

## Revelation 6: The Four Horsemen

So far in Revelation we have encountered some powerful symbolism. The churches being described as lamp stands who run the risk of its fire being snuffed out! God the Father's presence illustrated by a Great Throne complete with majestic hues, lightning and thunder, and a emerald rainbow above it and a sea of glass below. The image of Christ represented by a slain lamb with seven eyes and seven horns who alone is found worthy to take the scroll from the Father's right hand and put into motion what must take place according to the Father's will. And today we get the honor of looking at four horsemen who ride different colored horses that carry out the beginning stages revealed in this great scroll with a plan so comprehensive it has to be written out in both the front and back.

**6:1 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!" 2 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.**

### **I. White Horse: Who is He? (Imagery is similar to Zechariah 1:7-12, 6:1-7)**

#### **a. Jesus: Best argument**

1. He rides Whitehorse like Jesus in chapter 19
2. He was given a crown, symbolizing royalty
3. White typically symbolizes purity and righteousness in revelation

#### **b. Anti Christ: Best arguments**

1. Scripture references that teach about false Christ's trying to deceive
2. Correlates well with the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24) [False Christ's, wars, famine, natural disasters, fear]
3. The crown is a *stephanos*, not a diadem like Christ wears in ch. 19 (a victor's wreath; not a royal crown)
4. The antichrist is bent on conquering (Persuading people to follow Him)

#### **c. Military Conqueror**

1. Military conquest was a great objective to the Roman Empire
2. The bow (and not sword) may be an illusion to the Parthians, who defeated Rome with bows
3. Military conquerors typically ride white horses after victories (The procession)
4. Military conquests are bent on conquest

#### **d. A Literary Personification**

1. We must read the text through a historical lens; not a theological one
2. The text does not identify rider (In other areas, symbolisms is explained (The Dragon is Satan)
3. Seems to harmonize with the other three unknown riders (Red, Black, Pale)
4. The content (One bent on conquest), not the identity, seems to be the author's focus

#### **e. The Common denominator in all these views is that God is in control.**

1. He is in the process of executing his plan
2. The tragedies that occur must take place
3. Evil seems to prevail, but God wins
4. God's people are on the right team

## **II. The Red, Black, & Pale Horseman (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, & 4<sup>th</sup> seal)**

**3** When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" **4** Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.

### **a. No Peace**

1. The Plight of Israel (Deportations, Destruction of Jerusalem, Scattering in Europe)
2. Arab extremists and the West (911, subway bombing in Spain)
3. The Oxymoron: If you advocate your faith it is hard to have peace (Jesus did not come to bring peace, but a sword; Matthew 10:34). Yet we are called to live at peace (Hebrews 12:14) and be gentle, respectful, clean conscience (1 Peter 3:15)

**5** 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, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

### **b. Famine**

1. Famine and / or Inflation: Supply and Demand
2. Danarius is equivalent to a days wage (8-10 times higher in price)
3. Today's problem in Africa. The cost of fuel.

**7** When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" **8** 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.

### **c. Death (1/4 of the world)**

1. The Seals devastation limited to ¼ of the earth. The Trumpets (1/3 of earth), the Bowls (1/2 of earth)
2. Revelation also describes a time when death won't be granted for five months (Revelation 9:5-6)
3. Christians can take heart that death has been conquered
4. The Reality of Christian martyrs leads to the fifth seal

## **III. The Fifth Seal: The Martyrs**

**9** 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. **10** 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?" **11** Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

### **a. The Altar is an illusion to the animal sacrifices at the temple**

1. Note the martyrs are under the altar: This is where the blood would be
2. The sacrifice is like an aroma to God
3. Many people are represented here. Most likely Thousands

### **b. Criticisms of the Martyrs Prayer**

1. Unlike prayers of martyrs like Stephen and Jesus
2. They should pray for the salvation of the wicked
3. Seeing the world through their eyes

### **c. The Ancient World: The Martyrs Perspective**

1. AD 60: Earthquakes
2. AD 64: Nero burns Rome; blames Christians
3. AD 70: The destruction of Jerusalem (Temple)
4. AD 79: The Eruption of Vesuvius
5. AD 92: The Great Famine
6. This was the World of the Early Church
7. John's vision asserts the Sovereignty of Jesus

### **d. More martyrs must be added before revenge is realized**

## **V. The Sixth Seal**

**12 I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, 13 and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind.**

**14 The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. 15 Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. 16 They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"**

### **a. The Four horsemen and Today**

1. We see their marks in modern history and today
2. Men bent on Conquering (Mao Tse Tung, Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler, Saddam Hussein, Osama Bin Laden)
3. No peace (Israel and Arab Countries), James W. von Brunn shot security guard at Holocaust museum)
4. Famines in Ethiopia, Somalia (Aids in Africa). No jobs in Ukraine
5. Wars (WWI & II), Rumors of wars (Iran, North Korea) Iraq, Afghanistan
6. Natural Disasters (Tsunami, hurricanes, earthquakes)

### **b. In the end, Jesus will unleash his wrath**

### **c. Meanwhile we wait & Recognize what we see must first take place**