

Revelation

What to Expect

Revelation 6:1-17

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / October 18, 2026

I. Jesus Shows Us What to Expect

He shows us what to expect because He is in control of what happens next!

All of human history falls under the rubric of “His Story” and is a part of His sovereign plan, so that these four horsemen have been galloping through human history for centuries now.

A. You Should Expect to See Nations Warring Against Nations

Revelation 6:2 “...behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.”

Even though we see Jesus later in **ch. 19** on a white horse, this is not Jesus. This is the destructive force and evil of our enemy, Satan, that leads nations constantly to go to war against other nations.

B. You Should Expect to See Individual People Being Brutal to Other People

Revelation 6:4 “And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another...”

That’s what we see today and have been seeing since Cain killed his own brother in the very first family that ever existed.

2 Timothy 3:1-4 “But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ²For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”

C. You Should Expect to See Economic Chaos and Inequity

Revelation 6:5-6 “...and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶...saying, ‘A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!’”

This is all about scarcity and inflation, so that a day’s wage is barely enough to buy food to stay alive, let alone thrive. But notice how the oil and wine are preserved, because it speaks to the inequity of resources. No matter how poor some people or even entire nations are, there are always rich people living in luxury with more than enough.

D. You Should Expect to See Death by Unexpected Causes

Revelation 6:8 “...and behold, a pale horse! And its rider’s name was Death, Hades followed him...”

This horse stands for death, not by war or individual brutality, but by calamity, famine, or plague.

II. Jesus Wants Us to Trust that He’s in Control

Revelation 6:9-10 “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 witness they had borne. ¹⁰They cried out with a loud voice, ‘O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before You will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’”

The first four seals show us what life in a fallen world is like for everybody on this earth. But this fifth seal focuses on life for Christians in this world.

It’s not talking about one-day-some-day when Christians are killed for their faith. This has been going on for a long time.

Revelation is not a guide for how to avoid persecution. It’s an encouragement for how to endure faithfully, because God knows something about persecution that we keep forgetting.

Persecution is what so often leads to massive revival and church growth! The early Church grew at a breathtaking pace while it suffered intense persecution in the first four centuries.

A. Trusting Doesn’t Exclude Crying Out

When the first four seals are opened, we hear the four living creatures crying out. But when this fifth seal is opened, we hear the cry of a human heart!

Revelation 6:10 “They cried out with a loud voice, ‘O sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before You will judge and avenge our blood...?’”

This is not a cry for vengeance; it’s a cry for justice because the human heart longs to see things made right!

That phrase “How long, O Lord?” is a biblical lament that you find scattered all through the Bible because it reflects the raw, honest cry for deliverance, justice, or relief in times of suffering and waiting.

Psalms 13:1-4 “How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? ²How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? ³Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, ⁴lest my enemy say, ‘I have prevailed over him,’ lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.”

Psalms 94:1-5, 7 “O Lord, God of vengeance, O God of vengeance, shine forth! ²Rise up, O Judge of the earth; repay to the proud what they deserve! ³O Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked exult? ⁴They pour out their arrogant words; all the evildoers boast. ⁵They crush Your people, O Lord... ⁷and they say, ‘The Lord does not see...’”

B. Trusting Starts by Knowing He’s in Control

Despite how troubling this chapter is, the sovereignty of God is woven all through it.

The phrase “**was given**” is used **4x** in the midst of these scary four horsemen.

v. 2 (White Horse) “...a crown **was given** to him...”

v. 4 (Red Horse) "...Its rider **was permitted** (original language "was given") to take peace...and he **was given** a great sword."

v. 8 (Pale Horse) "...And they **were given** authority over a fourth of the earth..."

And then you see that God is sovereign over how many Christians will be killed.

v. 11 "...until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed..."

Evil is not in charge, it's not on the throne, and evil can only operate as it's given permission to do so, because evil is on a short, sovereign leash that's being held by our Savior!

III. Jesus Shows Us How It All Ends for Unbelievers

This sixth seal levels the playing field of human status, leaving everybody in the same terrifying position – on the receiving end of the terrifying wrath of God.

Revelation 6:15-17 "Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶calling to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, ¹⁷for the great day of Their wrath has come, and who can stand?'"

On that final day, unbelievers will cry out, not to God, but to the mountains and rocks to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb!

They would rather die than come face to face with the Lamb whose sacrificial blood and free offer of salvation they have rejected. Because then He will no longer be saying to them, "Come to Me all who are weary and heavy laden." He will be their judge!

"The book of Revelation opens the doors of eternity and invites us to stop, look, and listen while allowing you to sit in the corner of glory... It's almost like there is a sign on the door to eternity that says, 'Do you want to know what's really important? Eavesdrop on eternity... Do you want to construct a life that really fits with what God is doing? Eavesdrop on eternity.' Eternity is the compass that orients every aspect of a Christian's life..."

- Paul David Tripp, *Lost in the Middle*

Eternity is the compass that should orient every aspect of a Christian's life, but sadly, so many Christians live by a different compass! It's not too late to pick up a new compass and let eternity reorient your life and what matters most.