

# CHAPTER 6







## Understanding the Book of Revelation | Chapter 6

WITH PASTOR TOM

## THE FIRST SIX SEALS

The first four seals of the scroll bring four horsemen.

**Revelation 6:1-2:** The white horse brings a man of conquest.

Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals: From the previous chapter, we understand this scroll is the history and destiny of mankind and creation, and only Jesus — the Lamb — had the right to loosen the seals on this scroll of the culmination of history.

If the scroll details the culmination of history, then the things associated with the removal of the seals must happen before the scroll is opened. This is not the fulfillment of history itself, but the preparation for it.

And I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." Each seal is associated with a living creature

Behold, a white horse: white horse in Revelation 19:11-16; but this is a satanic dictator who imitates Jesus.

He rules (a crown was given); he (Satan) rules with a bow, not a sword; and he exercises dominion over the earth (went out conquering and to conquer). This is not the reign of Jesus.

His reign shall not bring war, famine, and strife in its train.

You can tell much about how a person understands this book and God's prophetic plan by seeing how they understand this first rider. Those who believe that this is a prophetic passage, yet to be fulfilled, often account this rider to be the antichrist.

He went out conquering and to conquer: We see that he (anti-Christ) will be more terrible than all previous dictators were. He will rule over men as a false messiah, and lead man in organized rebellion against God. He is the one often called the antichrist.

Come and see: A political leader. All that waits is for the Lord to allow it in His timing after He takes His church from this earth.

(2 Thessalonians 2:6-7)

Significantly, the first seal opened brings this dictator to prominence. We understand that the seventieth week of Daniel 9 begins when this dictator will confirm a covenant with [the] many, referring to the Jewish people.

Daniel 9 shows that these four horsemen are connected with Daniel's seventieth week and the great tribulation.

**Revelation 6:3-4:** The red horse brings war and conflict.

When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth: This rider didn't need to bring war and destruction. All he needed to do was take peace from the earth. Once this peace — God's gift to man — was taken, men quickly rush in with war and destruction.

And it was granted: This authority was granted to the horseman. This is, directly or indirectly, the judgment of God.

That people should kill one another: The nations of the world often spend more than \$1 trillion on military expenditures a year.

**Revelation 6:5-6:** The black horse brings scarcity and inequity.

When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

A black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand: The scales symbolized the need to carefully measure and ration food. This speaks of a time of scarcity.

A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius: These prices are about twelve times higher than normal. It means that it would cost a day's wage to buy the ingredients for a loaf of bread. This describes a time of famine when life will be reduced to the barest necessities.

Do not harm the oil and the wine: Yet, the nicer things will be available for those who can afford them.

**Revelation 6:7-8:** The pale horse brings death.

When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

A pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death: This last rider shows that there will be a tremendous death toll from the dictatorship, war, famine and other calamities described by the previous three horsemen.

Our modern age has seen hundreds of millions killed by dictators, war, and famine. Yet all that will pale in comparison to the death toll coming in the wake of this ultimate dictator.

Power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill: Power was given to the horseman, and given by God. Though all hell breaks loose on the earth, God is very much in control. He still holds the scroll and opens the seals.

The fifth and sixth seals of the scroll are opened.

**Revelation 6:9-11:** The fifth seal brings forth the cry of the martyrs.

When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God: That these souls were under the altar emphasizes that their life blood was poured out as an offering to God.

Who had been slain for the word of God: It is probably best to see this as the cry of all martyrs for God's truth, not merely believers persecuted by the coming world leader, the first horseman of Revelation 6:1-2.

And they cried with a loud voice...bYou judge and avenge our blood: We usually don't think of God's people crying out for vengeance, but here they made their cry to God, and leave the matter with Him.

When God's people are persecuted, He will set it right. In this way the blood of Abel cried out from the ground for vengeance (Genesis 4:10), as did the blood of unavenged murders in the land of Israel (Numbers 35:33).

It was said to them that they should rest a little while longer: These saints were instructed to wait. How long must they wait? Until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed. This may mean that they should wait until all God's appointed martyrs are killed.

**Revelation 6:12-17:** The opening of the sixth seal brings cosmic disruption.

I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

A great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth: In the Bible, celestial disturbances are often connected with the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Zephaniah and Jesus Himself all described such things.

(Zephaniah 1:14-16)

Joel 2:10-11: The sun and moon grow dark, and stars diminish their brightness... for the day of the LORD is great and terrible; who can endure it?

John did not use technically precise scientific language, but he simply described what he saw.

All people are equally brought low by God's wrath. The judgment is all the more profound because it is the wrath of the Lamb.

What sinners dread most is not death, but the revealed presence of God.

The first six seals are a summary of the judgments distributed over the whole book; a brief summary of what will occur in 'the day of the Lord,' up to the time of His actual Apocalypse or Unveiling in chapter 19.

That span begins with the revelation of the Antichrist (the first seal) and it concludes with the revealing of the face of Him who sits on the throne (the seventh seal).

As far as the seals are concerned, they will be an intense amplification of bad conditions often experienced through history. God will give mankind over to his fallen nature — and more!

This is not the case with some of the trumpet and bowl judgments of later chapters. They are completely unique manifestations of God's judgment.

- The sixth seal concludes with a valid question: Who is able to stand? Only the believer can stand before this great judgment, the one who is justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.



- Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand. (Romans 5:1-2)
- I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which you also received and in which you stand. (1 Corinthians 15:1)
- Testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. (1 Peter 5:12)
- The believer can stand in the face of this great wrath of God because Jesus already bore the wrath the believer deserved.