

The Second Seal: A Red Horse

6: 3-4

DIG: What power was given to the rider on the red horse? Why would the Lamb allow this to happen? What effect will it have on the people of the earth? Will it draw them closer to God or drive them away from Him? Why?

REFLECT: When turmoil and strife come into your life how does it affect your relationship with the Lord? Do you draw near to Him or keep Him at arm's distance?

Again, somewhere above Patmos, **John** stands trembling before **God's** eternal throne. The white horse bearing the rider who deceives the world has galloped from the scroll and down the walls of heaven to wreak havoc on the earth. When the Lamb opened the second seal, **John** heard the next cherub say to the second rider, "Come!" And immediately another horse came out, a fiery red one. Red symbolizes the blood that will flow as a result of the wars that he will bring. The antichrist will barely have his peace program off the ground when **Jesus** breaks the second seal.¹⁹⁴

Mankind has always longed for peace. There have been peace treaties, disarmament conferences, leagues of nations, peace prizes and demonstrations for peace - all seeking somehow to bring a lasting world peace. All have failed. But when the antichrist comes to power there will be a tremendous surge of optimism and the world will expect a long period of peace and safety. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape (**First Thessalonians 5:3**). From their point of view, those pesky Christians and messianic believers will also have disappeared, and there will be nothing to restrain full enjoyment of all the pleasures and excesses in the sinful hearts of mankind around the world.¹⁹⁵

Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth. Notice that **Yeshua** gave the rider power. All that will happen will be under the sovereign control of the Lord. He will allow the false peace, war, famine and death to bring about His desired ends. On the other hand, the seven seal judgments, the seven trumpet judgments and the seven bowl judgments reflect the wrath of **Ha'Shem**, to be poured out on an unrepentant world. But sometime early in the first half of the Great Tribulation, during the beginning of the birth pains (**Mt 24:8; Mark 13:7-8; Luke 21:9**), world peace turns into world war as the rider on the red horse has his way. Describing this time, **Christ** said: **You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom (Mt 24:6-7a).**¹⁹⁶

And the rider was given power to make men slay each other on an unprecedented scale. The **peace and safety** that the world seemingly wanted so desperately will not last. In spite of themselves, mankind would soon be fighting each other again. There would not only be wars between nations and kingdoms, but there would be no end to the fighting. Racial strife will increase, as will labor troubles. Civil war will erupt within nations, and organized crime will be rampant. Individual feuds will generate waves of murders and a state of anarchy will prevail. The police and the army will hardly make a dent in the strife. Things will only get worse and worse because **God** will send them **a strong delusion** and they will delight in wickedness (**Second Thessalonians 2:11**).¹⁹⁷

The first rider was given a bow, but the second rider was given a great sword (KJV). The sword refers to the dagger-like *machaira* of assassination, uprising and warfare. It was also a sword used by assassins and would be appropriate for this sort of bloody warfare.¹⁹⁸ This sword is not the *rhomphaia* of order and justice that comes from the mouth of **Messiah (1:16)**. John's vision describes a great sword to picture the extent of the war. **The antichrist will become very strong, but not by his own power.** Again **ADONAI** gave this great sword to the antichrist for His own purposes. **He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy mighty men and kill many of God's people whom John will see under the alter** in heaven (6:9).

Since the antichrist comes as a conqueror bent on worldwide conquest, the **70th seven** of **Dani'el** will enter into a new phase of war. There will be three wars during the Great Tribulation. The opening of the second seal begins the first of these wars. The second war takes place in the middle of the Great Tribulation (see **De**), and the third, which is the eight stage campaign of Armageddon (see **Ex**), will come at the end of the Great Tribulation when **Yeshua Messiah** returns (see **Ev**).¹⁹⁹

The antichrist will be the counterfeit prince of **peace**. **The LORD** will show the world he is a fake by causing his phony **peace** programs to fail. All his talk of **peace** will dissolve into a bloody holocaust. The rider on the **red horse** will take his **great sword** and plunge it into the sinful hearts of men and women who will **exchange the truth of God for a lie (Romans 1:25a)**. **Yeshua** is the true **Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6c)** and hope of any permanent **peace** by means of the United Nations or any other human effort is doomed to failure. When the leaders of the world rejected **Him**, they rejected the only solution to their problems.²⁰⁰ The scene will turn ugly and remain that way until **the King** returns to establish **His Kingdom on the earth (19:11 to 20:6)**. Famine always follows war, and that is what we see next.