



### Opening of 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Seals

**A**ND when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 4 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 unto him a great sword. 5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast 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. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts 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. 7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. 8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. (Rev 6:3-8)

For all its wickedness and oppression, the rule of Rome had given the known world some heretofore non-existent benefits perhaps the greatest of which was a general peace throughout the empire (PAX ROMANO) where tribal wars had prevailed before. It also provided a common means of commerce, trade, and communication. But a heavy price was paid by the early church for the so-called 'Peace of Rome'. Persecution and tribulation was also made possible by the long arm of Rome throughout the Empire, and its dreadful hand fell heavily upon our early martyrs.

You will recall that the White Horse seems to represent the Roman Empire (and later, the Roman Church). It is a clumsy counterfeit of that peace which Christ offers. I believe it even more particularly represents the Roman Church than the temporal Roman Empire. The Rider has no true weapons – only a bow; yet he goes “*forth conquering, and to conquer.*” The Roman Church has been the catalyst for major wars since its inception. It may wield the bow, but the arrows are provided by its surrogates

of nations. It has considered all of Europe to fall under its dominion to include the Hapsburg Monarchy. If one would search the encyclopedia for the City of Rome, one will find that it has historically been known as the City of Seven Hills. The cryptic reference by John the Revelator in Rev. 17:9 describes the false church (the Woman Riding the Beast) as sitting on "*seven mountains*". So I have considered the White Horse Rider to introduce the coming fall of Jerusalem by Titus of the Roman legions (in 70AD), as well as the spiritual Rome that dominates many lands, and minds, today. We will now take up the following three seals of the seven.

*"3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 4 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 unto him a great sword."* If white is representative of purity and peace (regardless the harshness thereof), red must certainly represent the wars that have been fought over the struggles for religious domination of Rome, and other false religions, over her presumed charges. As an example, consider the St. Bartholomew Day massacre against the Protestant Huguenots of France in 1572, or the attempted invasion of England by the "Invincible" Armada of Spain repelled and sorely defeated at the hands of Lord Charles Howard and Sir Francis Drake of the British Navy. The Red Horse Rider is a War-Monger. His spirit of war and devastation was representative of that time contemporary to St. John, the period immediately following, and, with few exceptions, until our very day. *"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."* (Matt 10:34) Christ does not originate wars and mayhem, but when men stand on righteousness and faith, the armies of the world will rise up in opposition. The Church itself, though reformed with fire and Holy conviction during the Great Reformation, has admitted division and error into its doors.

Unholy alliances have characterized the relationship between Church and the secular power almost from the outset of the Gospel being preached to all nations. It forces compromise and a lukewarm gospel.

As John avers in the stated text, *"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 unto him a great sword."* Constantine the Great was elevated by the alliance between the church and the secular power. He introduced many errors, while denouncing others. But the embodiment of ecclesiastical power in the seat of imperial power led to a prideful abuse of power in both spheres. Certainly, faith and truth should have direct influence over government; but government should never have influence over the Church.

*"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast 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. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts 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."* The wars and devastation that lay in the wake of the Red Horse Rider is prelude to that which follows with the Rider on the Black Horse – black being the stark contrast of white. Immorality and decadence follows in the wake of war – and the Black Horseman brings with his advent a condition of unequal justice and perhaps exorbitant taxation. It is the rude oppression of the Dark Ages where men became vassals on their own lands, and justice was denied to the poor, and what semblance of justice there was meted out, it was in unbalanced measure. Cost of the merest goods of common existence was inflated at the hands of hoarding church and aristocracy. By the way, this influence of the Rider on the

Black Horse was not time-sensitive. He still prevails in many parts of the world today. The balances he has in his hands are hypocritical. They are not true balances. Justice is denied thousands of martyrs in our day owing to false religion claiming they have no right to life. From the reign of Constantine until the establishment of the Papacy in 538, the darkest errors of religion were introduced and were then perpetuated by a prideful church whose papal head claimed to stand in the place of Christ on earth.

Error is a feature of every church age. There are always flies in the ointment of doctrine and teaching. Men do not like to be subordinated to the Lord Jesus Christ. Even the early church began to adopt Platonic philosophy in order to gain sophistication and the acceptance of the world. Of course, the Gospel requires of us just the opposite. We are to transform the world by the Gospel – not be transformed by the world.

“The oil and wine (the grace bestowed by the Spirit of love and faith) were endangered of being hurt by the greed and zeal for profit that had entered the church through compromise with the secular state. There is much more to be gleaned from the meanings presented herein of the balances, the wheat and the barley, and the oil and the wine – not just in a historical sense, but in a contemporary one as well. We can see some of the same abuses of the “Big Model” Church as existed in the Roman Church during its early ascension. Please study this text more diligently in order to get the full sense of it. The space needed for a devotion does not allow such a deeper study.

*“7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. 8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.”* One pompous name for the Pope in Rome is “Vicarius Filii Dei” a title given by Constantine to St. Peter as the presumed first Pope. Translated from the Latin, it means “Representative of the Son of God on Earth.” There is no empirical evidence that I have seen that can prove that St. Peter was ever associated with the Roman church as its Head. But the title is claimed as an inheritance by all Popes of that Church. Can any man stand in the place of Christ – even Peter?

In a sense, each of these Four Horsemen represents some feature of all secular Imperial Power or that mal-appropriated ecclesiastical power of the Roman Church and her lackeys. This Pale Horse represents death. That is his name! And Hell follows in his wake. What can this mean? When does Hell follow death without exception? When the decedent dies outside the security of election in Christ! Ephesians 2 clearly tells us that all are dead in trespasses and sin until ‘quickened’ by the Spirit. (made alive). Those who die in their sins are inextricably committed to the domain of Hell. The affected faith and compromised doctrine of the many modern churches are pale compared to the true faith and doctrine of Christ. They are lukewarm, and Christ will have none of them. They are frozen in time in the Laodicean model of religious malaise.

Of course, the death, too, of many saints of God have occurred as a result of the edicts of Rome. Some estimates claim 50 million have been martyred at the hands of Rome. So the Pale Horse, like the other three, represents some feature of Rome – either governmental, or ecclesiastical – and both physical and spiritual Death.