

The Third Seal: The Third Horseman

Revelation 6:5-6

The End Times

In my last post, we continued our journey in **Revelation 6** as the second of the seven **seals** was opened. In this post, we look at the **Third Seal** which reveals the **Third Horseman**.

The Third Seal

"⁵ When he broke the third seal, I heard the third living being say, "Go!" I looked, and there in front of me was a black horse, and its rider held in his hand a pair of scales. ⁶ Then I heard what sounded like a voice from among the four living beings say, "Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages! Six pounds of barley for the same price! But don't damage the oil or the wine!" ~

Revelation 6:5-6 (CJB)

"⁷ For peoples will fight each other, nations will fight each other, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various parts of the world." ~ Matthew 24:7 (CJB)

The black horse and its rider represent famine. The scales are used to weigh food, which will become scarce and be sold by weight. A quart of wheat is one-eighth of the normal amount of wheat a day's wages would buy.

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It is interesting to note that the leaders and wealthy people seem to be exempt. Oil and wine are symbolic of the rich. Wheat and barley will be difficult to obtain by the poor, yet at the same time there will be an abundance of oil and wine. The rich will be the last to be affected by the famine throughout the land. The Antichrist will promise to provide for the people and thus gain control of the economy. He will promise what he cannot deliver. He promised peace but produced war (**Red Horse**). He promised prosperity and produced famine (**Black Horse**). He promised life and produced death (Pale Horse ~ **Fourth Seal**).

Later, in Revelation 13:16-17, famine is specifically aimed as a persecution of Believers, because only those marked by the evil one will be allowed to buy food. It is good to remember that on the last day, at Yeshua's Second Coming, Believers will find that ***"they will never again be hungry, they will never again be thirsty ..."*** ~ Revelation 7:16 (CJB). However, the limitations upon the evil works of this rider are clearly seen. Although life will be severe, barley will still be available, though most won't be able to afford very much of it at all.

"Do not damage the oil and the wine!" may allude to God setting limits on the degree of destruction. The olive tree and the vine have roots that go deep and would not be immediately affected by a drought.

The Tanakh also speaks of scarcity and the driving prices up (see Deuteronomy 28:49-57 and 2 Kings 6:24-25; 7:1-2).

Special Comparative Note on Chapter 6:5-6 ¹

Historicist Approach:

Many **Historicists** see the fiscal oppression imposed by some of the emperors of the third century. Taxes could be paid in either money or in produce – particularly in grain, oil and wine. Some **Historicists** go along with the **Preterists** in identifying this seal with the food shortage in besieged Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Preterist Approach:

The **two pounds of wheat** were equivalent to only one person's daily ration. To feed a family, a worker would have to turn to barley. As indicated above, Preterists look to the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD to explain their interpretation of this seal. Some believe the reference to the oil and wine could allude to the fact that some Jews pillaged the oil and wine from the Temple.

Futurist Approach:

Most **Futurists** understand this seal to allude to a famine during the future **Tribulation**. Another view of this **seal** relates to economic upheaval – inflation, recession, panic - where **oil and wine** represent luxuries. Walvoord disagrees with this point as they were considered staples in the ordinary household in Biblical times.

Idealist Approach:

Idealists see this seal as one of the four judgments by which God takes vengeance on corrupt societies (see Ezekiel 5:16; 14:21). In modern societies, it may simply mean economic disruption and inflation. With respect to oil and wine, Hobbs points out that in 92 CE, Domitian had endeavored to interfere with the production of grapes in the provinces.

In my next post, the **Fourth Seal** is broken.

¹ Material in this section is taken from "Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated" by Steve Gregg