

# ***THE REVELATION***

## ***The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse***

**LOOK UP! CHRIST IS COMING SOON! HALLELUJAH!**

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, or simply the Four Horsemen, are described in ***Revelation 6:1–8***. The Four Horsemen are symbolic depictions of different events that will take place in the end times. As an example of the Bible's influence on culture at large, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse have been referenced many times in literature, paintings, movies, and other media, often as portents of an imminent cataclysm or the means by which a disaster comes to pass. – Jeremiah

Apocalypse is defined as being the complete final destruction of the world, as described in ***Revelation***.

The time of praising God has ceased because the hour of judgment has come. The Bible teaches that the world is headed, not toward peace and unity, but toward a final, catastrophic war, the battle of Armageddon.

The worship described in ***Revelation 4-5*** is preparation for the wrath described in ***Revelation 6-19***. It seems strange to us that worship and judgment should go together, but this is because we do not fully understand either the holiness of God or the sinfulness of man. Nor do we grasp the total picture of what God wants to accomplish and how the forces of evil have opposed Him. God is longsuffering, but eventually He must judge sin and vindicate His servants.

Daniel prophesied in ***Daniel 9:27 (NIV)***<sup>27</sup> *He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him".* I used the NIV translation of this verse to make it a bit easier to understand. What is so significant about the middle of the Tribulation? That is when the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel and becomes their persecutor instead of their protector and the Tribulation becomes the Great Tribulation. This could be a study on its own. At this point I just want to remind you that as the seven years progress things get worse.

The Bible teaches that the world is headed, not toward peace and unity, but toward a final, catastrophic war, the battle of Armageddon. Until that time, things will continue to deteriorate as the world falls deeper and deeper into chaos, confusion, and sin. As the end approaches, wars will increase, crime will escalate, there will be economic upheavals, and unprecedented natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, famines, and diseases. We read in ***Matthew 24:6-8 (ESV)***<sup>6</sup> *And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.*<sup>7</sup> *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,*

*and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.* <sup>8</sup> *All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.*

**Read Revelation 6:1-2 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> *Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!"* <sup>2</sup> *And I looked, and 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.*

The Lamb, Jesus, opened one of the seven seals on the scroll that he had in his hand. David Jeremiah says that the seals were not all on the outside of the scroll but instead rolled up inside the scroll to be open one at a time. What is written on the scroll is not read but acted out. One of the four living creatures (an angel) called with a voice like thunder *Come!* The white horse came out. We do not so much view the horse today as they did at that time. The white horse was the picture of conquest, battle, war, attack and victory, a signal of coming war. In response to the angelic summons, a white horse came forth bearing its rider. The first four seals involve horses and riders (the so-called four horsemen of the Apocalypse). Some think that the white horse is Christ because Christ is pictured on a white horse in **Revelation 19:17**. There are differences but we won't study that now. However, I tend to agree with David Jeremiah who thinks this rider is the Anti-Christ.

The Anti-Christ has no arrows in his bow. He is coming in peace (lol). The word for *crown* in **Revelation 6:2** is *stephanos*, which means "the victor's crown." The crown that Jesus Christ wears is *diadema*, "the kingly crown" (**Rev. 19:12**).

We have a tendency to think that the Anti-Christ is going to start his wickedness immediately. As he first appears, he is just beginning to set the stage. At first the people will believe they have found the Messiah they have been waiting for so long. Daniel the prophet had prophesied centuries earlier in **Daniel 9:26 (ESV)** <sup>26</sup> *And after the sixty-two weeks, [3-1/2 years] an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed.* In the middle of the Tribulation, the Anti-Christ will reveal his true self. I will try to go into this later in our study.

**Read Revelation 6:3-4 (ESV)** <sup>3</sup> *When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!"* <sup>4</sup> *And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.*

Don't forget it is the Lamb who is opening these seals it is His right to do so. Notice this rider was permitted to take peace from the earth. Wiersbe, writes, "Antichrist's conquest begins in peace, but soon he exchanges the empty bow for a sword. The color red is often associated with terror and death. It is a picture of wanton bloodshed. War has been a part of man's experience since Cain killed Abel, so this image would speak to believers in every age, reminding them that

God is ultimately in control, even though He is not responsible for the lawless deeds of men and nations.”

Tony Evans writes, “The **fiery red** horse of **the second seal** represents chaos. Following initial peace to begin the tribulation, the world will devolve into violence, with people beginning to **slaughter one another**. Like Adolf Hitler before him, the Antichrist is going to transition from pretending to be peaceful to wielding **a large sword**, representative of his capacity to slay people. The parallel to Hitler is instructive because the German chancellor rose to power amid the turbulence of the Great Depression by building consensus and support before his administration devolved into violence and dictatorship.”

**Read Revelation 6:5-6 (ESV)** <sup>5</sup> *When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand.* <sup>6</sup> *And I heard what seemed to be 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 wine!”*

The color black is often connected with famine. When the Lamb had opened the third seal, a black horse appeared, with his rider holding a pair of balances. Worldwide famine follows worldwide war. Even now we are beginning to see the high cost of living in America. But currently it is nothing like what they will experience during the Tribulation. Conditions will be so dreadful that it will be a measure of wheat for a denarius or three measures of barley for the same amount.

A penny (denarius) a day was a standard wage for laborers, but it had much greater buying power than our penny today. A "measure" of wheat was about two pints, sufficient for the daily needs of one person. Ordinarily, a person could buy eight to twelve measures for a denarius, and much more of barley, which was the cheaper grain.

It will cost a whole day's wages for enough food for one meal—that is, if one is going to eat wheat. Now if they will take barley they will get three meals for a day's work. What hard conditions! Prices are going to be unprecedented in those days of the Tribulation.

The oil and the wine represent luxuries that are enjoyed by the rich. Oil would correspond to our beauty aids and the body conditioners that we use today – the luxuries of life. The wine corresponds to the liquor that will be in abundance. McGee comments, “Isn't it interesting that there will not be enough foodstuff, not enough barley for food, but there will be enough barley to make liquor! They will make it in that day, and the rich are the ones who will get it.”

**Read Revelation 6:7-8 (ESV)** <sup>7</sup> *When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!”* <sup>8</sup> *And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.*

John saw two images: Death riding a pale horse (probably yellowish green) and Hades (the realm of the dead) following him. Christ has the keys of death and Hades, and both will one day be cast into hell. Death claims the body while Hades claims the soul of the dead. John saw these enemies going forth to claim their prey, armed with weapons of the sword, hunger, pestilence (death), and wild beasts. These would be symbols taken from war in ancient times.

Conquering tyrants who bring the world war, famine, and pestilence are certainly nothing new. Suffering people from the days of the Roman Empire to the most recent war can easily recognize anticipations of these four dreaded horsemen. This is why the Book of **Revelation** has been a source of encouragement to suffering believers throughout history. As they see the Lamb opening the seals, they realize that God is in control and that His purposes will be accomplished.  
– Wiersbe

The fifth and sixth seals will be open in this chapter and the seventh seal will be opened in chapter 8.

When we think of our how bad our world is today, let's praise God that we will not be present for the Great Tribulation and let's praise God like they did in **Revelation 5:13-14 (ESV)** <sup>13</sup> *And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"* <sup>14</sup> *And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.*