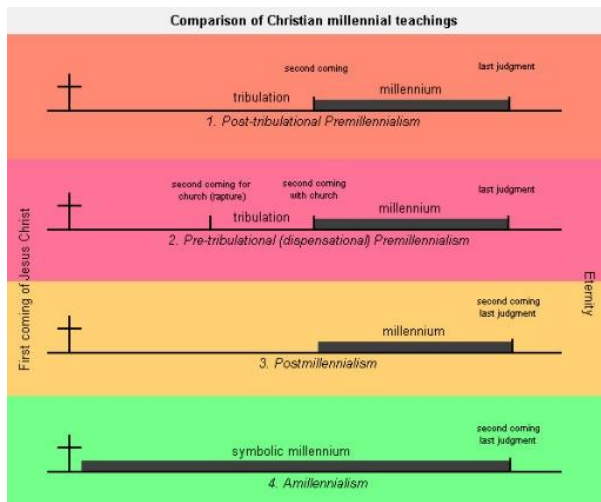


The Seals – A Wake Up Call

Our Cultures. Many people believe that God exists. Yet, many ignore Him because they would rather enjoy comfort, luxury, and the pleasures of sin. For many Christians, God is someone to “worship” but not someone to serve. For non-Christians, a sense of right and wrong is considered by many to be something for the “old people and previous generations.” For them absolute standards of right and wrong do not exist. For others God is a myth. For many centuries and even today, Christians have been and are being ridiculed, abused, and murdered for their faith. How has the world responded to God’s prophets and apostles? How did they react to Jesus? The truth is that they killed them when they did not like the messages of rebuke and calls to submit to God. Those who have rejected the message and did not believe in Jesus have abused, persecuted, and even murdered many Christians. Where has God been? Has God ignored His followers? No! God is not ignoring His people. God will correct the injustice. Judgment is coming.



Revelation 6 is packed with information as well as biblical connections throughout the rest of the bible regarding the coming judgment.

Then I saw the Lamb open one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" (Rev. 6:1 CSB)

The Lamb has taken the scroll and immediately begins to open the seals ... and each seal when opened releases its judgment. This part of the Revelation is not unfamiliar to John as it is

recorded in the Gospels as well.

Revelation 6	Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
1. War (v. 1-2)	1. Wars (v. 6)	1. Wars (v. 7)	1. Wars (v. 9)
2. International strife (v. 3-4)	2. International strife (v. 7a)	2. International strife (v. 8)	2. International strife (v. 10)
3. Famine (v. 5-6)	3. Famines (v. 7b)	3. Earthquakes (v. 8b)	3. Earthquakes (v. 11a)
4. Pestilence (v. 7-8)	4. Earthquakes (v. 7c)	4. Famines (v. 8c)	4. Plagues and famines (v. 11b)
5. Persecution (v. 9-11)	5. Persecutions (v. 9-13)	5. Persecutions (v. 9-13)	5. Persecution (v. 12-19)
6. Earthquake; De-creation (v. 12-17)	6. De-creation (v. 15-31)	6. De-creation (v. 14-27)	6. De-creation (v. 20-27)

Also, as I have been showing you in the past weeks everything in John’s Revelation is rooted in the Old Testament and this passage is no different. The Central OT scripture behind this text is

Zechariah 6:1-7 which pictures the 4 winds as God's chariots driving by his agents who go back and forth patrolling the earth.

(Zech. 6:1-5) Now I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming forth from between the two mountains; and the mountains were bronze mountains. ² With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses, ³ with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot strong dappled horses. ⁴ Then I spoke and said to the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these, my lord?" ⁵ The angel replied to me, "These are the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing before the Lord of all the earth,

The point of the "wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes" is to give us a fourfold, impressive picture of the terrible war that is coming in the Tribulation.

And why is war coming to Jerusalem?

(Mat 23:31-36) ³¹ "So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. ³² "Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. ³³ "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell? ³⁴ "Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, ³⁵ so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶ "Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

A few verses later Jesus tells them that their home is going to be left desolate—devastated—destroyed. ... Even Ezekiel prophesied of this judgement coming to Jerusalem.

(Ezekiel 5:17)¹⁷ "Moreover, I will send on you famine and wild beasts, and they will bereave you of children; plague and bloodshed also will pass through you, and I will bring the sword on you. I, the LORD, have spoken."

(Eze 14:21)²¹ For thus says the Lord GOD, "How much more when I send My four severe judgments against Jerusalem: sword, famine, wild beasts and plague to cut off man and beast from it!

I hope I am making my point that the trouble we see in Rev. 6, against Jerusalem, has been prophesied multiple times throughout history.

Now as we read through the text, we saw that each of the four "living ones" takes a turn in introducing a horseman.

² I looked, and there was a white horse. Its rider held a bow; a crown was given to him, and he went out as a conqueror in order to conquer. (Rev. 6:2 CSB)

White Horse

Hal Lindsey wrote *“This is the Antichrist, and he is the only person who could accomplish all of these feats.”* I disagree (5 reasons).

1. This rider, already having achieved victory, rises on to further victories **“He went out conquering and to conquer.”**
2. This horse is ‘white’ and the color is always associated with that which is holy.
3. The rider of the white horse is armed for battle and already victorious... a crown had been given him.
4. Also, (with only one exception) every time you see the word ‘conquer’ in John’s writings it always refers to Christ or believers.
 - In **John 16:33** Jesus says, “I have conquered the world.”
 - **Rev. 3:2b** Jesus says, “as I also conquered and sat down ...”
 - **In Rev. 5:5** “Behold he has conquered ...”
5. Lastly, in **Rev. 19:11** the rider on the white horse is clearly identified as Christ, the Word of God, faithful and true... King of Kings.”

So, what does this white horse mean? **Here it is:** Our conquering Lord is conquering now, and he is exercising both spiritual and universal kingship over everything. Now the other horse and riders are introduced. All the passages we have seen: Matthew, Ezekiel, Zechariah, will help us better understand this chapter.

- In Ezekiel the one who afflicts Judah is Babylon, but Babylon is an instrument in the hand of Jehovah who is sending trials for the purpose of purifying Jerusalem and sanctify his people.
- Also, (Ezek. 11:19; 33:11) the other three riders are serving the first rider.

Red Horse : ³ When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!"
⁴ Then another horse went out, a fiery red one, and its rider was allowed to take peace from the earth, so that people would slaughter one another. And a large sword was given him. (Rev. 6:3-4 CSB)

The word “sword” is (machaira) which is a short sacrificial knife.

This horse and its rider refer to religious persecution of God’s children. Not a war between nations but a war between the world and true believers. Religious persecution of slaughter and

sacrifice. Jesus, in Matthew 10:34, predicted that a sword (not peace) would come to those who follow Him. This horse points to the martyrs of Christ during the Tribulation.

The **2nd seal** speak of those being slaughtered and the **5th seal** will speak of them as having been slaughtered.

Black Horse: ⁵ When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" And I looked, and there was a black horse. Its rider held a set of scales in his hand. ⁶ Then I heard something like a voice among the four living creatures say, "**A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, but do not harm the oil and the wine.**" (Rev. 6:5-6 CSB)

This is great economic hardship. In other words, a whole day's wages for a quantity of wheat that will last one person just one day. At this point the only way to survive will be to be dishonest, shrewd, and even cruel. This is something true believers cannot do. *When you really think about it the RED and BLACK horse belong together... it's all about the persecution of God's people.* These two horses are seen spreading oppression, injustice, and economic hardship. **The 2nd and 3rd riders describe those woes that specifically affect the lives of believers.**

Pale (Ashen) Horse: ⁷ When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" ⁸ And I looked, and there was a pale green horse. Its rider was named death, and Hades was following after him. They were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill by the sword, by famine, by plague, and by the wild animals of the earth. (Rev. 6:7-8 CSB)

Whereas riders 2 and 3 spoke of trouble that will specifically impact believers the 4th rider announces those woes which both believer and non-believer suffer. Here the word sword is **rhomphaia** (*not machaira*) and is the long heavy sword—like the one that David used to cut off Goliath's head. Unlike the previous riders, this is war.

Here we see the 4 universal woes that all people suffer: warfare, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts.

To sum up:

- Jesus is the rider on the white horse.
- The rider on the red horse represents slaughter.
- The rider on the black horse represents economic hardship and poverty due to injustice.
- The 2nd and 3rd symbolize the direct persecution of the church by the world.
- The rider on the ashen (pale) horse represents those 4 woes common to all humanity.

5th Seal: ⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the word of God and the testimony they had given. ¹⁰ They cried out with

a loud voice: "Lord, the one who is holy and true, how long until you judge those who live on the earth and avenge our blood?" (Rev. 6:9-10 CSB)

This is those who have died for their faith under the 2nd seal. According to verse 9 they were killed for the "testimony they maintained." **Question:** how do we harmonize the cry for justice and vengeance with Stephen who prayed "lay not this sin to their charge"? **Answer:** They are not praying for themselves to be vindicated for their own sakes but for God's sake. The world killed them only because the world couldn't get to God.

Notice the reward given to these martyrs. ¹¹ So they were each given a white robe, and they were told to rest a little while longer until the number would be completed of their fellow servants and their brothers and sisters, who were going to be killed just as they had been. (Rev. 6:11 CSB)

- A robe of righteousness and holiness.
- Assurance that their prayers will be answered in God's time.
- God knows exactly how many will die for their faith.

6th Seal: ¹² Then I saw him open the sixth seal. A violent earthquake occurred; the sun turned black like sackcloth made of hair; the entire moon became like blood; ¹³ the stars of heaven fell to the earth as a fig tree drops its unripe figs when shaken by a high wind; ¹⁴ the sky was split apart like a scroll being rolled up; and every mountain and island was moved from its place. ¹⁵ Then the **kings of the earth**, the **nobles**, the **generals**, the **rich**, the **powerful**, and every **slave** and **free** person hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶ And they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, ¹⁷ because **the great day of their wrath has come!** And who is able to stand?" (Rev. 6:12-17 CSB)

This seal introduces the complete judgment day. In the vision John sees the judgment **affecting 6 parts of creation.**

1. Earthquake
2. Sun turns black like hair.
3. Moon like blood
4. Stars of the heavens falling to the earth
5. Sky split like a scroll and rolled up.
6. Every mountain and island gone from their place.

John is showing us a clear picture of the dread, despair, and confusion of the wicked at the beginning of the Tribulation. Notice the **six classes of humanity** underlined above. John sees the entire godless world seized by fear, terrified and fleeing.