



## [Revelation 6:5-6](#)

(5) And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. (6) And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

*King James Version*

This is a picture of scarcity of grain during a time when olive oil and wine are abundant. The grain must be measured very carefully, and it is sold at about twelve times its normal price. At the same time, growers are commanded not to reduce the production of oil and wine, items which most would consider to be luxuries. It seems that the common folk would spend all their living on grain to fend off starvation and have nothing left over for the finer things, while the rich would continue to live comfortably and make money on the inflated grain prices. The Third Seal describes scarcity in the midst of prosperity; the rich get richer as the poor get poorer.

Such a situation is not hard to imagine in our fast-paced, greedy world. Amos shows the rich "[selling] the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of sandals" ([Amos 2:6](#)). Many businessmen have no qualms about taking advantage of a situation, as long as they are guaranteed to make a profit. We should not be surprised when food prices escalate sharply after a mediocre harvest.

[God](#) is not capricious; He does nothing without a purpose. He says that He sends these droughts, floods, diseases, insects, and famines to warn us and cause us to return to Him ([Amos 4:6-9](#)). Our God wants us to receive blessings, not curses, but sometimes He must get our attention and point us in the right direction when we go astray.

But Israel is stubborn and rebellious ([Jeremiah 5:23](#)). The people fail to see that their sins have caused these curses to fall upon them (verses 24-25). In fact, Israel *loves* to dwell in [sin](#) (verses 26-31)! Thus, God must punish them to make them obedient to His

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Revelation 6:5-6 (<http://www.theberean.org>)  
laws—laws that will make them prosperous and happy.

Hunger is a method that hits home quickly, and God will try to use this curse effectively:

Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the short measure that is an abomination? Shall I count pure those with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? For her rich men are full of violence, her inhabitants have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. Therefore I will also make you sick by striking you, by making you desolate because of your sins. You shall eat, but not be satisfied; hunger shall be in your midst. . . . You shall sow, but not reap; you shall tread the olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil; and make sweet wine, but not drink wine. ([Micah 6:10-15](#))

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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