The Four Riders of the Apocalypse

Revelation 6:1-8
4-24-2022



INTRODUCTION:

Be ready as the world prepares for the Antichrist:

What Events will surround his diabolical coming?

I. WORLD-WIDE CONQUEST (White Horse)
(v. 1-2)

II. WARS & RUMORS OF WARS (Red Horse)
(v. 3-4)

III. SEVERE FAMINE (Black Horse)
(v. 5-6)

IV. DEATH & DESTRUCTION (Pale Horse)
(v. 7-8)

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Revelation 6 - 19 describes God's futures dealings with man on planet earth.

It will be a time like no other. A time so serious that the Lord Jesus gave warning concerning it in Matthew 24.

The imagery of horses represents the world forces that God will use to fulfill His sovereign plan.

The reference to horses may also imply the swiftness with which each event will unfold and lead into the next (indicating succession).

NOTE: The sovereignty of God. It is God who allows the seal judgments to occur. Nothing happens until God gives the OK.

NOTE: V. 2 - "a crown was given unto him..."
v. 4 - "power was given to him..."
v. 8 - "power (authority) was given unto them"

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What Events will surround his diabolical coming?

I. WORLD-WIDE CONQUEST (White Horse)
(v. 1-2)

V. 1

The Lamb controls the timing of the Trib. events by His loosening of the seven seals. Each time He loosens a seal, something traumatic occurs on the earth.

The opening of the first seal begins the 7-year Tribulation on this earth.

"The noise of thunder" - a reference to the sound of the Beast's voice. A sound of power and judgment!

NOTE: These four "Beasts" (living creatures - cp. 4:6-8; 5:14) each call attention to the four horses of the Apocalypse.

V. 2

Some have identified this rider on the white horse with Jesus Christ, who also will return on a white horse (Rev. 19:11).

The differences, however, are as follows:

1) 6:2 - "Bow"	-	19:15 - "sharp sword out of His mouth"
2) 6:2 - rider is unnamed	-	19:11 "Faithful and True" 19:13 "The Word of God" 19:16 "The King of kings and Lord of lords"
3) 6:2 - "a crown" ="stephanos"	19:12	"many crowns" ="diadema"
4) 6:2 - "conquering" (by peace)		19:11 "In righteousness He doth judge and make war" 19:15 "strike the nations"

"White horse" = a <u>counterfeit</u> or <u>copy</u> of Christ's white horse (Rev. 19:11).

"This rider on the white horse evidently pictures man's last effort to bring in a reign of order and peace while Christ is still rejected" (Ironside).

"A bow" = NOTE: No arrows are mentioned. Arrows are the deadly part of the weapon.

The Anti-christ will be an imitation for Christ. He will begin as a peaceful liberator and will greatly deceive the world (John 5:43; II Th. 2:1-12).

Cp. Daniel 9:24-27 -
--70 sevens (of weeks) are described (v. 24)
--69 sevens or 483 years have been fulfilled [from the command to rebuild Jerusalem until the triumphal entry = 69 "weeks"]

--The final "week" (seven) awaits the coming Tribulation

--The Tribulation kicks off with the Antichrist ("the prince that shall come" - v. 26) who will sign a 7-year peace treaty ("covenant") with Israel.

The Antichrist will come to world-wide power the same way Antiochus Epiphanes did - "peaceably . . . by flatteries" (Dan. 11:21-23).

The Antichrist will make people think they are entering the Millennium when actually they are entering the Tribulation. As Satan's masterpiece, he will come in like a <u>Lamb</u> (first 3 1-2 years) and go out like a <u>lion</u> (last 3 1-2 years).

"Crown" = a victor's wreath. The crown given to conquerors; those victorious in the Isthmian games.

"Conquering and to conquer" - refers to his winning victory after victory without defeat, while aiming at a goal of total conquest. LIT. "He went forth conquering and <u>in order that</u> he might conquer."

The Antichrist will stop at nothing less than complete dictatorship or total mastery.

II. WARS & RUMORS OF WARS (Red Horse)

(v. 3-4)

V. 4

"Red" = fiery red

The color depicts bloodshed and sin.

"To take peace from (out of) the earth" - the conquest of "peace" evidently pictured in verse 2 quickly comes to an end.

For when they shall say: "peace and safety" then cometh sudden destruction..." (I Th. 5:3).

"Great sword" - a reference to the short Roman dagger and is symbolic of violent death.

Much personal betrayals will occur - even between family members.

If our world today cannot experience peace while peace is possible, can you imagine the coming Tribulation when peace is taken away?

*We should take advantage of the peace we have today. Use, don't abuse, your freedom in America.

III. SEVERE FAMINE (Black Horse)

(v. 5-6)

V. 5

"Black" = the symbol of mourning or affliction (Ex. Black worn at funerals; in Spain).

"Black" - is often connected with famine (Jer. 14:1-2; Lam. 5:10).

Famine is the result of war. "A shortage of food will always drive up prices and force the government to ration what is available."

"To eat by weight" is a Jewish phrase indicating that food is scarce (lev. 26:26) (Wiersbe, p. 588).

"Measure" = a quart

"penny" = a day's wages (The Greek "denarius" was a Roman silver coin equivalent to a day's wages

V. 6

"A measure" - a quart (enough for one person)

"Barley" - cheaper than wheat, was primary food for the poor (Swete)

In the Tribulation, a man will work all day just to secure food for himself! There will be nothing for his family! (Wiersbe, p. 588)

"Hurt not" - do not deplete the oil or wine (2 primary agricultural items in Israel)

With famine conditions as severe as they will be, the Antichrist will have little trouble convincing the world of the need for a one-world economic system to feed the hungry multitudes (Rev. 13:17).

Often times we take the provisions that God provides for granted. We don't appreciate His blessings until they are taken away.

IV. DEATH & DESTRUCTION (Pale Horse)

(v. 7-8)

V. 8

"Pale" - pale green. The color of sickness. The color of death.

"Death" is pictured as sitting on the pale horse and Hell follows closely behind sweeping up after death.

Death comes before hell; as death claims the body while Hell claims the soul of the death (Rev. 20:13) (Wiersbe, p. 588).

--Jesus Christ has the keys of death and hell (Rev. 1:18);

--Death and hell will one day be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:14).

"Sword" - a large blade (cp. Rev. 1:16).

Life itself is often taken for granted.

CONCLUSION:

NOTE: Matthew 24:4-31 runs strikingly parallel with the six seals of Revelation 6.

Mt. 24:4-5 -	Corresponds with the first seal
Mt. 24:6-7a -	Corresponds with the second seal
Mt. 24:7b -	Corresponds with the third seal
Mt. 24:7-8 -	Corresponds with the fourth seal
Mt. 24:9-22 -	Corresponds with the fifth seal
Mt. 24:29-31 -	Corresponds with the sixth seal

The Bible identifies the beginning signs of "The Day of the LORD" with the opening of the sixth seal
(Rev 6:12-17)

Question: Does not the Day of God's wrath include the first five seals also?

Evidently not. Proof:

(1) While Christ is sovereign over the events of the first five seals (since He opens each one), the nature of the evens that transpire indicate the results of man's sin and wrath, not God's.

(2) During the five seals, God uses natural (earthly) causes to accomplish His purpose; whereas beginning with the sixth seal and continuing through the trumpet and bowl judgments, God uses supernatural causes to judge.

* (3) The fifth seal could not be God's wrath since it describes the martyrdom of God's faithful saints.

(4) The word "wrath" is not used in the first five seals.

* (5) The question asked by the martyred "souls under the altar" (Rev. 6:10) indicates that God's judicial wrath on His enemies had not yet begun (God answers their prayer in 8:3).

(6) The sign of God's wrath is said to begin in Rev. 6:17, and the outpouring of God's wrath begins in 8:7.

Question: Does not the phrase "is come" ("elthen" - aorist indicative of "erchomai") indicate that the day of God's wrath began before the sixth seal?

No. In this dramatic context, God is using a **ingressive** aorist which speaks of an action about to occur.

Note: the use of "elthen" in this sense in -

(1) Rev. 19:7 - speaking of the Church's impending (about to begin) marriage

(2) Mk. 14:41 - speaking of Christ's impending (about to begin) crucifixion

e) The Bible identifies the signs in the sky with Christ's coming and the in-gathering (Rapture) of His elect (Matthew 24:29-31)