

The Four Horsemen (Message #16)

Revelation 6: 1-8

Tonight as we continue our journey through the future, our text takes a much different tone. We are leaving a scene of worship and praise, entering a scene of wrath and punishment. These verses reveal no rejoicing or joy, only rebellion and judgment. There is great splendor for the redeemed, with only great suffering for those left behind.

Tonight we will begin our study of the Great Tribulation, a 7 year period divided into 3 ½ year segments. The events that we will encounter in the coming weeks are very real. As horrible and difficult as they are to imagine, these things must come hereafter. The Lamb has broken the 1st seal to the sound of thunder, an impending storm on the horizon, [v.1 – And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see](#). It is here that God's judgment begins with the: [Four Horsemen](#). Let's consider these horsemen and the calamity they will bring.

I. The White Horse of Deception (2) – [And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer](#). The 1st rider is seen riding a white horse. He appears to be a man of authority. So, who is this man? Some believe it to be Christ Himself. Jesus is seen riding a white horse in [19:11-16](#) (Illus. differences: crown, *stephanos*; many crowns, *diadems*, bow- sword.) This man isn't Jesus; he is the Antichrist. What can we discover about him?

A. His Plan – The text reveals that he carries a [bow](#), but there is no mention of arrows. The Antichrist intends to conquer the world and he will do so without firing the first shot. He will come as an imposter, an imitator of Christ. He will have the answers for the world's problems.

- He comes on a white horse bringing a plan for peace. He will have the solutions for the great social and economic problems of the world. He will be regarded as the greatest leader the world has ever known. The world will love and even worship this child of Satan.

B. His Power (2b) – [and he went forth conquering, and to conquer](#). He will, without massive military buildups or conflict, conquer the world. He will become the ruler of the world. All the kings, prime ministers, and presidents of the world will submit to his authority. (Could it be something like the leader of the UN?)

- This man of sin will deceive the whole world. Every nation will submit to the authority he possesses. Our precious Lord came without so much as room in the inn. He was despised,

rejected, and crucified, denied as the Messiah. Here the Antichrist will be elevated to the position that Christ was denied.

C. His Performance – The Antichrist will be a master of performances. He will display what the world desires to see. They will be deceived by his facade of peace and tranquility. All of his work, at first, is just for show, merely a carefully orchestrated performance. He will be ushered in without resistance.

- But, underneath the appearance of a great world leader lays the demonic nature of the most wicked dictator the world has known. He is the son of the father of lies; his promises of peace and prosperity are actually preparation for total domination.
- This idea isn't beyond reason. Hitler came as an evil dictator disguised as a man of peace. He was nearly successful with his plan of deception. The Antichrist will be successful.

I. The White Horse of Deception (2)

II. The Red Horse of Dismay (3-4) – *And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.* The 2nd rider appears on a red horse. He will bring about great destruction and bloodshed. As Jesus breaks the 2nd seal, a time of war will begin unlike any this world has ever seen.

A. The Peace will Vanish (4) – *and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth.* This rider received power to remove peace from the world. The Antichrist came with a promise of peace, but the peace didn't last. The entire world will erupt under the turmoil of global war.

- Jesus predicted wars as nations and kingdoms rise against each other. *1 Thes.5:3 – For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*
- Those taken in by the deception of the Antichrist will soon face the harsh reality of war on every hand. There will be fighting and bloodshed in every corner of the world, from remote villages to the large cities. What terror and carnage awaits those left behind!

B. The People become Violent (4b) – and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. This rider carries a great sword, revealing the extent of this warfare. Every nation and people will be involved. The men of the world will begin a campaign of murder and bloodshed, unleashed on each other.

- We live in a violent world today. Almost every day there is murder somewhere near us. The enemies our soldiers face have one agenda, death! They are willing to kill themselves and innocent people to combat us. Imagine the carnage that's going on in Iraq magnified greatly and carried out on a global scale. That is what this world will face as Antichrist assumes power. It will be a time of indiscriminate killing as never before.

I. The White Horse of Deception (2)

II. The Red Horse of Dismay (3-4)

III. The Black Horse of Despair (5-6) – And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; The 3rd rider is seen upon a black horse. As he appears, a time of famine and great need will come upon the earth. The time of global war will bring about a global famine. It will be:

A. A Time of Devastation (5b) – and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. He carries a pair of balances. This reveals a time of devastation as food supplies and other necessities run low. It appears that the basic needs of life will be weighed in balances, with only an allotted portion at a time.

- I have never experienced such a time. God has abundantly blessed our land. We have all we could want and more. There are places that face these realities today. During the Tribulation, the entire world will suffer because of famine and need.

- I remember my grandparents speaking of the difficulties of the Great Depression and the time during World War II. I'm sure these were difficult times, but they cannot compare to the want and need this world will soon face.

B. A Time of Starvation (6a) – And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; The measure here is equivalent to 1 quart, so 1 quart of wheat or 3 quarts of barley. A man needs 1 quart per day to survive. The penny isn't what you think. It is the Roman *denarius*, a day's wages.

- Now, wheat was used for making bread and other baked items. Barley was often used to feed the livestock, sometimes eaten by poor people. So, for those fortunate enough to have a job with all the war and famine, a day's wages would feed only one person well (wheat), or only 3 people poorly (barley). Whatever the case, there'll be some difficult choices. Who eats and who doesn't? The Tribulation will be marked by great starvation.

- Consider these statistics in our day of plenty: 15 million children die of hunger related illness each year; every 3.6 seconds someone dies of starvation, about 24,000 per day. These numbers won't even compare to the death created by the famine of the Tribulation.

C. A Time of Division (6b) – [and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine](#). Apparently there will still be luxuries during the Tribulation. Those who have wealth will enjoy plenty, while those who have not will face starvation and death. The rich getting richer while the poor get poorer will take on new meaning then. Remember, the church is gone. All the saints who are filled with compassion through the Spirit have left. The world will be at the mercy of lost men's consciences.

I. The White Horse of Deception (2)

II. The Red Horse of Dismay (3-4)

III. The Black Horse of Despair (5-6)

IV. The Pale Horse of Death (7-8) – [And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.](#) The 4th and final rider rides a pale horse.

- This is the Greek word *khloros* and refers to a green or pale yellow color. The pale horse pictures the appearance of the dead. This rider is the only one specifically named, [Death, and Hell followed with him](#). This is a vivid reminder of what happens to those who die without Christ. Notice:

A. The Scope of Death (8b) – [And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.](#)

There have already been countless lives lost to war and famine, but here Death will claim ¼ of the world's population.

- Right now there are near 6 billion people on earth. If that were to happen today, there would be nearly 1.5 billion dead at once! I can't imagine the scene surrounding that kind of mass death.

B. The Severity of Death (8b) – People will die with the **sword** (warfare); **hunger; death** (literally plagues or pestilence, AIDS, smallpox, anthrax, swine-flu, etc.); and **beasts of the earth** (animals). Many believe this to be rats or rodents. They were responsible for the bubonic plague that killed 1/3 of Europe's population during the Middle Ages. They are known to carry some 35 known diseases. One pair can reproduce five litters of 8-9 each year. They are commonly associated with plagues and famines. The Bible doesn't say, but this is certainly possible given the history of rats.

This text has brought a range of emotion. I rejoice because I will miss the horrors of all this, as the church is already gone. However, I am saddened by those who will be left behind to endure the Tribulation. People living today could very well be taken out or left behind.

I would ask you tonight, Are you sure you're saved? If not this could very well be your lot. Christian is there someone you know who is lost and you don't want them to face God in judgment? These 4 horsemen will very soon appear as judgment begins. These verses reveal horrible times and we've only begun to view the judgment. Whatever the need tonight, won't you come!