Revelation 6:5-6
The Third Seal: The Black Horse of Famine
A Comprehensive Bible Study Research Guide
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The Base Passage

> **Revelation 6:5-6 NKJV —** *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. 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."*

Daniel Deininger's Interpretive Framework: These seals are prophetic — pointing to end-time events that are either beginning or will intensify dramatically. The horsemen do not represent single discrete events but ongoing conditions that "snowball" and worsen over time. Matthew 24 and the Old Testament prophets speak to the same sequence of events described here in Revelation. My understanding is based on years of bible study and materials presented by both the United Church of God and what was originally taught in Worldwide Church of God by its founder, Herbert W. Armstrong. By citing scriptures I intend to demonstrate the validity of this understanding.

Section 1: The Sequence of the Four Horsemen

Both UCG and HWA consistently teach/taught that Jesus Himself provided the interpretive key for the four horsemen in Matthew 24. The seals follow a deliberate, escalating order: false religion leads to war, war leads to famine, and famine leads to disease and death. Each horseman feeds the next.

Matthew 24: Jesus' Own Parallel Account

> **Matthew 24:3 NKJV —** *Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"*

> **Matthew 24:4-5 NKJV —** *"Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many."*= White Horse / 1st Seal: Religious deception

Matthew 24:6-7a NKJV — *"And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars… For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."* = Red Horse / 2nd Seal: War

Matthew 24:7b NKJV — *"And there will be famines…"* = Black Horse / 3rd Seal: Famine — our primary focus

Matthew 24:7c NKJV — *"…and pestilences and earthquakes in various places."* = Pale Horse / 4th Seal: Disease and death

Matthew 24:8 NKJV — *"All these are the beginning of sorrows."* Key phrase — HWA emphasized this means these are not the worst; they are only the beginning of a much greater period of tribulation.

Source: HWA, The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last (hwalibrary.com) — "Here is Christ's own interpretation, in plain language, of these mystic symbols of the four horsemen."

Source: UCG, Overview of Prophetic Events Part 1 (ucg.org/sermons) — aligns Matthew 24 famine directly with the black horse of Revelation 6.

Section 2: What Does the Black Color Signify?

Black is not an arbitrary color choice. The Old Testament establishes black as the color of mourning and famine —

Jeremiah 14:1-2 NKJV — *The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the droughts. "Judah mourns, and her gates languish; they mourn for the land, and the cry of Jerusalem has gone up. Their nobles have sent their lads for water; they went to the cisterns and found no water. They returned with their vessels empty; they were ashamed and confounded and covered their heads."*

Jeremiah 14:3 NKJV — *The ground is parched, for there was no rain in the land; the farmers were ashamed, they covered their heads.*

Jeremiah 14 directly connects drought, famine, and mourning — black as a symbol of desperate need.

Lamentations 4:8-9 NKJV — *"Now their appearance is blacker than soot; they go unrecognized in the streets; their skin clings to their bones, it has become as dry as wood. Those slain by the sword are better off than those who die of hunger; for these pine away, stricken for lack of the fruits of the field."*

Lamentations pictures famine so severe that people turn black from starvation — the exact imagery behind the black horse.

Lamentations 5:10 NKJV — *"Our skin is hot as an oven, because of the fever of famine."*

Note: hwalibrary.com broadcast transcripts confirm HWA's identification of black with famine, citing Jeremiah 14 and Lamentations 4-5 as the OT foundation.

Section 3: The Scales — Economic Control and Divine Judgment

The pair of scales (Greek: zugos, a balance or yoke) in the rider's hand carries a double meaning in Scripture: the measurement of food in scarcity, and the instrument of God's judgment. Both ideas are present simultaneously.

Scales as Economic Measurement

Leviticus 19:35-36 NKJV — *"You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin."*

God established scales as the instrument of fair commerce. When the rider holds scales, he is taking control of the economic measuring system. Today we see new packaging of products, large boxes with less product in it. Shrink-flation, trying to mask the inflated prices for less product.

Proverbs 11:1 NKJV — *"Dishonest scales are an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is His delight."*

Ezekiel 45:10 NKJV — *"You shall have honest scales, an honest ephah, and an honest bath."*

Scales as Divine Judgment

Daniel 5:25-27 NKJV — *"And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN… TEKEL: You have been* ***weighed in the balances,*** *and found wanting."*

The most powerful OT use of scales — here scales become God's instrument of national judgment. The same imagery applies to the black horse: God is weighing the nations.

Scales as Rationing Instrument

Ezekiel 4:10-11 NKJV — *"And your food which you eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day; from time to time you shall eat it. And you shall drink water by measure, one-sixth of a hin; from time to time you shall drink."*

Ezekiel is commanded to physically act out the coming famine judgment by eating weighed, rationed food. God ties scales directly to covenant judgment.

Ezekiel 4:16-17 NKJV — *"Son of man, surely I will cut off the supply of bread in Jerusalem; they shall eat bread by weight and with anxiety, and shall drink water by measure and with dread, that they may lack bread and water, and be dismayed with one another, and waste away because of their iniquity."*

Nearly word-for-word parallel to Revelation 6:6 — weighed bread, anxiety, shortage. This is the OT template for the black horse.

Section 4: "A Quart of Wheat for a Denarius" — The Economics of Famine

This is one of the most precisely detailed prophetic statements in Revelation. Understanding the economic context makes its horror vivid.

What the Numbers Tell Us

- A denarius = a full day's wages for a laboring man

  Matthew 20:1-2 NKJV — *"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. Now when he had agreed with the laborers* ***for a denarius a day****, he sent them into his vineyard."*
- A choinix (quart) of wheat = one man's daily food ration — enough for one person only
- Three choinix of barley = a family portion at lower cost, since barley was the grain of the poor

The picture: a man works a full day and earns barely enough to feed himself alone — nothing left for his family, housing, or anything else. Barley could stretch further, but it was the inferior grain reserved for the very poor and for animals.

> *Source: UCG, Revelation Part 23 (ucg.org) — "There would be nothing left over for a family, housing or other needs. Barley was considered a cheaper, lower-quality grain, sometimes animal fodder or food for the very poor."*
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> *Source: The Expositor's Bible Commentary (cited by UCG) — food prices approximately twelve times higher than normal, implying severe inflation and famine conditions matching Matthew 24:7.*

The OT Pattern: Rationed, Weighed Food as Covenant Judgment

> **Leviticus 26:26 NKJV —** *"When I have cut off your supply of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall bring back your bread by weight, and you shall eat and not be satisfied."*
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> Leviticus 26 is one of the clearest OT templates for the black horse — weighed-out, rationed bread as a direct consequence of covenant disobedience.
>
> **Leviticus 26:3-4 NKJV —** *"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit."*
>
> The positive side of the same covenant — obedience brings agricultural abundance; disobedience brings the black horse.

Source: UCG, The Pale Horse of Pestilence (ucg.org) cites Leviticus 26:3-4 to show God promises the opposite of famine for obedience, establishing the covenant framework.

> **Deuteronomy 28:17-18 NKJV —** *"Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks."*
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> Deuteronomy 28 — the great curses chapter — lists agricultural failure prominently as a consequence of national disobedience.
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> **Deuteronomy 28:38-40 NKJV —** *"You shall carry much seed out to the field but gather little in, for the locust shall consume it. You shall plant vineyards and tend them, but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them. You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil; for your olives shall drop off."*

The OT Sword-Famine-Pestilence Triad

The Old Testament prophets repeatedly group war, famine, and pestilence together as God's three great judgments — exactly the order of the second, third, and fourth seals:

> **Jeremiah 14:12 NKJV —** *"When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the* ***sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence."***
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> **Ezekiel 5:12 NKJV —** *"One-third of you shall die of the pestilence, and be consumed with famine in your midst; and one-third shall fall by the sword all around you; and I will scatter another third to all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them."*
>
> Ezekiel 5 is a direct end-time prophecy about what befalls the people of Israel for unfaithfulness. UCG applies this to modern descendants of Israel.
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> **Ezekiel 14:21 NKJV —** *"For thus says the Lord GOD: 'How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem — the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence — to cut off man and animal from it?'"*
>
> God explicitly calls these "My four severe judgments" — the direct OT counterpart to the four horsemen of Revelation 6.

Source: UCG article on the Four Horsemen (ucg.org) cites Ezekiel 14:21 directly, calling the horsemen God's "four severe judgments."

Section 5: "Do Not Harm the Oil and the Wine"

This command is the most interpretively debated phrase in the passage. Multiple explanations from UCG and OT context are worth presenting.

View 1: Pockets of Abundance in the Midst of Famine

UCG's primary interpretation: the oil and wine represent remaining pockets of prosperity that are to be protected. Christ's own words in Matthew 24 support this:

> **Matthew 24:7 NKJV —** *"…and there will be famines… in various places."*

The phrase "in various places" implies the famine is not total — some regions or groups will have more than others. The wealthy may be relatively insulated while the poor suffer the worst.

Source: UCG, The Black Horse of Famine booklet (ucg.org) — "The reference here could indicate there will be pockets of abundance in the midst of famine."

View 2: Scarcity Is So Severe Even Luxury Items Must Be Preserved

The Living Bible rendering suggests oil and wine have become so scarce that even these items — normally not considered staple foods — cannot be wasted.

Source: UCG cites The Living Bible interpretation: "there is practically no oil and wine left." That would explain the admonition not to harm what little remains.

View 3: Economic Inequality — Luxury for the Elite, Nothing for the Poor

A third reading: the command preserves the luxury goods of the wealthy while the grain staples of the common people become unaffordable. This fits the broader pattern of economic injustice as divine judgment.

Amos 6:4-6 NKJV — *"Who lie on beds of ivory, stretch out on your couches, eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall; who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments, and invent for yourselves musical instruments like David; who drink wine from bowls, and anoint yourselves with the best ointments, but are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph."*

Amos pictures the elite enjoying oil and wine while the people around them suffer — the same contrast the black horse presents. (This does NOT mean the elite are sinless.)

Oil and Wine in the Covenant Blessings

In the OT, grain, oil, and wine are consistently listed together as the three marks of God's agricultural blessing:

Deuteronomy 7:13 NKJV — *"…He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil…"*

Deuteronomy 11:14 NKJV — *"…that I will give you the rain for your land in its season… that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil."*

Hosea 2:8 NKJV — *"For she did not know that I gave her grain, new wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold — which they prepared for Baal."*

The black horse removes the grain blessing while (in some measure) the oil and wine remain — God's judgment is measured, not total annihilation.

Joel 1: A Direct OT Parallel to the Black Horse Language

Joel 1:6-7 NKJV — *"For a nation has come up against My land, powerful and without number; his teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he has the fangs of a fierce lion. He has*

> *laid waste My vine and ruined My fig tree; he has stripped it bare and thrown it away; its branches are made white."*
>
> **Joel 1:10-12 NKJV —** *"The field is wasted, the land mourns; for the grain is ruined, the new wine is dried up, the oil fails. Be ashamed, you farmers, wail, you vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley; because the harvest of the field has perished."*
>
> Joel 1 uses the exact same words — wheat, barley, oil, wine — as Revelation 6:6. The black horse describes the fulfillment of what Joel foresaw: a nation/force that causes the grain harvest to fail.

Source: revelationscriptures.com analysis identifies Joel 1 as the OT cause (invading nation destroying crops) that produces the Revelation 6:6 effect (extreme grain prices).

Google AI: Ukraine is an example of this: Ukraine is a major global agricultural producer, typically ranking in the top five for wheat and corn exports, though war has significantly reduced output. Production dropped from a 2021 high of 86.7 million tons to roughly 58.8–63.7 million metric tons by the 2023/24 season. The sector faces severe challenges, including damaged infrastructure, logistics disruptions, and mined fields.Production for 2024/25 is expected to drop by 10% to around 74 million tons, with wheat production down by nearly half compared to pre-war levels.

Section 6: The End-Time Nature of This Seal — UCG and HWA Perspectives

HWA's Core Framework

Herbert W. Armstrong consistently taught that the four horsemen represent conditions that have existed in lesser forms throughout history, but will reach their final climactic, global fulfillment in the end times.

> *"We are right now in the time as foretold by Jesus when he said that this is the beginning of sorrows, just the beginning of trouble and of sorrows in the world today… The main Great Tribulation has not even struck as yet. It is coming next."*
>
> *Source: Herbert W. Armstrong, World Tomorrow Radio Broadcast, 1941 (hwalibrary.com)*

> *"Those, my friends, are all merely little drops of rain before the great storm. They are merely sort of forerunners, but there is going to come a famine and a pestilence… going to be so much greater than anything that has ever struck this world that it will simply astound and dumbfound this world."*
>
> *Source: Herbert W. Armstrong, The 5th Seal – Revelation broadcast (hwalibrary.com)*

HWA's Use of Ezekiel 5 for End-Time Scope

> **Ezekiel 5:12 NKJV —** *"One-third of you shall die of the pestilence, and be consumed with famine in your midst; and one-third shall fall by the sword all around you; and I will*

scatter another third to all the winds…" HWA applied Ezekiel 5 to end-time Israel specifically — one-third dying of famine and pestilence, a proportion that dwarfs anything in recorded history and matches the fourth seal's "a fourth of the earth" language.

UCG's Current Position

UCG president Rick Shabi, in a recent Biblical Worldview episode, explicitly connected current food inflation, fertilizer shortages, supply chain disruptions, and government food policy to the early stages of the black horse's ride. UCG is careful to say these conditions "haven't fully materialized yet" but that "the factors… are still going strong."

> **Matthew 24:21-22 NKJV —** *"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."* UCG and HWA both use this passage to establish the unprecedented, final nature of the seals' fulfillment — history has had foretastes, but the final ride will exceed anything before it.

Source: UCG, The Black Horse of Famine booklet — "In His Olivet prophecy, Jesus gave the first description of the events symbolized by these seals — and His prophecy is unerring."

The United States and Britain in Prophecy Connection

UCG's article on famine explicitly references their booklet The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy, connecting Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 to modern descendants of the 12 tribes. This is the doctrinal foundation for applying these prophecies to wealthy Western nations — answering the question: "How could famine strike food-rich countries?"

Source: UCG, World News and Trends: Famine Stalks the Earth (ucg.org) — "Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 foretold that serious famines would visit the descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel in modern times."

Section 7: What Causes the Famine? War, Misrule, and Disobedience

The WCG booklet on the black horse (hwalibrary.com) identifies several biblical causes that converge to produce end-time famine conditions:

1. War Destroys Food Systems

The second seal (war) directly produces the third seal (famine). War destroys crops, kills livestock, disrupts distribution, and creates millions of refugees competing for remaining food supplies.

> **Revelation 6:3-4 NKJV —** *"When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, 'Come and see.' 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."*

Source: Garner Ted Armstrong, Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse – Part 5 (hwalibrary.com) — "Famine, drought, starvation follow on the heels of war because they are the natural and immediate results of crop damage, of defoliation, contaminated water supplies, destroyed livestock."

2. Malevolent Government Policy

The WCG booklet notes that famine is often produced not by nature but by deliberate misrule. The scales in the rider's hand suggest government control of food distribution at exorbitant prices.

Source: UCG, Biblical Worldview – Black Horse of Famine — "Scarcity of food, a government that's in control of doling it out, and they are charging a very high price."

3. Pollution and Environmental Collapse

> **Revelation 8:8-9 NKJV —** *"Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed."*The WCG booklet notes that ocean pollution on an unprecedented scale will devastate the world's fish harvest, removing a primary protein source for billions.

4. Covenant Disobedience as Root Cause

Both HWA and UCG are clear: ultimately, these judgments are the result of nations abandoning God's law. The horsemen are not random catastrophes but covenant consequences. The pattern from Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 runs straight through to Revelation 6.

> **Leviticus 26:14-16 NKJV —** *"But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments… I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it."*

Section 8: The Connection to the Fourth Seal

The third and fourth seals are linked — famine directly produces the pestilence of the pale horse. The pale horse rider is explicitly named "Death," and his authority includes both famine and pestilence together:

> **Revelation 6:7-8 NKJV —** *"When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, 'Come and see.' 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."

Note that famine (hunger) reappears in the fourth seal's description. The third and fourth horsemen are not sequential and separate — they overlap. UCG notes that malnourishment breaks down the immune system, making populations susceptible to the disease epidemics of the fourth seal.

Source: UCG, Overview of Prophetic Events Part 1 (ucg.org) — "With improper nutrition, with malnourished peoples, you have the immune system broken down, and they're unable to resist."

Section 9: The Message of Hope

Neither UCG nor HWA presented these prophecies as cause for despair, but as a call to spiritual preparation and a reminder that Christ's return is the answer to what no human treaty or policy can stop.

Matthew 24:22 NKJV — *"And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."*

Matthew 6:33 NKJV — *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."*

UCG cites this directly in connection with famine — God's people are not to be in panic but in trust.

Leviticus 26:3-5 NKJV — *"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full…"*

The antidote to the black horse is the same as it always has been — covenant faithfulness and obedience to God's law.

Source: UCG, World News and Trends: Famine Stalks the Earth — "It comes down to our moral behavior gone awry that constitutes the basic problem. When we seek God first in our lives, He will take care of our material needs (Matthew 6:33)."

Source Directory for Further Study

UCG (ucg.org)

- The Horsemen of Revelation: The Black Horse of Famine — ucg.org/learn/bible-study-tools/bible-study-aids/horsemen-revelation/horsemen-revelation-black-horse-famine

- Biblical Worldview: Black Horse of Famine (video, Rick Shabi) — ucg.org/watch/beyond-today/daily/biblical-worldview-horsemen-revelation-black-horse-famine
- The Four Horsemen of Revelation (Beyond Today TV) — ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-television-program/the-four-horsemen-of-revelation
- Overview of Prophetic Events Part 1 (sermon) — ucg.org/sermons/overview-prophetic-events-part-1
- World News and Trends: Famine Stalks the Earth — ucg.org/the-good-news/world-news-and-trends-famine-stalks-the-earth-0
- Revelation Part 23: Scrolls and Seals — ucg.org/members/young-adults/know-your-sword-revelation/revelation-part-23-scrolls-and-seals-second-and-third-seals

HWA Library (hwalibrary.com)

- 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse – The Black Horse – Famine (WCG booklet) — hwalibrary.com (search: Black Horse Famine)
- The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last (HWA booklet) — hwalibrary.com
- Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse Parts 1 and 5 (Garner Ted Armstrong radio broadcasts) — hwalibrary.com
- The 5th Seal – Revelation (HWA broadcast, 1941) — hwalibrary.com

Key Scripture Passages for Self-Study

- Revelation 6:1-8 — All four seals in context
- Matthew 24:3-22 — Jesus' Olivet Discourse / parallel account
- Leviticus 26:14-39 — Covenant curses including famine
- Deuteronomy 28:15-48 — The curse chapter, agricultural judgments
- Ezekiel 4-5 — Rationed food as prophetic act; famine as judgment
- Ezekiel 14:12-21 — God's four severe judgments
- Jeremiah 14:1-12 — Drought, famine, and the black of mourning
- Lamentations 4:8-9; 5:10 — Black as the color of famine
- Joel 1:6-12 — Nation destroying the wheat and barley harvest
- Hosea 2:8 — Grain, oil, and wine as God's covenant blessings
- Amos 6:4-6 — Elite enjoying oil and wine while the people suffer
- Daniel 5:25-27 — Scales as instrument of divine judgment

Discussion Questions

TEXT & INTERPRETATION

Q1 Revelation 6:6 says “a quart of wheat for a denarius” — a full day’s wage for one person’s food. What does that picture tell us about who suffers most when the black horse rides, and who might be protected?

See also Matthew 20:1-2 and the contrast with “do not harm the oil and the wine.”

Q2 Jesus listed famine third in Matthew 24:7, right after war and before pestilence — in the exact same order as the horsemen. What does this tell us about how Jesus intended these prophecies to be interpreted, and what does it say about Scripture’s internal consistency?

Compare Matthew 24:4-8 with Revelation 6:1-8 side by side.

Q3 Ezekiel 4:16 describes God cutting off bread so that people eat “by weight and with anxiety.” How closely does that language mirror Revelation 6:5-6, and what does that parallel tell us about the nature of this judgment?

Also consider Leviticus 26:26 — “they shall bring back your bread by weight.”

PRESENT-DAY APPLICATION

Q4 In the past few years, have you personally noticed changes in the cost or availability of basic foods — groceries, eggs, wheat products, cooking oil? How did that affect your household, and does it change how you read Revelation 6:6?

UCG notes food inflation in the U.S. is up 25%+ since 2021. Fertilizer shortages, supply chain disruptions, and farm policy pressures are ongoing.

Q5 The black horse rider holds scales — a symbol of controlled, rationed distribution at high prices. Do you see parallels today in how governments or global organizations are increasingly involved in controlling food supply, pricing, or distribution?

Think about government farm subsidies, fertilizer restrictions, or global food security initiatives.

Q6 The wars of the red horse directly cause the famine of the black horse. With active conflicts in Ukraine — a major global breadbasket — and the Middle East affecting shipping lanes, do you think we are already seeing the red horse feeding the black horse? What evidence would you point to?

Ukraine and Russia together supply a significant share of the world’s wheat, sunflower oil, and fertilizer.

Q7 HWA described the famines and economic stresses of his day as "little drops of rain before the great storm" — forerunners of what is coming. In what ways do you think present conditions are forerunners, and in what ways will the full ride of the black horse be unlike anything we have yet seen?

Consider: the fourth seal says a quarter of the earth dies from famine and pestilence combined (Revelation 6:8).

DEEPER THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Q8 Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 present famine as a consequence of covenant disobedience — not random suffering but a specific response to turning away from God. How does understanding the black horse within this covenant framework change how we think about end-time suffering? Is God punishing, warning, or both?

See Leviticus 26:14-16 and compare with Leviticus 26:3-5 (the blessing side of the same covenant).

Q9 The command "do not harm the oil and the wine" suggests that even in judgment, there is a limit — the judgment is measured, not total. What does this tell us about God's character, and how does Matthew 24:22 ("those days will be shortened for the elect's sake") reinforce that same idea?

Q10 Given everything we have studied about the black horse — the scales, the rationed grain, the OT covenant patterns — what is the personal, practical response God seems to be calling His people to? Is it primarily physical preparation, spiritual preparation, or both, and what does that look like in your own life right now?

See Matthew 6:33 and Leviticus 26:3-5 for the positive counterpart to the black horse.