

**Revelation 6: 3-8; " The 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse, (Part 2), Sermon # 55 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on April 29th, 2007, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

The Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the one who opens all of seals of the Book of what God has decreed that His Church will have to face and endure, and what she will do and accomplish in every generation. At the opening of each of these first four seals we find one of the Living Creatures saying, "Come and See." The implication of those statements is that we should come and take a closer look at each horse and its rider that is pictured here for us. The Living Creatures represent ministers who preach the gospel and the blessed Word of God. I have explained this in some detail in my sermons on Revelation 4 and 5. Every faithful minister of the Word should prepare his flock to understand what these symbols mean. Each of these horses has a different color, and by their colors, each of the horses shows us something about the way that the Lord will proceed in His march through time, conquering and to conquer in relation to the time period that we are looking at in this vision. I have tried to show you that these prophetic visions that have been given to John have a reference to the progression of Christ's kingdom in relation to three specific periods of time within the Church age. There are certainly principles of truth that can be gleaned from each of these periods of time that can be applied to the whole church age. The Amillennialists have done a good job of bringing out these general principles. And I will also attempt to look for these and to apply them where I think it is appropriate to the text. But we should understand that there is also a more specific meaning to be understood by these seals which applies only to the first period of time after John wrote down this prophecy.

I attempted to show you last week that there are three main time periods before the Millennium being referred to in Chapters 6-19, and that they all have a reference to Christ's kingdom overcoming Rome, the 4th and final world monarchy. This truth is given to us in Daniel chapter 2, Verses 35 and 45. Christ's kingdom would be set up in the days of the kings of the 4th World Monarchy (Verse 44) and then "the Stone cut out of the mountain without hands strikes the image on its feet of iron and clay," which is the Roman Empire in all its forms. Then the Stone that struck the image "became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." This Stone is Christ coming in judgments upon the Roman Empire in each of its 3 developmental stages, and the Church then comes to reign upon the earth in the time period of the Millennium. The Stone "becomes a great mountain (a great spiritual Kingdom) and fills the whole earth. The gospel when it was preached by the Apostles, spread from Jerusalem to Asia Minor, the site of the 7 churches which John wrote to in chapters 2 and 3 of this book. And then Paul went to Macedonia and preached the gospel there because of a vision that he had; a man appealing to him to "come over and help them." And then, after bringing it to Corinth and Athens, he finally brought it to Rome. This shows that the main thrust of the gospel was toward Europe from the beginning. It was not that the gospel didn't go to other places in the world. But this was God's plan for how it should spread and have success in those days all the way up until the time of the Reformation. Europe is composed of the 10 kingdoms that Rome would be divided into after it fell. But Rome has still continued to be the site for the greatest oppositions of Satan during the whole time before the Millennium. These oppositions, which take place in three time periods before the Millennium are; the Pagan Roman Empire, the Christian Roman Empire, and the Papal Roman Empire. In each of these time periods, the Church is facing a different strategy of Satan. In this first time period, which is found in Chapter 6, we find the Church facing its first great systematic Satanic opposition from Roman Emperors. The seals have reference to this time period. It forms the time period from about 97 A.D. to 323 A.D. It runs from the reign of

the Emperor Domitian until the time when the Emperor Constantine came into power and put a stop to the persecutions of Christians and gave protection and favor to them. We will look at this victory at the end of this chapter under the 6th seal. During this time period of the seals, which reaches until Constantine became Emperor, there was tremendous persecution of Christians by at least 10 Roman Emperors. Many, many people died. Many people had come to know Jesus Christ throughout the Roman Empire and Satan's first desperate strategy, to prevent the advance and growth of the Church, was to persecute and try to destroy her before she could have a chance to grow and advance much. He did this by trying to show her interests in promoting Christ as King and Lord, as being something which ran contrary to the interests and Pagan worship of the Emperor. These 2nd to 4th seals show us how our Lord Jesus Christ decided to deal with this opposition of Satan, coming from the Pagan Roman Empire's rulers. He would come in judgments upon the Roman Empire itself. This is the meaning of the 2nd to the 4th seals. I want to show you first of all this afternoon, where these colored horses are found elsewhere in the Word of God. And then Secondly, I want apply the truth of that vision given to Zechariah, to Christ's judgments upon the Roman Empire which helped to advance His kingdom in that day.

**1st- Let's see where John's vision of the 4 Horsemen is drawn from.**

Turn with me to Zechariah Chapter 1. In Zechariah Chapter 1 we find the prophet being given a message from God to give to the Jews in captivity. It is found in verse 4. "Do not be like your father, to whom the former prophets preached, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Turn now from your evil ways and your evil deeds.'" "But they did not heed Me, says the Lord." "Your fathers, where are they?" "And the prophets, do they live forever?" "Yet surely My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers?" "So they returned and said, 'Just as the Lord of hosts determined to do to us according to our deeds, so He has dealt with us.'" God's statutes and God's judgments are something which overtake us in time if we do not study them to do them. If, when the gospel is preached to us, just as it had been to these Jews in the words that I just read to you; and we do not believe it, or the nation that we are living in does not believe it; then comes great trouble. He deals with us according to our ways and according to our deeds. But He will also deal with those who He has raised up to chastise us, if they sin against us. These Jews were coming to end of their 70 years captivity and they had become a lowly and oppressed people under their captors. This is the picture of the myrtle trees which is found in verses 8 and following. "I saw by night," says Zechariah, "and behold, a man riding on a red horse, and it stood among the myrtle trees in the hollow; and behind him were horses: red, sorrel, and white." "Then I said, 'My lord, what are these?'" "So the angel who talked with me said to me, I will show you what they are." "And the man who stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, 'These are the ones whom the Lord has sent to walk to and fro throughout the earth.'" "so they answered the Angel of the Lord, who stood among the myrtle trees, and said, 'We have walked to and fro throughout the earth, and behold all the earth is resting quietly.'" The myrtle trees represent the lowly Jewish Church coming out of their 70 years of captivity. The "earth" here represents the nations that had taken the Old Testament Church captive in their successive reigns. In this case it is Babylon, composed of the Chaldeans, and now also the Persians as well. In Daniel 4: 1 we are told that Nebuchadnezzar says in a letter, "To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth." He means those kingdoms that he ruled over in that day. Babylon and Medo-Persia are the first two World Monarchies mentioned in Daniel 2. They are at ease, and thinking that the Lord will not judge them for their having been cruel to the Jews in their captivity. But there is "a man who is on a red horse here. And he is no ordinary man. This refers to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Just as He stands in the midst of the lampstands in chapter 1 of Revelation, he stands among the myrtle trees here. Behind him are other horses; red, sorrel, and white." These

are horses ridden by the angels who are about to be given orders to bring judgments upon the "earth," these nations at ease. The Lord Jesus had sent them to scout out these great nations of the earth. The "man" among the myrtle trees is the Angel of the Lord and He is fulfilling here the office of an intercessor for the people of God. This is seen in verse 12. He asks God, "How long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which You were angry these seventy years?" "And the Lord answered the angel who talked to me, with good and comforting words." Christ was answered favorably by God the Father and He gave good and comforting words to Zechariah to speak to the people of God. "I am very jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great zeal." "I am exceedingly angry with the nations that are at ease; for I was a little angry and they helped--but with evil intent." That is to take advantage of the Jews in their weakened captive state. "Therefore, thus says the Lord: I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy; My house shall be built in it," says the Lord of hosts.

So what we need to conclude for application to our study in Revelation is that the red horse being ridden by Christ is red because it is His promise that in the future that he would die for all the Elect people of God. He is anxious to intercede on their behalf so that good things could come to sinners. He will ride forth to do battle for the sins of God's Elect, both Old Testament and New. He will also bring the judgments necessary to Babylon, the Chaldeans, and the Persians which will allow the Old Testament people of God to come back into Jerusalem and to re-build the city and the temple. They will be able to complete this good work to the glory of God because of Christ's intercession. In the book of Revelation He rides on a white horse to show that He has been victorious, and He will go forth to conquer among all the nations of the world by the means of the preaching of His Church, and He will especially overcome all opposition to His kingdom by bringing judgments over this 226 year period of time, upon the Roman empire, which is the Church's single greatest enemy. So I conclude that the horses of Revelation 6, which follow Christ who sits upon the white horse; the fiery red horse, the black horse, and the pale horse are angels who are sent forth at Christ's command to bring judgments upon the Roman Empire in the time and the way that He desires. In a broader sense we could say with A-Millennialists that wherever the gospel comes and is rejected for a long time, and the people of God are persecuted and oppressed, that Christ will bring judgments upon that society and those persons who do such things. But I think that this passage is more specific than this. And so--

**Secondly- I want open up the specific judgments which Christ brought upon the Roman Empire which helped to advance His kingdom in that day.**

The red horse represents God granting that "peace should be taken from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given him a great sword." If you turn over to 1 Chronicles 21, you will find an real example along these lines. In this chapter we find that "Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel." Joab reluctantly complies with this order, but "the Lord was displeased with this thing," it says in verse 7. David realizes, too late, that he has sinned and so God comes to him through Gad the prophet and asks David to choose what kind of a chastening and punishment that he and Israel will have to face. Either 3 years of famine, or three months to be defeated by their enemies overtaking them, or else for 3 days the sword of the Lord--the plague in the land with the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the territory of Israel." David chose the plague of three days. But look at how the plague is pictured. In verse 15 it says, "And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it." "As he was destroying, the Lord looked and relented of the disaster, and said to the angel who was destroying, 'It is enough; now restrain your hand.'" In verse 16 it says, "Then David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven, having in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem." This is the picture of the red horse of the book of Revelation in relation to the Roman Empire. These are the kind of judgments that came upon

that Empire, except in Revelation 6 it has reference to peace being taken away from the "earth," and men killing one another. The sword is given to the angels to wield at Christ's command which will be in conjunction with the decrees of the Almighty triune God.

I have been doing a lot of reading about what took place in the Pagan Roman Empire and I will preach more about it next week, but we only need to understand at this point that "people killing one another" and specifically Emperors putting many people to death, and especially putting Christians to death, was the great characteristic of most of these Pagan Emperors during this first period of Church history. That was how they established their power over people and how they obtained what they wanted from them. That is how they built their own empire and extended the Roman Empire. Satan was no doubt the one instigating these things behind the scenes in order to destroy the Church if he could. You could say that he stood up against the church and moved the Emperors to do these things. But Christ responded to these sinful acts of the Emperors by bringing judgments upon them and the Empire. The 3rd seal which is given to us in verse 5 under the figure of a black horse, I believe is related to the economic poverty and de-stabilization of the Roman economy that came about as a result of the cruel takeover of people's estates by these Roman Emperors and those who worked with them as their henchmen. This happened to many respected Roman citizens as well as many Christians. I will speak more of this next week. It happened over and over again under many Emperors.

And finally, upon the opening of the fourth seal in verse 8 we are bidden to look and see "the pale horse of Death, and Hades following with him." This probably refers to the pestilence, the diseases and death that were brought as a judgment of God upon the Christ-rejecting Emperors and indeed upon the whole Empire at certain points. Many people including Christians were carried off by disease during this time period of Church history. It is estimated that a quarter of the population of the Empire died by all of these judgments that are mentioned in the 2nd to the 4th seal. "Power was given to Death and Hades over a fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth." In Ezekiel 14: 21 God says through the prophet, "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?" "Yet behold, there shall be left in it a remnant who will be brought out, both sons and daughters; surely they will come out to you, and will see their ways and their doings." "Then you will be comforted concerning the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem, all that I have brought upon it. This could be written of the Roman Empire as well, in the days that we are considering under Seals two to four. The worst of it, of course, being that many souls as well as bodies perished because of their opposition to the gospel and their holding on the worship of false gods including the worship of their Emperors. This was the particular and peculiar trial of the Christians during this period of Church History. This is what they had to face and what they had to endure to overcome and to conquer to the glory of God. Many, many Christians died, but they did not perish eternally. They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. They believed in the One who rode the red horse to the cross for them. They trusted in the One who rode the white horse in the spiritual battle, the One who overcame their sin, so that they could overcome these great oppositions and difficulties, and be faithful and true witnesses to the One who loved them and died for them. I hope that our study will lead you to trust in the Lord Jesus and to draw closer to Him in prayer for His grace and help in time of trouble and persecution. We will speak more about this next week.