

Apocalypse: The end of the world as we know it...?

In the last book of the Bible, we read about the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, revealing - well, what exactly? Saint John reports a vision of horror and hate, that gives way to a new world coming, full of love and light.

Here's the text from Revelation 6.

"I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword.

When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. 6 Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages, and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.

I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth...

Read on if you want to know what happened when the seventh seal was broken.

What kind of narrative do you think this is? How do you think it should be pictured? Lots of artists, from classic to comic book have made images to show the scene. We are going to analyse some of them.

What do you think the 'end of the world as we know it' might be like? Why is this image so fascinating? Does it relate to what Nero and Domitian did to Christians, making martyrs of them by covering them in pitch, and burning them alive to illuminate Caesar's gardens by night?

Ned: 'It's the apocalypse'.

Marge: 'Do you have clean underwear Bart?'

Bart: 'Not any more'

Lisa: 'Oh no - I've never known true love.'

Homer: 'Oh no - I've not used those pizza coupons.'

8. The imagery of evil: this artist has...

3. We noticed some things the artist did well...

9. Using the bible. This artist has...

4. We're not sure about...

2. We would call this picture...

...because...

10. The interpretation the artist gives of Revelation 6 is...

7. We want to ask some questions...

5. We realised that...

1. We noticed...

6. It made us think more about...



5 things we noticed and 5 things we thought