

# The Four Horsemen of The Revelation

By Robert I. Adams

The book of Revelation in the Bible contains many intriguing visions. One of them is in chapter 6. There, the apostle John is shown four mounted horses that gallop into view. The first horse is white, the second is red, the third is black, and the fourth is pale. What do these four horses and their riders represent?

I believe we find the answer in what Jesus Christ told his disciples about the end time. In order to see clearly what the first horse – the white one - and its rider represents, we will start with the last horse and work back to the first.

Concerning the fourth horse and its rider, the apostle John wrote (Rev. 6:8): "I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, *with death*, and by the beasts of the earth."

When the text says people will be "killed . . . with death," the Greek word translated "death" appears to refer to deadly diseases, in other words, pestilences.

In Matthew 24, Jesus spoke of the end time, and said in verse 7, "there will be . . . pestilences." Here, Jesus highlighted one of the causes of people being killed by the emergence of the pale fourth horse and its rider, Death.

Let's take a look at the third horse and its rider. John wrote, "I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand" (Rev 6:5).

A pair of scales indicates scarcity of food. We can see an illustration of this in the book of Leviticus, where the Lord pronounced, "When I have cut off your supply of bread . . . they shall bring back your bread by weight, and you shall eat and not be satisfied" (Lev. 26:26).

The next verse in Revelation 6 says, "And I heard a voice . . . saying, 'A quart of wheat for a denarius'" (Rev. 6:6). A quart of wheat equals a daily ration for one person. And a denarius at the time of the apostle John was one day's wage for an average worker. The voice John heard was saying that a day's ration of basic food will cost the equivalent of an average worker's entire daily wage. Such hyperinflation follows a dreadful famine.

Just before Jesus mentioned pestilences (cf. the fourth horse), He said, "There will be famines" (Matt. 24:7). This shows that what Jesus pointed to here matches the third horse that was black.

Let's now look at the second horse. John recorded: "Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword" (Rev. 6:4).

The imagery of a sword indicates war. This is illustrated in the book of Isaiah, where it says, "Your men shall fall by the *sword*, and your mighty in the *war*" (Is. 3:25). War will therefore take peace from the earth.

Just before Jesus mentioned famines (cf. the third horse), He said, "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. . . . For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Matt. 24:6, 7). We see here that what Jesus says lines up with the second horse that was red.

There remains the first horse and its rider. John wrote: "I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2).

In the time of John, a Roman general would ride on a white horse when returning with victory. A white horse is therefore a symbol of conquest. Therefore, the white color need not portray anything good and pure.

The horseman's crown that was given to him is a symbol of authority. And the bow the rider on the white horse has in his hand is a symbol of might. We can see an example of this in the book of Hosea, where the Lord says, "I will break the bow of Israel" (Hos. 1:5), meaning the might of Israel.

The horseman holding the bow, has presumably arrows with him too. The book of Jeremiah speaks of armies that "hold the bow" (Jer. 50:42). Obviously, having a bow implies having arrows too. In the New Testament, believers are commanded to take the shield of faith (Eph. 6:16) with which they will be able to quench all the fiery darts of Satan. These darts are shot from his bow. Thus, the bow in the hand of the horseman can be seen as a symbol of Satan's might.

Now, notice what Jesus said just before he mentioned wars (cf. the red horse). He said, "Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many" (Matt. 24:5).

Thus, according to Jesus, the white horse and its rider represent false Christs. They are agents of Satan. Later in Matthew 24, Jesus said a little more about this phenomena. He said, "False Christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect" (Matt. 24:24).

Since Jesus will descend from heaven on a white horse in Revelation 19, the horseman on the white horse in chapter 6 seems to represent seductive imitators of Christ, and imposters who claim to speak on His behalf who go about winning converts.

Ultimately, the horseman on the white horse appears to represent the coming "Antichrist" (1 John 2:18) together with "the false prophet" (Rev. 16:13). Since the prefix "Anti" means 'instead of,' as well as 'against,' - the coming Antichrist will not only oppose Christ, he will also be a false Christ, supported by the false prophet.

In relation to the first horse and its rider that comes on the scene, Jesus said, "Take heed that no one deceives you" (Matt. 24:4).

About the second horse and its rider (wars), Jesus said, "See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet" (Matt. 24:6).

Concerning all four horses, Jesus said, "All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matt 24:8). The word, "sorrows" can be translated birth-pains. Jesus is saying that false Christs and false prophets together with war, famine, and pestilence are only the beginning of the world's labor in giving birth to the coming age. The four horsemen come at the beginning of the end time troubles in the book of Revelation. There is more to come—more intense birth-pains—as the time draws closer to the end of the age when Jesus returns as portrayed in chapter 19.

Let's take to heart what Jesus says about not being deceived, and not being troubled. And let's take comfort in that He also said, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

For more insight concerning the end time, you are welcome to view a new book/eBook I have written entitled "THE COMING - The Testimony of the Bible Concerning the Return of Christ."



In this book, we take a look at what Jesus Himself said about His return, what His apostles taught, and how all this ties in with what the prophets wrote in the Scriptures about the coming of the Lord.

You are welcome to view it at [Amazon](#).

At your service,

[Last Days Detective](#) - with an eye on the end time!