

Lesson Seven

Seals One-Four (6:1-8)

Seal One: The White Horse (6:1-2) – Gospel conquest

John is invited by one of the four living creatures to “come” (cp. 4:1). While the identity of the 2-4 horsemen is rather clear, there is disagreement about the identity of the first horseman. There are three commonly held choices.

- ***Christ***. This is unlikely because Christ is already in the passage as the one opening the seals.
- ***Anti-Christ***. This is unlikely because the color of the antichrist is red, not white. In Revelation, white is always used for Christ and his saints.
- ***Gospel conquest***. Apocalyptic symbols lead us to the best interpretation. White is the color of purity and Christ. The bow is a symbol of conquest. The word “crown” used here is not diadem, or the crown of a king. In Revelation Jesus always wears the diadem crown. The word “crown” is “stephanos” which is the common crown in the NT for a victor. When all three descriptors of this rider are used to identify the first horseman – white, bow and crown – the most likely interpretation is gospel conquest. Jesus stated that the gospel must be preached to all the nations before he returns (Mark 13:10).

Seal Two: The Red Horse (6:3-4) - Warfare

One of the best known sign of the End is war. Jesus said wars and rumors of war is a clear sign that the End is soon coming (Mark 13:7). There has been warfare throughout the history of man. As the End nears, war becomes more prevalent.

Seal Three: The Black Horse (6:5-6) – Scarcity

The most natural result of war is scarcity and famine. Scales were used to measure grain. A denarius equaled a day's wage for a working man in the first century. A man will work all day to purchase a quart of wheat or three quarts of the less expense barley. Yet in amidst of scarcity, the rich continue to enjoy their abundance of oil and wine.

Seal Four: The Pale Green Horse (6:7-8) – Death

Pale green or gray appropriately symbolizes death. Death is the natural result of war and scarcity. Death is followed by Hades, or the grave. Death is caused by three factors.

1. Famine
2. Pestilence
3. Wild beasts

One-fourth of the earth was impacted. This suggests partial death. Much worse is experienced in the Great Tribulation.