

**HOPE OF
ISRAEL
MINISTRIES**

BIBLE

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE



“And another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to...take peace from the earth...”

**Principles of Prophecy -- The Red Horse
of Revelation 6:4**

Lesson 36

An Open Letter from the Staff...

Taking into consideration the significance of the horse as a Biblical symbol, and viewing the subject in the light of numerous other facts, it is clear that the four horses and their riders present a prophetic picture of the mighty spiritual influences, agencies or powers, which were to arise and go forth into the entire world at the beginning of the "Christian Era." These agencies have imparted special characteristics to that great era that distinguish it from all previous periods of the world's history.

The most prejudiced enemy of the Messiah cannot deny that our era is clearly marked off from the eras that preceded it due to various characteristics that are all its own. These most distinctive features are due entirely to influences that came into operation *at and immediately after the death and resurrection of the Messiah*. By common consent this age is known as the "Christian Era" and its civilization is commonly termed "Christian Civilization"; and throughout the world its system of reckoning time has the supposed date of the Messiah's birth for its starting point. As a result, all men throughout the civilized world (in various ways) render involuntary recognition to the Messiah. They acknowledge, even though it may be most repugnant for them to do so, that his doctrine has been the leading factor in shaping the course of human affairs throughout the age, and that his time in the world was the beginning of an *entirely new order of things* among men.

After retrospectively contemplating the age in which we live -- and noting the outstanding features that mask it -- we cannot help but observe that the spiritual powers or agencies that have had the major part in shaping the course of human affairs from the dawn of the era until now have been FOUR in number. Moreover, following a careful examination of those powers or agencies we find that they correspond respectively, and in the PRECISE ORDER in which they arose, to the symbolic representations of the FOUR HORSES AND THEIR RIDERS.



HOPE OF ISRAEL MINISTRIES **BIBLE** CORRESPONDENCE COURSE LESSON 36

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About Our Cover...

The Red Horse of Revelation 6:4 taken from an illuminated parchment dated 1047 A.D.

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The Red Horse of Revelation 6:4

LESSON 36

In a book written by Howard B. Rand entitled *Study in Revelation*, the author presents the following interpretation of the Red Horse of Revelation 6:4 --

“The red horse signifies tyranny, misrule and bloodshed. The earth is the Roman world and in the killing of one another is indicated the internal strife and slaughter among her citizens. The rider of the white horse had a bow with which to prosecute to a successful conclusion distant conquests, but the rider of the red horse is given a SWORD for he is to kill near at hand and within the confines of the Empire.

“The period covered by this rider of the red horse is the years of turmoil and persecution from the time of Nero to the edict of Milan, under Constantine. Here are pictured revolts, revolutions and bloodshed that followed in the wake of Rome’s conquest and expansion. Murder became domesticated in the palace of the Caesars. The Praetorian Guards put up the imperial power at auction and sold it to the highest bidder...The Goths, Germans and Persians, who had so long threatened Rome, invaded her territory on every side. During the general confusion many usurpers sprang up over the empire and established short-lived kingdoms. It was an era of tyrants” (Destiny Publishers, Merrimac, MA 1985, pp. 39-40).

In the book *Then Is Finished the Mystery of God*, we find a different twist on the interpretation:

“The horse that John saw come forth was ‘fiery-colored,’ flame-colored, red like blood. Its color suggested blood! Very appropriately so, because it fitted in with the mission on which the horse’s rider rode, namely, ‘so that they should slaughter one another.’ Besides this, since it was



The remorse of Nero after killing his mother.



Bronze statue of Constantine in York Minster, England, near the spot where he was proclaimed emperor in 306 A.D.

granted to the rider ‘to take peace away from the earth,’ what could this mean but war, bloody war? So, then, when the Gentile Times ended in 1914 and the Rider on the white horse did ride forth, was this event marked by bloody war?

“Yes, world war, the first world war of human history! By October 5, 1914 (the middle of the seventh Jewish lunar month, Tishri 15), the Gentile Times had ended in that year, and by that time there were nine nations and empires involved in war, and it was really a world war. Many more nations entered the war after that

date, till finally twenty-eight were involved. With good reason the vision to John showed that to the rider on the fiery-colored horse a 'great SWORD' (a symbol of war) was given. Indeed, the quantity and size of carnal weapons employed in that first world war were the largest up till that time in all human history, airplanes and armored tanks now coming into use in warfare.

"With such a 'great sword' a great slaughter could be made of humankind, making the earth run red with blood....so that to that symbolic rider of the fiery-colored horse it was in real fact 'granted to take peace away from the earth'" (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1969, pp. 50-51).

Not to be outdone, author Marshall W. Best has this to say --

"The second rider emerges after the opening of the second seal (Rev. 6:3, 4). The second is similar to the first rider, but actually a consequence of the first. War erupting (the first rider) results in extensive and PROLONGED COMBAT (the second rider). The first rider initiates the war, while the second EXPANDS IT....

"Germany's seemingly limited invasion of Poland in 1939 instigated a huge war that resulted in untold millions of casualties all over Europe, Africa, and Asia. The rider of the first seal is as Germany invading little ol' Poland. The second rider will be the FUTURE WAR as the expansion into Russia, Japan, North Africa, China, and America was in World War II. This war will start out in one region, but will flare up rapidly into a MASSIVE WAR with prolonged, devastating consequences.

"491. The second seal illustrates that the war will expand into a much larger, REGIONAL CONFLICT" (*Through the Prophet's Eye*. WinePress Publishing, Enumclaw, WA 2000, p. 404).

A Worldwide Church of God publication, entitled *The Red Horse: War* by George



World War I infantry in reserve awaiting orders, 1916. Battle of Morval. Jehovah's Witnesses believe WWI to be the Red Horse of Revelation 6:4.

Ritter, projects the Red Horse way ahead into the future:

"John was not speaking [in Rev. 6:4] about the fall of Jerusalem. That war was already some twenty years behind him. John was referring to FUTURE EVENTS that would bring 6000 years of human history crashing to a cataclysmic close.

"The context of the book of Revelation alone demonstrates this....

"So John is referring to A TIME YET AHEAD OF US when 'peaceful coexistence' will be a thing of the past" (1975, p. 48).

Fred Miller, to further confuse the issue, hones in on the period of 180-270 A.D. --

"**2. Red:** is a symbol of blood, war, fire, not of 'good.' 'Take peace from the earth' indicates INTERNAL WAR, not killing the enemy, it is a figure of CIVIL WAR. 'A great sword' indicates a LOT OF DYING IN BATTLE. So the second period of time should be characterized historically by breakdown of society, a great deal of armed conflict with many killed in CIVIL DISORDERS and not because of invasion of outdoors. This must follow a

period of peace and 'good' and expansion....

"2. The Red Horse, when they kill each other with a great sword.

"So low had Rome sunk that Julianus bought the throne at public auction. Eighty emperors occupied the throne within a period of ninety years, and most of them met death by violence.'

"Thus the period of the next ninety years from 180-270 was a period of CIVIL WAR, DISORDERS and disruption, just as the symbol states" (*Revelation: A Panorama of the Gospel Age*. Moellerhaus Books, Clermont, FL, 1993, pp. 61 & 67).



Above -- A coin of Emperor Julianus. To the Left -- Emperor Julianus. Some think he was emperor at the time of the Red Horse.

As is the case with the White Horse, there appears to be NO END to the GUESSES or "interpretations" available for this Red Horse. Notice this novel approach from the Internet --

"In Revelation there are the Four Horses of the Apocalypse, the White Horse is the peace of Israel, that will occur during THE YEAR OF JUBILEE. The year of Jubilee ends in December of '98, then comes the Red Horse meaning WORLD WAR, and this war will come in the winter season following the White Horse....

"While the riders on the horse are the symbols of the events, the horses themselves are the QUICKNESS OF THE EVENTS following one another. But while Israel is in her year of

Jubilee, the Red Horse cannot enter until the year of Jubilee is fulfilled. So when the year of Jubilee is complete in December '98, the Red Horse will come as foretold by Jesus in Matthew 24:20-21" (*Last Day's Prophecy: Countdown to Armageddon*, <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Agora/7197/gulf.html>).

More confusion! Moving further into the realm of the bizarre we find this gem:

"What is the great sword of the red horse of revelation? More and more it would seem that it is not nuclear but rather BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS. Biological weapons are the most destructive of all weapons of war ever developed" (<http://www.Dccsa.com/greatjoy/Rev64bio.htm>).

Instead of stumbling around in the darkness like people have with the White Horse, let us examine this horse and rider of Revelation 6:4 more closely. Let us once again determine -- using the Bible as a guide -- the TRUTH behind this age-old enigma!

Hard Upon the Heels

The color of the horse (red), the words "to take peace from the earth" and "kill one another," and the SYMBOL of "a great

sword" clearly testify as to the significance of this feature of John's vision.

What we have here is a symbolic prophecy of WAR!

But it would be a great mistake to regard this symbol as meaning only -- or even primarily -- PHYSICAL wars. It signifies something much BROADER than that -- namely STRIFE OR CONFLICT OF EVERY SORT. What is pictured here is something SPIRITUAL rather than material.

1. Notice **Matthew 10:34**.

COMMENT: The occasion was the FIRST sending forth of the 12 disciples to proclaim that the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God was at hand -- see **verse 5**.

2. What would happen if the household they visited was not worthy? **Matthew 10:13**.

3. What did the Messiah then warn his disciples would happen? **Matthew 10:17-21**.

COMMENT: Here we have the Messiah's own words, spoken at the FIRST GOING FORTH OF THE GOSPEL (the White Horse), that the IMMEDIATE EFFECT would be antagonism, conflict and deadly strife.

THE RED HORSE WAS TO FOLLOW HARD UPON THE HEELS OF THE WHITE HORSE!

4. Read **Matthew 10:34** again.

COMMENT: To put the entire matter into a single vivid sentence, the Messiah draws a word picture which STRIKINGLY AGREES with this detail of the rider on the Red Horse: "Do not think that I came to *bring peace* on earth. I did not come to *bring peace* but a *sword*."

5. Compare **Matthew 10:34** with **Revelation 6:4**.

COMMENT: When we compare the words of **Matthew 10:34** with those of the vision (**Revelation 6:4**), "And it was granted to...*take peace from the earth*...and there was given him *a great sword*," it becomes strikingly CLEAR that the prophecy and the vision refer to the SAME THING!

6. The Messiah's next words explain the figurative expression "a sword" -- **Matthew 10:35-36**.

7. The words of the Messiah, recorded in **Luke 12:49-53**, throw additional light on the subject.

COMMENT: Speaking prophetically and in highly figurative language of the period of his absence, the Messiah used these words: "I came to send FIRE on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" Now it is clear from what follows that the word "fire" in this saying is descriptive of the SAME THING as the word

"sword" in **Matthew 10:34**. "Fire" and "sword," when used figuratively, are commonly joined together.

8. Read **Micah 7:6**.

COMMENT: The words of the Messiah, recorded in **Matthew 10:35**, are a quotation from this verse in Micah. The birth of the Messiah is foretold a little earlier in this same prophecy (**Micah 5:2**), and his sacrificial death is implied in **Micah 6:6-7**.

COMMENT: It is highly instructive to trace out the CONNECTION between the going forth of the gospel and the various forms of strife -- including wars -- that followed. The Red Horse always gallops hard after the White Horse. Various kinds of "wars and fightings" followed the message of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God everywhere, and have followed it from the days of the apostles until now. The Good News of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God has DIVIDED families into hostile camps, breaking the very closest ties of nature. Then, its effects widening, it has SEPARATED communities into antagonistic parties; and then nations; and finally it has SET NATION AGAINST NATION.

Sometimes the warfare has been confined to words, feelings and attitudes. But more often than not, it has taken the form of PHYSICAL VIOLENCE -- persecutions, imprisonments, tortures, and where there was resistance (as between Protestants and Catholics in France and elsewhere) civil wars.

It is safe to say that all other causes of dispute PUT TOGETHER have not contributed nearly so much to hostility between human beings as the single cause of religious difference regarding the Good News of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God. How amazingly true were those few words of the Messiah -- "I did not come to bring peace but a sword"!

Additional Reading...

The *Four Horsemen* of the Apocalypse

The Red Horse Begins to Ride

In the Book of Acts we are given to see clearly the beginning of the career of the Red Horse rider. After such a start -- such booming, powerful growth under the White Horse -- the infant Ecclesia seemed to be overwhelming the world. But it was not long to be so!

1. What kind of reception did the world give YEHOVAH's Ecclesia? **Acts 2:13.**

2. Does the TRUTH make some people MAD? **Acts 4:2.**

3. Had the Messiah prophesied persecution? **John 15:20; II Timothy 3:12.**

4. Did persecution come early? **Acts 5:17-18.**

5. Did "a great persecution" arise about Stephen? **Acts 6:9-13.**

6. Did Saul -- who later became Paul -- persecute the fledgling Ecclesia? **Acts 8:1, 3.** To what did this lead -- to a complete scattering of the members of the Ecclesia? **Verse 1.**

7. Did the newly converted Saul narrowly escape death after the Judeans plotted to kill him? **Acts 9:23-25.**

8. What happened when Herod the king started to harass the Ecclesia? **Acts 12:1-4.**

9. At Antioch in Pisidia, did the "Jews" persecute Paul and Barnabas and expel them out of their coasts? **Acts 13:45, 50.**

10. At Iconium did the Judahites ("Jews") stir up the Gentiles against them? **Acts 14:2, 5.**

11. At Lystra did the Judahites actually STONE Paul and drag him out of the city thinking him dead? **Acts 14:19-20.**

12. At the first appearance of the Good News of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God in Europe -- at Philippi -- antagonism and persecution immediately raised their ugly heads. **Acts 16:19-27.**

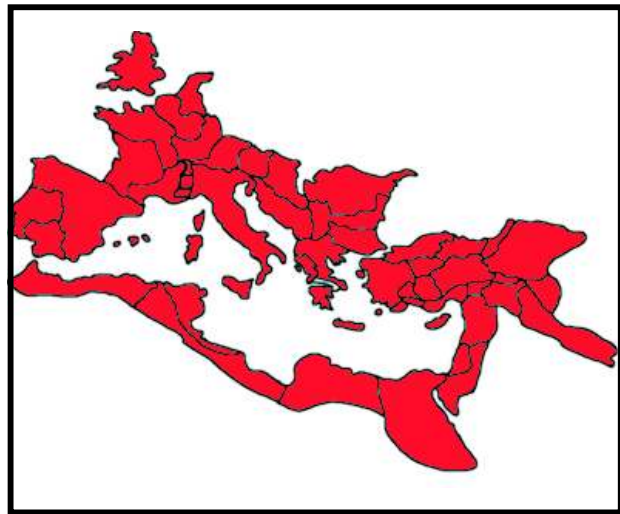
13. Next, at Thessalonica, the entire city was set in uproar. **Acts 17:5-9.**

COMMENT: At Corinth and Ephesus it was the same story. The Good News was making its way against the united opposition of Judaism,

Paganism, Greek philosophy, and Roman cynicism -- which afterwards changed to FIERCE PERSECUTION. Everywhere the White Horse caused STRIFE. The Red Horse was now riding at full gallop.

Pax Romana

It should be noted that there is nothing in the symbols of the second seal (Red Horse) that indicates actual PHYSICAL war. That is seen under the fourth seal where we find the words "to kill with the sword." In the case of the Red Horse the words "to take peace from the earth" implies a time when there was PEACE on the earth, and does NOT imply war in the ordinary sense. The word "peace" in its Biblical significance means WELFARE, PROSPERITY, TRANQUILITY.



The Roman Empire at the height of Pax Romana.

At the time of John all of the known world was embraced in the PEACEFUL STATE known as the Pax Romana -- a state of political tranquility maintained by the iron hand of Imperial Rome. Historians describe this remarkable era as "The two centuries of peace" that began with the reign of Augustus Caesar (30 B.C. to 14 A.D.). The Pax Romana was thoroughly established over the entire Roman world in the days of Tiberius Caesar, the



It was the force of Roman arms that kept the Pax Romana for almost 210 years.

successor of Augustus, who ruled the Empire at the time of the Messiah's ministry, and it continued through the reigns of Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, Titus, Trajan and Hadrian, to that of Marcus Aurelius.

With this fact in mind we can see TREMENDOUS SIGNIFICANCE in the words spoken concerning the Red Horse rider, that it was "to take peace from the earth." That was done so effectively and permanently that STRIFE, WARS and FIGHTINGS have not ceased until now -- nor will to the end. Clearly, those words would not apply to the last days of our era since there will then be NO "peace" to take away from the earth.

Side by side with the success of the White Horse came increasing persecution. Nero, the mad Roman Emperor, initiated the first GOVERNMENT persecution in 64 A.D. A disastrous fire had destroyed a large part of Rome. It was whispered that Nero himself had set it, to clear away the slums that cheapened the view from his palace, and that he had celebrated by fiddling while the capital city burned. To clear himself -- and safeguard his position -- Nero accused Christians of setting the fire.

Some were martyred by lingering torture, others by exposure to wild beasts in the

arena. THE INFANT CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION AT ROME WAS VIRTUALLY DESTROYED!

1. Nero's government had, in 61 A.D., released the apostle Paul after two years at Rome. **Romans 28:17-31, Ephesians 3:1, Philemon 1:1.**

COMMENT: Two years was the maximum imprisonment proscribed by a Roman "statue of limitations" since in the meantime no accusers had appeared against him -- **Acts 28:30, 31.**

2. Was Paul seized again and held at Rome? **II Timothy**

4:6, 13.

3. Did he speak personally before Emperor Nero? **II Timothy 4:16-17.**

COMMENT: Paul appeared before Nero and was finally beheaded at Rome in January, 67 A.D. Be sure to send for the article *Where Did the Apostle Peter Meet His Death?* for more information regarding Paul's imprisonment and death.

Eventually the Ecclesia of YEHOVAH God was silenced everywhere in Roman lands. No meetings were allowed after 69 A.D. out of fear of revolt after the death of two Caesars already that year.

About 90 A.D. Emperor Domitian began the SECOND IMPERIAL PERSECUTION. The apostle John was imprisoned on the isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea where he received the Revelation and the command to write it down. But like Nero's persecution, Domitian's was local and spasmodic. Most of the slain were IN ITALY AND IN ROME ITSELF. Once again, TRUE Christianity, IF ANY, was driven from Rome.

Hope of Israel Ministries -- Preparing the Way for the Return of YEHOVAH God and His Messiah!

A Prediction Fulfilled

It is a truly remarkable fact that the Good News of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God was NOT to bring peace into the parts of the earth to which it was taken but, on the contrary, CONFLICT. How marvelously has the prediction in **Revelation 6:4** been fulfilled -- a prediction that no man would ever have made! Throughout the past 19 centuries the gospel has been THE CAUSE OF STRIFE wherever it has gone. It has aroused ANTAGONISM, HATRED and DISCORD everywhere. In other words, the White Horse rider with his bow has been closely followed -- even to the ends of the earth -- by the Red Horse rider with the "great sword."

YEHOVAH God made known that His Kingdom, instead of finding ready acceptance, was to encounter the most determined and VIOLENT RESISTANCE from all the powers of earth and of hell; that it was to be WAR from start to finish; that His followers must be prepared to endure DIFFICULTIES as good soldiers; that they must take to themselves all the armor of YEHOVAH God; that they would need a sword more than a cloak; that there was to be "no discharge in that war," since they must fight to the very end the good fight of faith.

It seems incredible that after 19 centuries the powers of evil should still be dominant in the world which the Messiah bought back at the cost of his own blood. However, YEHOVAH God has a purpose and we know that "the mystery of God will be finished," and that the time thereof is fixed in YEHOVAH's timetable

1. Notice **Revelation 10:5-7**.

COMMENT: We should note and keep firmly in mind that while the influences or strengths represented by the three horses that follow after the White Horse are, by nature, EVIL and HOSTILE TO THE GOSPEL, they nevertheless have been appointed by YEHOVAH God to further His purposes in spreading the Gospel. The Bible clearly reveals that all the rage, malignancy and opposition of Satan -- all the forces he directs against the work of the

Gospel -- all the sufferings and afflictions he brings upon the servants of the Messiah -- will be turned ultimately to his own undoing and to the accomplishment of the purposes of YEHOVAH God.

2. An example of this is found in **Philippians 1:12-14**.

COMMENT: The opposition that Satan raised up against the apostle Paul caused his removal from the field of labor and his imprisonment in Rome. But this had the opposite effect from that which Satan intended, for Paul, enlightened by the spirit of YEHOVAH God was able to write from his prison and say, "the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the FURTHERANCE of the gospel."

The countless wars, fightings, persecutions and martyrdoms, arising out of the political policies of Papal Rome, would never have occurred but for the gospel. In order to fully realize the IMPORTANT PART that the Red Horse rider has played in shaping the history of the so-called Christian world, we should have to take into consideration EVERY instance of strife, variance, hatred, antagonism and dissension of whatever sort that has arisen during the past 19 centuries because of the preaching of the TRUE gospel and of its acceptance by some in a family, a community, or a nation.

Answers to Questions in Lesson 35:

1. No 2. prayer. 3. spared 4. True humility. 5. Yes. 6. disqualified 7. To fast. 8. No 9. As often as we need to. 10. One to three days -- or less depending on health. 11. Yes. 12. By occasionally fasting while taking in spiritual nourishment. 13. headache 14. To quit sinning! 15. Yes.

Check Your Progress...

Question 1: What religious group believes World War I was the time of the Red Horse of Revelation 6:4? _____

Question 2: Did the Worldwide Church of God believe the Red Horse would ride at “a time yet ahead of us”? _____

Question 3: What does the “great sword” carried by the rider of the Red Horse symbolize? _____

Question 4: Does the sword picture something spiritual rather than material? _____

Question 5: Is it true that the Good News of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God has brought peace wherever it was preached? _____

Question 6: What Roman emperor began the second imperial persecution against YEHOVAH’s Ecclesia? _____

Question 7: When was the first imperial (governmental) persecution initiated and by whom? _____

Question 8: Was Paul put to death for preaching the Good News? _____

Question 9: What was the “Pax Romana”? _____

Question 10: Who was the first person mentioned to persecute the fledgling Ecclesia of YEHOVAH God? _____

Question 11: Which horse symbolizes actual physical war? _____

Question 12: The Red Horse followed hard on the heels of the _____.

Question 13: Are the words “fire” and “sword” commonly joined together when used figuratively? _____

Question 14: What happened at the first appearance of the Good News of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God in Europe? _____

Question 15: What has divided families into hostile camps? _____

The answers will be found in the next lesson. Approximately 3 weeks after receiving Lessons 33-36, you will receive a mail-in test that covers these four lessons. The test will be returned to you after grading. Following the completion of the Hope of Israel Bible Correspondence Course you will receive a **Certificate of Completion**. If you complete the course with a grade of 75% or better you will also receive an **Outstanding Student Award**.

