



Daily Verse and Comment

Revelation 6:8

(8) And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

King James Version

The final descriptive item regarding the fourth seal is "Hades followed with him." Obviously, "Hades" has been left untranslated in the New King James; it is "[Hell](#)" in the Authorized Version. *Strong's Concordance* defines this simply as "the place (state) of departed souls," although this is in itself an interpretive definition. A more complete definition would include that it is a proper name of the Greek [god](#) of the lower regions, known as Pluto by the Romans, who gave his name to the realm of the dead (*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*).

However, this barely scratches the surface of the subject. *The Complete Word Study New Testament* adds, "In Homer and Hesiod the word is spelled *Haïdês* meaning obscure, dark, invisible," suggesting that it is a place or condition about which mortal man understands little. The same reference work mentions that it equates to the Hebrew word *Sheol*, and that in all the New Testament passages in which it occurs, Hades is associated with death (with the *possible* exceptions of [Matthew 11:23](#) and [Luke 10:15](#)).

Cutting through all the scholarly speculation, much of which is based on either Jewish or Greek—not necessarily biblical—conceptions of *Sheol* or *Hades*, the basic idea is the grave, the place where the dead go after death. As Solomon writes so plainly, "But the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward. . . . [F]or there is no work or device or knowledge or [wisdom](#) in the grave where you are going" ([Ecclesiastes 9:5](#), 10).

Many scriptures show that God will resurrect or redeem us from the grave, not from some shadowy netherworld of spirits. For instance, the psalmist writes, "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave" ([Psalm 49:15](#); see 30:3), and God prophesies through Ezekiel, "Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves" ([Ezekiel 37:13](#)). [Jesus](#) Himself says, "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" ([John 5:28-29](#)).

The [Old Testament](#) instruction, carried into the New, is that death and the grave are parallel if not synonymous ideas. Notice these passages which use parallelisms:

- » For in *death* there is no remembrance of You; in the *grave* who will give You thanks? ([Psalm 6:5](#))
- » Like sheep they are laid in the *grave*; *death* shall feed on them. . . . ([Psalm 49:14](#))
- » [I am] adrift among the *dead*, like the slain who lie in the *grave*, whom You remember no more, and who are cut off from Your hand. ([Psalm 88:5](#))
- » What man can live and not see *death*? Can he deliver his life from the power of the *grave*? ([Psalm 89:48](#))
- » For [love](#) is as strong as *death*, jealousy as cruel as the *grave*. . . . ([Song of Songs 8:6](#))
- » I will ransom them from the power of the *grave*; I will redeem them from *death*. O *Death*, I will be your plagues! O *Grave*, I will be your destruction! ([Hosea 13:14](#); see [I Corinthians 15:55](#))
- » And they made His *grave* with the wicked—but with the rich at His *death*. . . . ([Isaiah 53:9](#))

These verses accent the common-sense truth of [Revelation 6:8](#): "And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades [the grave] followed with him." Death, in this case by pestilence, and the grave—Hades or Sheol, the abode of the dead—are inseparable companions; where one goes the other must follow because they are essentially the same. One can argue that they are technically different—that death is the cessation of life, and the grave is the repository of a person's earthly remains—but the difference is purely semantic. In the end, they both describe a state of lifelessness and corruption, of being cut off from the living and from God.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Four Horsemen \(Part Five\): The Pale Horse](#)

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