



## [Revelation 6:1-8](#)

(1) And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. (2) And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. (3) And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. (4) And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. (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. (7) And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. (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*

It is clear that the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse—the first four seals—parallel [Jesus'](#) prophecy in [Matthew 24:4-8](#), which ends with the words, "All these are the beginning of sorrows." Our Savior is letting us know that deception, violence, scarcity, and disease are only preludes to the catastrophic events of the last days. We could paraphrase His remark as, "These calamities are par for the course under man's civilization—far worse is yet to come."

The progression of disasters—of false ideas leading to war, war to famine, famine to pestilence, pestilence to wild beasts—is vital to understanding the spiritual teaching underlying the Four Horsemen. Through a kind of parable, Jesus is instructing us in the principle of cause and effect. If people believe the message of the father of [murder](#) ([John](#)

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[8:44](#)) rather than the Prince of [Peace \(Isaiah 9:6\)](#), they will eventually turn to murder and war to resolve their differences. Like the law of gravity, war causes shortages of food, producing malnutrition and opening the door to disease.

[God](#) is showing us that these sorrows trace their roots back to disobedience and rejection of Him. Mankind has built his civilization on a foundation of sand ([Matthew 7:24-27](#)), and it is no wonder that disasters ensue upon mankind with terrifying regularity. Because God is just, it cannot be otherwise. He has said, "The wages of [sin](#) is death" ([Romans 6:23](#)), and "The soul who sins shall die" ([Ezekiel 18:4](#)). In addition, He has given us two sets of blessings and cursings (Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28) to provide us frightening and vivid depictions of what happens when we disobey Him. The Four Horsemen are similar warnings or reminders that He is still on His throne, judging mankind for his sins.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

**To learn more, see:**

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

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