

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 8TH, 2024 // REVELATION

## FOUR HORSEMEN (REVELATION 6:1-8)

### JESUS IS IN CONTROL

Everything in Revelation 4 and 5 took place in heaven. In Revelation 6, John is still in heaven, but what he sees impacts the earth.

- Chapter 6 may be difficult to read, **especially if we do not have a firm foundation in our identity in Christ.** Jesus, the only One worthy to break these seals, is in control and will have ultimate victory.

### THE SEALS, TRUMPETS, AND BOWLS

Each series is divided into 3 parts: The first 4 are together, the 5th and 6th are together, and the 7th stands alone. The last 3 events in each series are called “woes,” curses from God.

- Throughout the seals, trumpets, and bowls there are insertions telling us about the state of the church (chapter 7, chapters 10-11, chapter 12-14).

### 3 DIFFERENT VIEWS ON THE SEQUENCE

- That the events are simply in order - 1234567, 1234567, 1234567
- That they are the same events that take place simultaneously (recapitulation).
- The third view is a combination of the first 2 views: The first 6 events happen after each other and the 7th is the same.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE END

The 4 “living creatures” (like a lion, like an ox, had a face like a man, and like a flying eagle) 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.

### FIRST SEAL: WHITE HORSE

This first rider symbolizes military conquest. Some think this is an allusion to the Anti-Christ. This rider imitates Jesus but isn't Jesus (Revelation 19, Matthew 24:4-5).

- The white horse brings confusion. **Do we follow Jesus of the Bible or imitators of a savior that has no power to save?** The fruit of our lives shows whom we follow.

### SECOND SEAL: RED HORSE

This rider symbolizes warfare, blood, and violence. This rider didn't need to bring war and destruction. All he needed to do was “take peace from the earth, so that people would slaughter one another” (see also Matthew 24:6).

- Without Jesus, we will destroy each other. **A genuine interest and love for people is possible with Jesus.**

### THIRD SEAL: BLACK HORSE

This third rider symbolizes famine. The pair of scales was for measuring food. Under these famine conditions, food prices were inflated and one had to work all day to eat (Matthew 24:7).

- Our culture may not have experienced this famine yet, but are our souls famished? **What if we gained the whole world, but have famished souls?** (Matthew 16:26)

### FOURTH SEAL: PALE HORSE

This fourth rider symbolizes death. This grim figure wasn't given traits like the other riders, but John was so certain of who this rider was that he named him, Death. This rider also has a companion—Hades.

- These four horsemen are wreaking havoc. **As horrible as they are, their power is limited, and Christ will win in the end.**

## FIFTH SEAL (REVELATION 6:9-11)

### WHAT ABOUT CHRISTIANS?

If the first four seals preview human life in general between the first and second coming of Christ, what about Christians during this time? **Christians will continue to be slain “because of the word of God.”**

- Though wicked humans may kill Christians, God views their deaths as a special heavenly sacrifice (Philippians 2:17; 2 Timothy 4:6).

### LORD, THE ONE WHO IS HOLY AND TRUE...

Several times John heard shouting (praising Jesus around his throne). This time, it is from martyrs, and they address Jesus as **Sovereign Lord, One Who is holy and true.**

- They want to know they had not died in vain. They want justice. They know God will avenge them. The question is not if, but when (Luke 18:7).

### “HOW LONG UNTIL YOU JUDGE...?”

All wrongs will not be made right “until the number would be completed of their fellow servants...killed just as they had been.”

- We are told that there will be more martyrs who will join the current ones under the altar. **Do we live lives worthy to be persecuted (because of the word of God and the testimony we give)?**

## SIXTH SEAL (REVELATION 6:12-17)

### ESCALATION

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.

- With the breaking of the 6th seal, John observed phenomena more violent than anything he had observed so far.

### SKY, LAND, AND SEA SHAKEN

- Earth – a violent earthquake
- Sun – turned black like sackcloth (symbol of mourning)
- Moon – turns blood red (Joel 2:31)
- Stars – falling to the earth is hard to comprehend (Isaiah 34:4)
- Sky – rolling up like a scroll
- Mountains and islands – both being moved

### DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS

- **Symbolic:** Metaphorical “earth-shattering” events.
- **Literal:** The 6th seal is the literal beginning of the end of life as we know it. Some believe this is the same event as Revelation 16:18.
- **Events since Christ was born:** The idea that these things have been happening since the first coming of Christ.

### HOW WILL PEOPLE REACT?

All sorts of people react: political (kings), military (generals), economic leaders (rich, powerful), and every person (slave and free).

- The first global human response is **self-preservation**, hiding among the caves and the rocks of the mountains that will not last. **The only foundation that will last is a relationship with Jesus.**
- All sorts of people react: political (kings), military (generals), economic leaders (rich, powerful), and every person (slave and free).
- The second response to natural disaster is to **blame God.** We see expressions of outrage and blame. **All people are equally brought low by God's wrath. “Who is able to stand?”**

### OUR RESPONSE TO THE HORSES

- White horse: Surrender to Jesus of the Bible. Pray, read, and worship Christ alone. **Do not follow false saviors that have no power to save.**
- Red horse: We are naturally bent towards war and violence. Know that God delights in His children. **Join a Life Group and be surrounded by God's people.**
- Black horse: Are our souls famished? We fight this by being radically hospitable and generous. **Do we have a genuine interest in people? Are we willing to lose our life in order to find it?**
- Pale horse: Hold on to Jesus. Know that He wins in the end. Don't lose sight of Who He is.

### FIFTH SEAL: ARE WE COMPLACENT?

- We need to have a “wartime mindset” and live a “wartime lifestyle.” We can get complacent and believe that the current earth is our forever home.
- **If we're unable to be faithful and knowledgeable in our current freedom, how can we possibly handle the pressure Revelation foretells?**

### SIXTH SEAL: WHO IS ABLE TO STAND?

- How are our ways working? The government? Has any empire stood the test of time? Material gain? Remember, all people will face God's judgment. **We will personally be held accountable.**
- There is **no security, no firm ground to stand on, nothing in the universe to depend on except God himself.**

### GOD WANTS A RELATIONSHIP WITH US!

- Revelation is a wake-up call. God doesn't shake the earth because He hates us, **but to provoke us to change!**
- **We need to fully surrender to God** and let Him transform us from the inside out.
- **God has been so gracious to us.** We have every opportunity to grow in a relationship with Him to prepare for what is to come.