

Chapter 17

Seal Three - The Black Horse

“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.’”

(Revelation 6:5-6)

Inflation The high cost of living; it seems to be going up nearly every day. I know many can perhaps top my stories; still I'd like to share a few from my own viewpoint. I remember my first job; I was a part time bus boy in a restaurant. I worked after school about fifteen to twenty hours a week and after taxes brought home a whopping \$18.00 to \$25.00 per week. By today's standards it was nothing. But then I could get the things I wanted. When I got my license gasoline was running about thirty to thirty-five cents per gallon and in those days often a gas war would erupt and you could sometimes get it for less than thirty cents per gallon. Today thirty cents would be a good shaking off of the nozzle. I remember hearing my parents complain as the price of milk neared a dollar a gallon. Many would compare the lower wages with the lower prices but somehow it just doesn't seem the same. The ratio seems to be much different and what you got for your money seemed to be much larger proportions.

They make automobiles out of more inferior products but in turn charge much higher prices. The quantity and quality goes down but still the prices soar higher and higher.

The recent economic crisis was blamed on housing and yes there were some things that happened there that did not help our situation but in my simplistic mind I remember that before the housing industry went soaring south the gasoline prices went up. The powers that be seemed to want to take the focus off of gasoline and direct our minds towards other things. But the fact of the matter is that gasoline went up first. That caused shipping and freight costs to go higher which in turn began an avalanche on nearly everything else. No one wanted to sacrifice profits and so in order to keep the same bottom line, prices had to go up.

The problem is that wages did not go up. In fact jobs started getting cut. Hours at work began to go down and soon we found ourselves with a 10% unemployment rate. Now people had to make choices on what they purchased which further caused sales to go down and so once again to maintain their higher profits prices went up. But no one was buying and the super powers in the financial world scratched their heads seemingly dumbfounded as to why.

Those of us in the quickly disappearing middle class of society knew that the answer was simple; lower prices would increase sales. Now they might not have such a large profit margin but some is better than none. It just seems like the rich in control can't understand that. To most of them it is all or none.

Even though the large oil companies insisted that they had no choice but to raise prices still each year they report record profits. Now I may be a little foolish here but it seems to me that if you are making more money than ever before then you can afford to lower the prices to increase sales. That is obvious to me. These economic powers have a way of explaining things but so far the explanations that I've heard sounds like their talking out both sides of their mouths. It's nothing more than a dog and pony show.

If it continues (and I believe it will) devastating results are certain to follow. As of this writing the economy seems to be getting a little better. But I believe that it is a false hope. I'm not alone; I've heard the reports of economists that still predict a future drop that could be even more disastrous. I'm not an economist. I don't even pretend to know all the answers and it all seems overwhelming to me at times. But I do know the Word of God. I know that as these horses approach one of them will be the black horse that ushers in inflation such as the world has never witnessed.

War has a way of doing that. Because of destroyed crops, production facilities and so forth costs are certain to soar. Even the deceiving words of the Antichrist will not be able to comfort or explain the devastating economy that will come in as a result of his "peaceful war." Of course he will come up with an explanation. And the world will believe him even though it will be nothing more than a pack of lies.

If we think the economy is bad now just wait; when this period of inflation hits the entire world will feel the pangs of it. The one crying out from the midst of the living creatures says, "*a quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius.*" These are the main ingredients for bread. The denarius in the days of John was equal to full wages for a day. So in essence this voice was saying "a loaf of bread for a day's wages." Now think of that in our modern terms. If I have interpreted this passage correctly that means during the time of the black horse a loaf of bread would be equal to about \$60.00 to \$100.00 depending on your job and current daily wages. Bread was considered to be the common food of all people. When they couldn't eat anything else they could afford to eat bread. But not at those prices!

What we are hearing today is the thundering hooves in the distance. We think we've got it bad now, just wait. It is going to get extremely worse. When the black horse arrives it will come with an economy that will rob the world of its wealth. The commoner (which includes most of us) will be in deep trouble and full dependence on the rich and ultimately on the Antichrist.

This economic situation will result in a famine – But a way different kind of famine than the world has ever seen. Famine means that there is a lack of food – Not enough to go around; to feed everyone. In past history this world has experienced great famines. There have been times when, because of a lack of rain, the earth has ceased from producing fruit. These famines have been localized to countries or regions of the world. Great famines have happened and are happening still in the great continent of Africa. During these times the only solution to keep people from starving to death is to import food from countries like our own US of A where we currently have plenty.

The famine caused by the black horse is one of different proportions. It is not said that there is a lack of food. But because of exuberant prices even though the food is in great supply only the rich will be able to afford it (*don't hurt the oil and wine*). This will be a famine of resources with which to buy food. Let that one mull over in your mind for a while.

Here is what I see happening ... once again this is my speculation, not what is specifically spoken in the Word of God, so take it as you will. This is what makes sense to me. I believe that because of this great inflation caused by the war waged by the Antichrist that a dependency on his government will become a necessity. In the United States (and other countries as well) a welfare state has developed. Many depend on food stamps or a monthly government check in order to make a living. Without these provisions many would not have the resources to have a place to live or the ability to buy food. We could spend pages talking about what is wrong with this system but for what we are trying to establish here we will stop at that.

I believe that the Antichrist will set up a system much like our welfare system that will be considered as a charity to those who can't afford the high prices of food. In order to maintain control of the system he will devise a mark, perhaps a chip located underneath the skin of the forehead or right hand. This chip will contain all anyone would ever want to know about this individual – family history, any criminal records, any and all financial information and perhaps even tracking information. It will become a requirement not only of the poor but also of the rich and will develop into what the Bible calls “The Mark of the Beast.” We will talk more about his in subsequent chapters.

Can you see the well-laid plan of the Antichrist? Each step will come so quietly and subtly that the average person won't know what has hit him until it is too late. Only those who have committed themselves to Jesus Christ and have studied His Word – The Bible, will be able to recognize what is happening. The rest of the world will fall right into place and in line behind the Antichrist.

I've heard countless people who were not Christians say, “I'd never fall for that. I won't let them put that awful Mark of the Beast on my forehead or on my hand!” But folks, again it will happen in such a progressive and underlying way that those who aren't committed to Jesus Christ will just follow the progression. History tells us that. Most have already done it in other situations.

This world leader influenced and controlled by none other than the devil himself will be so charismatic, and his personality will be so magnetic that the world will flock to him as he talks of peace, brings war to control those opposed to his regime and allows the financial system to evolve into one that he controls and people will fall for his smooth, kind words and right into his evil and fatal trap.

The only way to keep from it and escape his clutches is to become a committed born-again Christian – A devoted follower of Jesus Christ. We must study the Bible to know what is coming. It is all there; it is all laid out if we will read it in its rightful context and get beyond the teaching hype of others. We can know and we can be prepared. But this is the only way. Don't

be deceived by the progressive but fatal trap of the devil. Come to Christ even now and be prepared for the thundering hooves of the approaching horses.

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