

Small Group

March 21, 2018



Revelation Chapter 6:

The Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse

Up to this point the book of Revelation has been pretty straightforward, give or take a lampstand or two and some funky looking beasts. But nothing too crazy. In chapter 6 we are start getting into the “muck and mire” of Revelation. It is not easy to understand and depending on your interpretative bent you will see things as historic, figurative, symbolic or futuristic. I have chosen (and believe) the more historic approach. Although there is symbolism that is applied to any age the immediate context of the Scripture plays a big part in understanding what is being said. In this context we are looking at Rome, the corruption, violence, intimidation and brutality of a government and system that puts itself up in the place of God. Each of the first four seals broken let loose the Four Horsemen of The Apocalypse.

The fifth seal reveals the martyrs who lost their lives for the sake of the Gospel. What price must one pay to be a bedfellow with Rome?

KEY POINTS

- Seal #1 Horseman #1: The Power of Rome
- Seal #2 Horseman #2: The Peace of Rome
- Seal #3 Horseman #3: The Prosperity of Rome
- Seal #4 Horseman #4: The Impotence of Rome
- Seal #5: The Persecution of Rome

Bible Study Questions

Read Revelation 6 (see pages 4 - 5)

1. John has a similar vision to Zechariah who also saw four horsemen. As Zechariah spoke out against the Persian rule so too John is receiving a revelation about the rule of Rome. Read Zechariah 6 below. What are the similarities and differences between his vision and Johns?

2. The Four Horsemen are unleashed in a fury. Remember, this is symbolic imagery not descriptions of actual events. Rome is about power, their military, intimidation, fear, submission and wealth. Discuss the Four Horsemen of The Apocalypse and their relevance to the eventual destruction of Roman rule.

- Seal #1 Horseman #1: The Power of Rome
- Seal #2 Horseman #2: The Peace of Rome
- Seal #3 Horseman #3: The Prosperity of Rome
- Seal #4 Horseman #4: The Impotence of Rome
- Seal #5: The Persecution of Rome

3. Why is it important that the Church and State remain separate?

Why is it dangerous for the Church to claim allegiance to a politician or political party?

4. Discuss this quote from Epictetus: AD 50 - AD 135 (Greek Philosopher - exiled from Rome about the same time that John was).

“The emperor seems to provide us with profound peace since there are no wars any longer. But can he then provide us from fever too? Or from shipwreck or from fire or from earthquake? He cannot. From absolutely none of these things can he provide peace.”

5. Read Psalm 77 (below). There is a long Israelite tradition of crying out to God for deliverance. Many times God appears to be silent to the cries of his people. How is this cry echoed in our own day, in our families, our churches and the world around us? Why does God appear to be silent to our cries for deliverance?



Personal Application Questions

Please answer the questions below as they best apply to you personally. Speak in the “I”. There is no obligation to answer any question.

1. Which verse(s) from Revelation chapter 6 speaks most personally or profoundly to you?
2. What is your biggest takeaway from this chapter?
3. What kind of “turbulence” are you experiencing in your life right now? How do you get through the turbulence?
4. Christians around the world are persecuted for their faith and allegiance to Christ. What steps can you take to remember and pray for the Persecuted Church?
5. How do you maintain a prophetic voice against the authorities and systems of this world who value military strength, economic power and worldly prestige?
6. **Assignment:** Read Revelation chapters 6 – 8.

Revelation 6:1 - 11

1 I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" **2** I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest. **3** When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" **4** Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword. **5** When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. **6** Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "Two pounds^[a] of wheat for a day's wages,^[b] and six pounds^[c] of barley for a day's wages,^[d] and do not damage the oil and the wine!" **7** When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" **8** I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth. **9** When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. **10** They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" **11** Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters,^[e] were killed just as they had been

Zechariah 6: 1 – 8

1 I looked up again, and there before me were four chariots coming out from between two mountains—mountains of bronze. 2 The first chariot had red horses, the second black, 3 the third white, and the fourth dappled—all of them powerful. 4 I asked the angel who was speaking to me, “What are these, my lord?”

5 The angel answered me, “These are the four spirits^(a) of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. 6 The one with the black horses is going toward the north country, the one with the white horses toward the west,^(b) and the one with the dappled horses toward the south.”

7 When the powerful horses went out, they were straining to go throughout the earth. And he said, “Go throughout the earth!” So they went throughout the earth.

8 Then he called to me, “Look, those going toward the north country have given my Spirit^(a) rest in the land of the north.”

Psalm 77: 1 - 9

1 I cried out to God for help;
I cried out to God to hear me.
2 When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;
at night I stretched out untiring hands,
and I would not be comforted.
3 I remembered you, God, and I groaned;
I meditated, and my spirit grew faint.^(b)
4 You kept my eyes from closing;
I was too troubled to speak.
5 I thought about the former days,
the years of long ago;
6 I remembered my songs in the night.
My heart meditated and my spirit asked:
7 “Will the Lord reject forever?
Will he never show his favor again?
8 Has his unfailing love vanished forever?
Has his promise failed for all time?
9 Has God forgotten to be merciful?
Has he in anger withheld his compassion?”

