

The Revelation is the last book of the Bible that details the climax and conclusion of **The Great Controversy**; the conflict begun in heaven by Lucifer and to be resolved here upon the earth. The central Figure of the book, as with the entire Bible, is Jesus Christ- He Who is *Alpha and Omega*, the *Beginning and the End* (John 5:39; Rev 1:8). Throughout the Revelation, we are shown [glimpses of God's omnipotence that orders the course of human history](#), dictates the final events upon the earth, and concludes the great conflict with *Christ's Second Coming* and the destruction of the wicked. The last great event revealed, however, is God's restoration of *Paradise Lost*, the eradication of evil and recreation of the Earth for humankind and God to dwell together in peace.

The term *Revelation* is the English translation of the Greek word *Apokalypsis*, comprised of two terms:

Apo: meaning to remove **Kalyps:** meaning a veil

Therefore, the Revelation is the removing of the veil of darkness that has obscured men's understanding of truth. Satan has inspired and propagated the *veil* by way of human dogmas, men's traditions and misinterpretations of Scripture. This last book is more formally called the **Revelation of Jesus Christ** and is hence, Jesus' unveiling the things of Himself and His works for mankind's redemption.

The study of the Revelation summarizes human history, while conveying and forecasting profound spiritual details in events referenced. As a letter to His bride, the church, Jesus foretold Christianity's future. This revelation was from the Christian church's start, immediately after His resurrection

and ascension, to the close of the *Dark Ages*, an era known as the *Time of the End*. The **Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse** gives a broad view of the experience of the church and the perils it would face. This unveiling is expounded in the message to [The Seven Churches of the Revelation](#), given in a later study.

White Horse Era (A.D.31-100) The first period described is represented by a rider upon a white horse, with a bow in his hand, who is given a crown to wear (Revelation 6:2). The rider is said to have gone "*forth conquering, and to conquer.*" Historically, Roman generals rode white horses after a military conquest and therefore, this time denotes a triumphant era for Christianity. The Apostles of Christ, including Peter and Paul, were empowered by the Holy Spirit to perform great signs and wonders. They were led successfully to spread the gospel of Christ to the known world (Col 1:23, Acts 5:12-14, 9:31). The horse and rider's garments, both white, speak of the early church's pure religion based on Christ's example. All were united during this period under "*one Lord, one faith, and one baptism*" (Ephesians 4:5). Man's salvation was by grace alone, the gift of God through faith of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12; Eph 2:8).

Red Horse Era (A.D.100-313) The second era is symbolized by a rider upon a red horse, given a sword with which he was to kill and take away peace from the earth (Rev 6:4). The Apostles, by God's Spirit, foresaw the workings of Satan to hamper the spread of the gospel and were given forewarnings of impending tribulations to befall the church

(2 Thess 1:4-8). Satan would invoke persecution upon the **saints**, faithful followers of Jesus Christ, to halt the success of the *White Horse Era*. Jewish leadership who rejected Jesus Christ as Messiah were the first to persecute Christians. In time, Romans who equated Christianity with Judaism for its upholding the Sabbath, joined as persecutors, especially after the Judeo-Roman war period (A.D.66-70). Decius (A.D.249-251) and the **Great Persecution** enacted by Diocletian (A.D.284-305), Pagan Roman emperors, saw the torture and death of countless Christians for their faith. Of the many forms of cruelty inflicted upon Christians during this period were crucifixion, being clothed in animals' skins and fed to wild beasts, being covered with pitch, burned at the stake and hung as lamps in the streets. Persecution remained one of Satan's preferred methods of warfare against the faithful, to thwart the spread of Christianity.

The period of the red horse and horseman was a *bloodstained era* for the church. The peace that covered the earth during the first age was robbed by the atrocities of the second. However, as one person was being martyred, two more stepped forward bearing the cross of Christ. The indomitable faith and conviction of the martyrs did more to attract new believers than did the preaching of the gospel by the Apostles. Tertullian, A Roman theologian wrote, "*The blood of the martyrs is as seed for the gospel.*" In essence, Satan's efforts to destroy Christianity during this era actually furthered the cause of Christ (Acts 20:28, 29).

Black Horse Era (A.D.313-538) The third period is

described as a rider upon a black horse, carrying balances in his hand (Rev 6:5, 6). With the legalization of Christianity and the cessation of persecution of Christians under Roman Emperor Constantine in A.D.313, the church was subjected to different, far worst threats, *compromise*, false doctrine, and the resulting complacency brought on by materialism. The balances in the hand of the horseman and the words spoken to him may denote the scarcity of true Christian faith, like the staple foods of wheat and barley at the time, they came at an exorbitant cost and were difficult to find. As black is the opposite of white, the black horse is indicative of falsehood and false faith that were pervasive during the era. Satan began a different attack upon the church using influential men, once spoken by Christ as "*ravenous wolves*" (Matt 7:15), to assimilate with the believers and promote false teachings. Satan, who could not beat Christ's ranks, decided to join them. In joining the church, Satan would *corrupt* truth by way of false doctrines, traditions of men, and ceremonial rites; supplanting simple faith in Jesus' finished works and obedience to His commandments. [Roman Emperor Constantine](#), once **Pontifex Maximus**, the head of pagan Roman worship, declared his conversion to Christianity in A.D.312 with the support of politically minded church leadership in Rome. Constantine's clandestine purpose to unite the civically unstable and religiously divided Roman State (part Pagan, Christian, and Jewish), was pivotal in the mass growth and popular reception of Christianity, notwithstanding, offering-up God's

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

Supplemental Study 5 [Based on Revelation 1:1-5, 6:1-8]



Lesson 25

church and true faith as sacrifices upon the *altar of compromise*. The Apostle Paul, like Christ, warned of *savage wolves* within the church that "would not spare the flock but in speaking perverse things would draw away disciples after themselves" Acts 20:28-30. Such were the power-seeking Roman Bishops who were ready to appease the masses for wealth and position. Once despised, Christianity became vogue as hordes of pagans followed the emperor's lead by a deluge of conversions. The church became inundated with converts in name only, taking no interest in Bible doctrine, but holding firm to their pagan traditions. As a result, "truth was cast to the ground" (Dan 8:12) and mass error seized the church. Idolatry through the adoration of saints (Dan 11:38, 39) and the ancient pagan doctrine of an immortal soul were two heresies introduced by Roman Bishops during this period. Most significant was the attempt to alter God's law commanding worship on the seventh day (Sabbath), to man's proclaimed holyday, Sunday, the first day of the week. Sunday observance was subtly introduced as a "celebration", commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In reality, Sunday was an appeasement for recent converts from paganism, accustomed to worshipping the pagan god of the sun, on the day of the sun. The change was also a means to separate worship practices of the time from the despised traditional Jewish and early Christian customs. Adoption of the name *Saturday* for the weekly seventh day, honoring the pagan Roman god Saturn, in place of the traditional Jewish and Christian name, *Sabbath*, meaning "rest", further affirms

the latter point. In time, the Bishop of Rome would assume the title of *Pope* and proclaim primacy over all other church offices, creating a previously unknown hierarchy in the Christian Church (Ephesians 5:23).

Pale Horse Era (A.D.538-1798) The fourth period is described as a rider named *Death* upon a pale horse to whom power was given to kill a quarter of the earth with sword, hunger, and wild beasts. The rider, Death, signifies the apparent demise of true Christianity, resulting in a dead faith. This era, historically called the **Dark Ages**, was marked by extreme spiritual darkness. With Bibles confiscated by the church-led State, few traces of God's true faith, based on teachings of Jesus Christ, His Apostles, and God's law were evident during this period. The unification of church and State started in the prior period and completed by the papacy, created a religiopolitical power where opposition to church teachings was punishable by civil law. Satan had successfully distorted true godliness seen in the early apostolic church for self-serving, self-exalting rituals, founded upon man's dogmas, traditions, and perversions of Bible truth. The Papal See usurped the title of "*God's True Church*", established by, and based upon Jesus Christ (Eph 2:19-22), while blasphemously assuming His Godly prerogatives. Paganism had so infiltrated the church that Christianity became little more than **Baptized Paganism**.

The era's dead faith introduced even more heresies than those of the prior period, including: the teaching that salvation was through church membership rather than by

the free grace of God, the doctrine of purgatory, the selling of indulgences as a means to control minds while enriching the Roman Church, confession of one's sins to a priest, a mere man, and penance – all of which removed Christ as man's sole *Mediator* (1 Tim 2:5) while elevating sinful men.

The Waldenses and the Hussians, loyal followers of Jesus Christ among God's **Church in the Wilderness** during this era of darkness, strove to "*contend for the [Bible] faith once delivered to the saints*" (Jude 3). They were forced to flee to the mountains where the earth provided refuge from the murderous Roman See, who sought them as prey (Rev 12:6, 13-16). When all hope appeared lost for the masses, bewitched by the doctrines of men, as well as for the cause of truth, God raised-up men and women of faith who with access to the Bible, began a *reformation*, protesting the Roman Church's debased condition. God raised up faithful men, even within the Church of Rome, such as Martin Luther, who openly denounced the church's heresies, stirring a rising movement. Slowly and progressively through the **Protestant Reformation**, God brought remembrance of His lost truths, debunking the oppressive teachings of men. The Protestant Reformation brought revival to the dead faith of the era, though Satan would seek to pervert even this movement. Deceived by Satan, many rejected light from the Holy Spirit in favor of darkness by clinging to favored doctrinal errors, thus bringing factionalism and the rise of **Protestant Denominations**.

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