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## **Commentary – From the Margins Death Comes a Calling**

**H**e is not really a gentleman, nor does he come with honorable intentions. Rather, he is terrifying, dreadful, and exceedingly strong, the undisputed enemy of life. And he will be dealt a mortal wound that all of humanity will see delivered.

Death personified comes riding a pale horse when the Lamb of God removes the fourth seal of the scroll (Rev 6:7). The Lion of Judah, the Root of David is the glorified Christ Jesus, who is the reality of the paschal lamb sacrificed for the household of God. The Lamb John sees in vision, with its seven horns and seven eyes, is Christ, but Christ seen from the perspective of spiritual attributes manifesting themselves as spiritual appearance. Christ satisfied in detail the role of the paschal lamb; thus, Christ appears in this portion of John's vision as the true Passover Lamb.

The context of the Lamb opening the sealed scroll precludes the four horsemen from being world conditions between the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century and the end of the age as some teachers of Israel claim. Allow me to repeat myself: the four horsemen of the Apocalypse are not (1) many false prophets, (2) wars and rumors of wars, (3) famines and earthquakes in various places, and (4) the deaths that follow famine and war, all from Jesus' Olivet discourse. Teaching that they are world conditions is a misapplication of Scripture, for which the teacher will be properly chagrined when his or her judgment is revealed. In fact, it is reasonable to conclude that the teacher of Israel who labels the four horsemen as world conditions has not been, or was not called to teach...or at the very least, to teach prophecy.

Each of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse is a spirit being that becomes the personification of the attributes assigned to him, just as Christ Jesus appears as a Lamb. These attributes include the color of the horse that the creature rides—only the first rider is not identified as a living creature. Whereas the second, third, and fourth riders are identified as living creatures, the first rider has a bow, is given and crown, and comes out conquering and to conquer. No other phrase is used to describe or identify him. Therefore, within the context of this vision, the first rider appears as a man while the glorified Christ appears as a Lamb. Neither the Father nor the Son look like lambs; thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the first rider is not a man but only has attributes that causes him to look like one.

I am actually going somewhere with all of the above: the long vision given to Daniel about what has been recorded in the book of truth (Dan 10: 21) was sealed and secret until the time of the end (Dan 12:4, 9). It could not be understood earlier than the time of the end; it could not be understood in 1847, or in 1927, or in 1957, or in 1987. It could only be understood when humanity arrived at a specific location in the sea of time, that location marked by being able to understand the visions of Daniel in true Catch-22 logic. If the visions are not now understandable, then humanity has not yet arrived at the time of the end—and I am as mistaken as my predecessors. However, if the visions are understandable, and if my explication of the visions are their unveiling, then humanity has, indeed, reached the time of the end, and every previous understanding of the visions lacks validity.

Reading this, you know that no one else is writing or saying what I have been for some time now. And you have to decide if you hear Christ's voice in my words. If you don't think so, go your way. May we part in peace. But if you think that I have indeed been drafted to

reread prophecy and to utter Christ's words, then you need to respond. And if you are not sure, you need to hedge your bets by taking the Passover annually as Christ Jesus established the example. You need to quit listening to men—they will only get your firstborns killed, and you if you are a firstborn—and hear the words of Jesus and believe the One who sent Him. I am not, nor will I ask you to do something that isn't already recorded in Scripture. But you can see that Jesus took the Passover, instituting new symbolism with the bread and the wine, at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> of the first month. He moved the hour of the New Testament Passover a day earlier to represent a month, to represent that on a second Passover (the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> of the second month), spiritual Israel would be liberated from spiritual bondage as physical Israel was liberated from physical bondage. Again, this liberation will not occur at midnight on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the first month, but a month later. And a third of the greater Christian Church will be killed because this holy nation would not cover its sins with the paschal blood of the Lamb of God. It determined for itself how and when it would take the sacraments. But the Father never gave Israel that prerogative, sorry. The Passover really will become a test of whether Israel hears the words of Jesus and believes the Father. And the price of disbelief for firstborns will be the second death.

Therefore, within the context of the emergence of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse inaugurating seven years of tribulation, Christ Jesus is portrayed as an actual Lamb. Attributes and role played in the plan of God are appearance. And this same characterization needs applied to the four horsemen

The first three horsemen are unnamed, and have been *interpreted* to mean the general world conditions from the 1<sup>st</sup> Century until the time of Christ's return as the Messiah. That interpretation seems intellectually satisfying, but it is not spiritually satisfactory. It is akin to saying that the Lamb of God represents the Christian Church. One Lamb doesn't represent many disagreeing denominations, nor does one horseman represent world famine from the siege of Jerusalem to the siege of Leningrad. The Lamb of God is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the Root of David. And the third living creature riding a black horse with a balance in his hand is a spirit being that, while seeming to personify famine, makes merchandise of purchased disciples that have been bought with a price: the shed blood of the Lamb of God. The focus of the Father has been on the dual harvests of the earth, the barley harvest and the latter wheat harvest (the resurrection to life upon Christ's return, and the great White Throne Judgment a millennium later). This third living creature—again, within the context of Christ Jesus appearing as an actual Lamb—has a pair of scales in his hand. He has the ability to weigh, as if for selling, the wheat and barley. This spirit being has taken captive both the earlier and the latter harvests of God, and has made merchandise of Israel. This is the holy nation's endtime captor. As such, this is the third beast of Daniel chapter 7, to whom dominion is given (v. 6). This is the four headed leopard, the reality of the king of the South (Dan 11:5), to whom Israel returns when the holy nation rebels against Father and Son (2 Thess 2:3). This is trinitarian Christianity (as opposed to Arian Christianity)—the four-headed leopard cannot explain himself so it is little wonder that he is not able to explain a triune godhead.

The living creature riding a bright red horse takes peace from the earth. When, since the time of Christ, has there been peace on the earth? This second living creature, given a great sword, has a name: Apollyon in Greek. He is a destroyer. He is the bear of Daniel's vision—and he has three ribs in his mouth when seen. Those three ribs represent the three people he is unable to devour, Christ Jesus and the two witnesses.

The first rider appears as a man, not a beast, as he rides with his bow, conquering and to conquer. This first rider is given a crown as if he comes as a king. But he is really a lion that

has been made to stand as a man after having his wings plucked off. And he comes as the false prophet that will be thrown alive into the lake of fire upon Christ's return.

The most difficult trek a teacher of Israel will make is over the mountain separating being physically-minded from being spiritually-minded. The path is three-dimensional; the route taken circuitous, marked by switchbacks and by the governing principles of the visible reveals the invisible, the physical precedes the spiritual, and the entirety of canonical Scripture forms the visible, living shadow of the spiritual birth process. The path leads away from Protestant Orthodoxy, which finds Rome, the Roman Empire, and the Roman See lurking among the beasts of the prophet Daniel's visions. It leads away from the realized eschatology of the Roman Church. It leads away from identifying endtime Israel as the modern descendants of the ancient house of Israel. It leads onto lonely slopes of blooming fireweed, bright pink and wavering in an afternoon breeze, a vista that stretches in all directions, spectacularly beautiful.

Being spiritually-minded requires transforming metaphors and symbols into a cross-dimensional literalism that has a mountain representing a mountain, a government, and a state of consciousness for sentient beings, not one or another. Death becomes the penalty for lawlessness, an attribute of lawlessness, and the personification of lawlessness. Death, now, has both life and a face. He is a spirit being just as the Lamb of God is the living Root of David.

The symbolism of the Book of Daniel and of Revelation has proven to be an insurmountable barrier for biblical literalists. Oh, these literalists have certainly assigned meaning to the symbols. The lion whose wings are plucked off and is made to stand as a man is the Babylon Empire. The four headed, four-winged leopard is the Greek Empire. The undescribed fourth beast with ten horns together on its head when the little horn appears is the Roman/Holy Roman Empire, with the little horn representing the Pope. But these literalists are spiritually clueless. On the cover of *A Philadelphia Apologetic* is a photo of a Kamchatka orchid found on Kodiak Island. The orchid is to them just another pretty flower.

I was drafted to reread prophecy because I would climb the mountain that separates physical from spiritual. Only when at the summit of this mountain will a person realize that it didn't need to be climbed, that a periscope had been given to Israel with which the holy nation could see into the spiritual realm.

Typology serves as a periscope that allows disciples to peer into the supra-dimensional realm usually identified as heaven without climbing over the mountain separating physical from spiritual. It is a nearly two millennial old gift from God the Father to the younger brothers of Christ Jesus (Rom 8:29) that couldn't be opened until the time of the end. A few disciples such as Samuel Mather and Jonathon Edwards shook the box and made an educated guess as to the contents, but the gift remained unopened until the Father said it was time. And then opening the box has taken additional time, as has learning to use this rarest of gifts.

Human beings live in a four-dimensional universe, with apparently additional unfurled dimensions. The recent work of some physicists on M-theory, or Super String Theory has been on understanding how matter is constructed. The problem has been the difficulty of making observations when the strings that need to be observed and measured are smaller than the smallest light mass particle (a photon) available for making observations. Work becomes mental rather than physical. And work in the mental realm is really work done outside the four-dimensional universe, for one characteristic of human beings is the ability to leap outside of space-time as migrating salmon leap above their watery realm.

Humanity lives in time as salmon live in water, and humanity dies in time as salmon die in the waters of their nativity. The abiding characteristic of time is change. Nothing remains as it was for long. And change allows the maturation of life. No physicist writing equations for standing waves did so when a physical infant. Their leaps outside of time would have been smaller, perhaps no higher than *pretend*. But with the passage of time, both bodies and minds matured — time passes at the decay rate of heavy mass particles, and is a function of the expansion of the universe, as evidenced by the uniformity of temperature in deep space.

The abiding characteristic of the supernal realm is timelessness, as revealed by the linguistic implication of, *I AM*. Since the presence of life and the absence of life are incompatible states, the possession of life in the supernal realm is everlasting. There is and can be no death in the supernal realm, for life and death cannot share the same timeless moment. Likewise, there is no maturation process as seen in birth, infancy, adolescence, and maturity.

The universe has a beginning. That is truly indisputable. At a particular instant, it suddenly came into existence, expanded extremely rapidly, and produced time, or better, space-time. And whether humanity likes the thought, the universe was created as a death chamber.

The above is certainly a grisly thought: the creation of the universe seems to be about life, rather than death. But what life hasn't died? Only that which is presently alive? The inescapable reality of time is death. Thus, to escape time, life must escape from death.

One prominent radio evangelist used to say that the universe was like a cake that awaited decorating, that glorified human beings would put the icing on the cake. The scenario is physically satisfying, but not well thought through. The focus of God has been the dual harvests of the earth, the early and the latter. And following bringing the latter harvest into the barn, the new heavens and the new earth change what had been physical into what will be spiritual. The death chamber will be permanently abolished, for it will no longer be needed. Even the rebelling angels will have received the wages for their lawlessness.

Despite the apparent injustice of the linguistic representation, death has been historically portrayed as darkness. And the struggle between light and dark isn't merely a struggle between good and evil but between life and death. Within time, even that which is good dies. There is no escape as long as life remains in time, or in the death chamber. All life awaits execution.

The War Scroll of Qumran reveals a community that described itself as the *Sons of Light*. The community took the light/dark metaphor to a height far above Melville's white whale. But then, it has been and it remains the prerogative of religion to mentally leap outside time to find the trailmarkers for the cross-dimensional path to everlasting life.

The lie Eve swallowed in Eden was that she would not die (Gen 3:4), that she had life. Yes, she had life, but beyond the walls of Eden was the death chamber of time. Eden was an oasis of life, which was hers if she would have eaten the fruit of that tree, but for disbelief, she and her husband were driven from the garden before they could eat of that tree. Life and death were set before them, and they chose death. And death entered Eden in the killing of animals to cover the couple's nakedness.

Eden serves as a metaphor for a terminal promised land of everlasting life. It is the end of the trail—and as the serpent in Eden told Eve that she would not die, thereby causing her to choose death over life, the old serpent that deceives the whole world (Rev 12:9) told the second Eve that she would not die, that she had an immortal soul, that she should believe Plato rather than Paul, who wrote, "For the wages of sin [lawlessness — 1 John 3:4] is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 6:23). Life in the death

chamber of time is temporary, lasting from moments to a few hundred years, at best. Life and death cannot coexist, but as one moment passes into the next moment, change occurs. Life can change into death. Only life outside of time is everlasting, for change has been limited to what will coexist together. And darkness has no fellowship with light. Even a small candle seems extremely bright in the absence of any other light.

Lawlessness has no fellowship with obedience. Paul writes, “Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness” (Rom 6:16). And herein lies Israel’s problem: when spiritual Israelites were slaves to sin, they were free in regard to righteousness (v. 20). They could choose whether to obey the laws of God. They could obey most of the time; they could obey all but one time. They were free, with all rights of freewill. And Israel liked being a truly free woman so much that even after she became betrothed to Christ Jesus, she retained her liberty. But Paul writes, “But what fruit were you getting at that time [when free in regard to righteousness] from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death” (v. 21).

Death is the end of freewill — and freewill will end in either life or death.

The terms of the second covenant contain the following clause, *I have set before you this day life and death, choose life that you may live*. In the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> Centuries, Israel finalized her choice of death. At the Council of Nicea, she surrendered her independence and accepted the Roman Emperor’s determination of what constituted sound doctrine in exchange for him covering her civil nakedness. Israel presented herself as the obedient slave of lawlessness. No longer would she pretend to keep the laws of God, at least not the fourth commandment. And she would no longer accept Jesus’ shed blood at Passover as her covering for sin although she wanted to keep a vial of it around just in case she was caught without the Emperor’s clothing as her covering.

The mistake of historical theologians is in not seeing that all of Israel was sent into spiritual captivity prior to the council of Nicea, that the Council formalized that captivity but didn’t introduce it, that Israel went into captivity when this holy nation believed the lie of the old serpent that she would not die, that she had everlasting life apart from receiving it as the gift of God. Thus, this holy nation didn’t value the gift she received through receipt of the Breath of God. She treated it as a cheap trinket to be dangled before suitors, a trinket by which she could hypnotize princes and peasants, the pompous and the paupers.

Israel reveled in darkness and called it spiritual enlightenment. She made a treaty with Death, the terms of which called for her making him appear desirable, respectable, debonair even, if he would grant her world dominion. And he has, indeed, become quite a distinguished appearing fellow, standing there looking for all the world like the Cross upon which Christ was crucified.

Three crosses on a hilltop, all of humanity represented there that morning—one lawbreaker asked Jesus to save Himself and the lawbreaker’s physical life. The other lawbreaker acknowledged the justice of his death, and asked only that he be remembered when Christ came into His kingdom. The second lawbreaker didn’t look to save his physical life, but sought spiritual life. And he was spiritually justified, for he indeed deserved death. Salvation will be just this simple when the dual harvests of the earth are reaped. All who endure in faith will be saved; all who hear the words of Jesus and believe the One who sent Him will have life. But everyone who seeks to save his or her physical life will lose it, as well as the person’s spiritual life.

Pictorialists have historically portrayed the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse as a dark, sinister appearing sort of grim reaper, scythe in hand, face concealed. But he doesn’t appear

that way at all. It is his image or mark [*stigma*] that the antiChrist requires all who would buy and sell to bear during the last 1260 days of the Tribulation, for he is the beast dealt a mortal wound when the two witnesses are resurrected back to life. He is the fourth king of Daniel chapter 7, the beast that is terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It is his body that is given over to be burned when the court of the Ancient of Days sits in judgment. He is the northern horn of the four horns that emerged on the head of the spiritual king of Greece when the great horn is suddenly broken. His head is the one whose deadly wound has healed when the first beast of Revelation chapter 13 emerges from the sea. He is Death, and he appears as Christ's cross [*Chi xi*].

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