***The Black Horse and Rider

RV117-02***

We begin our study of the third seal in Revelation 6:5-6.

**The Inerrant Bible**

The Bible is a book which was produced by God the Holy Spirit, who guided human agents to record, with absolute accuracy and truth, that which the Spirit of God laid upon their minds. For this reason, the Bible is inerrant. It has no mistakes anywhere in it. All other religious writings claiming to be divine revelation, however, are clearly flawed with error and with contradictions.

**The Book of Mormon**

The Book of Mormon is a prime example of a Bible which has been produced by man alone, apart from God. In the sacred Scriptures of Mormonism, such as Doctrines and Covenants, which are the prophecies of their founder and leader, Joseph Smith, and The Pearl of Great Price, the additional sacred writings, there is constant evidence of error. There is constant error geographically in terms of time, and any number of ways that subsequent time has demonstrated.

**The Book of Abraham**

As a matter of fact, one of the primary books in The Pearl of Great Price was a book called The Book of Abraham. The Book of Abraham was translated by Joseph Smith from some ancient hieroglyphic writings that he discovered in some mummy cases of some four mummies that he had bought. The original copy from which he translated was rediscovered in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. And when it was translated, it was discovered not to be a book written by Abraham, but in fact to be a ceremony for the dead. It was an old Egyptian ceremony for burial. And Joseph Smith has been proven an outright liar and deceiver in claiming that God gave him the capacity to translate that writing which Abraham had produced. The Mormon Church has squelched that. It has amazingly put that undercover such that, even when I talk to Mormons themselves, they are not aware of the fraudulency of Abraham.

Nothing like that is true about the Bible, and nothing like that can ever be true about the Bible. It was produced by God through men led of the Spirit of God. Therefore, the Bible alone carries absolute authority in speaking for God, and is not subject to the confirmation of human reason. You must not too quickly say, "Yes, I agree to that." The Bible *alone* carries authority representing the mind of God, and it is, furthermore, not subject to human reason. We have Christians among us in the Christian community who agree that the Bible is indeed the product of Almighty God. However, they are willing to apply human reasons to judging how the Scriptures are to be used, or not used; believed, or not believed; or, adjusted, or not adjusted. That is the problem. In our day, when people don't like something in the Word of God, and they do not like something that is going to undermine their own personal ambitions, then they find a way to dismiss what the Scriptures say. When their own temperament requires a certain type of viewpoint, it is not beyond then to dismiss the evidence that is in Scripture.

So, we must stand wholeheartedly on the fact that the Bible, because it is produced by God, is the authority, and we do not process it through our human thinking. So, the Bible alone carries that kind of absolute authority.

**Prophecy**

One of the unique things about the Bible, which confirms its divine origin, is its revelation about future events. Much of Bible prophecy, of course, has already been fulfilled, and it has always been fulfilled precisely and literally as it was expressed, and without contradiction, and without (even one time) failure. The Mormons in their Scriptures have had to make thousands (and I mean thousands) of changes in their prophetic scriptures in order to bring them into conformity with subsequent events. Joseph Smith would stand up and make a prophecy about the future. These are the prophecies which are recorded in Doctrines and Covenants. Then time went by and it didn't work out the way he said, so they went back and they readjusted his prophecies, so that it would then read correctly, and still seem that they indeed had a prophet who could speak with accuracy. The prophets of the Scripture always spoke with accuracy because God was their informant.

**The Book of the Revelation**

Furthermore, God the Father has taken us all into His confidence in the book of the Revelation, which we are studying. In this book, He reveals, particularly, the conditions on earth during the last seven years of human history preceding the return of Jesus Christ.

**The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse**

Widespread conditions on the earth during the first half of the tribulation are now being portrayed to John in his vision via the four horsemen. And we refer, therefore, to them as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. The word "apocalypse" comes from the Greek word "apokalupsis," which is the name of this book. It's the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

**The Riders on the White and the Red Horses**

The writer on a white horse, that we have already looked at, symbolizes a condition of uneasy peace established on earth by the conquest of the antichrist and a social order based on the dogmas of humanism. The rider on the red horse symbolizes widespread bloodshed resulting from a society in which people seek full expression for their sin nature lusts, and they use violence to get their desires. As the New Age movement and as the change agents in public education are training children to think, these people operate on a set of morals that is acceptable to them, so that even if they violate the Word of God, that's not the important thing. The important thing is that you live by a set of rules that is acceptable to you. So, the Red Horse represents not just war between nations, but it represents homicide – people killing each other, as was done in the days before Noah in order to secure what they want.

**The Third Seal**

So, we now come to Revelation 6:5-6 where, we read about the third seal. Verse 5 says, "And when He had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, 'Come,' and I beheld, and lo, a black horse. And he that said on him had a pair of balances in his hand:" "And when he had opened the third seal." The word "opened" is the Greek word "anoigo." "Anoigo" means "to break." So, He is now saying something when he has broken the third seal in the order of seven seals. It is in the aorist tense grammatically, which indicates that particular point when Jesus now reaches over and snaps open that third seal. It is active voice. The Lord Jesus Himself does the breaking, because He is the only one who is fit and authorized to do that. And what He breaks, again, is the "sphragis." The "sphragis" is that seal, very much like a piece of wax in which an imprint has been made, to seal a portion of this book. When you come to the seal, the scroll cannot be unrolled further. The seal ensures secrecy of the next thing in line which is recorded. This third seal is guarding that information on this segment of the scroll.

**The Third Living Creature Angel**

Now the Lord Jesus reaches over and breaks that seal to reveal that which is under the third segment. As soon as He snaps the seal, John says that he hears something. The word "hear" is the Greek word "akouo." "Akouo" means that John hears a voice with his human ears, and he understands what he hears. It is right after this point, when the seal is broken, that John himself personally hears the voice. And the voice that he hears is again that of the "zoon," which is the word for the living creature angel. This is now the third of the four living creature angels. These angles surround God's throne. We were told earlier that around this throne, surrounding the throne of God as an honor guard, and as a protection of the holiness of God, are these four living creature angels. This one undoubtedly makes a thunderous sound as he makes his proclamation, just as the first two did.

What this one says, again, is the same thing that the first living creature and the second living creature said, and that is that he thunders out the word "Come" ("erchomai"). "Erchomai" means "to move out." This is directed now to the third horseman who is off in the wings, waiting to come on the scene. He is directing the third horsemen of the apocalypse to move out to stage center. This is in the present tense, which means it is a continuing directive that is to be executed. It is active in voice. The horseman himself is now to move out. Furthermore, its mood is imperative, so this is a command. What the living creature angel is doing is commanding this third horseman to make his appearance.

When he does, John says that: "He beheld" something. The word "beheld" is "horao." "Horao" is the Greek word for seeing something in a panoramic overview. That is, John again is saying, I'm standing back, and I'm seeing this whole scene at once." He's not just focusing in on the rider or on the horse. He's seeing this whole dramatic scene which includes: God the Father; the four living creatures surrounding the throne; the 24 elders sitting around with their thrones; and, the Lord Jesus Christ standing there before the Father with the scroll in His hand, snapping the seals one-at-a-time. And suddenly out rides this black horse upon which is the rider. John takes this all in as a total panoramic view.

**A Black Horse and Rider**

Then he adds the word "Lo," which in the Greek is this word "idou," which we have had many times before. It's a technical word. We can translate it as "behold." It is a word which is used by the writer to indicate that something important is about ready to be revealed. It's a kind of a word that means: "Pay particular close attention:" "I beheld, in a panoramic overview, and then, take notice. Pay attention. Something very important and extraordinary is to be observed now. And what he observes is a black horse. The word black is "melas," and that's just what it is. It's the color for "black." In Matthew 5:36, we have this word used in contrast to its opposite, which is white. This horse is stark, pure black. It is a "hippos," which is the Greek word for the animal the "horse." This black horse now rides on the scene.

**Famine and Inflation**

As we have told you, all of these horses symbolize some condition that exists in the tribulation. We've seen the condition of the white horse. We've seen the condition of the red horse. We come to really a very important one that tells us a great deal about the tribulation – the condition of the black horse. Basically, what this horse represents is a condition in the tribulation era of great monetary inflation, and consequent high cost of food, leading to the fact that people cannot afford to buy food, and consequently, to great malnutrition; great physical breakdown; exposure to disease; and, rampaging death. So, this black horse is one of the most frightening of the features of the tribulation era.

Unless you have traveled the world someplace, and have seen people in real hungry poverty, you are not inclined to appreciate how horrible this is. These are people who desperately have no food. For whatever reason (apart from the point now), they simply do not have food to eat, and not to have it because something within the tribulation society inhibits both the production of food and the possession of material means with which to buy the food. So, this black horse represents a condition which is purely summed up as the destruction of famine.

**The Example of Israel**

In Lamentations 4:11, we have this kind of a condition described as it historically appeared with the Jews when they were about to be conquered by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. Lamentations is describing the conditions that arise in the society when you can't get food, or when it's too costly to buy.

You and I have a very hard time relating to this. Lack of food is not a problem with us. Therefore, it is difficult to enter into the horror that is going to exist in the tribulation. And then the next question is: why is that horror existing? And as we shall see, the reasons for that horror are the reasons that are in our society in the United States today, and are taking full control of our economic system, and they are leading to the same consequences. No doubt what is happening today will lead right into this condition. It is preparatory for the tribulation.

The evil of the Jewish people has brought upon them, finally, the divine judgment, and this is now a judgment not just upon individuals, but upon the Jewish society as a whole. Notice Lamentations 4:11: "And the Lord has accomplished His fury. He has poured out His fierce anger, and has kindled the fire in Zion, and it has devoured its foundations." There is always this asinine view among people, including Christians, that God is not really going to come down with a big, hard fist upon you for your evil. That's because we forget that God always gives grace before He gives judgment. But you may count on the fact that if you do not conform yourself to the Scriptures, and if you do not conform yourself to the pattern of God's word, your arrogance is going to get the judgment of God upon you. The Jews couldn't believe, with their favored position, that God would ever do to them what He did here.

**Famine**

You will see how absolutely horrifying famine conditions can become, and what animals and beasts it makes of people. This is not just those characters living off there in backward countries and in primitive societies. I mean people like yourselves. Famine will turn human beings will turn into beasts. These are the folks we're talking about. We're talking about the people who are prosperous. We're talking about the people who knew the living God. We're talking about the people who knew the rules by which to live, and who, by and large, in their history, had obeying those rules. But now they we're violating them, and were rationalizing how applicable the Scriptures are to their day, and questioning whether the Bible could really be understood in terms of application of its principles to what they were doing politically, militarily, educationally, socially, and in every way in their society. God says, "Yes, I can apply it, and I will apply it."

So verse 11 says that God has kindled the fire in Zion, and it's an apropos analogy. God is now devouring the foundations. There's not going to be anything left. If you've ever seen a fire raging in a house or a building, if you can't stop it, there is nothing left. It is totally devastating. That's the point here. Something that God is doing is going to totally devastate this nation.

Then notice verse 12. The ancient world itself did not think it possible for Jerusalem to be invaded and to be destroyed by a foreign power. Verse 12 says, "The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem." Not only did the Jews not believe it, but even the nations around them couldn't believe that this great and powerful and significant nation of the ancient world could be conquered by a foreign people. They knew whose God this nation was. While they saw Nebuchadnezzar riding high and wide and powerful over the horizon, they didn't think that the Babylonians could pull it off, and neither did the other nations about them.

Does that sound like something familiar in our thinking in our society today, relative to the power and the place and the position of the United States? I often hear idiots tell us:" It can't happen to us. We can't be defeated. It's only by the grace of God that we weren't defeated in World War II. As some of you probably know, the atom was split for the first time in a German laboratory. Therefore, they had the information in the early 1930s when Hitler was rising to power. Had it not been for the grace of God, they would have taken hold of that information and run with it. They were trying to run with it, as a matter of fact. The American scientists were very much concerned, as we moved into the war years, and particularly as we got into the end of 1944 and the beginning of 1945, when we were now well on the way to moving out to Alamogordo to the White Sands to test the first bomb in the month of July of 1945. They became so concerned they sent out the O.S.S. (the Office of Strategic Services), the predecessor of the CIA (our secret spy agency), to get information to see where the Germans were in this. They came back relieved to find that the Germans were two years behind us, and we weren't sure where the Japanese were, who were also working on it. It is only the grace of God that gave the bomb to us, and not to them, or this would have been a different world indeed. God wasn't ready to let the fire burn us down. So, today people think that it can happen to us, but it could have happened to us then. When God is ready, it will happen.

Verse 13 indicates that the basic cause of Israel's national apostasy was the failure of its spiritual leaders to teach and to obey Scripture, while attacking those like Jeremiah, who were trying to teach them doctrine. I told you before what they did to Jeremiah – how they abused this prophet. This man who was sounding forth and daily teaching the Word of God, saying, "This is the doctrinal principle. What you're doing is wrong militarily. What you're doing is wrong economically. What you're doing is wrong socially." And instead, they viewed him as an enemy, and they finally put him in jail. They put him in that slimy pit that they threw him into, because they were sick and tired of listening to his negative sounding forth as to what was going to happen to them nationally.

So verse 13 says, "For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her." Here you have corrupt spiritual leaders. What do you expect of the people?

Then verse 14 says that the spiritual leaders were, in effect, blind leading the blind to their mutual destruction: "They have wandered like blind men in the streets. They have polluted themselves with blood so that the men could not touch their garments. It was not beyond them as spiritual leaders to act in bloodshed to remove the opposition, and to silence the voices that were against them.

This is exactly what the New Age movement and its spiritual leadership and its associates, like the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches, are out to do today – to silence the voices who are sounding the alarm and showing people what is taking place. These spiritual leaders were blind, and going to their own destruction, and taking the nation down with them because the nation would not listen to the Bible doctrine-teachings Jeremiah, but they were listening to the emotional, exciting priests and leaders who were giving them visions of glory on the horizon which was never to be realized.

Well, the divine discipline upon these negative Jews included the agony of famine. Famine was one of the judgments because of what they had done, and because of their attitude toward God and toward His Word. So, if you move back up to verse 4, we read something that is almost impossible to believe – that a sensitive, compassionate mother would do to her infant child. Those of you who are mothers, and you have little infants, put yourself in the position of these Jewish mothers. Lamentations 4:4 says, "The tongue of the nursing child clings to the roof of his mouth for thirst." His mother now is suffering so from malnutrition that she does not have the milk to be able to nurse the child, and the child's mouth is dry as he tries to secure nourishment that is not there: "The young children ask bread and no man breaks it until them." Those who are a little older are sitting there pitifully crying, asking for a morsel of bread, but there's nobody to give it to them.

This is famine. The mothers are malnourished. They cannot produce the milk. Their food supply has been destroyed by the society's socialistic attitudes, which is what the Jews had fallen into. They were moving toward a welfare state structure. No matter how Jeremiah and Isaiah and these men were warning them, they were inflating their money. These prophets were saying, "God says that you must not do that. If you inflate your money, God will destroy you as a nation." Oh, they wouldn't listen: "A little inflation never hurt anybody." So, they pursued with their various social programs.

So, now here they are – suffering the consequences of socialism that inevitably comes. Socialism never can raise food to feed people. There has never been a country in the history of the world who has had a socialist economic system that has been able to raise enough food to feed the people. They always have to come to free-enterprise capitalism to buy their food to survive. And the free-enterprise capitalists are always stupid enough and greedy enough to sell them the food, instead of letting them suffer the consequences of their economic system.

So, here you have the pitiful side of children who cannot be fed enough, and who, in time, as you know, when the child suffers malnutrition, then he begins to get that distended stomach, and that bloated little belly. It's a sign of how far the malnutrition has gone, and how far the organs have been deteriorated, and he's well on the way toward death itself. That is agony for a mother to have to face.

Verse 5 points out the fact that this is even more agonizing because these same Jews once lived in luxury, and enjoyed delicacies. Lamentations 4:5: "They that did very delicately are desolate in the streets. They that were brought up in scarlet embraced dunghills. That's a very stark picture. They once walked around in finery, and now they sit in manure piles, because at least sometimes there's a little warmth in a manure pile. At least they can use some of that manure to burn as fuel for whatever little food they may have.

Then verse 6 says that the punishment of prolonged starvation is more agonizing than the divine destruction which was wreaked upon Sodom, which brought instant deaths of the sinners there: "For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom that was overthrown, as in a moment, with no hands laid on her." God could have brought instant destruction upon the Jews, but He didn't. Here is the great mighty city of Jerusalem, and the people are dying little-by-little from starvation. They are in the agony of going from day to day, trying to survive, and there is no food. And I don't mean that you have a little food. I mean that you have less and less, until, there is practically no food, and you're gnawing at every root, and every blade of grass, and anything you can find. They are in that kind of desperation. That's where they came to in Jerusalem. These people are in a position worse than those who are in Sodom, because when that fireball broke over Sodom, everybody under it was incinerated, and they were instantly killed. And that was the end of that. This is a slow, agonizing death.

Then there is the physical debilitation that is evidenced upon these people. Notice verse 7: "Her nobles were pure snow. They were whiter than milk. They were more ruddy in body than rubies. Their polishing was a sapphire." What this person is saying is that there was a time when these people had the appearance of being in the pink of health. But notice what has happened now with malnutrition.

Verse 8: "Their visage is blacker than a cold. They are not known in the streets. Their skin clings it to their bones. It is withered. It has become like a stick." Malnutrition has caused their skin to turn black as soot, so that they are no longer recognizable to their acquaintances. Here you have the biblical interpretation that we're looking for, to anchor ourselves to the significance of the black horse. Black in the Bible is the color of suffering; of privation; and, and particularly of famine. Black is the color of starvation. And so here we have these people whose skin is turning black from their malnutrition. Not only that, but from the fact that, undoubtedly, they have become so emaciated and weak that they no longer practice normal sanitary procedures, so that they are dirty, and they stay dirty.

Furthermore, it says that their skin has shriveled on their bones; that is, that they have lost so much weight that their skin is just clinging to their emaciated skeletal structure. Their skin itself, it says, has become dry as a stick of dead wood. It is just dry because, again, the normal oils and the normal lubricating processes have been so depreciated in the body because of the lack of nourishment to produce those things.

Then comes Lamentations 4:9 that says that instant death by the sword in battle is better than the slow death of starvation when there is no food available: "They who are slain with the sword are better than they who are slain with hunger; for these pine away, stricken through for lack of the fruits of the field." So, again, he points out that it's better to have instant death than the agonizing death of malnutrition and starvation. In the tribulation, God is going to provide the prolonged death of famine. He is not going to immediately provide the instant death that will come for some of them when they turn loose their nuclear weapons on one another.

Then we have the climax of this horrible picture here. It is unbelievable that a tenderhearted, compassionate mother could do. Verse 10: "The hands of the tenderhearted women have boiled their own children. They were their food in the destruction of the daughter of My people." So, that the desperation of hunger is so great that mothers take their infant children and they boil them for food, and eat them. That's what they were doing in the great city of Jerusalem, folks. This is not a threat. This is an historical account. Remember that these are the people who knew the living God. These are the people who had the moral code. These are the people who had doctrinal instructions. These are the people who had courageous men like Jeremiah standing up and sounding forth when everybody else was saying, "Jeremiah, you're part of the lunatic fringe. Bug off. We have moved ahead. Why don't you catch up with us? You're so backward. You're tiresome." But Jeremiah knew of what he spoke because he spoke from the authority of the Word of God. So, in the desperation of their famine, they turned to eating their own children.

So, black is the color associated in the Bible with dire need and famine. The grim picture of famine is the black horse, which is going to stalk the human race in the tribulation era.

**A Scale**

So Revelation 6:5 says, "When He had broken that third seal, I heard the third living angels sound forth in a thunderous voice: "Come." And I beheld, and lo (take note), a black horse. Then John observed something further about the rider: "And him that sat." This is the Greek word "kathemai." "Kathemai" describes the position that one has upon a horse when he are riding the horse. This is his constant position. He's there riding on this horse. The rider is actually on the horse, and he has something. The word has is "echo." "Echo" refers to a possession that the rider has. He is holding something. He actually does the holding himself. What he holds in his hand is a "zugos." A "zugos" is a pair of valances; that is, a scale for weighing things. The "zugos" actually portrays a yoke from which then is hung at the fulcrum point that which is being weighed. This is the picture you have of the "zugos" which actually apply to this thing yoke-like specifically, and then it came to indicate the scale on which you weighed things.

So, this rider is indicating that he comes out and represents something that needs to be weighed. It says that: "He holds this in his hand."

**A Voice**

Then we come to verse 6, and John hears some voices. Again, he has that same word, "akouo," which indicates that he is hearing something with his physical ears. It's at the point when the rider comes on, and John spots the scale that the rider is holding in one hand. He sees that the horse is black, and then he says that he hears personally another voice. The Greek Bible has this little word "hos." The word "hos" means "as it were" or "sounded like." So, he says, "I heard something that sounded like a "phone," which is the word for voice: "I heard something that sounded like a voice." It was a very dramatic special kind of voice, and that's why it caught John's attention. He says, "It was like a voice. It was something that was intelligible in communicating to me."

He says, "I heard this voice," and he tells us where he heard it. He says, "I heard it in the midst ('mesos')." The "mesos" means "in the center of" the four living creatures. Well, the living creatures are standing around God's throne, so for a voice to come from the center of the four living creatures means that it's God the Father's voice that he's hearing. So, John is suddenly aware of the fact that a statement is coming from the center of the four living creatures who surround the throne. Revelation 4:6 tells us about these four creatures surrounding the throne. The speaker is God the Father.

That being the case, we are introduced to the fact that the Father is going to make a declaration concerning the condition which is to exist in the tribulation. It's not only a preview of what is going to exist, but it is, in effect, a divine declaration of what God is going to do. Remember that now, once the tribulation begins, there is no more God holding back in mercy. There's no more waiting to give you information to get you to come to your brains, and get your head screwed on straight, and come back to the authority of the Word. That is now passed. God is pouring forth His judgments. So, here He is going to declare one of the things that He's going to do.

Namely, He says, "A measure of wheat." The word "measure" is the "choinix." This is a noun. It refers to a liquid measure about the size of a quart, or refers to a dry measure in the size of about two pounds in weight. This was a standard New Testament measure of weight or measure of volume. The scale is used to measure of the "choinix" volume. The Greek historian Herodotus, from the fifth century B.C. (the man who is given the title of "the father of history"), said that a "choinix" was the measure of a soldier's daily food ration. This is what a man in combat needed each day for sufficient nutrition for the activity in which he was engaged.

**Wheat**

What he has a "choinix" of (a measure of) is "sitos," and that stands for the grain of wheat. This is a measure of wheat. Wheat was a very important crop in biblical times. It was a food staple. It is used by Jesus in the parable of the true and false profession in Matthew 13:25. He compares the wheat, which is genuine, nourishing food, to that which is in the midst of a grass (actually a thing called "darnel"). The King James Version translates it as "tares." The tears at the early stage look very much like genuine wheat. What Jesus said is that the tears are false. They look like the real thing, but they're false profession. The wheat is the real thing. Matthew 13:29 tells us that the wheat cannot be distinguished from the tears at the early stages. But at the harvest time, Matthew 13:30 says that you can distinguish them. You can pull the tears out, and you can save the wheat.

The wheat is recognized as a very valuable nourishing food because that's what it is. But if you eat the darnel, that is poisonous. And if you get that mixed in with your wheat, it can kill you. So, it's a stark contrast of that which is genuine, valuable, and nourishing over against that which is not. That's why Jesus uses the comparison of the wheat and the darnel.

**A Denarius**

The voice coming from the midst of the four living creatures is probably the voice of God the Father. That voice is proclaiming that a "choinix" of wheat is to be sold for a denarius. That's the Greek word "denarion." The "denarion" is the word for a Roman silver coin. In Matthew 20:2, we get a very important piece of information concerning the value of one denarius. This is concerning the man who is hiring laborers for his vineyard: "And when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard." So, we have here the indication that a denarius was a day's wage in New Testament times. For a whole day's service (for a whole day's labor), a man received one of these Romans silver coins, the value of which was described as a denarius.

It's pointless for us to try to equate that to present day terms. Writers do that, and, of course, inflation has killed them. Some writers say a denarius was worth 18 cents a day. Well, we've long since gotten past 18 cents for a day's wage. But whatever the day's wage is today, or in the tribulation, that's the comparable thing of what a denarius was in New Testament times. The reason for the complaint in this parable of the workers who put in a full day's wage, while others put in only part of a day's wage, was that the people who put in part of the day got a full day's wage. Whereas those who began early in the morning and worked all day didn't get any more than a full day's wage. You have that in Matthew 20:11-12.

So, the workers who started at the beginning of the day got what they agreed upon. If you look at Matthew 20:1-2, you see that the lord of the vineyard made a labor contract with them. They agreed that for this day's work, he would pay them so much. However, Matthew 23:7 said that the owner of the vineyard kept finding men lounging around during the day in the square. He came up to them and said, "Why don't you come and work for me? I need some help getting my harvest in." They said, "OK." However, you will notice in Matthew 23:3-7 that they didn't enter a labor contract with the owner of the vineyard. All they entered into was that the owner said, "I'll do what is right." They said, "OK. We'll go to work for you, and at the end of the day, you do what is right." That's the arrangement they made with the owner.

So, at the end of the day, the owner paid off the labor contractors exactly one denarius for a whole day's work. But for the other men, some of whom had only worked for one hour, he paid them also a full day's wage. Whatever the reasons the owner of the vineyard had, we don't know. But it was certainly his right; his authority; and, his privilege with his money to do that if he wanted to. And that's what the Lord Jesus pointed out to His disciples. That's a principle of economics. You can do with your money as you choose. Anytime a government or any system comes in to hinder you from doing with your money (the fruits of your labor) as you choose, then it is out of line with Scriptures. It is violating the biblical institution of volition.

So, the Father on His throne has proclaimed here a very amazing thing – that in the tribulation era, the level of a whole day's wage will buy one quart of wheat, which is one day's good nourishment. This was what the military received as one day's good nourishment.

Then, John hears a further proclamation from the throne of God, and that is three measures (three "choinix") of barley. That's the word "krithe." "Krithe" was also a prominent grain food in New Testament Times just as wheat was. But you use barley to feed your horses and your cows. It was animal food. It was that because it was much cheaper than wheat. The people who ate barley in New Testament times were the poor. The people who had funds available ate wheat. The upper classes viewed eating barley, as a matter of fact, with contempt. The Arabs, as the followers of Muhammad, described themselves as wheat, and they refer to Jews as barley, and they do that to this day. The Arab calls himself God's wheat, and he refers to the Jew as God's barley, to give you a little frame of reference of the contents of barley as a grain.

In Judges 7:13. Gideon, overhears the Midianite soldier explaining a dream that he had. The dream was that the Midianite soldier saw a loaf of barley bread rolling into the Midianite camp and devastating it. And of course, the people who sat there around him said. "That can only be Gideon." So, the Midianites we're describing Gideon. Even in this man's dream, Gideon, the Jew, was viewed as a loaf of barley – not of wheat bread, but a loaf of barley. And the rest of these Midianite Arabs very quickly recognized that that was speaking about one of the Jews, and it could only be Gideon, because he was the only force that they could expect to do such devastation to them militarily.

**Inflation**

In Second Kings 7:1, Elisha said that the price of barley flour was half of that of wheat in his day. So, we're dealing with a cheap food in barley. God the Father says that in the tribulation, a person will be able, for one day's wage, to buy three "choinix" (three quarts) of barley. So, for a day's wage, he'll have enough for himself, and some for his family, although of less nourishing food. Normally in New Testament times, however, a denarius (one denarius coin) would buy eight "choinix" of wheat. So, if you can only buy one, you have eight times the norm. So, what does that tell you? That tells you that inflation is also going to run rampant in the tribulation. If you wanted to be able to buy eight "choinix" of wheat now, you'd have to pay eight days wages for it – not just one, as it used to be.

Furthermore, in the case of barley, you could buy 24 quarts of barley for one denarius in New Testament Times. Now, because of the inflation, all you'll be able to buy will be three. So, you've got eight times a rise in the cost of items. Of course, inflation is caused by the fact that the governmental authorities have put so much money into circulation to pay for their social programs that you've got too much money chasing the amount of goods that are available. Therefore, the prices go up. That's exactly what is happening in our day.

So, God proclaims from His throne that there will be enormous suffering in terms of not only famine, but in terms of economic suffering under the inflation of the economy. It indicates a scarcity of food as well, because inflation prices counter a super abundance supply. When you have inflationary prices, people can't buy, and therefore it discourages people producing. For some reason, the antichrist's kingdom is going to be plagued by shortages of food and by enormous inflation.

However, there is something else that the throne of God has to declare. Our time is in this session, so we won't get to that, but next time we are going to pursue what the luxuries are going to be like in the tribulation. The picture is totally different. And then we're going to see if the Bible gives us any indication why this kind of terrible condition can exist in the tribulation. Remember that the antichrist controls it all. He controls all the food; he controls all the energy; and, he controls all the economy. The New Agers are going to be euphoric in the tribulation because they will believe they have come into a condition where, finally, they can realize what all the political parties of our day are so desperately trying to achieve. Then what happens? That person sitting on the throne, the Almighty real and true Lord of Creation, sounds forth a declaration and says, "One denarius for a quart of wheat; one denarius for 3 quarts of barley."

You never thought about God that you as the ultimate price control agency, did you? He is. And is he ever going to blow the antichrist and his political system out of the water? Those systems are seeking to be elected to office constantly in our day. And the same results can be anticipated by us as the terrible things that came upon Jerusalem that we read about in Lamentations in this session. Take the Word of God seriously. The Bible was written by Him. You cannot undermine it. You cannot beat the game.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

[**Back to the Revelation index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/revelation.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)