

# “THE FOUR HORSEMEN”

Revelation 6:1-8

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## INTRODUCTION

I remember as a child hearing about the “four horsemen of Notre Dame” —great running backs named Don Miller, Elmer Layden, Jim Crowley, and Harry Stuhldreher--that were practically unstoppable by other teams. Thanks to New York Herald-Tribune writer Grantland Rice and a 13-7 victory over Army that season, they and their nickname became legend:

Outlined against a blue, gray October sky the Four Horsemen rode again. In dramatic lore they are known as famine, pestilence, destruction, and death; these are only aliases. Their real names are Stuhldreher, Miller, Crowley and Layden. They formed the crest of the South Bend cyclone before which another fighting Army team was swept over the precipice at the Polo grounds this afternoon.

A Knute Rockne student publicity aid and future Tribune sports editor, George Strickler, posed the four players on horseback once they returned to South Bend and wire services picked up the photo. The rest is history.

This passage shows us the real Four Horsemen.

In order to understand Revelation, it is necessary to have a familiarity with significant Old Testament passages.

For Example:

Revelation 5: Daniel 7:13-14

Revelation 6: Zechariah 1, 6; Matthew 24

Zechariah 1 and 6 show us that the horsemen are divinely appointed messengers to accomplish God’s will.

Matthew 24 shows us that the events described here are of continuous recurrence, yet they will have their ultimate fulfillment. During this dispensation we find ourselves in the “beginning of sorrows.”

We must remember that the seven seals as they are opened do not reveal the contents of the book of Revelation; this is not a reading of the book of Revelation. Rather, the terms of the divine contract are being fulfilled and the inheritance of the earth is being reclaimed.

Notice the involvement of the four living creatures (beings). They give the invitation each time by saying, “Come!”

These words are not spoken to John the apostle, nor are they spoken to Christ as in Revelation 22:17, 20.

The words are spoken to the horsemen – God’s divine messengers who will carry out and fulfill his purposes.

Remember that God told John at the beginning of chapter 4 that he was about to show him “what must take place after these things.” We are about to see the beginning of those things that must take place.

It is good to know that:

- 1) God knows the future.
- 2) He has revealed to us certain details about the future.
- 3) Much of that is recorded in the book of Revelation.
- 4) The book of Revelation is inspired Scripture.
- 5) The Lord promised blessing upon the one who would read and hear the words of this prophecy (1:3).

### I. THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE (1-2)

*[Breaking Down Earthly Power: the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ!]*

- A. His Color
- B. His Bow
- C. His Crown
- D. His Conquest
- E. His Identity:

- Not the antichrist – these are God’s messengers
- Not Christ – he is commanded by others; Christ is the one opening the seals!
- Not the Gospel – notice the expression “as with the voice of thunder”; that is not a good description of the gospel! It reminds us of impending judgment.
- Not wild animals (cf. v. 8)

II. THE RIDER ON THE RED HORSE (3-4)

*[Breaking of Earthly Peace]*

- A. His Color
  - B. His Work – the great sword
    1. Negative: removes peace from the earth
    2. Positive: bloodshed, men will kill one another.
- Notice here that Christ brings a sword to earth, not peace

III. Rider on the Black Horse (5-6)

*[Exhausting of Earthly Wealth]*

- A. His Color
- B. His Scales
  1. A quart of wheat for a denarius
  2. 3 quarts of barley for a denarius
  3. Protecting the oil and the wine – do not harm them
- C. His Purpose – limitations upon God’s judgment; mercy

IV. The Rider on the Pale Horse (7-8)

*[Destruction of Earthly Life]*

- A. His Color
- B. His Name: death
- C. His Followers: Hades
- D. His Authority (killing over ¼ of the earth; when has anything so bad ever happened?)
  1. Sword
  2. Famine See Ezekiel 14:21
  3. Pestilence
  4. Wild Beasts of the Earth

CONCLUSION

With the opening of the first four seals, we see the destruction of earthly, power, peace, wealth, and life. Surely the Lord is coming and in this passage he prepares to establish his kingdom.