

“The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse” Revelation 6:1-8

Last Sunday: The Rapture; an Explanation and the Five Different Views

Today: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (The First Four Seal Judgments)

What is the seven-sealed scroll again?

1. The sentence handed down by God against Jerusalem (Preterist: past)
2. The future dealings of God with the world and the church (Historicist: church history)
3. The title deed to all the Father promised Christ (Futurist: future)
4. God’s overarching plan of judgment and redemption (Idealist: spiritual)

OUTLINE:

- 6:1-2, The White Horse (first seal)
- 6:3-4, The Red Horse (second seal)
- 6:5-6, The Black Horse (third seal)
- 6:7-8, The Pale Horse (fourth seal)

Are we living in the Last Days?

Remember three components as we introduce the topic of the Tribulation:

1. The Tribulation will be a time unlike *any* before it or after it. Mt. 24:21, “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.”
2. The Tribulation will be a time of destruction *AND* salvation
 - a. Destruction: God’s judgment pouring out on the enemies of Christ
 - b. Salvation: Christ is gathering his elect like no other time in church history.
3. I will teach this time period from two perspectives:
 - a. Pre-tribulation: We will not go through this due to the Rapture.
 - b. Post-tribulation: We may go through this if we are in the last generation.

6:2/ The White Horse (first seal) has four options:

1. Preterist (Past): *Christ* riding a white horse going to war against Jerusalem in AD 70
 - a. Christ conquered (Rv. 5:5). Unlike Rev. 19, he’s wearing a Stephanos (victory).
2. Historicist (Church History): *Military conquest* by Roman emperors or otherwise
 - a. The first hundred years of the Roman Empire after Domitian (AD 96) when five emperors expanded Roman territory (the “Golden Age” of the Roman Empire)
3. Idealist (Spiritual): The proclamation and progress of *the Gospel*
 - a. The faithful receive white stones, the righteous wear white, the elders wear white, the martyrs receive white robes (Rev. 6), and Christ and his armies ride white horses.
4. Futurist (Future): *The Antichrist*; he looks like Christ but he is a counterfeit.
 - a. He carries a bow; yet where are the arrows? He “conquers” without fighting, due to his charisma. Can’t Satan disguise himself as an angel of light? (2 Cor. 11:14)

6:4/ The Red Horse (second seal) has four options: WAR

1. Preterist: ***Jewish-Roman War*** (AD 66–73); “The earth” could refer to Israel in the OT. Lk. 19:42, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.”
2. Historicist: The ***great wars*** of the Roman Empire (AD 180–284)
3. Idealist: The ***wars against the church*** in all ages (persecution); Mt. 10:34, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.”
4. Futurist: ***The wars*** of the end leading up to Armageddon in the Great Tribulation

6:5/ The Black Horse (third seal) has four options: FAMINE

1. Preterist: Jewish food shortages during the Roman siege of AD 70
2. Historicist: Famines and economic upheaval of the Roman Empire
3. Idealist: Famines as a consequence of war over the last 2,000 years
4. Futurist: Famines and economic upheaval in the seven-year tribulation (Mk. 13:8)

“Do not harm the oil and wine” – What could this phrase mean?

1. Famines kill wheat and barley first, later they kill olive trees and vineyards (deeper roots).
2. Famines don’t affect the rich as much (they have plenty of oil and wine).
3. Oil and wine were not really luxuries but ordinary food for people. Yet the famine would be so bad that people would not have enough money even to buy the barest necessities.

6:7-8/ The Pale Horse (fourth seal) has four options: DEATH

1. Preterist: AD 70; “The upper rooms were full of women and children that were dying by famine; and the lanes of the city were full of the dead bodies of the aged. The seditious ... as not enduring the stench of the dead bodies ... had them cast down from the walls into the valleys beneath. However, when Titus, in going his rounds along those valleys, saw them full of dead bodies, and the thick putrefaction running about them, he gave a groan ... and such was the sad case of the city itself” (*Wars*, 5:12:3-4, Josephus).
2. Historicist: AD 248–296; five thousand persons died daily in Rome (Gibbon). Eusebius writes, “Death waged a desolating war with ... famine and pestilence ... Men wasted away to mere skeletons, stumbled hither and thither like mere shadows, trembling and tottering. They fell down in the midst of the streets ... Some indeed were already the food for dogs” (*Ecclesiastical History*, Book III, Chapter VI).
3. Idealist: Geographically limited judgments over the last 2,000 years (¼ of the earth)
4. Futurist: The seven-year tribulation, yet the timing may be closer to the end (Great Tribulation).