

Revelation 6: Six seals opened

The First Four Seals:

6 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the [a]seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." 2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

Opening of seals: not the contents of the scroll yet.

First four seals: group of four: four is number of the earth, four creatures represent God's creation.

Four horses: end time, from the perspective of the earth, this creation. Horses announced by the four creatures.

First horse: different from the other three horses:

1. Announced with a loud thunder
2. He came to conquer: same word as 5:5 : the lion of Juda, the Root of David, has conquered.
3. A crown was given to him: different from the diadems in ch. 13:1.
4. White in Revelation: colour of righteousness and holiness. See 3:4,5,18, 4:4, 6:11, 7:9,13-14, 14:14, 19:11,14, 20:11.
5. White horse: see also Rev. 19:11 : there it clearly is Jesus Christ Who is seated on this horse.
6. Second horse is announced as *another* horse. Sets this and following apart from the first.
7. Crown: sign of authority. Unlimited authority: conquering and to conquer. Other horses: limited: 'permitted (vs. 4), do not harm oil and wine (vs 6), authority over a fourth of the earth (vs. 8).

Rider on the white horse: Jesus Christ as Judge: 1:12-18, 6:2, 14:14-16, 19:11-16.

3 When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." 4 Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

Second horse: colour of fire and blood. Great sword! Take away the peace: God's punishment: gives them over to war: power of Satan.

5 When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

Third horse: black: colour of famine. Scales: scarcity of food. No luxury.
No damage to oil and wine: the limitation of God's wrath.

7 When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." 8 So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

Fourth horse: sword, hunger, death (pestilence), wild beasts: see Ezekiel 5 and 14:21, Mark 13.
General devastation, misery, death.

Question:

About the second horse: taking away the peace: We see among mankind a constant push to unite the nations and try to achieve a world peace. After the first world war, there was the league of nations, which was a failure. After the second world war the United Nations is established, which still exists, but the opinions about it differ. A generation ago, there was a push for globalisation, the European Union was established, and in other parts of the world several trade pacts were established. Over the past decade, however, we see a reversal: a return to nationalism. And the pandemic of the COVID19 is expected to strengthen the push to close borders again. How do we as Christians look at these developments? Should we support either globalisation or isolationism? Should we have an opinion about this? Or should we just see this as God's work to mock the scheming of the nations?

Three more seals:

9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

First four seals: four creatures: this creation is involved in calling the four horses: this creation also wants this to happen.

Fifth seal opened: heavenly perspective: God's people join the four creatures in asking for God's judgment to come.

Altar: sacrifice: suffering, death, but also: sacrifice pleasing to God.

Cry out to God: prayers rise to come before God as a sacrifice to Him.

Question:

About verse 10. We are being taught by our Lord that we should love our enemies and we should not take revenge. In the letter of James we read about the 'meekness of wisdom'. We should leave it to God to avenge. But do we pray to God for His judgment to come over those who persecute His church and resist His Word? Should we pray for that?

12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. 13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Great earthquake: when God speaks, the earth quakes. Exodus 19:18, Psalm 68:8, 97:4, 104:32, and other places.

Sun became black, moon like blood. See Joel 2, quoted in Acts 2: OT description of the great day of God's wrath.

Result: all the peoples of the earth, small and great, are terrified. They have scorned Him, and it is too late for them to repent.

Question:

Plagues (e.g. COVID19 and its ensuing panic), wars and other disasters are a warning of the coming of the Lord. The COVID19 situation plunged this world into so much misery, more as a result of the fear than the virus itself. This is the response of the world to the signs of God's coming. How has been our response? Have we been praying more fervently for the return of the Lord? Or did we also fall for the panic and fear of this world?