

Corresponds to Program 22

## THE PALE HORSE STUDY GUIDE

### SPIRITUAL DEATH

#### Revelation 6:7-8

Now we have arrived at the last of the four horses. The first horse was white, representing the purity of the gospel going into the world. The second, the red horse, represents the anger and persecution of non-Christian people against the teachings of Jesus. The black horse represents a time of doctrinal compromise, allowing errors into the church, causing spiritual darkness. The Fourth horse is closely connected to the age of spiritual darkness and it brings spiritual death.

A pale looking person is usually one who is sickly and lacking in blood. This describes the church that has compromised the gospel of salvation through the blood of Christ. This church robbed the people of the understanding of the true gospel, the shed blood of Jesus for remission of sin. The church looks alive on the outside, but is lacking of spiritual life, because the knowledge of the saving blood of Jesus is missing.

During this time, history tells us that two major errors crept into the church:

1. The natural immortality of the soul.
2. The idea of eternally burning hell.

Satan brought these errors into the church to distort the true picture of a loving God. The false doctrine of what happens at death lead to the development of spiritualism, or the idea that a soul goes to heaven or hell at death. It destroys the doctrine of a resurrection of the dead, which is firmly anchored in Christ and the New Testament.

When Christ died, He was buried. He laid in the tomb for three days, and was resurrected on the third day. When Mary first saw Him in the garden just after His resurrection, Christ said:

“Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God”  
John 20:17 KJV.

Another false doctrine was formed in the church, teaching that souls who were not good enough would not go directly to heaven, but went to a middle ground area called purgatory. The person there had to suffer to atone for their own sins to make themselves good enough to enter heaven. The church capitalized on this by setting up a system of penance, either by paying money to the church, or by acts of pilgrimage to gain favor with God in order be saved and get out of purgatory.

The doctrine of an eternally burning hell caused many to see God as an evil tyrant who was greatly to be feared. The love of God was shut out, and the character of God was dimmed. Eventually, this doctrine lead to atheism, and a hatred of God and His religion. The French revolution shows the result of having a false picture of God and His gospel.

Those in the church who questioned these doctrines were labeled as heretics, and were tortured or put to death for challenging the church. Jesus never uses force to get us to obey Him. He asks us to serve Him out of love for His sacrifice for us.



“And the name of him who sat on it was Death...” **REVELATION 6:8**

### KEY SCRIPTURES

**Revelation 6:8** PALE HORSE/DEATH & THE GRAVE **Romans 8:35-39** NOTHING SEPARATES US FROM GOD'S LOVE

**Daniel 7:17, 23** BEAST REPRESENTS KINGDOMS **Isaiah 63:9** IN OUR SUFFERING, JESUS SUFFERS WITH US

During this time, by wielding its assumed power of casting souls into hell, the church gained authority over the kings. They used their influence to force civil governments to enforce their religious laws and dictates, under pain of excommunication. Daniel 7:17, 23 identifies beasts in Bible prophecy as representing kingdoms. Revelation 6:8 explains that this horse had power over a fourth of the earth. The Papal power had just such power over most all of the governments of Europe, a large portion of the world as John would have known it. Civil power, the power of the sword, killed multitudes that would not yield to Rome and her errors.

The church of this age also took advantage of the scarcity of Bibles. It misquoted text and gave tradition equal authority with God's Word. Prophecy was fulfilled as foretold in the New Testament.

"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

The "son of perdition" is also used to describe Judas, one of Christ's disciples whose hand was with His on the table at the Lord's supper yet went forth to betray Him to the civil powers. In the same manner this church-state power has professed to be with Christ but has betrayed Him by compromising the gospel. Satan came to Jesus under a religious

guise, misquoting the word of God, to tempt Him in the wilderness (Matthew 4:6-7; Psalm 91:11-12). The church in this age compromised the Word of God, misrepresented His character through false doctrines and persecuted with the aid of the civil power those who refused to accept their authority.

It was a sad history and one that reminds us of how important the gospel and character of God are for society and nations. Death and Hell and the "sword, hunger, death and by the beasts of the earth" wear down faith in God. These describe war, famine, disease, and like calamities under which billions of people have suffered for centuries. Satan wants us to view suffering as proof positive that no loving God rules the heavens and died for mankind. This final horse and rider embody an argument that is unanswerable in the minds of many. So, in this final pale horse we see a powerful three-fold attack against faith in God: Death, Hell, and human suffering all join to persuade us against a God of love.

The good news is that the Bible teaches that Christ has destroyed death and "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10). The devil would uproot our faith in God. Yet, despite all that we suffer, nothing can separate us from this love of God found in Christ Jesus (see Romans 8:35-39). God suffers with us in all our afflictions and He, too, longs for the day when pain and suffering will be no more (see Isaiah 63:9, Revelation 21:4). ★

