

Midweek Bible Study

Exposition of the Revelation The First Four Seals: The Horsemen Rev. 6:1-8

This section in Revelation introduces us to

1. the seven seals (6:1-8:5)
2. the seven trumpets (8:6-11:19)
3. the seven bowls (15:1-16:21)

Observations:

1. Matt 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 contain the Olivet Discourse, John does not.
2. The seals, trumpets, and bowls parallel each other (biblical parallelism) and they intensify and escalate. The seals intensify, the trumpets intensify, the bowls intensify; but also, the trumpets escalate over the seals and the bowls escalate over the trumpets.
3. The trumpets and bowls echo the plagues of Egypt
4. We need to think in circles of context. What was the relevance to the first century? We cannot ignore that. What are the truths that are being conveyed? How do they apply now and at the end of the age?
5. The pattern for the seals is that the first five span between the first and second advent, the sixth describes the final day/the last judgment.
6. The first four seals are the famous “four horsemen of the Apocalypse.” Horsemen 2, 3, and 4 are straightforward. It is the rider on the white horse which is the challenge!
7. The horsemen have a background in Zech. 6:1-8 (Cf. 1:8-15) and Ezek. 14:12-23. Also, the Mt, Mk, Lk on the Olivet Discourse or the Synoptic Apocalypse have many parallels
Matt. 24:4-9, 29; Mk. 13:5-9, 24-26; Lk. 21:8-12, 25-26
 - 1) deception
 - 2) wars
 - 3) international conflict
 - 4) earthquakes and famines
 - 6) persecutions
 - 7) Cosmic signs



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I. The First Seal (6:1-2)

- A. And I *saw* when the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals
- B. And I *heard* one of the four living beings saying, as with a voice of thunder, "Come!"
- C. And I *saw* and behold a white horse
- D. And the one sitting upon it having a bow and crown was given to him and went forth, conquering and to conquer.
 1. The identity of this horseman is vigorously debated.
 - a) Some see it as Christ
 - b) Others as a generic figure, a Satanic figure, or even the Antichrist.
 2. Arguments that the rider on the white horse is Christ
 - 1) The Messianic picture in Psalm 45 is similar
 - 2) Christ rides a white horse (Rev 19:11)
 - 3) White is associated with holiness and purity in Revelation 14x
 - 4) Christ wears a crown (Rev. 14:14; 19:12)
 - 5) Christ conquers (Rev. 3:21; 5:5; 17:14)The picture here, if Christ, is that the Gospel goes forth, conquering, even while there is war, famine, and death and persecution. Mk. 13:10
 - 3) Arguments that the rider is not Christ
Some see the white horse with its rider as "more general with the riders relating to the human lust for war and its consequences." (Osbourne, Mounce).
A Counterfeit Christ
 1. There is a strong counterfeit theme in Revelation. The Beast is a counterfeit Lamb. The rider on the white horse is a counterfeit Christ.
 2. The beast conquers (Rev. 11:7; 13:7)
 3. The Beast deceives by being an angel of light (Rev. 12-13; Cf. Matt. 24:4-5; Luke 21:8; Cf. 2 Cor. 11:13-15)
 4. There is a parallelism between the seals, trumpets, and bowls.
 5. The Beast's soldiers from the pit ride horses and wear crowns like gold (Rev. 9:7). The Beast himself wears ten diadems (crowns) on his ten heads (12:3; 13:1).

Conclusion: The rider on this white horse is a counterfeit Christ.

Others, "A satanic force attempting to defeat and oppress believers spiritually through deception, persecution, or both." Beale



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- II. The Second Seal (6:3-4)
 - A. And when He opened the second seal, I heard the second living being saying, “Come” (3)
 - B. And another fiery red horse went forth
The fiery red is for blood and war – but note the specifics
 - C. And to him who was sitting upon it was given to take peace from the earth
He was given authority or the power to take peace from the earth
 - D. And in order to slaughter each other
 - E. And a great sword was given to him
A sword of judgment – violent death

- III. The Third Seal (6:5-6)
 - A. And when He opened the third seal, I heard the third living being say “Come”
 - B. And I saw and behold a black horse, and the one sitting on it having a pair of scales in his hand
 - 1. The inevitable outcome of war is famine - Mk 13:8
 - 2. A pair of scales – the instrument of commerce
 - C. And I heard as a voice in the midst of the four living beings saying, ‘a quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barely for a denarius
 - D. And do not damage the oil and wine

- IV. The Fourth Seal (6:7-8)
 - A. And when He opened the fourth seal, I heard the fourth living being say, “Come”
 - B. And I saw and behold a pale green horse
Yellowish-green, pale, greenish gray
 - C. And the one sitting on it, his name was death and Hades followed him
 - D. Authority was given over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine, and plague and by the wild beasts of the earth

Conclusion

