

Revelation 6:1-8 | The First Four Seals: Four Horsemen

Introduction

This is the unveiling of the Scroll with the Lamb opening the seven seals on the scroll (Revelation 5:1). This is where the book of Revelation begins to get a little more challenging and the different eschatological positions such as the various views on the timing of the rapture (pretribulation/posttribulation) start to surface.

Chapter 6 picks up where the events of chapter 5 left off – the Lamb who was worthy to open the scroll of destiny is beginning to break the seals.

Verse-By-Verse Notes

Verse 1

- The opening of the first seal will set in motion the consummation of human history. John is invited by one of the four living creatures (4:6) to come (“come and see” some translations) to witness the unfolding of the end of history.

Verse 2

- The rider of this horse is almost certainly *not* Christ (see Revelation 19:11-19), but rather the Antichrist – a false messiah who “conquers” by ushering in an unprecedented era of world peace, but it will be short-lived.

Verses 3 & 4

- The rider’s identification is clearly implied: this is the curse of war and anarchy. The horse’s red color symbolizes bloodshed.
- Unprecedented war will be characteristic of the end-times, and of the tribulation period in particular preceding the glorious appearing of Christ.

Verses 5 & 6

- This horse and rider are symbolic of famine and inflation.
- Robert Mounce notes that *“The price [for barley] appears to be ten to twelve times what it should have been.”*
- John MacArthur: *“Famine is a logical consequence of worldwide war as food supplies are destroyed and those involved in food production are killed.”*

Verses 7 & 8

- The pale horse and rider is death.
- The Greek word *chlōros* (χλωρός) is where we get the English word “Clorox.” It refers to a pale green-ish gray.
- Although the KJV translates “hades” as “hell,” Hades here should be understood to be the abode of the dead, not hellfire.
- One-fourth of the world’s *current* population is 2 billion. The pale horse will bring unprecedented global death.
- Jim Hamilton: *“Before . . . the new heavens and the new earth, [Christ] has to bring judgment for all the despising of God’s glory and the defiling of his holiness. God is just,*

and Jesus has taken hold of the scroll. As he opens its seals, Jesus sets in motion the outworking of God's justice."

BIG TAKEAWAY: JESUS IS SOVEREIGN OVER THE DIRE PICTURE PAINTED BY JOHN – HE HOLDS THE SCROLL AND OPENS THE SEALS ACCORDING TO HIS DIVINE WILL.