



Daily Verse and Comment

Revelation 6:1-8

(1) I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" (2) I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest. (3) When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" (4) Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword. (5) When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. (6) Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!" (7) When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" (8) I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

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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 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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