

# DISCOVER PROPHECY



## Revelation's Four Horsemen

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### Why So Many Churches?

There are so many churches today. All different sizes and kinds. You have small churches that are traditional, you have large churches that are contemporary. There are those with priests, some with bishops, others with pastors and elders.

Just take a look into the phone book and you will see that there are so many different churches. In the Louisville area alone there are about 300 different churches from the Assembly of God to the Zion, Church of God.

Why are there so many different churches? Have you ever wondered why? If all these denominations claim to follow the Bible and the Bible alone, you would guess they would be the same. However, each one has a different method of ministry and a different creed of theology.

The Bible says that the Lord will reveal many things ahead of time to His people. "Surely the Lord does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets" Amos 3:7.

### The Future of Christianity

The book of Revelation talks about a lot of events that would take place after the book was written. Some of these events have already taken place, some are still yet to come.

The four horsemen of Revelation is found in chapter 6. There you find a seal. A seal is essentially a lock put onto a manuscript or book to prevent one from opening it unless it is the one designated to do so. We'll talk more about seals when we get to the Seal of God and the Mark of the Beast.

"...the Lamb opened one of the seals..." Revelation 6:1. This book or scroll has seven different chapters, each locked with a seal. Jesus the lamb of God is the only one that is able to open the book. As He does so, a different chapter in the life of the Christian church unfolds.

### A Conquering Faith

"And I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, 'Come.' 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" Revelation 6:1,2.

This first horseman comes out of the scroll and he can be described as a conquering horseman. This is the first phase of the Christian church. The church then is the conquering faith.

Remember that the book of Revelation is written in cryptic form. We can piece the symbolism of Revelation together by looking at each of the aspects of this segment of scripture. And thus unfold the history and future of the church.

In Revelation chapter 12 we have the symbolism of the church in the form of the woman. Here there is a beautiful woman clothed in a white light. White represents purity in Bible prophecy. Here we see the church as a horse and this church in history is pure in its theology and practice.

This horse was conquering. The church was growing by leaps and bounds. This horse represents the church at about the time of the apostles and shortly afterwards. To about the year 100 AD.

"...if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven" Colossians 1:23. The New Testament church and shortly after, was a pure church that sought to follow Jesus Christ in all His ways. It was a priority to follow the will of God over the will of mankind. "We must obey God rather than man" Acts 5:29. This was the hallmark of the Church during the first century. Pure in theology and practice and growing by the grace of Christ, adding to their numbers.

### Blood Stained Faith

The purity and practice of the early church changes and the people begin to experience the sadness of persecution and pain.

Next we see a new horseman, this time riding a red horse. "And when He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, 'Come.' And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men should

slay one another; and a great sword was given to him” Revelation 6:3,4.

Here the church is red from the blood of martyrs. Rome turns against Christianity and many of those professing Christ are killed for their faith.

There is a story that is set at about the time frame of this horseman that has become pretty popular. It’s called the “40 Wrestlers for God.” There was a large group of Christians (40 to be exact) and they were captured by the Roman soldiers. They could be saved from their fate of death if they only chose to deny their faith in Christ.

The men were taken to the lake side. Being winter, the lake was frozen over. The men were told to walk out onto the lake and to stay there until they died. If they wanted to return to the warmth of the fire on the shore, all they had to do was deny Christ.

The men were all stripped of their clothes and forced onto the lake. Shortly later, the sun set on the lake and the temperature began to drop. There were the men all huddled together on the lake, trying to feed off each others warmth. To encourage each other along, they began to sing a simple song, “40 Wrestlers for God.”

Hour after hour went by and the men continued singing their song to encourage one another. Hour by hour goes by and the soldiers continue to remind the 40 men that they could come to shore to the warmth of the fire, but they refuse.

One of the soldier’s began to think of the men’s determination and their willingness to stand up for Christ. Not long afterwards, the 40 men grow quiet. After a short pause, they start to sing again, but with different words now, “39 wrestlers for God.” The soldiers heart was touched and he took his cloths off and ran out onto the lake and joined the other 39 in the huddle. The song changed again, but now with the words, “40 wrestlers for God.”

The red horse represents the Christian church during the bloody period of persecution. The dates would be from about 100 - 313 AD.

### **Compromised Church**

After the red horse comes yet another horse, this one, black.

“And I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard as if it were a voice in the center 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’” Revelation 6:5,6.

This horse represents the church and its dramatic change in the practices and theology. The church would change and it would be introducing theology and practices that are not found in the Bible. Paul forewarned of this time.

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock...I know that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them” Acts 20:28-30.

The barley and flour was the main staple of the early church and in this passage, we can see that there was a severe shortage of this ingredient that made bread. It would cost an individual a great deal of money to purchase bread. Bread was hard to come by.

Bread in the Bible represents God’s Word. This would tell us that at this time in the history of the church, God’s Word would be hard to come by. Interestingly, very few people actually had their own Bible. So as the religious leaders were teaching and preaching, the people couldn’t tell if they were being taught the truth or not.

Speaking of the power of the dark ages that turned from the purity of scripture and began teaching traditions, the book of Daniel says that, “It will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper” Daniel 8:12.

The church of the dark ages began to turn from the Bible and its teachings. One such biblical teaching is the admonition to not worship idols. “You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God” Exodus 20:4,5.

The church began introducing pagan worship into the worship services. To encourage the pagans to convert to Christianity, they took the idols of the various pagan gods and gave them Christian names.

Peter was an outstanding apostle in the early church. In time, the image of Peter was brought into the church and the people were encouraged to worship the image. In actuality, the image was an exact replica of the pagan god, Jupiter.

Another segment of scripture that was transformed or changed during this time was the Sabbath blessing. “God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all work of creating that He had done” Genesis 2:3.

The church took this biblical blessing and changed it,

instituting instead pagan practices. "The church...after changing the day of rest from the Jewish Sabbath, or seventh day of the week, to the first, made the third commandment refer to Sunday as the day to be kept holy as the Lord's day" The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume 4, page 154.

In order to accommodate the pagans, "We are told by Eusebius that Constantine, in order to recommend the new religion to the heathen, transferred into it the outward ornaments to which they had been accustomed in their own" Development of Christian Doctrine, Page 372.

The church of the black horse was from about 313 to 538 AD.

### **A Union Of Church And State**

Then comes the forth horseman of Revelation. "And when He broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, 'Come.' And I looked, and beyond, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. And authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth" Revelation 6:7,8.

This time in the history of the Christian church represents a time when the church and the state unite in its efforts.

"Christianity became an established religion in the Roman Empire and took the place of Paganism...Christianity as it existed in the Dark Ages might be termed Baptized Paganism" Church History, Century 2, Chapter 2, section 7.

"Like the successive strata of the earth covering one another, so layer after layer of forgeries and fabrications were piled up in the church" The Pope and the Council, page 117.

As a result of these teachings being integrated into the church, many chose instead not to follow along with the church's teachings. These were forced from the church to the wilderness so that they might follow the biblical truths.

Because the church and the state united in its efforts (Christianity now having the power of the state), the church began to persecute thousands of people, killing many for not following the church's teachings.

By now, the church is actually killing people and is the pale horse of death! Now, no longer the pure church of the first century. This horseman began in 538.

### **The Restoration Of Truth**

Now the truth and purity no longer live in the church, but instead among those who have left the church. Yet, God brings about a restoration or reformation of biblical purity. As the false teachings slowly moved from the church, it takes some time as the Lord progressively reinstates the teachings in the church.

In 1370 God uses the man Wycliff to reinstate the authority of the Bible. As the church had come to a place to accept tradition and human reasoning above the Word, now God brings the authority of His Word back again.

In 1400 God uses the man Huss to bring back the truth of obedience to God. Where the church taught that you can do as you wish as long as you would pay penance, God calls people back to obedience.

In 1517 Martin Luther brings back to the church the truth of salvation by grace. For years people were believing the church's teaching that you are saved by works, but now the truth of righteousness by faith returns.

In 1555 Calvin comes into action and reintroduces into the church the teaching of Freedom of Conscience; that we each can choose for ourselves the grace of Christ.

As the church had transformed the act of baptism from immersion to sprinkling, God used Williams to bring back to the attention of the people the truth of Bible baptism; that baptism is by immersion. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" Matthew 28:19,20.

Next, Wesley brings the reformation teaching of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in 1705; that when we accept Jesus Christ as Savior, we follow His Will as Lord too. Our goal as Christians is to do all that Jesus asks us to do.

Then in 1844, the man Miller takes the focus and attention of the people off of the world to the clouds of the air, anticipating the second return of Jesus Christ. Rather than Jesus setting up a kingdom on earth as an empire of government, He will return to take His righteous to the place in heaven that He is preparing for us.

More and more God is continuing to bring reformation and a returning to the purity of biblical teaching and practice. Since then Christians are learning of the final restoration. That God's law was not nailed to the cross but is the standard of righteousness by which Jesus died to uphold. That when you die, you don't go

directly to heaven, but rather lay in the grave until the second coming. That God cares about our health and wants us to be happy in health and physical wellness.

### **A Restored People**

Jesus is returning to the hearts of people and an understanding of truth as found in scripture. There will be a people, in the last days, that are committed to the purity of the scriptures. These people, have essentially two qualities. “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” Revelation 14:12.

In the process of restoring the truth, God is restoring a people. A people who are following the truth as it is found in scripture, not tradition. Wouldn't you like to be one of them?

