

## Rider on the Black Horse (vv. 5-6)

**VERSE 5** **When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come."** [*conj kai + adv hote when + aor.act.ind.3s. anoigo open + art.w/noun acc.f.s. sphragis seal + art.w/adj.acc.f.s. tritos third + aor.act.ind.1s. akouo hear + art.w/adj.gen.nt.s. tritos third + noun gen.nt.s. zoon living being + pres.act.part.gen.nt.s. lego say + pres..dep.imper.2s. erchomai come*] **I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand** [*καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος μέλας, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἔχων ζυγὸν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ*] [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. eidon (horao) see + conj kai + part idou behold (horao) + noun nom.m.s. hippos horse + adj.nom.m.s. melas black, dark + conj kai + art.w/pres.dep.part.nom.m.s. kathemai sit + prep epi upon + pro.acc.m.s. autos it + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. echo have + noun acc.m.s. zugos crossbeam; lever of a balance; by synecdoche a pair of scales + prep en + art.w/noun loc.f.s. cheir hand + pro.gen.m.s. autos his*]).

**VERSE 6** **And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying** (*καὶ ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων λέγουσαν* [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. akouo hear + adv hos as + noun acc.f.s. phone voice + prep en in + adj.loc.nt.s. mesos middle + art.w/adj.gen.nt.p. tessares four + noun gen.nt.p. zoon living being + pres.act.part.acc.f.s. lego say*]), **"A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine** [*Χοῖνιξ σίτου δηναρίου καὶ τρεῖς χοῖνικες κριθῶν δηναρίου*] [*noun nom.f.s. choinix a dry measure almost equal to a quart; considered a daily grain ration for one person + noun gen.m.s. sitos wheat + noun gen.nt.s. denarion a Roman silver coin equiv. to a workman's daily wage + conj kai + adj.nom.f.p. treis three + noun nom.f.p. choinix quart + noun gen.f.p. kritte barley + noun gen.nt.s. denarion + conj kai + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. elaion olive oil + conj kai + art.w/noun acc.m.s. oinos wine + neg me + aor.act.imper.2s. adikeo do wrong/harm*]."

**ANALYSIS: VERSES 5-6**

1. The opening of the third seal followed by the summons of the third living creature (man-like) brings into the experience of men a new development.
2. A development that was not active until the warfare associated with the appearing of the red horse takes place.
3. The indirect effect of this war is famine.
4. Famine is one of the signs of the end-time.
5. Famine is always going on somewhere on the earth.

6. This is not famine in general but famine that hits those most immediately affected by the collapse of world economy as a result of the fall of the US.
7. What we have here is famine in previously affluent countries.
8. The black horse portrays scarcity and the way of portraying scarcity is the *zygon* or “pair of scales” the rider holds in his hand.
9. Careful weighing of food shows it to be in short supply (Ezek. 4:16-17).
10. John next hears an announcement coming from “the midst of the four living beings.”
11. This announcement does not come from the four living creatures as the previous summonses have.
12. The statement as to the source of the words is intentionally vague as seen in the words “I heard *something* like a voice.”
13. There is a degree of uncertainty in John’s description.
14. The voice comes from the heavenly presence.
15. The general location of the voice is where the throne proper is.
16. Since God the Father is the ultimate source of these judgments it seems best to assign the voice to Him.
17. It takes a days wage just to purchase a survival diet.
18. In other words what we have in the first part of the divine decree (or judgment) is exorbitant prices, presumably due to scarcity.
19. In former times God sent famines (e.g., 2Kgs. 8:1; Jer. 16:4; Hag. 1:11; 2:16-17).
20. It is fitting that He announces this future economic distress that is one of the upshots of war.
21. Wheat was the staple of the ancient world, a better grain worth more than barley.
22. The amount of wheat was only enough to sustain a person for one day.
23. A denarius was the average wage for a day laborer.
24. Wheat and barely were the basic food for those at the bottom of the economic ladder.
25. By buying the cheaper commodity a laborer could obtain enough food for a whole family, but each person received less nutritional value.
26. Again, the purchasing power of the basic unit of exchange drops far below what is normal and results in widespread hunger.
27. The famine will *not* be universal, however.
28. Protection of an element of the population from what is reflected in the decree “and do not harm the oil and the wine.”
29. A prohibition not to hurt the oil or the wine (illustrative of luxury items) means a limitation as to scarcity.
30. In other words the 3<sup>rd</sup> seal will entail hardship, but the famine will only affect certain classes of people.
31. The well-to-do (e.g., wealthy) are unhurt by this famine.
32. There are limitations attached to the rider on the black horse.
33. He could have charged more for than one denarius for a days worth of food, making the famine even more severe.
34. But because God controls history, He determines the degree of prosperity or adversity.
35. The lesson is a disparity between the rich and the average person.
36. This famine will be serious enough to make it unprecedented up to this time.
37. The world has seen many limited famines but never one like this.
38. People cannot live on oil and wine so they must be seen as extras.
39. The major feature of this limitation indicates the inequity that will prevail.

40. The average person will have it extremely hard while the wealthy will experience no interruption to their luxurious life style.
41. Some argue that God would not favor the rich while aggravating the circumstances of the poor.
42. This objection is mitigated by the fact that the rich will suffer under the judgments to follow.
43. A question about the relation of this famine (depression) to the one under the next seal is in order.
44. The 4<sup>th</sup> seal famine will be even more severe.
45. This is verified by the widespread death toll under the next seal.
46. The prohibition “do not hurt,” addressed presumably to the 3<sup>rd</sup> rider, is phrased so as to forbid even the beginning of damage to the oil and wine.
47. The privileged lifestyle of the rich remains intact.
48. Again, the balance indicates a time of scarcity when the basic commodities of life are rationed at inflated prices based on the first part of the decree of v.6.
49. For an OT parallel see Ezek. 4:16; cf. Lev. 26:26).
50. And again, there are limitations imposed on the rider of the black horse.
51. The rider on the black horse is probably the Antichrist the affected area is Western Europe.
52. The burden of the economic collapse is put on the shoulders of the average working man.
53. Prices are set and goods are rationed.
54. The rich in the surviving western democracies escape the effects of this seal.
55. The man in the street however struggles with scarcity and hyperinflation.
56. The draconian economic policies of the European confederation headed by the Antichrist are in response to the pulling of the economic plug in the wake of the destruction of American as per the 2<sup>nd</sup> seal judgment.

#### Rider on the Pale Horse (vv. 6-7)

**VERSE 7 When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come** (*conj kai + adv hote when + aor.pass.ind.3s. anoigo open; “broke” + art.w/noun acc.f.s. sphragis seal + art.w/adj.acc.f.s. tetartos fourth + aor.act.ind.1s. akouo hear + noun acc.f.s. phone voice + art.w/adj.gen.nt.s. tetartos fourth + noun gen.nt.s. zoon living being + pres.act.part.gen.nt.s. lego say + pres.dep.imper. 2s. erchomai come*)."

**VERSE 8 I looked, and behold, an ashen horse** (*καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος χλωρός [conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. eidon see + conj kai + interj. idou behold + noun nom.m.s. hippos horse + adj.nom.m.s. chloros pale green; fig. as the color of a sick person]*); **and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him** [*καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ ὄνομα αὐτῷ [ὁ] Θάνατος, καὶ ὁ ἄδης ἠκολούθει μετ’ αὐτοῦ [conj kai + pres.dep.part.nom.m.s. kathemai sit + prep epano above, over; here “on” as in Matt. 21:7; 23:18; but Rev. 20:3 = “over” + pro.nom.m.s. autos it + noun nom.nt.s. onoma name + pro.dat.m.s. autos “of him” + noun nom.m.s. thanatos death; pestilence + conj kai + art.w/noun*

*nom.m.s. hades + impf.act.ind.3s. akoloutheo follow after + prep meta + pro.gen.m.s. autos him]).*

**Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth** (καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἐξουσία ἐπὶ τὸ τέταρτον τῆς γῆς [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. didomi give + pro.dat.m.p. autos “them” + noun nom.f.s. exousia authority; power + prep epi upon, over + art.w/adj.acc.nt.s. tetartos fourth + art.w/noun gen.f.s. ge earth*]), **to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth** [ἀποκτείνειν ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ καὶ ἐν λιμῷ καὶ ἐν θανάτῳ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν θηρίων τῆς γῆς [*aor.act.inf. apoketino kill + prep en in; “with” + noun instr.f.s. hromphaia sword + conj kai + prep en in; “with” + noun instr.f.s. limos hunger; “famine” + conj kai + prep hupo by means of + art.w/noun gen.nt.p. therion wild animal, beast + art.w/noun gen.f.s. ge earth*]).

#### ANALYSIS: VERSES 7-8

1. A conspicuous increase in severity confronts us with the opening of the 4<sup>th</sup> seal.
2. The 4<sup>th</sup> living being (eagle-like) summons the rider on the ashen/pale horse.
3. The increased intensity raises the question of the time of this visitation.
4. One view has it in the latter half of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week of years, following the rationale that the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the tribulation is a time of relative tranquility and the 4<sup>th</sup> seal reflects the awful conditions more characteristic of the last three and one half years.
5. While it is true that the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the tribulation is far worse than the first half, it does not follow that the first half is relatively quiet.
6. After all, the US is nuked some two years into the period.
7. Never has there been a time when the four afflictions of the fourth seal have operated simultaneously over a fourth of the earth.
8. The best solution is to assign the 4<sup>th</sup> seal to sometime close to the midpoint of the tribulation.
9. The adjective to describe the color of the 4<sup>th</sup> horse is pale green.
10. It is the word used to describe the color of grass and other vegetation (Mk. 6:39 and Rev. 8:7; 9:4), but in the present connection, designates the yellowish green of decay, the pallor of death.
11. It recalls a corpse in an advanced state of corruption.
12. As to the identity of the rider a variety of views exist.
13. One view has it the rider is represents the release of the devil and his forces but this is based on allegorization of the words.
14. Further there is no evidence that the devil is allowed to directly take human life, though he is quite capable of doing so.
15. Satan is limited to influencing people with respect to evil and even on rare occasion to possess a person.
16. This view does not connect with the sequential cause and effect relationship between the first four seals with the imagery of four horsemen.
17. False peace (white horse) is a trap that results in unprecedented warfare (red horse) against a foe (white horse) resulting in world-wide depression (black horse) and finally, the rider on the pale horse, named Death.

18. The question is: ‘What is the relationship of this deadly ride to what precedes?’
19. This is the only horse that has a rider that has a name.
20. The basic meaning of the term is death, but as we have seen elsewhere, sometimes this word means pestilence, as in Rev. 2:23.
21. Immediately after the fall of the US, the economy of the western democracies (e.g. Europe) will crash, and hyperinflation and scarcity will come upon these peoples (rider on black horse).
22. The fourth rider (pale horse) will follow in rapid succession.
23. The pestilence (death) that will follow is the incredible amount of radioactive fallout that will quickly spread around the earth being caught up in the jet stream.
24. The rider of this horse is different from the others in that he sits “above” the actual horse itself and noted by the change of preposition (e.g., *enapo*).
25. While this preposition can mean “on,” it can also mean “above.”
26. Here the change of preposition from the usual *epi* as noted in riders one through three must have some significance.
27. Otherwise the change is inexplicable.
28. Also this rider has a trailer (“and followed after him”) called “Hades” or Sheol referring to the realm of the departed unbeliever in the underworld.
29. Hades is a kind of hearse that follows Death on his destruction of one-fourth of humanity!
30. Death has Hades as its inseparable companion.
31. If Hades is not mounted, he is on foot and acts as death’s hearse, standing ready to engulf the souls of all who are Death’s victims.
32. Hades is able to maintain the horse’s pace so as to keep up with Death’s movements.
33. Because they are granted power to do their work together (cf. αὐτοῖς “to them”), they must remain together in the portrayal before John’s eyes.
34. The natural antecedent for *autois* is Death and Hades.
35. In binding them together, the pronoun observes the constancy of their companionship.
36. The ravages of the fourth rider are staggering, but limited in comparison to what comes later in the tribulation.
37. If today’s world population of eight billion (and growing) is used, “over a fourth of the earth,” means Death and Hades have authority, to take the lives of 1.5 billion souls.
38. The magnitude of this catastrophe can hardly be grasped in the annals of human history.
39. Truly, the statement in Isa. 13:12 in connection with the destruction of America will be seen to be true by the end of the tribulation (e.g., “I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold, and mankind than the gold of Ophir.)!
40. Death carries the connotation of pestilence in Rev. 18:8 where the meaning is clearly nuclear pestilence coming upon the citizens of economic Babylon (USA).
41. Again, this is the meaning in Rev. 2:23.
42. Nuclear pollution and death will rise into the atmosphere and spread all around the earth with four (notice the repetition of the number 4 in this verse) attendant phenomena that takes the lives of one-fourth of existing humanity.
43. The four ravages of Death are the same associated with Ezekiel’s warning to Jerusalem (cf. Ezek. 14:12-21; esp. v. 21).
44. The first three items are different means that God will allow Death to remove human life: sword, famine, pestilence (*thanatos*, death; pestilence), and wild animals.
45. The sword denotes death by violent means, usually warfare.

46. The term used here is the noun *hromphaia*, which term means a large broad-sword.
47. Of the 7x this term is used in the NT, six occur in Revelation (cf. Rev. 1:16; 2:12,16; 6:8; 19:15, 21).
48. It is used of the sword that proceeds from the mouth of Christ's omnipotence.
49. It is used of His wrath against the nations at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent in Rev. 19.
50. When the "great sword" of the rider on the red horse is unleashed on its enemy, there will naturally follow mayhem among the nations that will result in many millions and millions of deaths.
51. With war come famine due to disruptions in economies and crop failure.
52. Famine is seen under the third seal, but this represents famine at its worst.
53. With starvation naturally comes pestilence or pandemics which will stalk mankind.
54. Finally, with the breakdown of society and the resultant helplessness of humans, wild beasts will be compelled to look to humans for sustenance (cf. Num. 21:6; Deut. 32:24; Josh. 24:12; 2Kgs. 2:24; 17:25; Isa. 30:6; Jer. 5:6; Ezek. 14:21; 33:27).
55. After such horrendous developments, could matters get worse?
56. The remaining seals will tell the story.
57. This interpretation of the 4<sup>th</sup> seal has the advantage of continuity with seals one through three.
58. Failure on the part of interpreters to identify the fall of the US in prophecy via a nuclear annihilation "in one hour of one day" (cf. Rev. 18:10, 17, 19), makes it next to impossible to be specific regarding the four horsemen of the Apocalypse.
59. In fact, if they understood this vital piece of the puzzle, they would look at these four riders in a different fashion.
60. The horrors associated with riders two through four is preceded by a specific time of peace mongering, which will totally delude the American establishment and citizenry.

#### Fifth Seal: Martyrs (vv. 9-11)

##### Their Location (v.9)

**VERSE 9 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal** [Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν πέμπτην σφραγίδα  
*[conj kai + adv hote when + aor.act.ind.3s. anoigo open; "broke" + art.w/adj.acc.f.s. pemptos fifth + noun acc.f.s. sphragis seal]*, **I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God** [εἶδον ὑποκάτω τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐσφαγμένων διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ *[aor.act.ind.1s. eidon see + prep ;hupokato beneath + art.w/noun gen.nt.s. thusiasterion altar + art.w/noun acc.f.p. psuche soul + art.w/perf.pass.part.gen.m.p. sphazo slaughter; metaphorical of Jesus' death as the Lamb of God in Rev. 5:6,9; put to death by violence as per 1Jn. 3:12 + prep dia because (reason) + art.w/noun acc.m.s. logos word + art.w/gen.m.s. theos God]*, **even because of the testimony which they had maintained** [καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἣν εἶχον *[conj kai-ascensive "even" + prep dia because + art.w/noun acc.f.s. marturia witness + rel.pro.acc.f.s. hos which + impf.act.ind.3p. echo have; "had maintained"]*];

ANALYSIS: VERSE 9

1. The fifth seal differs from the rest.
2. It has no summons and no horse or rider.
3. It is unlike the sixth seal with its upheavals and the seventh with its foreboding silence.
4. Its inclusion of martyrdom is appropriate because such often accompanies political, economic, and social chaos.
5. The subject of martyrdom fits well with the companion prophecies of Christ in the Olivet Discourse.
6. He prophesied about the hardships awaiting believers in the days just before His return (cf. Matt. 24:9-10; Mk. 13:9-13; Lu. 21:12-17).
7. A different kind of scene was revealed to John's sight after the Lamb opened the fifth seal.
8. The significance of the difference is missed by those who explain the fifth seal as producing martyrdom.
9. This is unacceptable because it ignores the basic principle that the seal judgments are God's wrath against those who live on the earth (cf. Rev. 3:10; 6:10).
10. Martyrdom for Christ's sake can hardly be looked upon as a judgment from God.
11. It is out of keeping with the other judgments in this series.
12. The judgment aspect of the fifth-seal judgment is gleaned from the cry of the martyrs in verse 10.
13. Their cry for God's vengeance against their persecutors is heard, and certain vindication against their murderers is fully assured.
14. The martyrs are clearly tribulational martyrs.
15. All who come to saving faith after the Rapture of the Church will be subject to worldwide persecution, of which, many will die rather than deny their faith.
16. The information revealed to John under this seal makes it clear that others will be added to their number (cf. v. 11).
17. When this seal is opened it is clear that martyrdom of believers has been in progress.
18. Because of the difference between this seal and the first four it has been supposed that this seal is not consecutive as are the first four.
19. The consecutive opening of the seals speaks of consecutive fulfillment.
20. The focus should be the fervent request of the martyrs for vindication and the divine assurance that it will soon take place, and not the fact of martyrdom.
21. The judgment aspect of this seal is the fact that God will in due time hunt down and destroy their enemies under the seals, trumpets, and bowls to follow.
22. This seal carries with it the assurance of judgment, and not any specific form of judgment against those who are guilty.
23. In addition to all the other crimes against humanity, there is the additional crime of genocide against God's people.
24. The vision points to the heavenly throne room.
25. "The altar" is in heaven as it is everywhere else in this book (cf. Rev. 8:3, 5; 14:18) except in 11:1.
26. What is described as a throne room in chapters 4-5 is now God's temple (cf. 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 8; Ps. 18:6; Mic. 1:1; Hab. 2:20)
27. The combined conception of heaven as a kingly palace and as a temple occurs elsewhere in Scripture (Pss. 11:4; 29:9-10; Isa. 6:1).

28. The nature of what is symbolized by “the altar” is important in tracing the continuity of the Apocalypse.
29. One view is that this heavenly altar is that after which the altar of burnt offering was patterned.
30. Another view sees it as the golden altar of incense.
31. The primary reason for seeing this altar as the golden altar of incense is the fact that all other references to this heavenly altar in the Apocalypse is to the altar of incense (cf. 8:3, 5; 9:13; 14:18; 16:7).
32. The judgments that are preliminary to the inauguration of the messianic kingdom are tied to the prayers of the saints.
33. So it seems best to keep that concept in view here with the request of the tribulational martyrs for vengeance.
34. Again, throughout the book the heavenly altar is connected with the execution of judgment for which the saints are praying, and the prayers of the saints are symbolized by incense (cf. 5:8; 8:3,4).
35. Heaven is spoken of as a sanctuary (11:9; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 8; cf. Heb. 9:24).
36. What John is enabled to view as a result of the opening of this seal, is, “the souls” of these martyrs positioned “under the altar.”
37. The term “the souls” refers to the actual person absent the biological body which has been left behind on earth awaiting resurrection.
38. Saints in heaven minus their bodies is called the intermediate state.
39. The intermediate state is clearly in view in 2Cor. 5:1-5.
40. That fact that each one of these martyrs is given a “white robe” suggests an intermediate body of some sort, since a robe cannot clothe that which is immaterial.
41. Their “souls” refer to that invisible, immaterial part that once animated their bodies.
42. The human soul comes from a creative act of God a physical birth.
43. The soul is referred to in these studies as the ‘real you.’
44. The soul constitutes a person’s most valuable possession.
45. The body comes via procreation and genetic engineering.
46. The body is referred to as the external or ‘overt you.’
47. The body contains the indwelling OSN/STA which is referred to as the ‘old you.’
48. The human spirit that comes via regeneration is referred to as the ‘new you.’
49. The martyrs John saw as disembodied spirits are believers whose persecutors are still alive on earth.
50. This, therefore, excludes martyrs that lived before the tribulation.
51. These are the martyrs who come out of the tribulation only.
52. Those John saw were those who came out of the first half of the tribulation, with more to follow (cf. v.11).
53. The reason for the murder of these saints is expressed by John as being “because of the Word of God.”
54. As with Rev. 1:2, 9 where the same expression occurs, a precise definition is possible.
55. The Word of God here is none other than “the testimony which they maintained.”
56. This takes the *kai* (“even”) immediately after “God” to have its ascensive force, as it often does in this book.
57. This matches the construction in the two earlier verses (cf. Rev. 1:2,9).
58. Their testimony/witness regarding who and what Christ is was the basis for their death.

59. This testimony they held came via GAP, and they wore it like a badge which cost them their lives (cf. 12:17; 20:4).
60. Their loyalty to Christ was conspicuous in their refusal to submit to the mark of the beast (cf. Rev. 13:7, 15).
61. These martyrs are seen in chapter seven verse 14.
62. They are those over the course of tribulation, from the time when the mark of the beast system is implemented, who refuse this mark and are killed.