

## The Wake-Up Call

A man spent an entire weekend hunting for ducks without any success. He was embarrassed and did not want to arrive at home without any ducks, so he struggled with what to say to his wife and friends. On the way home he saw a man feeding a group of ducks at a pond. So he approached the man and asked if he could shoot some of them for \$50. The man agreed. After paying the man, the hunter picked up his gun and pulled the trigger. He killed twelve ducks. He was surprised. Quickly, the hunter apologized for having killed so many ducks. The man responded, "I do not care, the ducks are not mine." Now the hunter was really surprised. I wonder how God reacted? Was God pleased with the second man's deception? In Malachi 3:13-15 a group of people complained that God lets the wicked get away with being wicked. But a day is coming when God will end evil and punish those who reject Him.

## Our Cultures

In the United States the majority of people believe that God exists. Yet, many ignore Him because they would rather enjoy comfort, luxury, and the pleasures of sin. For many Christians, God is someone to "worship" but not someone to serve. For non-Christians, a sense of right and wrong is considered by many to be something for the "old people and previous generations." For them absolute standards of right and wrong do not exist. For others God is a myth.

For many centuries and even today, Christians have been and are being ridiculed, abused, and murdered for their faith. It is now fashionable to accuse Christians of being intolerant towards other people if those believers seek to tell others about God. The word "tolerant" now means that we should be content to let others go to hell. It now means that we should disobey God's command to tell others about Jesus Christ.

## How Long Sovereign Lord

How has the world responded to God's prophets and apostles? How did they react to Jesus? The truth is that they killed them when they did not like the message. They did not like messages of rebuke and calls to submit to God. Those who have rejected the messages and do not believe in Jesus have rejected, abused, persecuted and even murdered many Christians. Where has God been? Has God ignored His followers? No! God is not ignoring His people. God will correct the injustice. Judgment is coming.

## First Seal – White Horse

In Revelation 5, Jesus takes the scroll with seven seals from God the Father and now He is starting to open each seal one at a time.

And I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come." Revelation 6:1 (NASB)

It is important to remember that in Rev. 5 and in this study Jesus is called the "Lamb." It is Jesus who will break each of the seven seals of the scroll. As He breaks each seal, something terrible happens. When Jesus breaks the first seal, a white horse appears and seated on the horse is one with a crown.

“And I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him; and he went out conquering, and to conquer.” Revelation 6:2 (NASB)

The horse and the rider symbolize peace. It is a false peace that will not last very long. The crowned rider is in control of the world and he will “force peace” to occur. How can we know that this is the meaning? The answer is found when Jesus breaks the next seal.

#### The Four Horseman

##### Second Seal – Red Horse

The second symbol is a red horse and no description is given about the rider.

And when He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come.” And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men should slay one another; and a great sword was given to him. Revelation 6:3-4 (NASB)

This horse and rider will take “peace from the earth.” This means that the white horse, the first symbol, represents a time of peace since this second horse brings war or, in other words, takes peace away. This world leader will force a peace treaty and later break the peace himself by starting a great war. That is the meaning of the “great sword.” This world leader will be the Anti-Christ.

This agrees with the prophecy of Daniel 9:27 where we read that the Anti-Christ will make a peace treaty and then break it later.

And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering . . . Daniel 9:27 (NASB)

The Hebrew word for “will make” implies that the peace treaty is forced. The Anti-Christ, one who is against Christ, will force peace on the world. This horse and rider are very powerful. But in the middle of the Tribulation period, war starts and continues until the end of the Tribulation. That is the meaning of the second horse.

##### Third Seal – Black Horse

When Jesus breaks the third seal, He allows a global famine to occur.

And when He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, “Come.” And I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard as it were a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.” Revelation 6:5-6 (NASB)

A denarius was the average day’s wage in Jesus’ time, and a quart of wheat was consumed in one day. barley was typically given to the animals for feed. This is a picture of a famine. The cost of food will be very high and they will be willing to eat anything. This will not be a one time event but an ongoing famine. God will allow the famine to occur around the world until the end of the horrible Tribulation.

#### Fourth Seal – Yellowish Green Horse

When the next seal is broken, we see a yellow-green horse. The Greek word for “ashen” means “yellow-green.” This horse symbolizes the fact that God will allow more men and women to die from famine and disease in the last half of the Tribulation than at any time in the history of the world.

And when He broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come.” And I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. And authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth. Revelation 6:7-8 (NASB)

This is only the beginning of God’s judgment on the world. We will see more details about death later in Revelation. Many will die, especially those who believe in Jesus.

#### Seven Seals of Revelation

##### Fifth Seal – Martyrs

When the fifth seal is broken, the Apostle John sees those Christians who were killed during the Tribulation.

And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, should be completed also. Revelation 6:9-11 (NASB)

These are men and women who will some day trust Jesus to forgive their sins. Later they may die because they own a Bible, quote it, read it, believe it, go to church, and talk about God. The mark of a true Christian will be that they are telling others about Jesus! Can you imagine the joy of these martyrs when they finally escape this earth?

These martyrs will be clothed in white since white is a symbol of holiness (Revelation 3:5). This is an important truth to understand. When God forgives our sins, He forgives all of our sins – past, present, and future. He will treat us as holy ones or saints when we stand before Him some day. He will consider us to be perfect and ready for heaven, even though we still sin in this life. We call this “position versus practice.” We are “positionally” holy, but in “practice” we are still sinners. God understands that we have not been completely transformed; but when we die and go to heaven, we will be perfect.

This is a wonderful truth. It means that Christians do not need to worry that God will not forgive their sins. There is never a sin that God will not forgive. When a person believes in Jesus, all past, present, and future sins are forgiven.

This horse reveals the fact that many of those who believe in or are trusting Jesus for the

forgiveness of their sins will be dying throughout the last 3.5 years of the Tribulation. The last half of the Tribulation was also called the Great Tribulation by Jesus (Matt. 24:21). Christians will be dying in greater numbers as the end of the Tribulation approaches. God will allow many Christians to die. Notice the words, “until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed . . .” God plans the time of our death.

#### Sixth Seal – Final Battle

The sixth seal gives us a glimpse of the last battle of the Tribulation.

And I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. And the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?” Revelation 6:12-17 (NASB)

The events described in this passage will occur in the latter part of the Tribulation – just before the Second Coming of Jesus. They are also described in Matthew 24:15-31, Mark 13:24-27, and Luke 21:25-28 where Jesus predicts that these events will occur just before His return. In the final moments of the Tribulation, Jesus says this about the final moments.

But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. Matthew 24:29-30 (NASB)

The seals cover the entire Tribulation period and are in effect from Revelation 8 through Revelation 19.

#### God's Justice Unfolds

#### Conclusion

The four horsemen are a warning that God will strike at the desires of every man and woman. Most people admire a great leader. I do not know of anyone who does not want to follow a great leader. We desire to have peace in our life, in our city, and our nation. Most of us spend our entire life earning money in order to avoid going without food and becoming sick. Illness is something to avoid. These are four major things we all want: great leaders, peace, food, and good health. Most of us would say these are important to a good life. But in the Tribulation, God will remove these from the people of the world. He will finally allow a terrible leader to take over the world. He will finally allow war, famine, and sickness to occur world wide and at an unprecedented level. The world will know that these events are from God. There will be no doubt because it will be so terrible.

Many years ago I was not sure that I was doing God's will. I was also fearful that I was not a Christian. I was going through a very difficult time in my life. So I asked God to do something miraculous in my life to show Himself to me in a way that would be very unusual. I asked for a surprise. My wife and I were traveling home from a vacation and we stopped at a restaurant to have lunch. We were seated near a couple we did not know. We ordered our lunch, and sometime later the other couple left. When we finished our lunch and were prepared to pay for our food, the waitress explained that the other couple, total strangers to us, had paid for our lunch. What a surprise! What a wonderful gift. That is the only time that has ever occurred in my life. Did God show Himself to me? Yes! That is what God will do in the Tribulation. He will bring pain and suffering on a world that has rejected Him and whose people lived as they desired. When God brings unusual catastrophe and pain, only then will many men and women finally admit that He is real and that Jesus is God. A day is coming when God will end evil, punish those who reject Him, and force men and women to admit He is real.