

SALVATION IN SYMBOLS & SIGNS

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Corresponds to Program 21

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the NKJV and KJV.

THE BLACK HORSE STUDY GUIDE

THE DARK AGES

Revelation 6:5-6

We will now examine the third horse in our studies. Again, we are invited to “come and see.” John saw a black horse galloping, and the rider had a set of balances in his hand.

Remember that this horse covers the same period of time as the third church, since we follow the principle of “repeat and enlarge.” That means that this rider corresponds to the church at Pergamos.

The third horse signals the start of the time known as the “Dark Ages,” so, it seems fitting that the horse color is black. The black indicates spiritual darkness. The gospel began to go with power under the white horse when the pure gospel was proclaimed. This brought the persecution found in the red horse time. Rather than stand firm, the church under the black horse allowed unbiblical teachings to enter the ranks. Pagan beliefs and heretical teachings infiltrated the church. The following principle shows that darkness falls where the gospel light goes out.

The Black Horse

The first symbol we will look at is again the color of the horse. The Bible uses darkness as a symbol for the power of Satan (Acts 26:17-18). This horse represents people who choose darkness over light (John 3:19-21).

Satan established his “seat” or “throne” in the Pergamos church through the first Sunday law issued by Roman Emperor Constantine in AD 321 (Revelation 2:13). Many Christians, worn

down by persecution, embraced this early compromise of God’s Sabbath written in His law (Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Mark 2:27-28; Revelation 14:6-7). And to this day many Christians still embrace Sunday instead of the Bible Sabbath as the day to worship.

Pair of Balances

The “pair of balances” is an interesting image conveying important Bible truth. The phrase comes from one Greek word *zugos* (pronounced *dzoo-gos*), meaning “yoke, burden or bondage.” It can refer to either the yoke

Christ calls us to bear (Matthew 11:28-30) or to a false yoke of spiritual bondage or legalism as the following verses indicate:

“Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” (Acts 15:10).

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” (Galatians 5:1).

The balances deepen the symbolism of the black horse, in this case referring to the subtle forms of legalism that erode the liberty of Christ’s gospel.



“So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.”

REVELATION 6:5

Wheat and barley points to the symbolism of spiritual food. Jesus said that He was the bread of life, and wheat and barley were the main ingredients in bread (John 6:33-35, 48-51). His Word was made flesh (John 1:14). When we partake of Christ and His Word, we will never hunger or thirst. The rationing of wheat and barley for a “penny,” which was about a day’s wage in Biblical times, signifies a famine for Christ and Bible truth (Amos 8:11). This developed more and more during the dark ages as the Word of God was outlawed and

KEY SCRIPTURES

Acts 26:17-18 DARKNESS SYMBOL FOR SATAN’S POWER **Rev. 6:6** RATIONING WHEAT/FAMINE OF GOD’S WORD

Revelation 6:5 BALANCES SYMBOLIZE BEING WEIGHED **1 John 2:20** OIL SIGNIFIES THE HOLY SPIRIT

copies of the Bible were not available.

“Oil and wine” are also Biblical symbols. Oil represents the anointing of the Spirit (1 John 2:18-20), and wine represents the blood of Christ (Mark 14:23-25). Therefore, the oil and wine here signify those who rely upon the power of the Holy

Spirit and the blood of Christ for their salvation. As we today are filled with the Holy Spirit and find our strength in Christ, we will resist legalism and come out of darkness into God’s wonderful, “marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). ★

