

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 8TH, 2024 // REVELATION

FOUR HORSES (REVELATION 6:1–8) GROWING INTENSITY

This is the first of the chapters we will read in which we see a lot of apocalyptic writing, which means language that describes the end of time. It is not meant to be a code to crack or a mystery to be solved. We know Who Jesus is and what He has come to do.

THEOLOGICAL THOUGHTS

A sequence of events takes place. How you see the sequence taking place determines where you might land and what you think about the end times. Many fall into one of three camps: pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, or post-tribulation. This is a minor but worthwhile discussion.

A SERIES OF EVENTS

One way to structure these events is by grouping them.

- Group 1: The horsemen are in series 1 in the sequence of events.
- Group 2: The fifth and sixth seals are series 2 in the sequence of events.
- Group 3: The seventh seal is a stand-alone but represents the 3 series of events.

THE LAMB

The Lamb opened the seals. Jesus is the Lamb and the only One with the authority to open these seals, for the Lamb alone is worthy (Revelation 5).

- A seal was often used as proof of authenticity and authority (and still is today). This is further evidence to the reader that the Lamb is indeed Christ.

WHITE HORSE

One of the four living creatures says, "Come!" John focused on the rider. The rider went out as a conqueror and to conquer. The repetition displays the power this individual has.

- The bow represents military power.
- The crown represents authority and victory.

SYMBOL OF THE WHITE HORSE: THOUGHT 1

The rider is Jesus. Christ is the only other rider depicted on a white horse in Revelation.

- This idea is unlikely as the intent of this rider seems to be intimidation and authority but not total victory. We know that **Jesus comes back to conquer and reign as King.**

SYMBOL OF THE WHITE HORSE: THOUGHT 2

This rider is the antichrist. The rider is one of the beasts we see in Revelation 13. This predominantly comes from the idea of the rider's conquest, that the rider will conquer and display authority.

- In Revelation 13, the beast conquered Believers. It's unclear what exactly the rider is conquering in Revelation 6.

THE "FIERY" HORSE

The red horse and its rider were given a large sword. This rider is allowed to take peace from the earth, with the ultimate goal that people would slaughter one another.

- **No matter how many treaties or agreements are signed, peace will never be attained until Jesus returns.**

SYMBOL OF THE RED HORSE: THOUGHT 1

Many scholars agree that this symbol refers to warfare. Jesus tells us this in Matthew 24:6–14: "**Wars and rumors of wars... then the end will come**". The color red may also signify bloodshed, which would align with context as we know this rider was given a large sword.

SYMBOL OF THE RED HORSE: THOUGHT 2

Still others hold that this horseman represents struggle and war within nations, civil war and revolutions within people groups across the globe. This is also within context as the "large" sword possibly signifies a large/global scale.

- **Most agree that this rider represents war and conflict.**

THE BLACK HORSE

The third broken seal reveals the black horse. This rider is holding scales, and a voice declares the reality that this horseman brings with it.

- Denarius = one day's wage.
- One day's wage = 1 quart of wheat.
- One day's wage = 3 quarts of barley.
- The oil and wine are not harmed.

SPARING OF WINE AND OIL

Some say this signifies that the wealthy stay wealthy and consume luxury. Others say this is spiritual and the things that satisfy the soul are scarce, while the things which destroy the soul are plentiful.

- **Jesus speaks of this horseman in Matthew 24:7, "There will be famines."**

SYMBOL OF THE BLACK HORSE

It is clear that the very basics of food are in short supply. Most scholars agree that this horseman brings **famine**. The text's clear language allows us to know that the **prices are inflated** for basic supplies. This could also support the idea of an **economic collapse**.

THE FOURTH SEAL

The horseman that appears here is a pale green. This color signifies sickness. The rider has a name, Death, and Hades follows behind this rider. This signifies the great fear of humanity, the grave. If we look at the past three horsemen (war, famine, mass destruction) **this will lead to death**.

THE FOURTH HORSEMAN

This rider was given authority over 25% of the earth, to kill using sword, famine, plague, and wild animals. This rider brings more than fear because Hades follows behind death. This could mean that many souls will be lost for eternity.

THE FIFTH SEAL (REVELATION 6:9–11) THE MARTYRS

This seal does not have a horseman. It is something entirely different. It is a group of people, "souls," who are crying out to Jesus to judge the earth, pleading for Jesus to avenge their sacrifice. They want justice. They are told to wait until their number is completed by others who are martyrs.

WAITING IN WHITE ROBES

The "souls" referred to here are those who have died for the sake of Christ and are waiting for Christ's return. We get further confirmation when 1 Thessalonians 4:16 speaks of the sequence before Jesus returns: "The dead in Christ will rise first."

THE ALTAR

As a result, He is allowing more of His followers to die for the gospel so those who are lost may know Him. 2 Peter 3:9 says that the Lord "is patient... not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance."

- **Persecution will increase, but some will repent and come to know Jesus.**

SEQUENCE

The fifth seal allows us to see something critical to understanding the order of events in Revelation. Verse 11 says that more Believers will be killed for the sake of Christ.

- **Believers may be on earth during the Tribulation.**

THE SIXTH SEAL (REVELATION 6:12–17) THE ANSWER

The opening of this seal declares God's power over the whole earth. The previous seals are under God's authority but are human-powered. This seal reveals God's acts, which are so disruptive that they affect the land, air, and sea.

- **This also answers the martyrs' prayer in the fifth seal.**

THE EARTH IS AFFECTED

The earthquake, sun, and moon have been described before in Scripture (Joel 2:31, Isaiah 13:10, Ezekiel 32:7). When they are brought up it is typically accompanied by God's judgment.

- **In the context of Revelation, this is most likely a sign of the final judgment from God of Humanity.**

MORE DESTRUCTION

This destruction affects the earth's topography, with stars falling from the sky, high winds, and the world being ripped open. It is clear that there will be a significant disruption to the earth as we know it, which will be felt everywhere across the globe.

HUMANITY AMIDST DESTRUCTION

When the holiness of God is near, it is undeniable. Fear of the pending judgment comes into the heart of humanity. Humanity hides, everyone is made equal, and no one's status or earthly possessions matter to a righteous God.

- **Humanity is unable to stand alone before the almighty God.**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

1. **Figurative language:** Symbols for the natural order for life to survive coming to an end.
2. **Literal language:** These events will come to pass as they are written.
3. **Cyclical:** These events continue throughout history, worsening progressively until the end.

RUN AND HIDE

- Humanity has a habit of trying to hide from God or blame God for the mess we find ourselves in.
- What we can be clear on from this chapter is that all of humanity will be faced with the truth of God. **The question becomes, are we running to hide from Him, or are we running to welcome Him?**

JUDGMENT

- Our response today is to acknowledge that God is righteous and holy. He is King and He alone has the right to judge. Chapter 6 reveals how the end will come. **Does this humble us?**
- **What is also revealed to us is Who's on the throne when the end comes. This should bring us to our knees.**

TRUTH SETS US FREE

- Does this conversation scare us or sober us? **Wake up, church!**
- Run to the King; do not hide from Him. Self-preservation leads to destruction; following Jesus leads to eternal life. **Matthew 16:25: "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will find it."**