us **grace** to move past them and be reconciled to Him!

### WHO IS ABLE TO STAND?

- Those that **put God and others first while taking responsibility for their actions**. These people will not feel the wrath of God.