



The
Four Horsemen
of the
APOCALYPSE

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We should already hear and intently fear
the galloping hoofbeats of the four horsemen.
They are racing toward us at this very moment.

And here is the most terrifying truth of all:
God's own people are going to be devastated
more than anyone else!

This booklet is not to be sold.

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the public interest, published by
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Chapter 1 by Gerald Flurry
Chapters 2-4 by Wayne Turgeon

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Chapter 1

The White Horse

THE MOST IMPORTANT PROPHECY CHRIST DELIVERED WHILE HE was on Earth was the Olivet prophecy. All prophecy really revolves around this prophecy, which is recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. I believe this is the most pivotal prophecy in the Bible. Some commentaries call it “the little apocalypse,” and for good reason.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all recorded the gospel of Christ. Why is John the only one of the four Gospel writers who did not record the Olivet prophecy? Actually he does, but not in the Gospel of John. He records it in the book of Revelation, chapter 6. It is in this chapter that John discusses the seven seals—with the *emphasis* on the *first four*—otherwise known as the FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE. The word *apocalypse* is an untranslated Greek word which means *revelation*. In the book of Revelation, John records the seven seals, which are *interpreted* by Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. So actually, all four of those authors had a version of the Olivet prophecy.

BIBLE INTERPRETS THE BIBLE

The book of Revelation has many symbols with many different interpretations. However, we must remember that the *Bible interprets itself*. Most Bible scholars fail to realize this fact, and that is why we see so many bizarre interpretations of the book of Revelation.

Only Christ can unlock the seven seals. “And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” (Revelation 5:5). These seven seals are unlocked in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy [Spirit]” (2 Peter 1:20-21). No man can interpret the Bible. That is the first lesson we need to learn.

THE WHITE HORSE

Let’s notice the first seal. “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the *four* beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a *white horse*: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer” (Revelation 6:1-2). Men usually assume this refers to Jesus Christ. That is why multiple millions of people are deceived by a false Christianity! (2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:9). A Christian is one who **FOLLOWS CHRIST**. So let’s make certain we let Christ interpret this first horseman of the apocalypse.

It is true that Christ will return to Earth on a white horse. “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a *white horse*; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth *goeth a sharp sword*, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS**” (Revelation 19:11-16). But notice carefully, Christ has a **SWORD**—*not a bow*.

The man on the *white horse* in Revelation 6, like the other three horsemen of the apocalypse, BRINGS GREAT SUFFERING UPON THE EARTH. Here in Revelation 19, CHRIST BRINGS ABUNDANT PEACE AND JOY, *after He smashes the rebels*.

The prophecies symbolized by the four horsemen began to be fulfilled at Christ's first coming. The evils continue until His Second Coming. By far, the most intense suffering is *just before* Christ's Second Coming.

The first horseman is *first* because he causes the most suffering by far! He goes forth "conquering, and to conquer." The word *conquer* means "to come off with the victory" (*Thayer's Lexicon*). This conquering occurs in the time between Christ's first coming and His Second Coming. The first horseman conquers BY DECEIVING! The other three horsemen, on the surface, would appear to cause far more serious catastrophes. But in truth, the *first* horseman *causes* most of the gruesome events of the other three! These catastrophes occur because men are deceived. The first and most deadly horseman is *religious deception*! And yet men are so casual and shallow in their religious interests that they fail to see this. Let's allow Christ to unlock this first seal for us.

RELIGIOUS DECEPTION

Mankind has no idea how much suffering is caused by religious deception. "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and *what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*" (Matthew 24:1-3). Christ was addressing only a small group of His own disciples—not the world. This was only His small inner circle of believers. The focus of the message was on today—the end of the world, or the END OF THIS AGE. Not only does Christ give a sign of the end of the world, He gives a sign of the *end* of the end time! He gives specific details to watch for!

Now notice the *first* and most important warning Christ gave them. “And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that *no man deceive you*. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (verses 4-5). This is the first horseman of the apocalypse! It is *not just about deception from false, non-Christian religions*. PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE DECEIVED ABOUT CHRIST AND HIS MESSAGE—about what *true Christianity* really is. And it gets so bad that CHRIST’S OWN DISCIPLES ARE DECEIVED! So this even goes beyond false Christianity. The first horseman will also deceive God’s chosen people!

When Christ mentions the word *you*, He is discussing His own disciples. They too are deceived into believing a message about the *person of Christ* while rejecting His message. These are people who were given God’s Holy Spirit and His precious truth. Then they rejected it for a false Christianity!

DO WE SEE HOW DEADLY THIS FIRST HORSEMAN OF THE APOCALYPSE IS? It gets so bad that many of God’s elect get killed because they become deceived! “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall KILL YOU: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake” (verse 9). Christ is still addressing His own disciples. That is why He addresses them as *you*. This happened in A.D. 70, but that was only a *type* of the end-time deception. “And because iniquity shall abound, the *love* of many shall wax cold” (verse 12). The word *love* is from the Greek word *agape*, which means *God’s own love*. God gave His most precious gift of love and they let it wax cold. That prophecy is being fulfilled this very minute in God’s Church!

The word *many* should read *the majority*. The MAJORITY OF GOD’S OWN PEOPLE ARE LETTING THEIR LOVE WAX COLD IN THIS END TIME! It’s the same Laodicean problem related in Revelation 3:14-20. There is no worse tragedy for God’s own people. Even they are struck by the arrows from the bow of the first horseman.

These are Christ’s *own words* WARNING US. THIS IS HIS STRONGEST WARNING TO US! Yet even most people in God’s Church take it lightly and are deceived.

This tragedy has been unfolding for almost 2,000 years. But it gets a hundred times worse in this end time! It all happens because they are deceived by the first horseman of the apocalypse.

The literal Greek in Luke's account states, "See that you are not *led astray*" (Luke 21:8). Remember, Christ was talking to His own disciples. Only the saints can be LED ASTRAY because only they have—or had—the truth! This prophecy is about God's Church being taught God's precious truth and then being deceived. They don't just *stumble*. They are led away from God!

This is the same end-time problem prophesied in 2 Thessalonians 2, the book of Malachi and many other prophecies. God's own people are deceived about *Christ's message*. They are also deceived about a man God used in this end time.

END-TIME ELIJAH

Here is a very revealing verse. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). The word *end* here is not the same as the Greek word used for the *end* of the age (see verse 3). *Thayer's Lexicon* defines the word *end* in verse 14 this way: "In the Greek writing, always the end of SOME ACT OR STATE, but *not* the end of a period of time ... what end is intended the reader must determine by the context."

So what really ended? When the gospel was preached around the world as a witness, then *that work* ended. It was the end of the Philadelphia era and the beginning of the Laodicean era in God's Church (Revelation 3:7-20). A man came and FINISHED an end-time work (Zechariah 4:9). Then he was taken out of the way (2 Thessalonians 2:7). For more information, request a free copy of *Malachi's Message to God's Church Today*.

But who was that man? Remember, Matthew 24 is addressed to Christ's own disciples. Now we can see another specific way of determining which of God's people *are* and *are not* DECEIVED BY THE FIRST HORSEMAN OF THE APOCALYPSE. "And his *disciples* asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias [or Elijah] must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and RESTORE ALL THINGS" (Matthew 17:10-11). Christ personally prophesied that He would send an end-time Elijah just before His Second Coming. This man would RESTORE ALL THINGS. He would do the *greatest work* of ANY OF GOD'S LEADERS IN THE END TIME. But

God's end-time Laodicean Church would be deceived about *who this man was*—JUST AS THEY WERE IN THE FIRST CENTURY ABOUT AN ELIJAH WHO CAME THEN! "But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they KNEW HIM NOT, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the DISCIPLES UNDERSTOOD that he spake unto them of John the Baptist" (verses 12-13). *Only* the TRUE DISCIPLES knew that John the Baptist filled the first-century role of Elijah. And *only* God's true disciples today KNOW THAT HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG WAS THE END-TIME ELIJAH!

None of the Laodiceans today recognize Mr. Armstrong as this end-time Elijah. And it is to their own shame!

Remember, this prophecy is *dual*. Christ said so. There was a first-century *type* of Elijah and an end-time *type* of Elijah.

The gospel of the Kingdom was not preached around the world from the first century until the last. Otherwise, Christ could not have said what He did in Matthew 24:14! So when we saw the gospel being preached around the world, we should have known it was the end time. But when that work ceased, WE WERE IN THE VERY END OF THE END TIME!

When Mr. Armstrong died, it was a GREAT TURNING POINT in this world and in God's Church. THE WHOLE WORLD MUST COME TO SEE THAT! Satan, no doubt, was then cast to this Earth (Revelation 12:9). Satan's own wrath greatly intensified the world's problems (verse 12). Then he persecuted the woman, or God's Church. Only a remnant of God's people were not deceived by Satan; it is these whom God will protect from Satan's greatest wrath—the Great Tribulation (verse 14). But God's Word prophesied that many in God's Church would be deceived shortly before that and would have to go into the Tribulation (verse 17; Revelation 11:1-3).

The first horseman of the apocalypse has struck a powerful blow to God's end-time Church!

Christ prophesied of this tragedy in the very next verse of the Olivet prophecy: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. When ye therefore shall see the *abomination of desolation*, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)" (Matthew 24:14-15). This is referring both to a spiritual

abomination of desolation that destroys God's Church, and to a physical abomination that attacks Jerusalem. I explain this in depth in our free booklet *Daniel—Unsealed at Last!*

When Mr. Armstrong died, the nations of Israel began to collapse very quickly. The physical abomination of desolation began to rise in power just as fast. That is why Christ mentions it immediately after discussing the gospel being preached around the world. That gospel message also contained a warning of Israel's collapse and the rise of the Holy Roman Empire, which is the abomination of desolation. After the gospel was preached around the world, you could see the abomination of desolation rise fast—first spiritually, and now, in Europe today, physically. Shortly, God's people in Judah (called Israel today) must flee when they see this European army (verse 16).

Christ prophesied that His people would *understand*. Do *you understand* this prophecy? If you don't truly understand it, then you have been deceived by the first horseman!

Luke's version of the Olivet prophecy states that the abomination of desolation is an army or armies. "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the DESOLATION thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter therinto" (Luke 21:20-21). Again, God's own people are told to flee at this time. But the Laodiceans won't flee because they are so deceived—by the first horseman of the apocalypse!

Those physical armies that will surround Jerusalem are about to enslave Judah, Britain and America. This abomination will leave many nations in "desolation" shortly before Christ returns.

If God's people didn't even recognize the mighty work of God's end-time Elijah, HOW COULD THEY EVER KNOW WHEN TO FLEE? We recognize the end-time Elijah *by faith* and we flee *by faith*. Now is the time to build that STRONG FAITH.

When the gospel stops going around the world, we can begin to watch for SPECIFIC SIGNS—like God's Church being attacked by armies of demons, the *rapid* collapse of Israel, the rise of the abomination of desolation, nuclear power out of control, and other serious signs we'll mention later.

CHURCH SPLIT

The first horseman of the apocalypse DECEIVES PEOPLE ABOUT CHRIST'S MESSAGE. Satan gets their focus on the *person* of Christ and off His *message*. That also happens to God's own Church, but in varying degrees.

God puts the *focus* on His own Church in this great religious deception. There is an important reason for this. Worldly religions are easily deceived and have never had God's revealed truth. So they don't understand the Bible. Only a tiny percentage of "Christianity" has ever understood God's Word. Satan has to be more subtle and powerful to deceive God's own people. Christ speaks more directly to His people because their salvation is at stake. Those in the world have not yet been called (John 6:44). They will get their chance in the second resurrection.

God's elect *today* will either be resurrected at Christ's return or they will be thrown into the lake of fire!

God actually discusses *three different groups* OF HIS OWN SAINTS in the last few verses of Matthew 24. *Two* of them are mentioned in verse 40: "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left." The *two* are two men (see the New International Version). Luke's version explains this verse better. "I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left" (Luke 17:34). These two men, or leaders in God's Church, are in the same BED. That just means both are in God's own Family. God is speaking *spiritually*.

"Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Matthew 24:41). *Woman* is a Bible symbol for *church*. The *two* women are both grinding at the mill. That means there are two separate churches, but *both of them* are God's churches. Both are grinding at the mill—teaching much of God's truth. But one church has a serious flaw. The Greek reads "in the mill." Both groups are in God's temple (or Church) but one group resides in the outer court (Revelation 11:1-3). These people have a government problem and can't be corrected or *measured* by God. God is not going to take them to a place of safety. They will go through the Great Tribulation because of a lukewarm attitude. One church flees. The other church is

not given that option (Revelation 12:13-17). Its problem revolves around the end-time Elijah, who preached God's gospel around the world. If we look closely, a serious problem can be seen.

The lukewarm church is NOT READY to flee. "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:42-44). Why are they not ready? Their watching is NOT GOOD ENOUGH. Luke says "watch ye"; in other words, you—*individually*—must watch, or you'll end up in the lukewarm church and be plunged into the Tribulation.

We are commanded to watch for a reason. We must warn the world—and even more importantly, GOD'S OWN LAODICEANS! Again, THEIR SALVATION IS AT STAKE! Examine our literature, and you'll see that we warn as Christ commands.

There is no point in watching if we don't warn. The Laodiceans don't see God's most urgent warning message. Some people say we lack love and are attacking our brethren. We are *not* attacking, but we *are* WATCHING and WARNING! God uses us to rebuke them *in love* (Revelation 3:19). That is because their own love is WAXING COLD.

God relates to us why He can't reveal His message to the Laodiceans—even the ones who are grinding at the mill (some of them are not even doing that). "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made RULER over his household, to give them meat in due season?" (Matthew 24:45). One of God's leaders is a "faithful and wise servant." God has made him "RULER over his household"—or Church. *Thayer's Lexicon* defines *ruler* this way: "set one over a thing, (in charge of it), to conduct the worship of God." This Church has God's GOVERNMENT. The same government that God gave to Mr. Armstrong! Many members of the offshoot Laodicean churches left or were cast out of the Worldwide Church of God. But they *rejected* God's government and Mr. Armstrong as being the end-time Elijah. They either had to reject Mr. Armstrong in that role or submit to the government he taught! That is *precisely* what Christ is discussing here. (For more information, request our free booklets *Colossians* and *God's Family Government*.)

The word *ruler* used here is the same word used in Matthew 25:23-24: “His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee RULER over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed.” We must PRACTICE God’s government today TO BE READY TO TEACH IT IN THE WORLD TOMORROW! God says 50 percent of the Laodiceans will finally learn to submit to His government. The other 50 percent won’t learn that lesson and shall lose their salvation! (verses 1-10). Rebellion against government is the main reason.

The Bible was originally written on scrolls without chapter breaks. The chapter breaks were inserted by *men*. The last few verses of Matthew 24 should be followed by the first 10 verses of chapter 25—without a chapter break. It’s all one story flow. That way people can better see the terrifying penalty the Laodiceans must pay for their REBELLION. Without the chapter break, the impact is much stronger. Perhaps now you can better understand *why* we so vigorously warn the Laodiceans. If we truly love the Laodiceans, how can we *not* warn them? The first horseman’s single-most monstrous destruction is inflicted on God’s own Church. MANY THOUSANDS OF GOD’S PEOPLE SHALL DIE FOREVER IN A FEW SHORT YEARS!

The Philadelphia Church of God is the *only* church of God today that continues to teach the same government God taught through Mr. Armstrong. The Laodiceans have rejected that government. That is the main reason God won’t use them to do His Work.

We can’t rule in the World Tomorrow UNTIL WE LEARN TO BE RULED BY GOD! As Mr. Armstrong said, “Government is everything.” That is what the First Commandment is all about, and it is the foundation of all the Ten Commandments.

Worldly religions have always rejected God’s government, which is based on God’s law, the Ten Commandments. Now God’s own people have the same problem. That is why the first horseman of the apocalypse can so easily deceive them. They don’t want God to *totally* rule them!

Mr. Armstrong used God’s government to preach the

gospel around the world and to RESTORE ALL THINGS. That job had never been done before with such power. There is no way that work could have been done without God's government. Just an ounce of logic would tell you so!

After the Laodiceans rejected Mr. Armstrong as fulfilling the Elijah office, it was easy for them to reject God's government. If they had accepted that government, THEY WOULD NEVER HAVE REJECTED MR. ARMSTRONG AS THE END-TIME ELIJAH. THAT WAS A COLOSSAL MISTAKE!

Grinding at the mill is not enough. God still has to TOTALLY AND UNCONDITIONALLY RULE US! The GOVERNMENT OF GOD is what *separates the two women grinding at the mill*.

God's own Laodicean Church is the woman who is grinding at the mill, but is still left to face the Tribulation.

The church that is ruled by God does God's Work. But what is that work? It is to "give them meat in due season"—which certainly includes *watching* and *warning* the Laodiceans and the whole world. Our primary job is *not* to preach the gospel around the world—though we do preach the gospel. The emphasis of our message is to *watch* and *warn*. It is a *season* to warn! And only a short span of time is left to do that job.

We would lose our own blood if we didn't send this warning message (Ezekiel 3 and 33).

We know the end-time Elijah has come and gone. We are in a different season. Tragically, the Laodiceans don't know that. Many of them still think their main job is to do what Mr. Armstrong has *already done*. "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so **DOING**" (Matthew 24:46). WE MUST BE FOUND DOING THE RIGHT WORK IN THE RIGHT SEASON! It's not enough to just be *doing* or just be grinding at the mill. We must deliver the right message, or Christ can't use us to do His Work.

What is the reward for doing this job? "Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him *ruler* over all his goods" (verse 47). God is going to make us *rulers* over the whole universe. The word *ruler* is the same word discussed earlier. Here is the MOST PROFOUND MESSAGE EVER DELIVERED BY GOD! WE MUST BE RULED BY GOD'S GOVERNMENT TODAY OR GOD COULD NEVER ALLOW US TO RULE THE VAST UNIVERSE! (Hebrews 2:7-8). We absolutely must see how towering this glory and responsibility is. It is urgently

necessary that we learn to be ruled now. *Only* Mr. Armstrong taught us *how* to be ruled. It's all for our own golden reward! We can't be Laodicean sloppy in this area!

God won't have another Satan on His hands. Lucifer rebelled and wrecked much of the universe. That happened for one and only one reason: He refused to administer God's government! So Satan rules the first horseman of the apocalypse today—trying to deceive all mankind about God's precious government. He desperately wants to get mankind to follow his rebellion.

Anyone who won't submit to God's government is destined to be deceived by the first horseman!

The fruits prove that Mr. Armstrong had God's government. But every Laodicean rejects it. That is exactly why they are Laodicean!

THE DRUNKEN LAODICEANS

Now let's go on to still another *third* group of God's saints called out of this world. The first horseman of the apocalypse has trampled them underfoot! "But and if that evil servant shall say *in his heart*, My lord delayeth his coming" (Matthew 24:48). Notice they say "My Lord delays His coming" *in their hearts*. It isn't something they express in words. These people believe strongly in Christ's Second Coming. But in their hearts they think He is *delaying* that coming. Christ didn't come when they thought He would, so they blame God. Their faith is breaking down. They began to say "prophecy not" (Amos 2:11-12).

After being disappointed, these people of God got drunk *spiritually*. Remember, God talks to us on different levels. But He talks to His own Church *spiritually*. "And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken" (Matthew 24:49). Which church of God today is smiting its fellow servants? Only the Worldwide Church of God really has that power. It laid the doctrinal foundation established by Herbert Armstrong to waste—wrecking God's true Church. Those who fought these false changes were cast out of the Church by their own "brethren" and "fellow servants"—their own Family (Isaiah 66:5).

Many Philadelphia Church of God members said this was the most traumatic experience of their lives. After all, we are discussing people's eternal lives. A fierce battle raged and still rages between God's very elect and the first horseman. These verses are discussing a devastating Church split. These Laodiceans wanted to "drink with the drunken." They wanted the Babylonian doctrines of this world.

A "son of perdition" is destroying God's true Church! (2 Thessalonians 2). He smites anyone who gets in the way. Only the Worldwide Church of God is flagrantly guilty of this sin. (For a more in-depth study, request a free copy of *Malachi's Message*.)

"The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of" (Matthew 24:50). These people of God don't know the Tribulation is almost upon us. They keep repeating "no man knows the day or the hour," but they rarely if ever say, "it is near, even at the doors" (verses 33-36). Such statements reveal why God calls them *hypocrites*. They are very dishonest in their Bible scholarship! "And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the HYPOCRITES: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (verse 51). Such hypocrites will be cast into the lake of fire. That is the subject here—not just physical death. GOD WARNS THEM THAT THEIR ETERNAL LIVES ARE ABOUT TO BE LOST! This physical life today is their only chance for salvation. It is the *season* to thunder a warning message! Anybody who sees what is happening CAN DO NOTHING LESS!

The first horseman of the apocalypse has deceived this world. But the far greater tragedy is what this deceptive monster has done, *and is doing*, to God's own people. This horse is galloping over God's own saints—deceiving and destroying probably more saints than at any time in the history of God's Church! May God help us to recognize him—and to heed the thunderous warning message coming out of God's *true* remnant Church today!

Chapter 2

The Red Horse

THE FIRST HORSE, A WHITE ONE, WHILE BEING THE LEAST understood, is perhaps the most important because it produces the most insidious destruction: UNIVERSAL RELIGIOUS DECEPTION. Yet we see that the other three horsemen are also heavily involved in and influenced by this world's false "Christian" religions. Few understand the four horsemen because few listen to Christ and His interpretation, which is the vital key to understanding the book of Revelation.

The deceived followers of the man on the white horse "go forth conquering and to conquer" based on their erroneous belief that the white horseman is Jesus Christ. In fact, he is *Satan* DISGUISED AS CHRIST (2 Corinthians 11:14). This leads directly into, and overlaps with, the second horseman of the apocalypse: WAR! The second horseman has wreaked havoc on mankind with religious wars throughout history.

We must be mindful to look to God in order to have these prophetic symbols unlocked to our understanding. It is because man has refused to look to God that he is being hounded by these destructive horsemen to begin with.

Satan has succeeded, via the first horse of religious deception, to deceive all of mankind into following a false christ. He would like nothing more than to blind us to the meaning of the remaining horses, which are saddled up, awaiting one last ride. Only Jesus Christ can open the mysterious SECOND SEAL for us.

A few in this world *have an idea* of what the solution to man's mounting problems is, but even they acknowledge that it is impossible to achieve, given his carnal human nature.

In his book *Politics Among Nations*, Hans Morgenthau wrote, “The overwhelming majority would put what they regard as the welfare of their own nation above everything else, the interests of a world state included. In other words, the peoples of the world are not willing to accept world government, and their overriding loyalty to the nation erects an insurmountable obstacle to its establishment.”

Norman Cousins, author of *In Place of Folly*, wrote, “The nations have insisted on retaining for themselves ultimate authority in matters of security. They want the right to possess greater physical force than they are willing to invest in the organization charged with the maintenance of world peace. They have provided no specific or adequate machinery to prevent aggression.”

After the Japanese surrender in Tokyo harbor ended World War II, Gen. Douglas MacArthur said, “The basic problem is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art, literature and all material and cultural developments of the past 2,000 years. IT MUST BE OF THE SPIRIT IF WE ARE TO SAVE THE FLESH” (*Reminiscences*).

In Matthew 24:6-7, Christ said, “And ye shall hear of WARS AND RUMOURS OF WARS: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.” Though Christ was addressing His disciples then, He had a much larger audience in mind—the multiple billions who inhabit this Earth *today*—at the end of the end time. Christ would never allow such suffering to occur without WARNING His servants first, either in person or through His written Word (Amos 3:7).

The importance of the *duality* of Scripture cannot be emphasized enough. We shall see that Matthew 24 refers to: 1) a first *typical* fulfillment in A.D. 70; 2) a long-term condition prevailing from A.D. 70 until now; and 3) an end-time *anti-typical* fulfillment yet ahead. It is this last type that you and I are staring straight in the face!

John’s vision, revealed by Jesus Christ and recorded by us today in Revelation 6:1-8, differs only slightly from the

Olivet prophecy in Matthew 24 and the other Gospel accounts. Josephus describes in graphic detail the wars and resultant famine and plagues in Jerusalem about A.D. 70, almost 40 years after the Olivet prophecy was first given. (Please read Josephus's *Wars of the Jews*, which tells of thousands of Jews being impaled by the Romans.)

Yes, what Christ said in Matthew 24 indeed had a typical fulfillment in A.D. 70. But John's vision was recorded 20 years *after* the city's fall and the temple's destruction. Nothing in it speaks of historical fulfillment or events occurring in John's day. Instead, it is referring to a FUTURE COMPLETION immediately ahead of us.

AN END-TIME MESSAGE

Revelation is clearly a book for the *end time*. Revelation 9:16 mentions a standing army of about 200 million men. There were not even enough men, women and children alive in the first century for this to be fulfilled then. It wasn't until the end of the 19th century that the world population exceeded 1 BILLION people. Only then could so many men be amassed into such a large fighting force. During the height of World War II, the combined armies of *both* the Allied and Axis forces were LESS THAN HALF (approximately 70 million) of the 200 million mentioned in Revelation.

Even the context of Matthew 24 shows that the ultimate fulfillment of these prophecies is still ahead. Verses 21-22 show that Christ's message would apply at a time when human annihilation was a very real threat. Only since shortly after the last world war and the arrival of nuclear weaponry has this been a practicality. Everything is now in place for the four horsemen to stampede.

"And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was RED: and power was given to him that sat thereon to TAKE PEACE FROM THE EARTH, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword" (Revelation 6:3-4). Jesus Christ opens the second seal and John sees a red horse whose rider is given authority to remove peace from the Earth. When peace is gone, there is only war. The

man on the red horse plainly represents war with its abominable effects. Verse 4 clearly interprets itself, but further proof is given in Matthew 24:6-7 as we have read. Christ practically spells it out for us in His description of the second horseman who represents “wars and rumours of wars.”

But some may argue that man has always had wars. Other questions often raised include: *Which* wars are being referred to in Matthew 24? Does the second horseman represent war in general or one specific war? Again, let’s allow the Bible to interpret itself.

WAR AFTER WAR

The first thing Christ prophesied about was a general condition of war that would extend from His time on Earth until man’s misrule on Earth was finally over. “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars [plural] ...” (Matthew 24:6). The very next thing He said after warning about this seemingly endless state of warfare was, “[S]ee that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.” These many wars comprise a *general*, not specific, condition of war. Christ admonished us not to be too troubled. Throughout man’s miserable existence on Earth, there have been alternating periods of war (of every description) and peace. Unfortunately, the periods of war have lasted much longer than those fleeting times of peace.

The rest of Matthew 24—and the second horseman of the apocalypse—refers to a far more serious type of war. One of such great impact that it is a totally unique war of and by itself—a world war of cataclysmic proportions far worse than World Wars I and II combined.

NUCLEAR WAR

The mood gets far more serious after the many wars of Matthew 24:6 are mentioned. Verse 7 tells us that “nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.” This indicates *world* war, where one large block of allied nations or countries would be directly attacking another. It means much more than “wars and rumours of wars.”

The world has already survived two world wars, but neither can compare to the potential global war spoken of in Matthew 24:22: “And except those days should be shortened, THERE SHOULD NO FLESH BE SAVED [ALIVE].” The Moffatt translation adds the word *alive*. This refers to TOTAL WAR, with the *annihilation of all people* as the outcome, barring divine intervention.

World War II was not the “war to end all wars” as many had hoped. The atomic blast in Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, killed close to *80,000 people*. Three days later, another atomic blast killed tens of thousands in Nagasaki. Today, hydrogen bombs can be *several thousand times MORE DEADLY* and destructive than the primitive atomic bombs. The word *overkill* was not used until these detonations in 1945. Today, there is roughly 150-200 times world overkill. Estimates show there exists the equivalent of 8 TONS of TNT for each man, woman and child!

Only in the generations since World War II has the potential for worldwide cosmocide existed. Never before has mankind had the potential to completely destroy itself—UNTIL NOW!

Gene Williams, author of *Nuclear War, Nuclear Winter*, said just one H-bomb is the equivalent of BUNDLING UP ALL THE EXPLOSIVE POWER OF FIVE WORLD WAR IIS *and setting it off within one second!* The World Health Organization conducted a study in 1979 which reported that a large-scale nuclear war would kill between 2 and 3 billion people. And that study was completed before the theories about nuclear winter were factored in!

That same year, U.S. President Jimmy Carter stated, “Just one of our relatively invulnerable Poseidon submarines—less than 2 percent of our total nuclear force of submarines, aircraft, and land-based missiles—carries enough warheads to destroy every large- and medium-sized city in the Soviet Union.” Each sub can fire 160 warheads (each with 2½ times the destructive power of a Hiroshima-type bomb) at targets 3,000 miles away.

Today, the independent Soviet states still have a similar destructive potential. Between America and the former Soviet Union, there is over 700 times the destructive power of all the bombs dropped by the Allies on Germany and Japan in

World War II. Thomas D. Cabot, in an article that appeared in the July-August 1984 issue of *Harvard Magazine*, summed it up well by saying, “The nuclear weapons argument sounds like boys soaked in gasoline arguing about who has the most matches!”

The scale of war Christ prophesied in Matthew 24 and Revelation 6 simply could not have been fulfilled at any other time in man’s history! Humanity has never built or designed weapons that it did not eventually use. Man will find a use for the deadly nuclear weapons and other destructive devices created since World War II. We have created nuclear missiles stored underground or under the sea in submarines, armor-piercing laser beams, biological (germ) and chemical warfare, nerve gas, neutron bombs designed to destroy people (not buildings) and heat-seeking missiles (“smart bombs”).

With these and other weapons at man’s disposal, it is no wonder the second horseman of the apocalypse has the power to TAKE PEACE FROM ALL THE EARTH. Surely this confrontation is not completely fulfilled in small-scale regional conflicts, civil wars, or even international conflicts such as those in Korea or Vietnam many years ago. The very fact that this second horseman has a GREAT SWORD should serve as a clue that he has the ability to kill millions, ultimately billions, almost effortlessly. Has that kind of destruction ever occurred before in conventional warfare?

Let’s now focus on the specific time and place of the second horseman’s final death march upon Earth.

ANOTHER WORLD WAR TO COME

Religious deception—the first horseman—has conquered the Earth with Satan’s counterfeit religion. Now we see WAR—the second horseman—as the tool religion has used down through history to gain its satanic conquests. Notice Revelation 12:7-9: “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which DECEIVETH THE WHOLE WORLD: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out

with him.” Satan is the great being symbolized by the rider of the blood-red horse. The casting down of Satan leads to this intensified period of global wars and conflicts.

Satan is the same being who took peace from the Earth back in the Garden of Eden, who later challenged Jesus Christ for rulership of the world, and who is today the “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2), and the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4). He’s responsible for the war-making that has gone on in every era of man’s history. But now, with his reign almost over, Satan realizes his time is extremely short (Revelation 12:12). But he will not give up without a titanic struggle.

From God’s gift of revealed prophecy, we can specifically label Satan’s terrifying political instrument, or tool. It is the **BEAST**, the international alliance that has been forming in Europe since World War II, but with roots extending back for thousands of years. Only God’s end-time Elijah predicted the seventh revival of this dreaded power while its principal constituents lay prostrate after a crippling defeat in World War II.

The Holy Roman Empire is and has been Satan’s primary tool of destruction. Daniel 7 describes this world power, which is now poised to rear itself one last time. Like its predecessors, this final resurrection is based upon the infamous partnership between a political power and a universal false church. Revelation 13 describes this ungodly partnership in great detail.

Daniel 11:40-41 and 44 depict the beast’s almost invincible nature and foretell that it will achieve remarkable victories with its blitzkrieg-style artillery assaults. “And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with **CHARIOTS**, and with **HORSEMEN**, and with **MANY SHIPS**; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. ... But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth WITH **GREAT FURY TO DESTROY**, and **UTTERLY TO MAKE [OR take] AWAY MANY**.”

In the archaic terminology of his day, the Apostle John describes the terrifying weapons with which the climactic

wars are to be conducted. "And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. ... And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was TO HURT MEN FIVE MONTHS" (Revelation 9:3, 7-10).

With a little imagination, we can see that John is not just speaking of conventional warfare, but mainly radiation sickness, the effects of germ warfare and other modern weapons. First on the horseman's hit list are the descendants of the ancient lost 10 tribes of Israel as they are identified by both biblical and secular sources. These represent the present British Commonwealth nations, the United States and several of the democracies of northwestern Europe. (For proof of this national identity of our peoples, request our free book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.)

UNPRECEDENTED DEATH

The political, religious, military and economic polarization of these power blocs is forming this very minute, and has been for some time. Much of the structuring of these alliances has taken place behind closed doors out of view of an unsuspecting world. Very soon, perhaps in a matter of just a few years, these giants will clash in the deadliest battle ever experienced in ancient or modern history. Almost too devastating to even imagine, this war will be so destructive that unless God forcibly intervenes, the entirety of mankind will perish.

Jeremiah declared, "... and thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant" (Jeremiah 4:7). Imagine New York, Los Angeles, London and Sydney vaporized by nuclear attack, with tens of millions DYING INSTANTLY.

Military experts estimate that about a third of a nation such as the United States would be killed by a full-scale

nuclear attack just at the first strike. They can only *estimate* because that has obviously never occurred before.

But Jesus Christ said it WILL happen! The Bible even reveals what *percentage* will die! Notice the “kill ratio” foretold about 1,900 years ago. “And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the THIRD PART OF MEN KILLED, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths” (Revelation 9:17-18). We could speculate on the exact particulars of nuclear weapons and radiation fallout, but the end result will be the same—one third of all humanity will die!

The Prophet Joel also paints a gruesome picture of our immediate future. “A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness” (Joel 2:2-6).

It’s no wonder the Prophet Jeremiah exclaimed, “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it” (Jeremiah 30:7).

These dreadful and frightening events would not be necessary *if* man would only turn from his evil ways of war, disobedience to God, false religion, vanity, greed and all that produces man’s worsening state of decay. The blood-red second horseman only rides because of mankind’s lack of deep, heartrending repentance toward its Maker. But nations have proven UNWILLING TO REPENT AND TURN TO GOD.

The second horseman of the apocalypse must ride

roughshod to teach man a very painful, yet necessary lesson. There is no need for the “elect of God” to be unduly alarmed or frightened. “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). We can take hope that this global insanity is not permitted to run its course. “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved [alive]: but for the *elect’s sake* those days SHALL be shortened” (verse 22).

The very elect of God will be provided with a place of protection from these terrible events (Revelation 3:10; 12:14). We can lay claim to these promises *if* we qualify as God’s very elect. The very elect will not be taken in by the spiritual deception of the FIRST horseman.

THE FINAL BATTLE

God’s climactic, last-minute intervention to save the world from itself is announced by the blasting of the seventh and final trumpet in Revelation 11:15: “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” World rulership will be dramatically transferred to JESUS CHRIST.

Six thousand years of human misrule, intolerance, misunderstanding and suffering will finally be laid to rest. During man’s history, over 1,400 wars have been waged, just over 100 since World War II. Amazingly, the nations will want nothing to do with the new peace enforced upon them when Christ returns! Rather than lay down their arms, they will pick them up again and fight against God. It is really *Satan himself* who will be behind this tumult. Realizing he is about to lose his throne (2 Corinthians 4:4), Satan will desperately attempt one final all-or-nothing battle against his successor, Jesus Christ.

John wrote of this time: “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

... And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (Revelation 16:13-16).

The valley of Megiddo, or *Armageddon* as it is commonly called, is strategically located near three key mountain passes, which give quick access in all directions through the State of Israel. It provides a very suitable *gathering* place for the entire world’s armies to descend upon Jerusalem. It was the sight of several important battles anciently. Righteous King Josiah was killed as he attempted to block Egyptian Pharaoh Necho’s passage northward to fight the Babylonians. Gideon and Barak both won significant battles there during the judges period. General Allenby’s forces surprised the Turkish armies there in 1918.

“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, *gathered* together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army” (Revelation 19:19). And what will be the outcome? Fortunately, there will be no real contest this time. “These shall **MAKE WAR** with the Lamb, and the **LAMB SHALL OVERCOME THEM**: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful” (Revelation 17:14).

An even more graphic description occurs in Zechariah 14:2, 12: “For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle.... And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.”

Thankfully, really good news follows the bad—much like clearing skies after a storm.

A WORLD WITHOUT WAR

With Satan bound (Revelation 20:2), his diabolical church-state system destroyed and the nations no longer under his influence, remarkable things will begin to happen, as the Prophet Isaiah describes: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people

shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and THEY SHALL BEAT THEIR SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES, and their SPEARS INTO PRUNINGHOOKS: NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP SWORD AGAINST NATION, NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANY MORE” (Isaiah 2:2-4; see also Micah 4:1-4).

Can we comprehend a world without war? It will only become a reality when all mankind will finally learn from God and His newly born-again sons how to live according to God’s laws. There is a light at the end of the tunnel, and for the sake of all humanity, the sooner we arrive at that point the better.

Meanwhile, a resurrected Holy Roman Empire (the abomination of desolation) will destroy anyone in its path caught unawares. Only a small remnant will escape. The majority, including God’s lukewarm Laodicean Church, will be slaughtered or enslaved in the Great Tribulation. Those who escape will be the ones who warn *today* in the tradition of the end-time Elijah, Herbert W. Armstrong (Ezekiel 3 and 33). We have no choice but to warn those we love.

THE ALTERNATIVE

The mere thought of what is yet to transpire made the Prophet Habakkuk terribly sick (Habakkuk 3:16). THIS IS A SUBJECT THAT NONE OF US LIKES TO CONTEMPLATE.

Famous astronomer Dr. Carl Sagan, in *To Preserve a World Graced by Life*, wrote, “The dangers of nuclear war are, in a way, well-known. But in a way they are not well-known, because of the PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR—psychiatrists call it DENIAL—THAT MAKES US FEEL SO HORRIBLE THAT WE MIGHT AS WELL NOT THINK ABOUT IT. This element of denial is, I believe, ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS WE FACE” (emphasis added).

Sticking our head in the sand won’t make the threat of nuclear war disappear. The prospect of nuclear winter is a deadly reality. The season for warning the Laodiceans and the world is almost over! But there are still two horsemen poised to ride.

Chapter 3

The Black Horse

THE FIRST HORSEMAN (ON THE WHITE HORSE) REPRESENTS RELIGIOUS deception, while the second horseman (on the red horse) represents war (Revelation 6:1-4). John continues with the vision: “And when he had opened the *third* seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a BLACK HORSE; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine” (verses 5-6).

This haunting scenario may sound familiar. Christ gave a very similar answer to His disciples about 60 years earlier when asked when the end of the world would come. “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places” (Matthew 24:7).

These accounts are not the vivid nightmares of an elderly apostle or the overactive imagination of the other three Gospel writers. Rather, these symbols comprise both a bloodcurdling history and dire prophecy soon to unfold in our lifetime!

These brief accounts depict the four horsemen following each other in rapid succession. False religion forced itself on mankind through the terrifying instrument of war. It is difficult to conceive that this whole world is deceived (Revelation 12:9). Even more incredulous is that the largest organized religious “cult” on Earth today waged the bloodiest battles ever, in the name of God. It’s recorded in history for all who are willing to examine the evidence.

Without looking to the living Head of God's Church, Jesus Christ, these revelations could never be opened to our understanding. We must continue to humbly look to Him for the meanings of these most frightening, yet necessary, end-time warnings.

The third horseman, riding a black horse, symbolizes FAMINE. In Matthew, Mark and Luke, Christ was speaking of general famines, set against the backdrop of war. The plural use of the word *famine* refers to the repetitive occurrences of famine down through time, rapidly accelerating immediately before His return.

Remember how quickly the first horseman, representing religious deception, was pursued by the second horseman of war? In the same fashion, the third horseman, depicting famine, follows directly behind war. Though war is a primary factor, it is not the sole cause of famine, as we shall see.

FAMINES OF THE PAST

Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26 list the abundant blessings ancient Israel would have received for obeying God. A primary example is the keeping of all God's commandments, including the test commandment—the Sabbath. Conversely, these chapters also portray a gut-wrenching scene of what would happen to the Israelites if they did not comply. The ultimate curse would be that they would cannibalize their own children!

Other passages warn of punishment coming in a variety of other ways, any of which could easily produce famine. Extreme weather upsets (Deuteronomy 28:24; Amos 4:7), crop blight (Amos 4:9), destructive insects/animals (Deuteronomy 28:39, 42), sterile soil (verse 23), all resulting in ruined harvests (verse 17; Ezekiel 5:16). Portions of Revelation 8 and 16 show the same penalties for modern nations as well as for ancient Israel. Contrary to popular belief, our God changes not (Malachi 3:6).

The Bible records numerous famines from the time of Abraham (Genesis 12:10). In fact, 13 famines have been recorded in the pages of the Bible. We may be familiar with Abraham's great-grandson Joseph, who helped bail out the Egyptians during their seven-year famine (Genesis 41:56). God

purposed that famines be used to correct corrupt leaders or problems (2 Samuel 21:1; 2 Chronicles 32). Examples of war-induced famines are recorded for us (2 Kings 25; Jeremiah 52; Isaiah 14:30; 51:13; Jeremiah 16:4; 44:27). The famous Jewish historian Josephus recorded a Roman siege on Jerusalem that produced a famine so great that the masses resorted to cannibalism in the so-called *city of peace* (*Wars of the Jews*).

The Middle Ages, the first several hundred years after the first millennium A.D., are also known as the Dark Ages. Entire cities experienced starvation followed by killer diseases. Thousands of dead bodies could not be disposed of quickly enough. Rats spread bubonic plague throughout all of Europe. War, one example being the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), was again the main culprit. Whole cities were leveled with starvation so severe that some even resorted to cannibalism! You may read the many historical accounts for yourself.

FAMINES OF THE FUTURE

But let's jump ahead to modern times. Again, not every famine has been or is caused by war. Today we see *cyclical* famines caused by unusual weather conditions, plagues, and insect or animal infestation. Third World countries have more and more mouths to feed with less and less food. This is a structural-type famine that *most of mankind* is now facing with FEW OR ABSOLUTELY NO SOLUTIONS IN SIGHT!

No longer making headlines are such areas as India and several African countries (such as Nigeria, which had a civil war during the 1970s). We have all seen pictures of the bloated bellies of African babies and young skeletal children.

It logically follows that starvation, or at the very least, scarcity of food, would result from prolonged warfare. Generally, it is the populace that suffers worst. Often, the damage done to an ecosystem can take years and even decades to recover from. Hard to believe as it may seem, vast desert areas, such as the Sahara, used to be either lush jungle or forest land. Bear in mind that this man-made disaster was exacted on the region without the assistance of radiation contamination.

The summer of 1994 shocked us daily with equally stark images on our television screens from the aftermath of tribal

genocide in Rwanda. The civil war ravaged northwestern Rwanda, widely considered the breadbasket of the country. People numbering into the millions were driven from their homes and forced into the impoverished lifestyle of refugees. The country has struggled with food shortages and starvation ever since, relying on hundreds of thousands of tons of food assistance for its orphans, prisoners and other vulnerable groups.

Do we somehow feel that this could never happen to the greatly blessed American and British peoples? Contrary to such false assumptions, this terrible time *will* occur (Jeremiah 14:12-18). Multiple millions will be in for a rude awakening, despite ample warning, which came first from God's end-time servant Herbert Armstrong, and now through the Philadelphia Church of God.

As we have seen, this tragic tale of war-induced famine has repeated itself countless times down through the centuries of man's miserable and generally substandard existence. History tends to repeat itself because we usually fail to learn from it. Over time, the problems tend to grow on a larger and grander scale—which should drive the point home.

Many other factors point to increasing food shortages. Global agricultural commodity markets are on a roller-coaster ride, with supplies dropping and prices rising. The price of corn has shot through the roof due to a combination of bad weather and increasing demand for the crop from the growing ethanol industry. In the global grain-growing industry, land devoted to cultivating wheat and barley has been declining for a full generation. Demand is rapidly overtaking supply in our grain markets.

One great problem this globe now faces is that most of its arable land is already under production, and much of that land is seriously degraded due to the intensive, chemically-based farming practices fashionable since World War II. Figure in the increasing occurrences of floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, drought and other unnatural disasters and it is clear that the world's systems of agriculture stand on the brink of disaster.

With food as our largest export product, the United States stands to lose the most in any trade war if any "natural" or unnatural disasters should cause us to have a bad year.

National reserves for our own needs, in case of just such an emergency, are very small and would barely last long enough to get us through to the next growing season. Who would help us, the greatest humanitarian nation ever, should we have a crisis?

We have not even factored in the effects of nuclear war, should our economic sparring with any of our trading partners come to blows. Our land could be so contaminated by radiation that nothing would grow for quite some time. And even if it did, would it be safe to eat? Leviticus 26:34 implies that there will NOT BE ANYONE IN THE U.S. EVEN TRYING TO FARM.

In the preface of his book *A World Beyond Healing*, Nicholas Wade wrote, "Burning cities create soot, and soot absorbs light. If enough smoke from incinerated cities were to reach high enough in the atmosphere, it might linger for months, shrouding the Earth in a black pall. The likely extent of such a veil is still a matter of keen scientific debate, but an evident possibility is that sunlight would be blotted out, land and crops throughout the Northern Hemisphere chilled, and WHOLE HARVESTS DESTROYED" (emphasis added).

Back in the summer of 1816, northern New England and Canada experienced both snow and frost. In both North America and Europe, many crops did not ripen. As a result, famine, disease and social upheaval ensued.

Climatologists were fairly certain that this "year without a summer" was the result of a cataclysmic eruption of Mt. Tambora in *Indonesia*. For nearly 400 miles around, it was pitch dark for two days. An estimated 200 million metric tons of fine dust and sulfuric acid were emitted, some as high as the stratosphere. This was just a minor foretaste of disruptions in agriculture that nuclear warfare would surely produce.

Gene Williams, in *Nuclear War, Nuclear Winter*, wrote that only between 1/10 of a percent and 5 percent of sunlight would reach the ground. With nighttime temperatures *during the day*, crops would not grow and livestock would soon die. In the *best* of conditions, an average large city stocks only enough food and supplies to last the populace *a week or less*. America exports about half the world's total tonnage of grain. The total world grain storage would only last a matter of weeks. The U.S. could possibly survive for a year, but that is of little comfort

when you consider the bind this country would find itself in. We would need the reduced agricultural production at home, yet we would also have to sell grain *abroad* to earn precious income. Laurence Pringle, in *Nuclear War, From Hiroshima to Nuclear Winter*, points out that ICBM silos, our enemies' first targets, ARE LOCATED IN THE HEART OF OUR GRAIN AND LIVESTOCK-PRODUCING REGIONS!

Even without such an occurrence as nuclear war, food is not usually being grown anywhere in the world where it is most needed. Proper food distribution is difficult enough *without* an emergency. People in areas of even the U.S., not to mention some poor Third World countries, would have a tough time getting their hands on much-needed food in an emergency. The northeastern U.S., for example, derives 80 percent of its food from outside sources! To further complicate matters, the extra produce of the wealthier nations could not even be purchased by the poorer ones. Though worldwide food production almost keeps pace with population, the chief concern for the starving masses of the Earth is the grossly unequal distribution of food due to out-of-reach prices. The rich get fatter and the poor get thinner.

THE MOST HELPLESS VICTIMS

Let's put a human face on the hard, cold facts of starvation: It ultimately affects young people more than anyone else (Jeremiah 18:21). According to Habitat for Humanity, 20 million people worldwide die annually from malnutrition and related causes—and 13 MILLION OF THOSE ARE CHILDREN! World population continues to mushroom. The number of births continues to surpass deaths. To break this down even further, that is over 35,000 children, not adults, WHO DIE FROM MALNUTRITION EVERY DAY!

Of the 70 million children in the United States under age 18, almost 17 percent live in poverty—a higher poverty rate than for any other age group (Current Population Survey, 2004 Annual Social and Economic Supplement). Worldwide, UNICEF estimates that close to 50 million children in rich countries live in poverty, and the number is rising (2005).

Tragically, more deaths, about 10 times as many, can be

attributed to some form of malnutrition (the *wrong* foods) as opposed to starvation (*lack* of food).

Jesus Christ accurately foretold these doomsday-style statistics when He first delivered the Olivet prophecy. But He had something much worse in mind when He said, "And there shall be famines."

THE 'MOTHER OF ALL FAMINES'

As with the two previous horsemen, this third horseman of famine will have a specific fulfillment. It is ready to gallop into our immediate future with an impact far beyond the historic and present-day occurrences of localized famines.

Immediately following, and as a direct result of worldwide religious deception and World War III, the first and second horsemen respectively, a great famine, like none before it or ever again, will strike this Earth with frightening force and fury. This time, instead of only affecting war-torn regions or the Third World, it will affect the *First World* nations—the blessed birthright peoples of the lost 10 tribes of Israel. Not a respecter of persons, this calamity will reduce the wealthy nations to the same level as the poorest. It is almost unfathomable to those of us who have been spoiled in the land of plenty to imagine experiencing such stark starvation ourselves!

Ezekiel 5:12 reveals that one third of the United States and the British Commonwealth, including countries such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand, will be killed in the opening volleys of war. Many of these people will die from the combined destructiveness of the third and fourth horsemen—famine and pestilence. Verse 10 describes our citizenry's last, desperate act of survival—cannibalism! (For more details of what lies immediately ahead for us, please request our free booklet on Lamentations.) These prophecies **MUST WAKE US UP!** How can anyone fail to carefully examine his religious views after reading such frightening prophecies?

We are not discussing some dusty old prophecies. These are dramatic, dire prophecies that lie directly in front of us! The proud, haughty look will melt from the faces of our people and reduce those still barely clinging to life to scrounging through garbage heaps and strewn rubble for their next meal.

This great famine will eventually spread to every corner of the Earth before mankind repents in unconditional surrender to God (Philippians 2:10).

AN END OF FAMINE

The future appears very bleak. But there is a way of escape (Revelation 12:13-17). God will hear and forgive anyone who will repent. The only ones promised divine protection are those few who have yielded to God and His way of life. Christ will be forced to intervene at His Second Coming in order to save man from his self-imposed extinction (Matthew 24:22). Only this group will be fed spiritually during an equally severe spiritual “famine of the word” (Amos 8:11-12). Not even earthquakes and famines can separate them from God (Romans 8:35). The fate of the Laodiceans and the great false religions of the world (Revelation 18:8-10; Isaiah 5:12-13) represents a sharp contrast to the reward given to God’s people.

Our loving Father must allow man to go through such terrible conditions in order for us to finally learn obedience. It’s not as if God brought it about. Mankind has caused its own misery by choosing not to obey God. For the sake of His rebellious children, God allows man to learn that sin does not bring happiness. It only brings much pain and suffering—ultimately DEATH (Romans 6:23).

When humanity finally realizes that only God’s *give way* really does work, God can bless them more abundantly than ever (Micah 4:4; Isaiah 32:15; Amos 9:13-14). Then, righteous men, women and children will mock the thought of famine (Job 5:22). Yet today, this is a very brutal reality and not a laughing matter. But before we are finally rid of this curse in the not-too-distant wonderful World Tomorrow, the fourth horseman of disease and pestilence must complete his fateful ride.

Chapter 4

The Pale Horse

AS PREDICTABLY AS THE SUN RISES AND SETS, SO THE FOUR horsemen of the apocalypse continue to march steadily forward unimpeded. This chapter concludes the terrifying fulfillment of prophecies uttered by Jesus Christ over 1,900 years ago but intended most specifically for the time we are living in right now, TODAY.

We have already examined the first three horsemen: The first is religious deception, next is war, then famine. With the fourth, pestilence, these horsemen represent the final, end-time culmination of the most traumatic problems endured by a rebellious mankind. They picture one of the most ominous scenarios ever. It is imperative that each of us takes heed while there is still time.

“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth” (Revelation 6:7-8).

The context mentions two of the other horsemen—war and famine. But we cannot be certain of the symbolism of the last horseman from this passage. The key word to its identity is the word *pale*, which often makes us think of someone who is feeling sick, having an anemic-looking appearance. *Pale* is translated from the Greek *chloros*, which we would normally take to mean the color of chlorophyll, the property that gives plants their healthy green appearance. When used biblically,

however, *chloros* means the sickly pale green color of sickness and disease.

Other biblical translations describe the pale horse as an *ash-colored horse*, a *horse sickly green*, a *horse sickly pale* and an *ashy pale horse*. We have continually stressed throughout that we should look to Christ the Revelator to explain these seals and symbols. He provides us with the most correct word to unlock the true identity of this pale green horse which man's best translations cannot: "and there shall be ... PESTILENCES" (Matthew 24:7). The man on the pale horse symbolizes climactic, globe-encircling plagues and pandemics occurring and soon to occur in this modern age!

Look up *pestilence* in any Bible concordance and you will be amazed by the link between the second, third and fourth horsemen representing war, famine and pestilence (Jeremiah 21:9; 27:13; 29:17-18; 32:24; 34:17; 38:2; 42:16-17; 44:13). These three horsemen derive their origin directly from the first horseman of religious deception, as we have already shown.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

Worldwide disease epidemics are mentioned in the same context with the other horsemen in Revelation 6:1-8 and in the three Gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke, because they are successive. Multiple millions of people will perish from sickness and disease if they survive the ravaging effects of nuclear bombardment and subsequent starvation. This will bring the total death toll of all four horsemen to one fourth of all mankind. With the world population over 7 billion people, this number could conceivably approach 2 billion!

We have repeatedly emphasized in our literature that the only reason for this type of extreme punishment is man's unabated rebellion toward his Creator God. Despite this self-inflicted genocide, man refuses to obey God and submit to His rule, the only way that can bring true peace and happiness with joy unmeasured (John 10:10).

The book of Daniel is an end-time prophecy (Daniel 12:4, 9). It reveals more prophecy for the nations of Israel in the end time, which may be surprising to many people. "As it is written

in the *law of Moses*, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth” (Daniel 9:13).

Let’s examine Deuteronomy 28 (part of the law of Moses) carefully and add modern-day expressions to see more clearly how this warning applies to our time now. “But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee . . . The LORD shall make the *pestilence* cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it. The LORD shall smite thee with a *consumption* [chronic, degenerate diseases such as AIDS], and with a *fever*, and with an *inflammation* [malaria or communicative diseases such as influenzas], and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew . . . with the botch of Egypt [elephantiasis], and with the *emerods* [tumors, cancer, etc.], and with the scab, and with the itch [aggravated psoriasis and other nutrient-deficiency diseases such as scurvy, rickets, etc.], whereof thou canst not be healed [incurable or drug-resistant diseases] . . . with madness [mental illness, insanity] and blindness and astonishment of heart [emotional distresses such as depression]” (Deuteronomy 28:15, 21-22, 27-28).

The next verse (verse 29) graphically depicts the utter hopelessness of mankind suffering from these and the many other innumerable scourges of our generation. Invisible bacterial microbes are outwitting the best researchers and doctors, quickly outstripping their ability to develop vaccines to keep up with newer and more drug-resistant strains.

MAN’S BEST FRIEND?

But it gets even worse. Earlier, God shouted out the warning, “I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate” (Leviticus 26:22).

The warning is repeated in Revelation 6:8. Man, responsible for the extinction of hundreds if not thousands of species

of creatures, now faces a grave danger—at the jaws of wild animals. Of even greater threat than being bitten out of self-defense is being directly attacked and consumed as part of a source of dwindling food supplies.

Not only will animals attack people for food, they will also become sickly carriers of such mass killer diseases as the bubonic plague (the Black Death of the Middle Ages) or rabies. Our modern, so-called civilized Western peoples are neighbors to many potentially rabid vermin and animals such as squirrels, rats, skunks, foxes and bats. It's not an unlikely scenario that, immediately following war and famine, these infected animals could come in contact with ordinary pets, especially cats and dogs. The human population could quickly fall prey to either rabid or ravenous beasts.

Fortunately, sanitary standards, medical science and certain security measures such as fencing have thus far shielded most from contact with the untamed wilderness. But how thick is this buffer zone? Given a breakdown in protective conditions, these silent time-bombs lie ready to explode. It could be as inconspicuous as a deer tick carrying Lyme disease. A false sense of security exists because vaccines for many childhood diseases such as mumps, measles, whooping cough, tetanus and chicken pox are available. Meanwhile, new strains and viruses are emerging as old ones resurface.

Some may dismiss such discussion as being alarmist and unrealistic. But shouldn't we consider the possibilities, given the fact that such problems were specifically prophesied by none other than Jesus Christ?

PAST PLAGUES

Earlier, we examined war-induced famine. But history shows that epidemics are also a by-product of the resulting chaos. There are many historical examples of deadly disease epidemics.

You might be surprised to learn how much effect disease has had on the course of mankind. Look at the great economic upheavals that resulted from the Black Death in Europe.

The Mainstream of Civilization 1350 to 1815, written in 1974, presents an interesting summary: "The effects of economic

depression, political confusion and religious uncertainty were intensified by terrible outbursts of plague in the middle years of the 14th century. The Black Death [bubonic plague] first appeared in Italy in the 1340s and swept through Europe during the next two decades. The worst was over by 1360, but repeated, though less severe, outbreaks throughout the next half-century kept the population from reaching its pre-plague numbers. Although no accurate estimate can be made of the mortality, it was especially severe in thickly populated areas. Some towns lost more than two fifths of their inhabitants.”

The Black Death, spread by flea bites and rats, killed CLOSE TO ONE HALF OF EUROPE'S POPULATION—25 to 50 million people—in one three-year span ALONE (1347 to 1350)! Eventually some who became ill developed an immunity, and the disease finally died out. Still, this account has ominous overtones for our future.

From the Grolier Society's *Book of History* (Vol. 9), a set of history books written before World War I, is an article by Dr. G. Archdall Reid titled “The Triumph of Race”: “The ancient condition of the Eastern Hemisphere was reproduced in the West. Again, we read of plague and pestilence, of water and air-borne diseases coming and going in great epidemics, and of the famines that followed. Measles and cholera piled the Earth with the dead. The part played by smallpox was even greater. When taken to the West Indies in 1507, whole tribes were exterminated. A few years later it quite depopulated San Domingo. In Mexico it destroyed 3.5 million people. Prescott describes this first fearful epidemic as ‘sweeping over the prairies, smiting down prince and peasant, and leaving its path strewn with the dead bodies of the natives, who perished in heaps like cattle stricken with murrain.’”

Unlike the short-lived Black Death, smallpox plagued Europe for centuries. At its height in the 18th century, it killed about 400,000 Europeans a year, including such heads of state as the queen of Sweden in 1741. The World Health Organization announced in 1979 that smallpox had been wiped out after a successful inoculation campaign in Asia during the same decade.

Closer to home, an influenza epidemic in 1917-18 killed about half a million Americans. In Massachusetts alone, it

claimed 15,000 lives in four months before a developed immunity saved civilization. Typhus accounted for 3 million deaths from 1918 to 1922, due to overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions in prison camps and refugee homes. Between 1943 and 1956, almost half a million Americans were infected by the polio epidemic. Over 20,000 died from paralysis and respiratory failure. Partly due to vaccines discovered in the '50s and '60s, polio is now only a problem in less-advanced countries.

These are natural attention-getters. But even in the 21st century, despite better medicine and technology, the threat to all societies looms large on the horizon. Even old diseases from world wars fought over 75 years ago are making a silent but deadly return. The *New England Journal of Medicine* (Feb. 16, 1995) cited several doctors both in the U.S. and in France who report that trench fever, a scourge of soldiers in both world wars, has reappeared among homeless alcoholics. This illness, spread by lice, was especially common during World War I when more than a million soldiers caught it. No one knows whether it is a new affliction of cities or one that has been unnoticed all along. The disease is rare during peacetime, although it has been found in AIDS patients in recent years.

AIDS

When looking at statistics about AIDS, it is easy to miss the physical suffering of those infected and to overlook the mental and emotional anguish of the people around them. It is easy to skip past the facts surrounding the infants born HIV-positive and those whose parents die, leaving them as orphans. In other words, the impact of this disease is much deeper than just the number infected. The toll on the lives of the people involved is immense, not to mention AIDS' considerable economic impact.

UNAIDS, the United Nations' anti-AIDS agency, placed the number of people living with HIV around 39 million at the end of 2004. An estimated 2.2 million of those infected are under age 15, and slightly less than half of all victims are women. In 2004, 3.1 million people died from HIV-related illnesses, including 510,000 under age 15. This brought the estimated

total deaths from HIV to about 23 million men, women and children since the disease was first recognized.

UNAIDS also estimates that some 15 million children under age 18 have lost one or both parents to AIDS. Of these AIDS orphans, more than 80 percent live in sub-Saharan Africa. Close to 60 percent of all infected people live in sub-Saharan Africa, while only about 10 percent of the world's population lives there. If current HIV infection rates continue, close to 60 percent of today's 15-year-olds in the worst-afflicted countries of southern and eastern Africa will not reach age 60.

The social and economic impact of HIV/AIDS is astronomical, especially in Africa. UNAIDS predicts that "[u]nless urgent interventions are made, the epidemic could cause a steady fall in agricultural production, which would fuel serious famine in African countries" (Reuters, Oct. 12, 2004). Up to a quarter of Malawi's civil servants have reportedly been killed or left seriously ill by AIDS. In Zambia, school teachers are dying at a faster rate than colleges can train new ones, and three fourths of deaths in the police force in Kenya are apparently linked to AIDS (UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2004).

NO ONE IS IMMUNE

In America, health care remains a controversial subject among lawmakers. Billions of dollars are spent annually. Yet, tens of thousands are without insurance. We have too many problems already to try to satisfactorily deal with new ones that seem to pop up without warning.

To make matters worse, we live in a small world. Federal health officials admitted early in 1995 that some few passengers and flight crews on commercial airlines in the U.S. had been infected by tuberculosis bacteria. Though they stress the risk of catching TB on a plane is low, they advise people with active TB to take private transportation or postpone travel until they are no longer infectious. At least half a dozen people had been exposed, tested positive for the disease, and would carry a 5-10 percent lifetime risk if not treated with the recommended drug treatment. TB is spread by droplets in coughs, sneezes or breath. Fliers with airborne infectious diseases can be denied admittance onto aircraft, but the Air Transport

Association admits they cannot be easily detected.

All this from “normal” peacetime circumstances. What about *blatant* terrorist acts to damage air, soil or water quality? What about during nuclear war? “With many people weakened from radiation, stress and malnutrition, there could be outbreaks of infection and communicable diseases. Long-vanquished epidemic scourges like cholera, typhoid fever, tuberculosis and even bubonic plague could once again flourish if the public health barriers against them were to erode,” said Nicholas Wade in *A World Beyond Healing*. Mr. Wade later added that “radiation from nuclear weapons does not cause new types of cancer but increases the incidence of those that occur anyway.” Cancer, leukemia, diabetes, heart disease—the list goes on and on of woes afflicting our societies in peacetime, let alone in a nuclear holocaust.

A NECESSARY EVIL

The great, loving Creator and Sustainer of this universe takes no delight in seeing His future children suffer. It grieves Him to know the horrific loss of life soon to be visited upon Earth. God promised the people of ancient Israel in Exodus 15:26 that if they obeyed Him, they would never have to suffer any diseases, but would instead enjoy super-abundant health. In Deuteronomy 7:15, God said He wouldn't punish them with the same diseases with which He punished Egypt. But later, He vowed to inflict them with worse plagues. Why? For not obeying!

Deuteronomy 29:22-25 describe a yet future time when nations will ask why these diseases had to infect mankind. The answer is quite simple—because the people rebelled and served other gods, refusing to admit the error of their ways. Ezekiel 38:22 describes ways in which God will plead with Israel and how He'll inevitably become known to the billions who either ignorantly or willingly trampled on His laws. Even after the pestilence, on top of everything else that has already transpired and that which is yet to occur, the majority of people still won't repent!

The masses will not, but a minority will. God promises, in Psalm 91:3 and 6, to protect us from pestilence if we trust

in Him. Some prophets of old were thrown into treacherous dungeons for sounding this seemingly pessimistic warning (Jeremiah 38:2). Jeremiah still sounded the trumpet because he knew very well what worse fate would befall him if he should fail to prophesy. We share the same concern about our fate if we fail to warn this world about what will soon afflict it.

A WAY OUT

Millions have died and will die needlessly, because they either failed or will fail to heed these and other warnings to turn to God with the type of contrite attitude necessary to please Him (Isaiah 66:2). Unfortunately, it appears that many *see* the signs of the times and could escape, but they don't *act*. Most are like cattle heading for the slaughter, completely oblivious to what lies immediately ahead of them. Many others will recognize the four horsemen of religious deception, war, famine and pestilence, but will not know where to turn for escape if they refuse the only source of permanent escape—God!

God wants *true* repentance—a turning away from the carnal “human nature” that we possess to the spiritual nature God originally intended us to develop. Instead, man takes the law into his own hands and builds bomb shelters, paramilitary compounds or even flees to remote locations in a futile attempt to save his own physical life.

“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:22). The protected *elect* will comprise those who hold fast to God’s revealed truths and obey *all* of His laws (Revelation 3:10; 12:14). This very small cadre of future leaders will be preserved in the ultimate place of safety to receive final training before being given the authority 3½ years later at the return of Jesus Christ. There can be no greater concern than striving to comply with God’s standards of character in order to survive the punishment symbolized by the four horsemen of the apocalypse. This vision will soon be a reality for those who adamantly refuse to submit to God.

A few million, thanks to God cutting events short for the elect’s sake, will not have to die—though they certainly may wish they had! They will have to endure the worst time of

human suffering ever (Jeremiah 30). The Philadelphia Church of God is continually providing hope for those willing to yield their naturally stubborn natures to the will of God. Doomsayers only tell how bad things will get, but without the hope of how much better it will soon be. Jesus Christ is soon returning to this Earth to bring it all the joy and happiness man has continually sought after!

God will mercifully end the deadly sweep of the four horsemen just before they eradicate mankind from off the Earth. Finally, man will have the sweet, childlike attitude that God can work with in the wonderful World Tomorrow (Matthew 18:1-6). Are we each working out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12) so we can be a part of God's great master plan for humanity?

CONTACT INFORMATION

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or to request a visit from one of God's ministers:

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MAILING ADDRESSES WORLDWIDE

United States: Philadelphia Church of God,
P.O. Box 3700, Edmond, OK 73083

Canada: Philadelphia Church of God, P.O. Box 400,
Campbellville, ON L0P 1B0

Caribbean: Philadelphia Church of God, P.O. Box 2237,
Chaguanas, Trinidad, W.I.

Britain, Europe and Middle East: Philadelphia Church of
God, P.O. Box 16945, Henley-in-Arden, B95 8BH,
United Kingdom

Africa: Philadelphia Church of God, Postnet Box 219,
Private Bag X10010, Edenvale, 1610, South Africa

Australia, the Pacific Isles, India and Sri Lanka:
Philadelphia Church of God, P.O. Box 293,
Archerfield, QLD 4108, Australia

New Zealand: Philadelphia Church of God,
P.O. Box 6088, Glenview, Hamilton 3246

Philippines: Philadelphia Church of God, P.O. Box 52143,
Angeles City Post Office, 2009 Pampanga

Latin America: Philadelphia Church of God,
Attn: Spanish Department, P.O. Box 3700,
Edmond, OK 73083, United States

