

The Third Seal: A Black Horse

6: 5-6

DIG: How much will a quart of wheat cost during the Great Tribulation? How will the famine physically affect the people of the earth? How will it affect them spiritually? Do they see it as judgment and repent? Why or why not?

REFLECT: Where do you turn when things get out of control in your life? Do you think you can control your world? Ultimately, who is really in control? Who has their hands on the steering wheel of your life? What happens if there is an emergency? Do you instinctively grab the wheel? If need be, what would you have to do to let go?

The Lamb carefully opened the third seal. The leather scroll gently unrolls. At that moment, the third living creature steps to the center of John's vision and gives out ADONAI's command to the third rider, "Come!" Again in the presence of the Lamb of God, the twenty-four elders, and angels emerges another horse and rider. Only this time the horse will be black, the color of grief and mourning, and its rider will bear yet a third warning to the peoples of the world . . . famine.

The color black is associated with famine in Lamentations 5:10 (KJV). Famine is the logical consequence of worldwide war as food supplies are destroyed and those involved in food production are killed. Jesus also predicted this future famine when He said: Nation will rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places (Matthew 24:7). Ha'Shem has used famine as a means of judgment in the past (Leviticus 26:26; Deut 32:24; Second Kings 8:1; Psalm 105:16), but this will be the most devastating in all of human history.²⁰¹ While the first rider had a bow and the second rider had a large sword, this third rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand for the purpose of measuring out grain that will sell at a greatly hyper inflated price.

Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures. Since the four living creatures ministered around the throne (4:6), this is probably the voice of YHVH, the One sitting on the throne (4:2-3). God also speaks in relation with the fifth seal (6:11). Like with His servant Job (Job 2:3-6), the LORD has Satan on a short leash. He will only allow the devil to do so much damage. Things may seem to be out of control during the Great Tribulation, but in reality, the sovereign will of God will be working behind the scenes.

ADONAI revealed that **a quart of wheat** will cost the equivalent of **a day's wages**. But many will not be able to survive on that, so they will be forced to buy **barley**, a cheaper food that is usually fed to animals. **Three quarts of barley** will still cost the equivalent of **a day's wages**, so no money will be left for clothes, housing or transportation. There will be tremendous inflation. Survival will be the great issue of that time.

The **voice of the Eternal One** calls out one more instruction to **the third** horseman, who rides **the black horse** and carries the **scales** of judgment: **And do not damage the oil and the wine**. Some have said this pictures the social injustice at that time. It will be the poor who will suffer, not the rich who could still purchase luxury items. However, **oil and wine** were not luxuries, but part of the basic supplies of life. Since the roots of the olive and vine go deeper, they would not be affected as much by a drought that would all but destroy the grain. Consequently the coming worldwide judgment of famine allowed by **God** will be tempered by mercy. For while there will be a great lack of food, there will be an abundance of medicine, for **the oil and wine** will not be damaged.²⁰²

The two witnesses will shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the three and a half years they will be prophesying. And they will have the power to turn waters to blood and strike the earth with every kind of plague they want (see Dc - **I Will Give Power to My Two Witnesses and They Will Prophecy for 1,260 Days**). This drought will obviously bring about a worldwide famine, adding to the judgment of **the third seal** at the beginning of the Great Tribulation (6:5-6).

Despite the initial success of the antichrist's global economic unity, a worldwide economic meltdown will occur. This will increase the need for global economic controls, including a personalized insignia for anyone to buy or sell - **the mark of the Beast (13:16)**.²⁰³ **Christ is the bread of life (John 6:35)**, but **the antichrist** will be the counterfeit bread of life. Like **the Adversary** whom he serves, **the Beast** will prove to be **a liar (John 8:44)** when his economic programs fail and result in famine. All this will take place during the first half of the Great Tribulation, but the worst is yet to come.