

The Second through Fourth Seals

Revelation 6:3-8



Revelation 6:3-8 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.

Introduction: These three seals are presented as the other three "Horsemen of the Apocalypse." Each of these seals, including the first one, is presented by one of the four beasts mentioned in the previous chapters that are around the throne.

The first seal represented the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation period. The second through fourth seals represent the beginning of the second half – the half referred to by many as "The Great Tribulation." These events unfold in sequential order – one after the other.

I. THE SECOND SEAL – VS. 3-4

Revelation 6:3-4 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.



A. The vision

1. It is said here that John “heard the second beast say” but it doesn’t say that he saw or beheld anything.
 - a) Some say that for this one John didn’t actually see anything but the way it is worded it indicates that this happened as the first seal events were concluding.
 - b) In other words, the next event to happen after the 3 ½ years of peace is what is given in this seal.
2. Red horse
3. Power was given to him to “take peace from the earth”
4. Had a “great sword”

B. The meaning

1. The red horse
 - a) The horse is a symbol, as pointed out in the message on the first seal, of war, strength, dominion (the white horse being a symbol of victory)
 - b) The color of the horse indicates a change from conquest to battle – the horse being the color of blood symbolizing carnage, discord and bloodshed
2. “Power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth”

- a) It was given to him – he didn't possess it beforehand. This was power given to him by the old dragon, the Devil – Rev. 13.
- b) The power he had was allowed him by God – even if it came from the Devil – nothing happens during this time period that God doesn't allow
- c) The fact that the vision of this horse was second is, of course, no coincidence – immediately following the 3 ½ years of peace will come the sword and bloodshed through war where the antichrist takes rule by the sword

[Ezekiel 38:11-12](#) And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, (12) To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places *that are now* inhabited, and upon the people *that are* gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.

- 3. He is seen as making war, and that during this war he made the people on earth, the armies of the earth "that they should kill one another"
 - a) This isn't a description of something in history, although a case could be made for that
 - b) This is what will happen half way through the tribulation period – the world will set on itself and begin killing one another

- c) This can be seen as civil war, not just nation against nation

Note: Read Matthew 24:3-14

Matthew 24:3-14 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (4) And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Take heed that no man deceive you.** (5) For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (6) And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. (7) For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. (8) All these *are* the beginning of sorrows. (9) Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. (10) And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. (11) And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. (12) And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. (13) But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (14) And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

4. The rider of this horse is seen with a "great

sword”

- a) The first horseman had a bow – but not arrows
- b) The “great sword” here is to be seen in contrast with that image from the first one
- c) The sword is a sign of bloodshed and carnage

C. The application

1. The same as the first seal, as well as the same for all the others
 - a) For the unsaved person – it points to what’s to come and is given to give them a reason to pursue a relationship with Christ
 - b) For the believer – it points us to what’s to come so we will be more motivated to make sure all that will listen can hear
2. Another application, already mentioned, is that there will be some of this taking place on earth before the tribulation but prior to the rapture, and there will be more talk of peace – maybe because of the war that has been taking place. We need to be careful we don’t use world events today that have to do with civil war and unrest as a precursor to the rapture – it will more than likely not be. Keep in mind, these seals are what begins halfway through the seven years so whatever is happening on earth now may be a precursor to some of this but it is not this yet.

II. THE THIRD SEAL – VS. 5-6

Revelation 6:5-6 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.



A. The vision

1. Black horse
2. Pair of balances in his hand
3. A voice in the midst of the four beasts
4. A description of famine

B. The meaning

1. Black horse
 - a) Horse – image of war
 - b) Black is a symbol of what happens through famine
2. “Pair of balances” – this is a symbol for weighing one thing against another – points to what is coming in the famine
3. “A voice in the midst of the four beasts” – the only Person that is seen in the midst of the four beasts is the “Lamb that was slain”

Revelation 5:6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.
4. The last part of verse 6 is a description of the outcome of famine
 - a) “A measure of wheat for a penny” – that is

a day's wage at the time

- b) "Three measures of barley for a penny" – barley wasn't as good as wheat, but it was cheaper
- c) This was spending a day's wage for one meal – with nothing left for anything else
- d) "See thou hurt not the oil and the wine" – this is seen as the rich being immune from the famine – they thought their money could buy their eternity but in the sixth seal all are dealt with

C. The application

1. During this time period the results of the world war are seen, and famine kills many
2. For those that are alive during this time it will be very difficult to "endure to the end" and be saved
3. For those that heard the gospel on this side of the Rapture there will be no hope, and many will die from starvation – with no hope of heaven

III. THE FOURTH SEAL – VS. 7-8

Revelation 6:7-8 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.



A. The vision

1. Pale horse – pale-green or yellow-green
2. “Death” sat on the horse
3. “Hell” followed behind
4. Power was given to kill over a quarter of the earth

B. The meaning

1. The pale horse represents death, or the process of dying when the “look of death” sets in
2. “Death” is seen as the rider of the horse and that is simply to describe what is going to happen

Revelation 20:13-14 And the sea gave up

the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

- a) This is where the image of the "grim reaper" came from, and the term "old man Death"
 - b) Each of these riders represent a series of events during the Tribulation period where one follows the other
3. "Hell" is seen as following death, which would seem to indicate that the ones that will die will be the enemies of the Lord and not the believers that are saved during the Tribulation – they will die but I don't believe during this time represented by this seal.
- a) The word translated "hell" here is also used of the grave in 1 Cor. 15:55 so it could be that it was simply referring to the fact people would die
 - 1 Corinthians 15:55 O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?
 - b) However, the fact it is translated "hell" here (and in 9 of the other 11 times it appears in the New Testament) is to point to the place we would refer to as "hell," I believe
 - Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
 - Luke 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes,

being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

4. "Power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth"
 - a) The same as the previous horsemen – "Death and Hell" here receive their power from the Devil
 - b) More than a quarter of the population dies – if it were today that would be more than 1.9 billion people – that's six (6) times the population of the US – more than that of China or India
 - c) They die by the sword (war), hunger (as a result of the war), death (they just die of disease or natural causes), and wild beasts

C. The application

1. This is going to be the worst of the four horsemen and it will be an awful time on earth. Sadly, though, it gets worse, and there are many alive when the rapture takes place that will live to see this seal unleashed.
2. What will we do, as believers, to let others know of pending judgment?

Conclusion: One thing to note in regard to the seals is that this isn't really the judgment of God's wrath on earth (that happens with the vial judgments) – this is all man's doing (or what God has allowed to happen to them because of their doing). The outcome of man's rejection of Christ will be that of war and death and destruction – that's true now as it will be then.