

13

The Four Horsemen

(The breaking of the first four seals of the seven-sealed scroll in Rev. 6:1-8 provide a *skeletal account of Antichrist and his kingdom, from beginning to end*. The breaking of the remaining three seals and all of the asides seen from this point to the end of chapter nineteen provide *all of the sinews, flesh, and skin to cover the skeletal framework set forth through the breaking of the first four seals* [cf. Ezek. 37:1-10], providing a *complete word picture of the last seven years of Man's Day*. And this has been done in *complete keeping* with the manner in which the book has been structured, revealed at the beginning in Rev. 1:1.

“Four” is a number having to do with *the earth, particularly in relation to mankind on the earth* [e.g., the material restoration of the earth was finished on *the fourth day* in Gen. 1:14-19, there are *four divisions* of mankind on the earth in Gen. 10:5, 20, 31 (lands, tongues, families, nations), and there are *four points* of the compass in Rev. 7:1]. And a breaking of the first four seals of the scroll, having to do with *the earth and with mankind on the earth*, covering the whole of the matter, would be in complete keeping with the way numbers are used in the Book of Revelation and with the manner in which Scripture is structured elsewhere, particularly evident in Genesis and in John's gospel.

The relationship between the breaking of the first four seals to the breaking of the remaining three, along with other scripture extending to and including chapter nineteen of the Book of Revelation, will be discussed different places in subsequent chapters in this book.)

Christ's future work surrounding *the redemption of the inheritance* will begin to occur through judgments seen when the first seal on the seven-sealed scroll in Revelation chapter six is broken.

And this redemptive work will continue from that point until all of the remaining six seals have been broken and all of the judgments connected with the breaking of all seven seals have been brought to pass.

This redemption of the inheritance will occur during the last seven years of Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy (Daniel's Seventy-Seven prophecy, often referred to as *the Tribulation*), which will be the concluding seven years of the previous dispensation, the 2,000-year dispensation in which God dealt/will deal with Israel (*ref.* Chapter XII in this book).

Prior to that time, the 2,000-year dispensation in which God deals with the Church will have been completed (a period unseen in Daniel's prophecy but occurring between the sixty-ninth and seventieth sevens, when "time" fulfilling Daniel's prophecy has not been transpiring [God has, so to speak, stopped the chronometer in relation to "time" in Daniel's prophecy]). And the Church will have been removed from the earth into the heavens before God allows "time" in the prophecy to resume (before God allows the chronometer to, once again, begin marking off time in the prophecy), fulfilling the final seven years (Rev. 1:10-13; 4:1, 2).

However, the event marking the beginning of Daniel's Seventieth Seven is not the removal of the Church. Rather, this event is marked by *the ratifying of a covenant* between "the prince that shall come [Antichrist]" and "many" in Israel (Dan. 9:26, 27). Or, another way of marking the beginning, viewing the matter from a different vantage point, would be to see this period beginning with *the breaking of the first seal* in Rev. 6:1, 2. Daniel, in his prophecy, presents matters one way; John, in the Book of Revelation, presents matters another way.

The sequential breaking of the first four seals of the seven-sealed scroll depicts *four horsemen* — *a rider on a white horse, a rider on a red horse, a rider on a black horse, and a rider on a pale horse*. And as each rides forth, certain things are stated about their separate activities, which have a correspondence with the different things signified by the different colors of the four horses (Rev. 6:1-8).

The whole of that being depicted is dealt with in *imagery, figures*

of speech, figurative language. And even the world when referring to “the four horsemen of the Apocalypse” has, over the years, dealt with the matter in a similar figurative fashion.

Though there are four different horses, the rider on each horse should not be thought of as a different person. To capsule the matter and then deal with it different places later in this chapter, it becomes evident when reading and studying the text that the rider on the first horse is seen riding forth at a later time on a second horse, then a third, then a fourth.

That depicted when this man rides forth on the second horse at a later time is contingent on and results from his actions when he previously rode forth on the first horse. Then, that depicted when he rides forth on the third horse at a still later time is contingent on and results from his actions when he previously rode forth on the first and second horses. And, likewise, that depicted when he rides forth on the fourth horse at a later time yet is contingent on and results from his actions when he previously rode forth on the first, second, and third horses.

All four are inseparably connected, in this manner. And seeing that wrought through the actions of *one man, occurring at different times*, depicted in the imagery used (four horses, each of a different color), appears evident from the way Scripture depicts and handles the whole of the matter.

The Rider on a White Horse

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts [‘living creatures’] saying, Come and see.

And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer” (Rev. 6:1, 2).

This is undoubtedly a reference to the actions of Antichrist as seen at the beginning of the Tribulation and continuing for at least the first three and one-half years of this time. He is seen at the beginning wearing a crown (Gk., *stephanos* [a victor’s crown], not *diadema* [a monarch’s crown]). And this man will go forth

“conquering, and to conquer.” In the imagery used, he will possess *only a bow* in his hand as he goes forth, with there being no mention of arrows for the bow.

This man’s aspirations — *worldwide dominion* — evident from both *related Scripture* and *the type crown* which he is seen wearing at the very beginning (a crown depicted by the word *stephanos*), will be achieved by the middle of the Tribulation (after three and one-half years). Only after he has achieved this dominion can he be seen wearing a crown depicted by the word *diadema* (a monarch’s crown, a crown worn by one actually seated on the throne and ruling over a domain). And this man is ultimately seen wearing such a crown later in the book (Rev. 13:1; *cf.* Rev. 12:3).

And, as previously seen, this man will achieve *worldwide dominion* through a means which Scripture depicts as a rider on a white horse with a bow in his hand, but no arrows for the bow. To understand how this man will accomplish his objective through this means, one need only turn to commentary on Rev. 6:2 in Dan. 11:21 (comparing Scripture with Scripture), written over five hundred years before John wrote and over two and one-half millenniums before the corresponding prophecies are to be fulfilled. And one can know that Dan. 11:21 is dealing with the rider on the white horse in Rev. 6:2 for the person in Daniel is said to be “the prince of the covenant” (v. 22; *cf.* vv. 28, 30-32), who can only be “the prince that shall come” from Dan. 9:26, 27, where this covenant is first mentioned in Daniel’s prophecy.

“And in his estate shall stand up a vile person [paralleling Dan. 8:8, 9], to whom they shall not give the honor of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably [depicted by the rider on the white horse], and obtain the kingdom by flatteries [depicted by the rider possessing a bow, but no arrows]” (Dan. 11:21).

The first part of the verse describes the person in God’s eyes — “a vile [‘a despicable’] person”; the second part of the verse — “to whom they shall not give the honor of the kingdom” — has to do with this man obtaining his power through a means other than honorable. And the remainder of the verse deals with the means through which he will obtain this position of power — “by flatteries.”

The word “flatteries” in this verse (also vv. 32, 34), in the Hebrew text, has to do with being *smooth or slippery in a beguiling or scheming manner* (cf. Jer. 23:12). And it is apparent from corresponding Scripture (Dan. 7:25; 11:36) that much of this will occur through his eloquence. This man will possess oratory capabilities which he will use to deceive the masses. He will deceive “many” in Israel and evidently throughout the whole Middle East and the world at large.

And the manner in which things are progressing in the world today, particularly in the Middle East, it is evident that the world is rapidly being prepared for the reception of a man *of the nature* described in Scripture; and the world, as well, will receive him *in the manner* described in Scripture.

He will appear as *a man of peace* (Dan. 11:21, 24), one who seemingly has the answers for Middle East peace, a peace which has eluded man over the years; and, as previously seen, he will deceive the masses through his eloquence. And it is this type setting which will allow him to make *a covenant* with “many” in Israel.

For three and one-half years this man will continue his conquest in this manner (seen in Dan. 11:22ff), until the day arrives when his true colors are seen through that depicted by the same man sequentially riding forth on the red, black, and pale horses.

(Many expositors relate Dan. 11:21-35 to Antiochus IV Epiphanes [a Syrian ruler who reigned from 175 to 164 B.C.], seeing these verses as already fulfilled. Though there may be an allusion to this Syrian ruler, the prophecy, of necessity, looks beyond this man [similar to the manner in which the prophecy in Ezek. 28:12ff looks beyond the King of Tyrus to Satan.

Seeing this prophecy fulfilled in history would be out of line with the manner in which earlier revelation surrounding the kingdom of Babylon in Daniel is structured — from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the days of Antichrist [particularly noting that when the kingdom was divided following Alexander the Great’s death (323 B.C.), earlier revelation moves immediately to the future kingdom of Antichrist; and in ch. 11 this same move from the past to the future occurs in v. 4].

And when *the covenant* in Dan. 9:27 is taken into consideration, it becomes even more evident that Daniel, in this part of chapter eleven,

continues with revelation concerning “the prince that shall come” from chapter nine, here calling him “the prince of the covenant” [v. 22], providing additional information about this individual and the covenant.)

The Rider on a Red Horse

“And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast [‘living creature’] say, Come and see.

And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given to him a great sword” (Rev. 6:3, 4).

Israel and the covenant — the covenant which “many” in the nation will make with the man seen riding forth on the white horse, and ultimately seen riding forth on the red, black, and pale horses — is the key to understanding both this man’s rise to power and eventual fall from power.

This man, appearing as *a man of peace* (Dan. 11:21, 24), will apparently possess the answers necessary to defuse the Middle East situation (at least *seemingly, in man’s eyes*, for only Christ’s return can effect true, lasting peace in the Middle East and the world at large). And, because of the place which Israel occupies in God’s economy, Israel must be recognized as the nation lying at the center of the whole of the matter. *A stable and secure situation surrounding Israel must exist first if the same thing is to exist in the Middle East and the Gentile world at large.* And the rider on the white horse, making the seven-year covenant with Israel, will apparently recognize and know at least that much about the overall matter.

God has placed Israel *in the midst of the nations* (Ezek. 5:5); and God looks upon and deals with the nations, not just in the Middle East but worldwide, *through Israel* (Deut. 32:8-10; Zech. 2:8; cf. Gen. 12:1-3). Thus, the place which Israel occupies in the Middle East — whether at “peace,” or at “war” — has direct ramifications affecting all of the Gentile nations, beginning in the Middle East and extending worldwide.

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to “The Intractable Middle East Problem,” Appendix I in this book.)

It is evident from things stated in Daniel's prophecy that the covenant which "the prince that shall come" will make with "many" in Israel will have to do, at least in part, with a restoration of the Mosaic Economy, apparently guaranteed by this man. Israel will be allowed to rebuild her Temple on the Temple Mount and reinstitute the Old Testament priesthood and sacrifices (evident from things seen in Daniel, Matthew, Luke, II Thessalonians, and Revelation).

For the Jewish people to attempt something of this nature today, under present circumstances, would present insurmountable problems. In fact, if they tried to do this today, the Moslem world surrounding Israel on three sides would undoubtedly erupt, for a Moslem mosque (reputed to be the third most holy place in the world for Moslems) presently occupies the spot on the Temple Mount where many believe that the Temple will have to be erected. And even if the Jews sought to build a Temple any other place on the Temple Mount today, similar insurmountable problems would exist. But in that coming day things will be quite different. They will have to be different. And this man will apparently possess the ability to bring about the necessary changes to make possible that which man would find impossible today.

In Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Sevens, where this man and the covenant are first introduced, things related to both his making and then breaking the covenant occupy center-stage. In reality, things surrounding the two together (his making and then breaking the covenant) comprise all that is revealed about this man in the prophecy of the Seventy Sevens.

Then, following the reference to "the prince that shall come" (9:27) as "the prince of the covenant" (11:22), Scripture again refers to this covenant several times during things revealed concerning his reign (11:28, 30-32). And the things revealed about this man and the covenant in these subsequent verses have to do with exactly the same things introduced in Dan. 9:27, when he breaks the covenant.

When this man does break his covenant, after three and one-half years, in the middle of the Tribulation, *things will begin to change rapidly*. He will break the covenant through causing "the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" and entering into and desecrating the Holy of Holies of the rebuilt Temple (the dwelling

place of God in the O.T. theocracy). He will sit “in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (II Thess. 2:4). And when this occurs, the Jewish people in Judea are told to run for their lives, to flee into the mountains or into a place in the desert which God will have prepared for their protection (Matt. 24:15, 16; Luke 21:20, 21; Rev. 12:6, 14-16).

Once this man turns upon the Jewish people by stopping the sacrifices and desecrating the Holy of Holies, events will then occur *so rapidly* that the Jewish people are told to not even take time to gather any of their belongings but to flee for their lives with only the clothes which they will have on their backs at that time. And the Jewish people are further told to pray that this day does not occur in the wintertime (leaving them at the mercy of the elements) or on the Sabbath (the nation will be keeping the Sabbath, with travel of this nature prohibited on this day [Matt. 24:17-20; cf. Ex. 16:29]).

The reason given for such haste is then succinctly explained:

“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matt. 24:21, 22).

At this time, as well, this man with his armed forces (those who will be affiliated with him against the Jewish people and the covenant [Dan. 11:30, 31]) *will destroy both the Temple and the city of Jerusalem* (Dan. 9:26). The Jewish people who do not escape into the mountains or into the desert will then “be led away captive into all nations” (Luke 21:24a). And the nation of Israel, as we know it today — a recognized nation in the Middle East — *will cease to exist*.

The cry which began in the early days of the existence of the nation — *a cry for the utter destruction of Israel*, echoed by Nasser and others down through the years — will seemingly have been realized (cf. Ps. 83:4). A destroyed Jerusalem will then “be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24b; Rev. 11:2).

(Note that “Jerusalem” is often used in Scripture as a reference to *the Jewish people, the people of the city*, rather than to the actual city [Lam. 1:7-9; Matt. 23:37-39; Luke 13:33-35; 19:41-44; Rev. 17:18]. Thus, Luke 21:24b and Rev. 11:2 could be viewed in a larger sense as a reference to not only Israel’s capital city but to *the Jewish people themselves*, scattered among the nations.)

That is the setting for and the why of that which will occur when the second seal on the seven-sealed scroll has been broken. *Peace*, effected through the rider on the white horse, will be taken from the earth. The man who rode out with only “a bow” in his hand (Rev. 6:2), *effecting peace through his eloquence and through making a covenant with Israel*, is now seen as one having “a great sword” in his hand (Rev. 6:4).

He now rides forth in *a different manner entirely*. Note how Daniel describes the man in those days:

“And the king shall do according to his will; he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation [the Tribulation] be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.

But in his estate shall he honor the God of forces [having to do with ‘power’]: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.

Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land [the land of Israel] for gain” (Dan. 11:36-39).

With this man’s treatment of the Jewish people (seeking to slay or enslave them), along with his bringing about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and a division of the land (which God calls “my land” and warns against anyone dividing this land [Joel 3:2]), is it any wonder that *peace is taken from the earth at this time?*

Again, Israel has been set *in the midst of the nations* (Ezek. 5:5), and God views the surrounding Gentile nations *through Israel*

(Deut. 32:8-10; Zech. 2:8). And the ill treatment which this man will accord the Jewish people, along with the destruction of that belonging to the Jewish people, *can only reflect negatively upon the welfare of the surrounding nations under his control and sway.*

Positive and negative ramifications surrounding the treatment of the descendants of Abraham through Isaac, Jacob, and his twelve sons are given in Gen. 12:3 and remain just as true today as ever. Individuals and nations that befriend Israel realize blessings from God. And the converse of that is equally true. A nation today, *seeking the destruction of Israel*, is doing little more than *seeking their own destruction*. They are doing little more than *committing national suicide*.

That is why when this man accords Israel the type ill-treatment which he will accord this nation in the middle of the Tribulation *he will be according like ill-treatment to himself*. And since he will be the world ruler at that time, *with all the Gentile nations under him, with God viewing these nations through Israel, this man will be doing little more than committing national suicide on behalf of the nations of the earth* — a sentence which will be carried out at the end of the Tribulation, when Christ returns (Isa. 63:1-6; Dan. 2:34, 35, 40-45; Rev. 19:17-21).

(To illustrate the point, note the Third Reich in Germany, from Hitler's rise to power in 1933 to its utter destruction in 1945. The Third Reich was to last for 1,000 years, but lasted for only twelve years.

Germany lost WWII before even entering the war. Why? Anti-Semitism! Hitler began turning his hand against the Jewish people only weeks following his rise to power. Thus, *the unchangeable destiny* of the Third Reich was set at that time, and Germany lay in ruins at the end of WWII.

So will it be with the rider on the white and red horses. Once this man turns against the Jewish people, *his unchangeable destiny* will be set, and his world will lie in ruins three and one-half years later.)

The Rider on a Black Horse

“And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast [‘living creature’] say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse;

and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts [“living creatures’] say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine” (Rev. 6:5, 6).

The man who had previously ridden forth on a red horse is now seen riding forth on a black horse, depicting the result of his previous ride. That depicted is *famine*, which follows in the aftermath of war.

The greatest famine in the history of the earth will grip the world for the simple reason that the greatest persecution in the history of the Jewish people will have befallen the nation. And this famine will be in complete keeping with the persecution and the God-established laws of the harvest, for man does not violate that which God has established and decreed without suffering the consequences.

(A person *always* reaps what he sows, and he *always* reaps more than he sows, with a period of time lying between the sowing and the reaping. A sown grain of wheat, over time, produces a stalk of wheat with many grains; a sown apple seed, over time, produces an apple tree with many apples, etc. Everything, over time, reproduces “after his kind,” with that reproduced *always* more than that which was sown [Gen. 1:11, 12; Gal. 6:7]. *These are God-established laws which cannot change.*

The man depicted by a rider on a white horse, then a red horse, then a black horse, and then a pale horse *will not be able to circumnavigate the laws of the harvest which God has established. This man will sow the wind, and he will reap the whirlwind* [Hosea 8:7].)

The man riding the black horse is seen with a pair of balances in his hand, and the price is given for a specified amount of food. “A penny [a day’s wage when this was written]” would purchase “a measure [about a quart] of wheat” or “three measures of barley.” That is to say, in that coming day, *it will cost a day’s wage for a minimal amount of food.* The thought appears to be that *life will be reduced to the barest of necessities — food to sustain life, and a fight for survival.*

From the remaining statement in verse six — “hurt not the oil and the wine” — food, though evidently scarce, will apparently

be available for a price. The expression “oil and the wine” could only refer to the wealthy, those able to spend far more than a day’s wage for food (*cf.* Prov. 21:17; Jer. 31:12).

But, the general populace will be another matter. What will be the end result of war, followed by famine, for the remainder of mankind? This is seen when the man responsible for the things which will have already come to pass rides forth on a pale horse.

The Rider on a Pale Horse

“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast [‘living creature’] say, Come and see.

And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell [‘Hades’] followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth” (Rev. 6:7, 8).

Because of that previously brought to pass (depicted by the rider on the red and black horses), the rider on the pale horse, whose name is “Death,” was given power over “a fourth part of the earth.” The end result of peace being taken from the earth, in the manner in which this peace will be removed — *resulting directly from the ill treatment accorded the Jewish people* — will be “Death,” with “Hades [the place of the dead]” following fast on the heels of death.

One-fourth of the population of the earth will die in that day — a figure which can only be above one billion people, even when allowing for the absence of all Christians (previously removed from the earth). One out of every four individuals on the earth will die, as a result of war, hunger (and apparent resulting disease, with probably very limited health care), animal attacks (possibly wild, hungry animals), or any number of other causes wrought by circumstances.

That, according to Scripture, is what will occur in that coming day because of and through the outworking of the principles in Gen. 12:3.