

THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

Revelation 6:1-8 speaks of the four horsemen. The first horse is white, the second is red, the third is black, and the fourth is pale. I think all are agreed as to the identity of the last three. There have been several opinions as to the identity of the first. I think this chart which compares scripture with scripture will make it very clear that the white horse, along with the other three, has been riding for a long time.

In Jeremiah, God calls them "Four forms of destruction." In Ezekiel, God calls them "My four severe judgments." What are these four forms of judgment? What is the meaning of the symbolism of the four horsemen? Do they ride yet? Have they ridden before? Do they ride now? I think we will see that to relegate them to the future only, is sheer folly. Let us examine the Scriptures to find out.

MY FOUR SEVERE JUDGMENTS

EZE 14:21 For thus says the Lord God: "How much more it shall be when I send **My four severe judgments** on Jerusalem--the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence--to cut off man and beast from it?

FOUR FORMS OF DESTRUCTION

JER 15:3 "And I will appoint over them **four forms of destruction**," says the LORD: "the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.

REV 6:8 And 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.

Note that Rev. 6:8 above, says that the four horsemen represent the sword, hunger, death and beasts. Ezekiel 14:21 says God's four severe judgments are the sword, famine (the same as hunger), beasts, and pestilence (the same as death). Jeremiah 15:3 calls God's four forms of destruction the sword (war), birds (the result of pestilence, since birds eat the dead), dogs (dogs roam in times of famine), and beasts. There are a multitude of passages that refer to these four horsemen. Sometimes beasts are substituted for "captivity" because when one beastly nation carries another into captivity, the land is emptied and filled with beasts. Pestilence is sometimes called death and sometimes called birds. In one place the sword is substituted for arrow. Famine is sometimes substituted with "dogs" or "waste". Below is a chart that will illustrate this.

Today, every time a famine strikes, the black horse is riding. It is one of God's four severe judgments. Every time there is war, the red horse is riding. Every time there is captivity and oppression, the white horse is riding. Every time the pale horse rides there is pestilence, plague, and death. Pestilence is defined as natural disasters such as locusts, floods, and other such catastrophes. These horsemen cannot ride unless God lets them. In one sense, since God is sovereign, God is pictured as being the rider of all four. *Was Your wrath against the sea, that*

You rode on Your horses, your chariots of salvation? Your bow was made quite ready; oaths were sworn over Your arrows. (Hab.3:8,9)

The white horse goes forth "conquering and to conquer". Beasts like to devour other beasts instead of planting corn and producing by the sweat of their own brow. The Bible teaches that those who oppress and carry into captivity are destined to captivity themselves. *REV 13:10 He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.* This truly is the patience and the faith of the saints, because we can be assured of liberation without using the sword or violent revolution. Some think that liberty can only come by overthrowing the oppressor. This is false. God sent the oppressor because of sin. Only repentance can overthrow the white horse! *If My people...will...then...I will heal their land. (2 Chron 7:14)*. If you find it hard to believe that only God can send these four severe judgments, remember from where the command to pour out the seven last plagues came. *REV 16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."* All oppression, famine, war, and plagues come from God's command. To deny this and blame it on the devil is to believe in dualism. Satan is only a tool in Almighty God's hand. Satan must always ask God's permission before he can plague mankind. The God of the Hebrews is the Sovereign Lord of the armies.

Now let us carefully examine some of the Scriptures that mention these four severe judgments and forms of destruction.

REV 6:1 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see."

2 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.

3 When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see."

4 And 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.

5 When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." And I looked, and behold, a **black horse**, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst 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."

7 When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see."

8 And 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.

WHITE	RED	BLACK	PALE
(OPPRESSION)	(WAR)	(FAMINE)	(PESTILENCE)
BEAST	SWORD	FAMINE	DEATH

JER 16:4 "They shall die gruesome deaths; they shall not be lamented nor shall they be buried, but they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth. They shall be consumed by the **sword** and by **famine**, and their corpses shall be meat for the **birds** of heaven and for the **beasts** of the earth."

(WHITE HORSE)	(RED HORSE)	(BLACK)	(PALE)
BEASTS	SWORD	FAMINE	BIRDS

JER 21:7 "And afterward," says the LORD, "I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, his servants and the people, and such as are left in this city from the **pestilence** and the **sword** and the **famine**, into the **hand of Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon

(WHITE HORSE)	(RED HORSE)	(BLACK)	(PALE)
KING OF BABYLON	SWORD	FAMINE	PESTILENCE

JER 24:9,10 I will deliver them to trouble **into all the kingdoms** of the earth, for their harm, to be a reproach and a byword, a taunt and a curse, in all places where I shall drive them.

And I will send the **sword**, the **famine**, and the **pestilence** among them, till they are consumed from the land that I gave to them and their fathers.

(WHITE HORSE)	(RED HORSE)	(BLACK)	(PALE)
INTO ALL KINGDOMS	SWORD	FAMINE	PESTILENCE

JER 27:8 'And it shall be, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck **under the yoke** of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish,' says the LORD, 'with the **sword**, the **famine**, and the **pestilence**, until I have consumed them by his hand.

(WHITE HORSE)	(RED HORSE)	(BLACK)	(PALE)
UNDER THE YOKE	SWORD	FAMINE	PESTILENCE

EZE 5:17 'So I will send against you **famine** and **wild beasts**, and they will bereave you.
Pestilence

and blood shall pass through you, and I will bring the **sword** against you. I, the LORD, have spoken.' "

(WHITE HORSE)	(RED HORSE)	(BLACK)	(PALE)
BEASTS	SWORD	FAMINE	PESTILENCE

PS 91:5,6 You shall not be afraid of the **terror** by night, Nor of the **arrow** that flies by day, Nor of the **pestilence** that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays **waste** at noonday.

(WHITE HORSE)	(RED HORSE)	(BLACK)	(PALE)
TERROR	ARROW	WASTE	PESTILENCE

JER 32:24 'Look, the siege mounds! They have come to the city to take it; and the city has been given into the **hand of the Chaldeans** who fight against it, because of the **sword** and **famine** and **pestilence**. What You have spoken has happened; there You see it!

(WHITE HORSE)	(RED HORSE)	(BLACK)	(PALE)
HAND OF CHALDEANS	SWORD	FAMINE	PESTILENCE

JER 34:17 "Therefore thus says the LORD: 'You have not obeyed Me in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and every one to his neighbor. Behold, I proclaim liberty to you,' says the LORD--'to the **sword**, to **pestilence**, and to **famine!** And I will deliver you to trouble **among all the kingdoms** of the earth.

(WHITE HORSE)

(RED HORSE)

(BLACK)

(PALE)

AMONG ALL KINGDOMS

SWORD

FAMINE

PESTILENCE

JER 38:2 "Thus says the LORD: 'He who remains in this city shall die by the **sword**, by **famine**, and by **pestilence**; but he who goes over to the Chaldeans shall live; his life shall be as a prize to him, and he shall live.'

JER 38:3 "Thus says the LORD: 'This city shall surely be given **into the hand of the king of Babylon's** army, which shall take it.

(WHITE HORSE)

(RED HORSE)

(BLACK)

(PALE)

HAND OF KING OF BABYLON

SWORD

FAMINE

PESTILENCE

EZE 6:9 ,11 "Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations where they are **carried captive**..For they shall fall by the **sword, by famine, and by pestilence**

(WHITE HORSE)

(RED HORSE)

(BLACK)

(PALE)

CARRIED CAPTIVE

SWORD

FAMINE

PESTILENCE

EZE 7:15 ,16 The **sword** is outside, and the **pestilence** and **famine** within. Whoever is in the field will die by the **sword**; and whoever is in the city, famine and pestilence will devour him. Those who survive will escape and **be on the mountains** like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, Each for his iniquity.

(WHITE HORSE)

(RED HORSE)

(BLACK)

(PALE)

ON THE MOUNTAINS

SWORD

FAMINE

PESTILENCE

EZE 12:15 ,16 "Then they shall know that I am the LORD, when I scatter them **among the nations** and disperse them throughout the countries.

"But I will spare a few of their men from the **sword**, from **famine**, and from **pestilence...**"

(WHITE HORSE)

(RED HORSE)

(BLACK)

(PALE)

AMONG THE NATIONS

SWORD

FAMINE

PESTILENCE

When one nation takes another into captivity or slavery, we also call that oppression. It is also possible for banks and leaders of nations to oppress the people as beasts. Let the church not be deceived into thinking we can overthrow captivity and oppression any other way than the way it was done when Judah returned from Babylon. It was not done by the sword. It was accomplished by prayer and submission. The white horse is a judgment sent by God just as much as war, famine, and plague.

Some have tried to imagine that Jesus is the white horse. No, Jesus does not oppress in a beastly fashion. He sets the captives free. However, there is a sense in which the Lord rides all four horses since He is the One who sends these demonic forces as His four severe judgments.

These horsemen ride in every generation to bring judgment on the nations that disobey God. Note the protection covenant keepers have according to Psalm 91(above).

We are promised that if we abide under the shadow of the Almighty, "no plague will come near our dwelling." However, there are exceptions to this such as Job's example and Paul's shipwreck. But in these cases Satan is allowed to go so far and no farther. Those who abide under the shadow of the Almighty find comfort in spite of afflictions. They rise above their circumstances to sit with Christ in heavenly places. They rule and reign with Him. Those who do not remain in the secret place of the Most High find turbulence of spirit. Their water is, as it were, turned to blood. Their world is darkened. They try to drown out the sound of the hoof beats with other noises or false comforts. They cry for the rocks to hide them. They attempt to cover their nakedness with various types of fig leaves. They keep going back to Jacob's well. They hew out cisterns...broken cisterns

that cannot hold water or satisfy their souls. Some want to kill the witnesses that torment them. Only through submission to the Almighty can deliverance come.

"if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. " 2CH 7:14