

Ukraine-A Foreshadowing of The End Time?

Part 4

End Times Posse: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

Revelation 6:1-8

On May 18, 1980, at exactly 8:31 a.m., billions of pounds of rock, water and trees evaporated, molten rock, and boiling mud flattened 150 square miles surrounding Mt. St. Helens. In one millisecond, all the rumblings, clouds of grey steam, and dancing seismographs of the months prior to that had pointed to the cataclysm coming — converged and she blew.

For days the evening news showed the frightened tourists and residents fleeing. But one scene will always be remembered. It was the caretaker of the Lodge on the scenic lake just 5 miles north of the volcano. Harry Truman and 16 cats lived at the door of doom and wouldn't leave. In one instant they vaporized because they didn't heed warnings.

And we see this scenario coming to a head sometime soon, as we look at what's being written, and listen to what's being said, about all the viruses that have occurred and the coronavirus that presently is, along with all the violence that is happening in our streets and around the world, and the economic devastation that is happening as a result of this, people are scared, and everyone sort of has the sense of impending doom. It's like the world knows that a killer storm is on its way, and fear is beginning to set in as they can sense the destruction that it will bring.

But remember what Jesus said about the tribulation back in ***Matt. 24:21 "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, unto this time, no, nor ever shall be."***

In our text this morning, the Apostle John records for us this killer storm in the Book of Revelation in the first eight verses of chapter six. In these verses, John describes the release of the four horsemen of the apocalypse—a divine posse with a divine warrant to inflict God's judgment on a rebellious world system. We think we are witnessing unspeakable horrors being inflicted upon the people of Ukraine over these past months. These things are but a microcosm, a mere foreshadowing of what is to come. What God gave to John in Rev. 6-19 is a vision of unspeakable horror. And it begins with Jesus opening up the first seal and out comes the first rider, The Antichrist (with picture)

Revelation 6:1,2

Then I saw the Lamb open one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" 2 I looked, and there was a white horse. The horseman on it had a bow; a crown was given to him, and he went out as a victor to conquer.

“thunder”=indicates a storm is coming. It's the sound of heavy hooves galloping this way!

The people of Ukraine certainly heard the “approaching hoofbeats” of Russian tanks coming to inflict unspeakable horrors upon their world.

On February 27, residents of a small village just north of Kyiv say Russian forces rolled into the neighboring villages, turned the local school into their base, vandalized and looted homes and terrorized the people here for five

weeks. On March 25, Katerina said Russian soldiers came to her home and took Victoria, claiming she had information about their forces on her phone. Three days later, Katerina herself was taken captive. She said she was held in a cellar for three days. Blindfolded and terrified, she tried to find out what had happened to her daughter. “They told me she was in a warm house and that she was working with them and would be home soon,” said Katerina.

Just a few streets away, we met another mother. Olga Yavon’s grief was raw and all-consuming. She knew why we were there and the moment she came out to greet us, she broke down in tears. Her boys, Igor, 32, and Oleg, 33, are among six of the village’s young men who authorities say were executed by Russian soldiers on February 27. She told us Russian forces rounded them up after a bridge nearby was blown up. The Russians kept hold of their bodies for nine days before dumping them on the outskirts of the village, with instructions to bury them quickly, she said. “They were very good boys,” Olga said. “How I want to see them again.”

Now, there are those who confuse this rider on the white horse with Jesus, which shouldn’t surprise us, because of what the Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11:14-15 about Satan and those he sends.

“For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.” (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)

But there exist pronounced differences between the two, that is, between this white rider and Jesus Christ. Let me just quickly point these out.

- Jesus is the one who breaks the seal negating Him being the rider. Further, Jesus comes at the end of the book or Revelation, not at the beginning.
- Following this white rider is war, famine, and death, whereas those that follow Jesus are the host of heaven, the church.
- The white rider is given a victory crown, which in the Greek is the word, “stephanos,” whereas Jesus comes with many kingly or royal crowns, which in the Greek is the word, “diadems.”
- The white rider carries a bow, whereas Jesus’s weapon is His word. Further, the bow contains no arrows, which means that it will be a bloodless victory, that is, He comes bringing peace, through the threat of violence, which will be both political and religious to a part of the world that has known little if any peace, and that is the mid-east, and more specifically, Israel.

And this white rider is going to come looking like Christ, but is anything but, which is why He is called “The Antichrist.” In other words, He will come assuming the guise or the appearance of Christ but opposes all that Jesus Christ and the Bible stands for. He will bring his own anti-Christ standards while doing away with biblical standards, or we could say the doctrine of demons.

And it shouldn’t be missed that the horse and rider are white, which is interesting because besides mimicking Christ’s return, white is the color of surrender, and the world will surrender itself to him.

And why would the world accept him and his peace accord, it’s because the world at this time will accept anyone or anything that will bring peace to this war torn and violent world. But the peace that the Antichrist brings will not last, just describes any peace that is brought about through threats of violence.

Therefore, at the heels of the Antichrist comes the second rider, War (with picture).

Revelation 6:3,4

3 When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" 4 Then another horse went out, a fiery red one, and its horseman was empowered to take peace from the earth, so that people would slaughter one another. And a large sword was given to him.

When Jesus opens the second seal, out rides War riding upon a fiery red horse, which so happens to be the color of blood. And it says that power was given to him to take away the peace brought by the first seal rider, the Antichrist. In other words, whatever restraint existed up to this point that has been preserving peace, God has given this rider the power to remove it.

This rider is the seal rider of strife, violence, assault, division, abuse, anger, hate, uprising, murder, insurrection, war, and bloodshed. He divides race against race, class against class, neighbor against neighbor, employee against employer, spouse against spouse, children against parents, religion against religion, and nation against nation.

This rider is war, and he'll take peace from the earth.

Yet there have always been violence and wars, and there always will be, and they will only get worse, thus softening up a world that'll accept anybody who'll bring a little peace, which is what the Antichrist will bring. But with the arrival of this second rider, all hope of a peace is smashed.

The problem is, and why so many will accept the Antichrist's peace is because humanity believes it can find peace on their own, that they don't need God, unfortunately their way leads only to everlasting death and separation from God.

It's like the atrocity of the idea that we can reverse global warming when we don't even know whether or not it's even a normally recurring aspect of global cycling! Didn't there have to be global warming to get us out of the last ice age?

And so the Bible says, **"For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape." (1 Thessalonians 5:3)**

And so, the very thing the world seeks, that is, peace, will actually lead to destruction as War rides down upon the world removing peace from the earth. Manmade peace is like everything man makes...it's flimsy, and it's temporary.

Following close behind war is the third rider, Famine (show picture)

Revelation 6:5-6

"When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, 'Come and see.' So, I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst 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.'"

The color of the horse and its rider is black signifying suffering and mourning. It's the sorrow and mourning that the world will experience through this coming worldwide famine.

Famine always follows war. Further, withholding food is often a technique of war, making food a weapon. Food is withheld, fields are burned, and those needed to till and harvest the crops are either dead or have been away at war. So after any war there's always some sort of famine.

There are currently 78 million tons of wheat held up in Ukraine that the world cannot get to because Russia is controlling the Black Sea. This is just one of the reasons that victory in Ukraine is in the national security interest of the United States. But more than this, the starvation that is being experienced, for all that stored up wheat, by the people of Ukraine.

Russia and Ukraine together produce nearly 30 percent of the world's wheat and roughly 12 percent of its total calories. Over the past five years, they have accounted for 17 percent of the world's corn, 32 percent of barley (a critical source of animal feed), and 75 percent of sunflower oil (an important cooking oil in many countries). On top of this, Russia is the world's largest supplier of fertilizers and natural gas (a key component in fertilizer production), accounting for 15 percent of the global trade of nitrogenous fertilizers, 17 percent of potash fertilizers, 20 percent of natural gas.

The current state of starvation in Ukraine is not new to these precious people, however. In 1932-33, The Ukrainian famine—known as the Holodomor, a combination of the Ukrainian words for “starvation” and “to inflict death”—by one estimate claimed the lives of 3.9 million people, about 13 percent of the population. And, unlike other famines in history caused by blight or drought, this was caused when a dictator wanted both to replace Ukraine's small farms with state-run collectives and punish independence-minded Ukrainians who posed a threat to his totalitarian authority. His name was Joseph Stalin.

How does this historical reality and the sound of the approaching hoofbeats of the black horse not make us mindful of what is to come?

The current crisis threatens to cause a global food shortage. The United Nations has estimated that up to 30 percent of Ukrainian farmland could become a warzone

To understand the seriousness of this famine is to understand the meaning of the words.

A denarius at that time represented a day's wage. So, for a day's wage a person could buy only enough for themselves or their family. And so, if someone is lucky enough to find work, the money they earn will only be enough to pay for their food, which begs the question, “How will they provide for the other necessities of life, like a roof over their head, and utilities?”

The voice goes on to say, “Don't harm the oil or the wine.” Oil and wine are often associated with the rich. They were luxury items in the ancient world.

What this is saying is that while the famine is worldwide, it's not universal, that is, it will mainly affect the poor and middle class. Imagine walking into a grocery store and having only enough for a loaf of bread and some milk only to find them in short supply while there's plenty of butter, jam, and liquor.

This became evident during the coronavirus shutdown and panic buying set in. Gone was toilet paper and paper towels, soap, meats, milk, eggs, bread, cereal, fruits and vegetables, or the necessities. But in great supply were ice crême, candies, liquor, energy drinks, and the other non-essentials.

To put this into perspective, one famine observer said, “As famine unfolds, antisocial behavior – hoarding, crime, etc. – increased, social arrangements erode, people see or abandon their assets, and out migration accelerates. In the midst of all this malnutrition rates soar, infectious diseases spread, and people die in unusual numbers.”

Therefore, as we look at this scale in his hands, it would seem that while it is meant to weigh out the money for the food, it would also seem that it is unfairly balanced favoring the rich over the poor.

The last rider to come onto the scene after the Antichrist, War, and Famine, is Death (show picture).

Revelation 6:7-8

7 When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” 8 And I looked, and there was a pale green horse. The horseman on it was named Death, and Hades was following after him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill by the sword, by famine, by plague, and by the wild animals of the earth.

As Ukrainians flee their country from Russia’s military onslaught, they face the prospect of the invisible enemy – bacteria and viruses that capitalize on the overcrowded conditions brought on by the bloody invasion, according to the Washington Post.

"As we’ve seen in wars over the years, viruses and bacteria are happy to exploit those situations where human beings are put under pressure," said Máire Connolly, professor at the National University of Ireland Galway who studies the relationship between war and disease.

The imagery is startling beyond imagination. The color of the horse is a pale green. “pale” comes from Greek word (chlorine/chlorophyll), and speaks of a ghastly green color...it’s the idea of a body that has turned green and rotten w/ decay...and acc’d to v. 8 during the tribulation, 1/4th of the world’s population will die. Think about that and let that soak in. Right now, that represents well over a billion people, that’s a thousand million plus! How will this happen? This is just speculation, but that could include something like germ / biological warfare, or something nuclear in nature on a national level. And if that wasn’t enough, following this rider, in its wake, is hell itself.

But what is even more telling is that this last word for death is the Greek word for “pestilence,” which back then meant death. And this fits into what we know about the aftermath of warfare. First comes famine, which is followed closely by pestilence and disease.

The question isn’t when infectious diseases are going to be wiped out, but rather it’s where the next new plague will appear.

Many of the bacteria that caused infectious diseases, and that were once thought by doctors and scientist as being eradicated or under control, are making dangerous and fatal comebacks because they’ve made themselves resistant to the drugs and antibodies developed to combat them. And somehow in the madness of the Covid pandemic we’ve lost sight of diseases like tuberculosis, hepatitis, meningitis, dysentery, typhus, staph infections, and venereal diseases. And more recent ones to fight, such as the Ebola virus, which hasn’t been stopped, but rather it’s still increasing, along with the still fatal HIV/AIDS virus.

Further, what’s interesting is that beasts are included in this destruction. It’s been said that the most destructive creature on the earth is the rat. It’s a menace to human health and food supplies. It’s been estimated that 1 billion dollars of food is lost each year in the United States alone to the rat. But also they carry fleas that sometimes carry

the bubonic plague, which is over 95 percent fatal, and has destroyed 1/2 of Europe's population in the 14th century.

Conclusion

The aftermath of these four riders, these riders on the storm will be the greatest destruction of human life so far ever recorded. One fourth of the human population will die with these last three horsemen. Notice the wording, "to kill with sword, with hunger, with death."

The Bible says when Noah built that ark he was moved w/ fear of what was coming. If you're not saved and this message scares you, you've got good reason to be afraid!... **for these 4 horsemen are ready to ride**...they're saddled up, and if you'll put your ear to the ground I think you'll hear them coming! The stage is set for the rapture of the church...and these seals will begin to be opened, and these 4 horsemen will ride.

Now, it's not just the religious world that's warning that the world is headed for chaos. Even the secular world is feeling a sense of impending doom.

George Borgstrom in his book "Hungry Planet" said, "it is sobering to realize that no part of the world, in the event of serious crop failure, is more than 1 year away from critical starvation. And even in the rich United States, with all it's surpluses, we are not more than 2 years away." That's the secular world speaking there.

While you and I as Christians will likely escape the brunt of this evil posse, I mourn for those who will be left behind and who'll suffer and die as God's wrath descends upon this earth. Frankly, if I hadn't accepted Jesus as my Savior and Lord, and knowing what's coming, I'd probably hit the floor running to the altar.

Hebrews 2:3a says to us this morning, **"...how will we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?"**

There's one more rider I need to tell you about this morning.

Revelation 19:11-16 New King James Version

11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

(BTW...Note image depicting Christ's return...NOT a Tatoo!)

So we need to ask if we've neglected this great offer of salvation? And if we have, how will we ever escape?