

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

TEXT: **Revelation 6:1-8**

THEME: **Judgment is coming**

INTRODUCTION: Our world is crying out for someone to come and fix the problems of the nations—the collapsing economies, the wars, the turmoil between nations, and the turmoil within nations that are collapsing from within. There is an old adage that says, “**Be careful what you ask for; you may get it!**” This is where we are today in the world, in our nation, and in the church. The world is asking for a leader and a government that they won’t want when they get it. We are—I believe—standing at the precipice of a world catastrophe unlike anything the world has ever seen, and many political and religious leaders are dumb dogs. Isaiah captured this thought when he spoke of the leaders of Israel.

Isaiah 56:9-12

⁹ All you beasts of the field, come to devour, All you beasts in the forest.

¹⁰ His watchmen *are* blind, They are all ignorant; They *are* all dumb dogs, They cannot bark; Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

¹¹ Yes, *they are* greedy dogs *Which* never have enough. And they *are* shepherds Who cannot understand; They all look to their own way, Every one for his own gain, From his *own* territory.

¹² "Come," *one* says, "I will bring wine, And we will fill ourselves with intoxicating drink; Tomorrow will be as today, *And* much more abundant." *NKJV*

Some in the church today think it is a waste of time to study prophecy, especially the Book of Revelation. However, Scripture says otherwise.

Revelation 1:3

"Blessed *is* he who **reads** and those who **hear** the words of **this prophecy**, and **keep** those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near." *NKJV*

Revelation 22:7

"Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed *is* he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." *NKJV*

That secular governmental leaders reject what the Bible clearly teaches is one thing, but that church leaders reject the clear teachings of Scripture is quite another. One radio teacher teaches that Christians must learn to “read the Bible for all it’s worth.” However, he asserts that all predictive prophecy, especially concerning Israel, was fulfilled in AD 70 with the destruction of the Jewish Temple.

This teacher even has people on his program to assert that those who hold to a more literal and dispensational view of Bible prophecy fulfillment are declaring self-fulfilling prophecies. He claims those teaching that God is not yet through with national Israel, and that many events in the Bible are still future, including Revelation chapters 6-19, are endangering the stability of the Middle East and the world. I have one answer to this brother—rubbish! That is shear rubbish!

Well does the Bible speak of such nonsense. **Isaiah 30:10** says in part, "Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us **smooth** things, prophesy deceits." *NKJV*

In **Matthew 16:2-3** Jesus said to the religious leaders, "When it is evening you say, '*It will be fair weather, for the sky is red*'; and in the morning, '*It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening*.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot *discern* the signs of the times." *NKJV*

And a lot of religious leaders are no more able to discern the signs of our times than the religious leaders of 1st century Israel.

How can you read, hear, and keep the words of this prophecy if you do not study it? Obviously, God thought the study of prophecy was important because 1/3 of the Bible was prophetic when it was written. So it's important for us to know what God's Word says about the future.

1. **THE FIRST HORSEMEN—THE WHITE HORSE AND ITS RIDER (6:1-2).**

1. In chapter 5 we have seen the mortgage deed of redemption taken by the Lamb of God, and now He begins to open the seals—**this begins the consummation or completion of God's plan of final redemptive fulfillment.**
2. **Revelation 6:1** begins the **GREAT TRIBULATION** period—or *the Day of the Lord*.
 - All the events of the first **3 ½ years** take place under the **7 seals**. You'll see this more clearly as we go through the Book.
 - The last **3 ½ years** are under the **7 trumpets** and **7 bowls**.
3. **When the Lamb breaks the first seal, these events take place.**
 - John heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see."
 - The Greek word ἔρχου *erchou* from ἔρχομαι *erchomai* would be better translated as "GO."
 - This is an **imperative** verb form—a *command*.
 - It shows that Jesus is in total control—the horse and rider don't move until the command is given.
 - John sees the events that are now beginning to take place.
 - The words "**and see**" are not in most Greek manuscripts.
4. John sees a white horse and its rider.
 - The one riding the white horse has a **bow**—*military bow* (as in bow and arrow). He is a military man.
 - The rider on the white horse has a **crown** that was **GIVEN** to him.
 - This crown is not the diadem—it is the **Στέφανος** *stephanos*, the victor's crown.
 - The crown Jesus possesses is the **diadem**, and no one gave to Him—*He possesses it already*.
 - **Revelation 19:12** says of Jesus, "His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns [diadems]..." NKJV
 - The rider on the white horse goes out conquering and to conquer.
 - The rider is the man of sin—the **ANTICHRIST** [*the INSTEAD OF Christ*] (**2 Thess. 2**).
 - The Day of the Lord cannot take place until the Antichrist makes his appearance.
 - The white horse indicates the impression of purity—the rider gives the impression that he is a good man.
 - He will supposedly have the answers to the world's problems (**2 Thess. 2:11**).
 - He apparently conquers everyone except Moab, Edom, and Ammon—*modern Jordan* (**Dan. 11:36-42**).

- But when they shall say "Peace and safety," what comes upon them?—Destruction! (**1 Thess. 5**).
5. The Jews are looking for Messiah to come and build the Temple for them or at least work out the details and gain permission for them to rebuild the Temple (**Dan. 9:24-27**).
 - This will not be the first time that the Jewish nation has received a false Messiah.
 - You remember the story of Barabbas (Matt. 27:16-26; Mark 15:7-15; Luke 23:18-19; John 18:40). The Gospels indicate he was a thief who committed murder in the process of trying to overthrow the Roman government.
 - When given a choice between freeing Jesus or Barabbas, they chose Barabbas, whose name meant "**son of the father.**" **It was more of a title than a name**—it was not a name a child would have been given at birth.
 - Barabbas was **an ANTichrist**—the people chose him *INSTEAD OF* Christ.
 - They thought Barabbas could help them throw off the Roman oppressors—the Jews are still looking for a political and militaristic Messiah to save them from their enemies.
 - As a practical application of this principle, anything we are serving or trusting **instead of** Jesus Christ is an **anti-Christ** and looking forward to the **Antichrist**.
 6. There are several outstanding characteristics about the Antichrist.
 - Great speaker—Dan. 7:8.
 - Industrialist—Dan. 8:25.
 - General—Dan. 7:21-11:38.
 - Economist—Dan. 11:43.
 - Intellectual—Dan. 8:23.
 - Diplomat—Dan. 11:21.
 - Worshiper of gold and silver—Dan. 11:38.
 7. The Antichrist bears several titles.
 - The Assyrian—Isa. 10:56; 30:27-33.
 - The Little Horn—Dan. 7:8; 8:9-12.
 - The King of Fierce Countenance—Dan. 8:23.
 - The Prince that shall come—Dan. 9:26.
 - The Willful King—Dan. 11:36.
 - The Idol Shepherd (or worthless shepherd)—Zech. 11:15-17.
 - Man of Sin—2 Thess. 2:3.
 - Son of Perdition (or destruction)—2 Thess. 2:3.
 - That Wicked One (or lawless one)—2 Thess. 2:8
 - The Antichrist—1 John 2:18.
 - The Wild Beast—Rev. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20.
 2. **THE SECOND HORSEMEN—THE FIERY RED AND ITS RIDER (6:3-4)**
 1. We now see that the supposed peace that the Antichrist brings is short-lived—not lasting.
 2. **The second seal is opened.**
 - A fiery red horse with its rider goes out to take peace from the earth.

- He takes peace from the earth, not just the land of Israel or the Middle East.
 - Red is the color of war and bloodshed.
 - The people kill each other.
 - A great sword is given to the rider—*indicating great wide spread war*.
 - Great = μέγας megas.
3. Notice it says the **second** living creature announces this.
4. The peace the Antichrist brings is short-lived, and now this is a **world war**.
- ***What are some things that could remove peace?***
 - Man's inhumanity to man, war, racial tensions, family breakdown, young people out of control, bloodshed, unfair dealings with peoples and nations.
 - Remember, the Antichrist is a man with no moral standards.

3. THE THIRD HORSEMEN—THE BLACK HORSE AND ITS RIDER (6:5-6).

1. **The third seal is opened.**
- The **third** living creature announces—**GO!**
2. John sees a black horse and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.
- Now we see a worldwide famine.
 - A measure (less than a quart, about a liter) of wheat for a denarius (penny).
 - A measure is enough food for 1 man for 1 day.
 - Three measures of barley for a denarius.
 - Three measures would be enough food for 1 man for 3 days.
 - The Greek word is δηνάριον denarion.
 - The denarius was a Roman silver coin in NT times.
 - From the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, we see that a denarius was the ordinary pay for a day's wages (Matt. 20:2-13).
 - So if you want wheat, it will take a whole day's wages to feed 1 person for 1 day.
 - If you want barley, it will take a whole day's wages to feed 3 people for 1 day.
 - Barley would be similar to eating flour soup—popcorn would be a blessing.
3. This horseman is commanded not to harm the oil and wine—**WHY?**
- Oil and wine are luxuries.
 - The people in our world are selling their souls for luxuries.
 - Luxuries don't do you any good when you're hungry.
 - We already see famines in the world that will lead up to this.
 - The judgments intensify as the Great Tribulation goes on.

4. THE FOURTH HORSEMEN—THE PALE HORSE AND ITS RIDER (6:7-8).

1. **The fourth seal is opened.**
- The **fourth** living creature announces—**GO!**
2. John sees a pale horse and the name of him who sat on it was Death.
- **Pale** = χλωρός chlōros. The word chlorine comes from this word.
 - This is a pale yellowish green—yucky green.
3. Notice that Hades follows Death—**WHY?**

- Death and Hades are personified because death never goes alone—hell always follows death for the unbeliever.
 - We do not simply cease to exist at death. We check in to a new reality—*heaven or hell*.
4. Death and Hades are given power to kill ¼ of the people on earth.
- ***How do they kill ¼ of the earth's population?***
 - With the sword—war and violence.
 - With hunger—intensifying famine.
 - With death—misery that leads to death, possibly including disease.
 - With the wild beasts of the earth—animals will go wild during this time.
 - Not only the beasts of the wild, but your household pets will go wild too.
 - ***Have you ever seen an ordinary housecat go crazy?***
 - They are extremely dangerous, even more so than a dog.
5. Notice that ¼ of the world's population dies.
- The present population is fast approaching 7 billion, so 1.75 billion people will die.
 - In other judgments that happen later in Revelation you'll see 1/3 of the people die, then ¼ of the people die, then 1/3 of the people die, and so on—but it's talking about that many of the people will die of those who are left alive when each particular judgment takes place.
 - This is similar language to **Ezekiel 14:21**, which says, "For thus says the Lord GOD: 'How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem -- the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence -- to cut off man and beast from it?'" NKJV

Conclusion: Our world is getting ready to see tribulation like it has never seen before. Before Antichrist comes on the scene, something catastrophic will take place, which will cause people to cry out for a leader to solve the world's problems.

The events taking place even now are preparing the world stage for the final 7 years of world history, as we now know it.