

>>>>>> Lesson 11 <<<<<<<

- 1) Made a statement – 3.5 years – not the whole story...
- 2) We did not quite finish the opening of the first seal so let's begin with a quick review and finish up on that.

Rev 6:1-2 (NIV)

- 3) Here, we see Jesus opening the first of the seven seals.
- 4) Once, the seal is opened, one of the four creatures says Come!
 - a) The word for come in the Greek is unclear – it can literally mean come or go.
 - b) It is also unclear as to whom the command is given – John or the horseman.
 - c) In my study, I did not find a consensus regarding either of these differences.
 - d) I don't think I mentioned this last week but, the first 4 seals deal with what you may have heard referred to as the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse".
- 5) As to the "come or go" aspect, I will say that it was interesting to me that only the Complete Jewish Bible translation had the word "Go" instead of "come" for the command word here.
 - a) This was out of 25 or so translations.
- 6) There is also some controversy regarding the identity of the rider – some scholars assert that the rider is Christ, others, the antichrist.
- 7) On the other hand, some put forth that the first rider is not a person at all, but, like the other three riders, he is an "impersonal force."
- 8) If that is the case. then what is that force? There are at least two major thoughts regarding this.
 - a) First, this rider would represent conquest.
 - i) The argument here is that the forces, war, famine, and death represented by the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th seals, normally follow conquest.
 - b) The second is that this rider would represent a time of peace.
 - i) Support for that argument is that there is, as we discussed last time, no mention of arrows – he has a bow but no ammunition.
 - ii) Also, white (white of the horse) in addition to the joy of victory, triumph, purity may be indicative of peace.
 - iii) The conquest here would be a conquest of deception with peace to follow.
- 9) I mentioned this in passing last time but, another note from the LABC relates this seal to how the first century reader might have seen this seal.

The picture behind this for the first-century readers may have been the powerful Roman legions and their greatest foes — the Parthians who lived east of the Euphrates River, which became the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire. The Parthians had defeated the Roman army twice with their cavalry (the rider on

horseback) and their archery (his bow). This had caused much fear of an invasion by the Parthians, so Rome eventually had made a treaty with them.

Most likely, the rider on the white horse represents sinful mankind's desire for conquest; when this occurs, many suffer.

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- 10) So, to finish up on this first seal we can draw a couple of conclusions:
- 11) Regardless of the interpretation we might give, scripture clearly states the rider is “bent on conquest.”
- 12) Since he is given the victor’s crown the assumption must be made that the conquest is (or was) accomplished.
- 13) Finally, some scholars believe that the first seal also represents a period of peace on the earth – perhaps after the conquest.
- 14) As we will see, the description of the second rider lends some credence to this idea; he is given power to take peace from the earth.

Rev 6:3-4 (NIV)

- 1) Red, the color of fire and blood, depicts warfare, bloodshed, violence.
- 2) God's judgment descends and the short-lived, false peace that mankind was enjoying ends.
 - a) We should, I think, make the point here that God is in charge of and controls all the events that are occurring in the Revelation.
 - i) Not Satan, fate, or any other force!
 - b) God controls the conquest and the ensuing false peace of the first rider.
 - c) He also controls the breakout of wars of the second rider.
- 3) When the event of the second seal takes place men will slay one another.
 - a) Violent slaughter will become commonplace.
 - b) While Scripture does not give the details, it is likely that when this occurs, the slaughter will be on an unimaginable scale.
- 4) There are differing opinions regarding the sword described here.
 - a) The Greek word for "sword" in this verse is different from the sharp two-edged sword of chapter 1 verse 16.
 - b) Some think this sword probably would have been about five feet long and would have weighed about twenty-five pounds.
 - i) Strong warriors would swing it while on horseback to kill foot soldiers

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- c) Another opinion is that the sword refers to the short, stabbing sword a Roman soldier carried into battle.
 - i) This type was also a weapon used by assassins.
- 5) Again, stepping away from the literal, the vision depicts a great sword to describe the extent of the war and resulting carnage.

Rev 6:5-6 (NIV)

- 1) In the list of symbols I gave you and in MacArthur's commentary, the color Black is associated with famine.
 - a) This is based on a few translations (primarily the KJV) having the color black associated with the famine in Lamentations 5:10.
 - b) I am not sure, but I feel from the information I could find there may be some issues with this interpretation – black as meaning famine.
 - c) The LABC simply states:

Following on the heels of the red horse of warfare, therefore, comes a black horse, which represents the sorrow and desolation of warfare that leaves people without money or food.

- 2) Though this is a minor point, I do think I would concur with the LABC interpretation of the color black rather than the other of famine.
- 3) This rider is holding a pair of scales for weighing food.
- 4) The words coming from the midst of the four living creatures regarding the amount of food for a day's pay pictures wartime inflation.
- 5) First-century readers would have interpreted this amount as twelve to fifteen times what they were used to paying.
- 6) A quart of wheat is barely enough to sustain one person for one day, while a denarius represents one day's wages for an average worker.
- 7) The point is that people's labor will barely provide enough food for themselves and not enough to feed their families.
- 8) Those with families will be able to purchase three quarts of barley for a denarius.
- 9) That will provide food for their families, but barley was low in nutritional value and commonly fed to livestock.
- 10) Thus, a person's wages will only minimally feed three people with low quality food.
- 11) Both of those scenarios represent starvation wages, and signify severe food shortage conditions.
- 12) This then would indeed lead to widespread starvation – another devastating result of warfare.

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- 13) The phrase "Do not damage the olive oil and the wine" is likely a warning to conserve two staples.
- 14) It could mean that these items would be hoarded and thus unavailable in the marketplace.
- 15) A Worse calamity is still to come.

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Rev 6:7-8 (NIV)

- 1) First, the description of the horse.
 - a) The word used here translated pale or ashen is the word from which we get our word chloroform or chlorine.
 - b) It can really be a color like a pale green. Not to gross you out, but one comment said it would be much like that of a corpse.
- 2) Hades follows behind death and in this case represents the grave.
- 3) Death and hades were given the power to kill $\frac{1}{4}$ of the earth.
- 4) To get a perspective on what is being said here, based on 21 Oct population numbers:
 - a) World population 7.9 billion
 - b) One Fourth = 1.9 billion
 - c) Covid19 deaths = 4.92 million as of that date
 - d) Therefore, one fourth is ~ 400 times the covid19 death toll - ~ 2 BILLION dead!!
- 5) Sword here represents war.
- 6) Famine and plague are pretty much self-explanatory.
- 7) Beasts, however, seems a little odd. One commentator associates the beasts with rats.
 - a) When we look throughout history, we find that rats have been responsible for many different world health crises.
- 8) Again, we are stepping into the literal when the actual point is this seal will unleash death on a scale, number wise that we cannot mistake.
- 9) In all history, looking across all major wars, plagues, famines etc. we have never seen death on this scale.
- 10) Again, there will be no mistaking this seal when it is opened.