And he arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, "Peace, be still"

This is the world, brutal and cruel, that Troy tried to withstand. Cruelty wins in the end. Our little clearings of civilization may seem real, but mindless wilderness always lurks, may take its time, but in the end overwhelms all our pretensions to decency. We revert to beastliness. (Seneca, Trojan Women, Lines 985-990)

## the four horsemen of the apocalypse part 2 of 5 —the white horse and its rider revelation 6.1-8

<sup>1</sup>I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures invite, with a voice like thunder, "Come!"

<sup>2</sup>Then I saw—imagine this!—a white horse. Its rider held a military bow and was granted a crown. He went off triumphantly, intending to conquer.

<sup>3</sup>And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature invite, "Come!"

<sup>4</sup>And another horse, this one red, went off, its rider given power to take peace from the earth, to the extent that they kill each other. He was equipped with a vicious sword.

<sup>5</sup>And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature invite, "Come!"

Then I saw—imagine this!—a black horse. Its rider held a set of scales in his hand. <sup>6</sup>I heard something like a voice coming from the four creatures, announcing: "A quart of wheat or three quarts of barley costs a day's wage, while olive oil and wine you are not to impact."

<sup>7</sup>And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature invite, "Come!"

<sup>8</sup>And I saw—imagine this!—a pallid horse. As for its rider, his name was Death, and hell accompanied him. And he was given dominion over a large swath of the planet to slay with the sword and with starvation and with death and with earth's wild beasts.<sup>1</sup>

edition: 2 february 2021 Page 1 of 16

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Critical notes on my translation of the text can be found in the end notes of the first homily in this series.

## 1ntroduction

After fearfully avoiding the Book of Revelation for nearly six decades of my life and, finally, shamed by my cowardice, I decided to face my fears and dive into the Book. How glad I am. I have learned so very much.

With the Revelator's guidance, and in accordance with scripture's power to discern "the thoughts and intents of the heart," I have learned a thing or two about myself. In addition, I have learned much about the world in which we all find ourselves—a world all too often driven by satanic impulses it seems unable to control. I have learned much about the alternative reality that John discerned through inspiration and revelation—an imagined world in which God rules the hearts and minds of its inhabitants. I have learned that I am expected to do far more than read and understand the Revelator's discerning insights into this world driven by the impulses of the dark "prince of this world," or of the world as it can be under the enlightened direction of the "prince of peace." I am to act. I am to confront and resist the satanic world as it exists. I am to labor in assisting in the establishment of the Kingdom of God as it can be.

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."<sup>5</sup>

The Book of Revelation is, then, above all else, a call to action. But inspired and effective action requires a knowledge of what really is and can be. If we are to resist the evils of this world and assist in the building up of the kingdom of God, we must understand the opposing principles upon which the two worlds are built. With the opening of the first seal in Revelation 6, John's apocalypse begins in earnest, and, with it, the beginning of his tutorial concerning the world as it is.

This is how I understand the "four horsemen of the apocalypse." This understanding will guide my interpretation of each. They represent a description of this world as it has existed

edition: 2 february 2021 Page 2 of 16

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See Hebrews 4.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See John 14.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See Isaiah 9.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Revelation 1.<sup>3</sup>

throughout human history, before and since the ministry of John. They represent a description of the world until such time as its inhabitants decide they have had enough of insanity and seek the Lord's help to undo it; until such time as they discard the vile image of Satan and seek renewal with and in the image of God.

In Part 1 of this series of homilies on the four horsemen of the apocalypse, we made a number of observations about the Book of Revelation in general and the four horsemen in particular. In today's homily, we turn our attention specifically to the first seal's white horse and its rider. We will first examine the symbolism of the white horse itself. We will then consider the horse's rider, with his military bow, crown, and stated intentions. As we mine these symbols for their meaning, we will draw some conclusions as to their meaning within the framework of John's apocalypse in general and in the scenes involving the four horsemen in particular. We will then utilize two real life, real time, historical narratives to illustrate the principles John seeks to unveil through the white horse and its rider.

With these introductory remarks, we now turn to the first seal with its white horse and rider.

## the white horse and rider

It will seem too obvious when we say that John's long and detailed apocalypse begins with the white horse and its lone rider of the first seal. But it might not be so obvious when we assert that everything in the vision that follows this horse and its rider flows from and is a direct consequence of this horse, its horseman, and the spirit they represent. Without this horse and rider, there would be no apocalypse. There would be no need. For the need to educate, warn, and correct human society through apocalypse would largely erode with the absence of this horse and rider.

No doubt, the reader will require an explanation for such a big assertion. I hope to provide it in the homilies that follow.

Our eyes are first drawn to and immediately fix upon a gorgeous white horse. It doesn't

edition: 2 february 2021 Page **3** of **16** 

really matter whether John saw a pure white horse or one that is merely whitist-gray. He is a poet. He knows his readers and uses that knowledge to his advantage. He knows that when his readers read "white horse" they will imagine the purest and whitest of horses. You tell me, am I wrong? Is this not what you imagined, whatever your interpretation might be? Well, you are not alone, as any Google image search, "White horse of the apocalypse," will demonstrate.

Such white horses are not common. Just watch tapes of the Kentucky Derby over the past, say, twenty years if you don't believe me. Due to their rarity, white horse have often been highly valued, both in terms of human interest and monetary worth. Due to their expensiveness, possession has nearly always been limited to the wealthy and powerful. White horses were rarely found pulling plows, wagons, or other farm implements. The wealthy and powerful often utilized them as a symbol of their prestige, wealth, and power. This was certainly true in Roman times, the time of the Revelator.

This provides our first clue as to the character of the horse's rider. He is wealthy and powerful, possessing the resources to purchase or the clout/brutality to confiscate the white horse.

The rider's possession of a military bow tells us that he is a military man. This military man's horse tells us that he is a calvary man, rather than an infantry man. Because pre-modern governments and armies did not supply the calvary man's horse, ancient calvaries were composed of rich men. They owned their own military-worthy horses and brought them to the battle. This confirms our rider as a wealthy man.

So, our rider is a wealthy, influential citizen. Like all wealthy and influential men, he is undoubtedly accustomed to getting his way. The Hebrew Psalmist captures the essence of such men as well as anyone.

edition: 2 february 2021 Page **4** of **16** 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> This was still often true during the American Civil War, during the American "Indian" wars, and the wars over Texas independence. It was true of Teddy Roosevelt's "Rough Riders," who were little more than rich white men engaging in capitalistic plundering and despoiling of brown people.

"Even in death, they experience no suffering,

but die with stomachs full.

They do not experience the hardships of common people,

nor are they struck as others are struck.

This is why they wear their self-conceit as a neckless;

envelope themselves in a garment of cruelty.

Their eyes bug out on account of their beefiness;

their physique boggles the mind.

They are disdainful and promote wanton oppression.

Their rhetoric is ever so soaring.

They claim divine license;

their assertions are found the world over.

This is why peoples keep turning to them;

why, as overflowing water, they flow to them.

They say, "How could God know?

How could 'Elyôn possess any awareness?"

In summary: these are the impious;

ever secure, always increasing in wealth."<sup>7</sup>

The rider of the white horse, however, possesses another telling article. He wears a crown that has been "given to" or "granted" him. Thus, our rider is something more than a common military man. Something more, even, than a wealthy and privileged calvary man. He is a leader, a crowned ruler of a nation, with or without wide public support. And he has been crowned with specific national expectations which he, himself, undoubtedly shares personally. He is sent forth at the head of a national army to conquer. The man and the nation he represents, and out of which he so haughtily rides, seeks dominance over other rulers, other peoples, and other nations.

No doubt, an adoring and fondling crowd lines the avenues and waves its banners as he leaves the city in search of dominance. "Make our nation great again" we might hear them cheer. "Make us #1" they shout. "We're #1, we're #1, we're #1." Blood sport is such a blast.

edition: 2 february 2021 Page **5** of **16** 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Psalm 73.<sup>4-12</sup>; author's translation

The notice that the rider intends to conquer; that dominance is the driving force in his life, is

central to understanding the meaning of the white horse and its rider. It is central to

understanding the following horses with their riders. It is central to understanding everything

that follows in the Book of Revelation. Whatever happens from here on out in the Book, the

Revelator wants us to understand that it all began with a desire. An unholy desire. A desire to

conquer, to dominate. It is all downhill from here. Every evil has this desire for domination—

emotional domination, physical domination, sexual domination, military domination, national

domination, economic domination—as its genesis. Every evil begins in the human heart and

works its way out into human conduct.

This insight is not, of course, original with John. He learned it from Jesus, who, during his

earthly ministry, expressed wonder at the fact that even his closest disciples were "without

understanding also" when it came to the origination of human sin and defilement.

"And he said, 'That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within,

out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts,

covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride,

foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."8

Jesus' warning about the impurity of the human heart and the consequences that flow from

that impurity, so well depicted in the person riding the white horse, was delivered to that first

of all men, Adam, thousands of years earlier.

"And the Lord spake unto Adam, saying: Inasmuch as thy children are conceived in sin,

even so when they begin to grow up, sin conceiveth in their hearts..."9

The Book of Mormon editor comments upon the very sort of desires, behaviors, and

consequences in his Nephite culture that are reflected in the desires, behaviors, and

consequences of the rider on the white horse,

<sup>8</sup> Mark 7.<sup>20-23</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Moses 6.<sup>55</sup>; emphasis added

edition: 2 february 2021 Page 6 of 16

"Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this—Satan had great power, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, and to the puffing them up with pride, tempting them to seek for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world. And thus Satan did lead away the hearts of the people to do all manner of iniquity..."

I am more than just a little intrigued by the advice/warning that the Lord offered W. W. Phelps—author of that most famous of LDS hymns, "The Spirit of God"—in the summer of 1831.

"He hath need to repent, for I, the Lord, am not well pleased with him, for he seeketh to excel, and he is not sufficiently meek before me." 11

The human heart, ever insecure when God is absent, is a deep well of desire for power, authority, prestige, riches, and domination. This human desire to "excel," to conquer, to dominate displeases God. It requires repentance. The consequences of not resisting, of refusing to repent of these unholy desires lead almost inevitably to conflict and destruction. Left unchecked, such desires have brought and will bring the sorrows of societal collapse and annihilation, as John will illustrate so effectively with his next three horsemen and his apocalypse as a whole.

So, John's apocalyptic vision begins with the discernment of a perverted human desire: the desire to dominate, excel, and conquer. But this unholy lust possessed by the rider on the white horse, along with the nation he represented, will do more than "defile the man" himself. It will defile the entire planet. The following three horses and their riders, along with the scenes of the fifth seal, will depict the defilement, the violence, the despoliation, the bloodshed, and the incalculable death perpetrated by the rider of the white horse with his unholy desires until, finally, in the sixth seal, God takes it in hand to begin the process of

edition: 2 february 2021 Page **7** of **16** 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> 3 Nephi 5.<sup>15-16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> DC 58.41

checking and cleansing such desire in hopes of bring about the victory of godliness over ungodliness: divine desire over satanic desire.

Scenes repeated hundreds, millions, tens of millions of times

Before turning to the three remaining horses, we should emphasis, again, that what the Revelator sees in the four horsemen should not, in my view, be thought of as one-off events. They are not "scenes" only from "the first thousand years," "the second thousand years," etc. of earth's "temporal existence." The rider of the white horse is not Enoch, or any other prediluvian figure. He is certainly not Jesus Christ, a common interpretation of traditional Christians. Rather, the unholy desire to dominate found in the rider of the first seal, along with its devastating and deadly consequences in the following seals, have played themselves out at the national level hundreds and hundreds of times in every age over the course of human history.

Today, we have no limit to the number of individuals who capture their national institutions and structures and use them to fulfill their personal desire to cruelly conquer and dominate. Such individuals tend to be charismatic, cunning, and flattering. They are, often, sociopaths; men such as Syria's Bashar al-Assad, North Korea's Kim Jong-un, Russia's Vladimir Putin, or America's Donald J. Trump, to name but a few. More often, however, they are common men and women who partake of a twisted nationalistic consciousness and so are deceived by the age-old traditions of dominance. But, whether sociopathic or "normal," they most certainly follow a satanic impulse to dominate. And their desires lead to the sort of carnage and death represented by the remaining horsemen of the apocalypse.

But an overweening desire to dominate along with its consequent carnage are not limited to such madmen making use of national institutions and structures. This desire to excel has played itself out millions upon millions of times at a smaller scale on the smaller stage of unholy individual desire and its attendant harms. Even as I write this, it is being played out at

edition: 2 february 2021 Page 8 of 16

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> In deed, interpretations that have the rider of the white horse as Jesus is a refection of the very satanic mentality that John is describing and condemning. It is a convenient way of justifying the national violence in which Christians have so often and so willing participated.

the public and private level in countless lives. Even without national institutions and military forces to enhance the effectiveness and magnitude of their cruelty, common, everyday citizens like you and I can be caught up in the desire for dominance. And we, with our own berserk desires to excel and dominate can and do inflict terrible harms upon others. Tragically, notwithstanding the Revelator's inspired warning, these unholy desires for dominance and the carnage they produce will undoubtedly play themselves out at the national and individual level many more times in the future, bringing pain and suffering to many more millions of God's children.

## **1**llustration

We have maintained that rather than representing singular individuals or events from specific eras, the four horsemen represent types, patterns of thought and behavior that have repeated themselves over and over in human history. If this is true, we should have no difficulty identifying examples of these attitudes and behaviors. Indeed, our greatest difficulty will come in limiting ourselves to but one or two. We will limit ourselves to two examples from the Book of Mormon. The two individuals and the events surrounding their national influence are separated, according to the Book of Mormon chronicler, by only a dozen years of so, demonstrating just how common is the phenomenon that John is using the four horsemen to illustrate.

It is in the fifth year of the reign of the judges that the chronicler introduces us to one, Amlici. He is described as "a very cunning man, yea, a wise man as to the wisdom of the world," who "by his cunning, [had] drawn away much people after him; even so much that they began to be very powerful; and they began to endeavor to establish Amlici to be a king over the people." After failing to achieve his desire for dominance through legal means, he, like a certain "American" loser in 2020, resorted to extra-legal coup-like strategies to achieve his desire for kingship and dominance.

"Amlici did stir up those who were in his favor to anger against those who were not in his

<sup>13</sup> Alma 2.<sup>1-2</sup>

edition: 2 february 2021 Page 9 of 16

favor. \*They gathered themselves together, and did consecrate Amlici to be their king. Now when Amlici was made king over them he commanded them that they should take up arms against their brethren; and this he did that he might subject them to him."<sup>14</sup>

In Amlici, we have a man like the rider on the white horse. Amlici intended, by hook or crook, to possess the dominance that comes with kingship. Having achieved his goal in part, he sought to increase his dominance through violent warfare. As we will see in the following homilies, the evils brought by the four horsemen of the apocalypse will occur in Nephite society as a direct result of Amlici's ungodly desire to conquer, excel, and dominate.

According to the Book of Mormon chronicler, it was some fourteen years later that another, like-minded man arose on the Nephite political stage. His name was Amalickiah. If the chronicler chose not to specifically point out Amlici's inordinate desire for dominance, preferring, rather, to demonstrate this obvious desire by his overt actions, the second occurrence, coming, as it did, so quickly on the heels of the first, convinced the chronicler, it seems, to be clearer and more aggressive in his diagnosis of the causes for violent warfare among his people. He would, then, mention Amalickiah's desire and "designs" (which we read as coexistent with "desire") over and over.

The 19th year of Nephite rule by judgeship was an extraordinarily eventful year. <sup>15</sup> It is during this year that we first hear of Amalickiah, "a large and strong man" <sup>16</sup> who had presumably been active in politics for some time and would eventually have a powerfully negative impact on both Nephite and Lamanite history for many years to come. This politician was "a man of cunning device and a man of many flattering words." Because of his cunning and flattery, he managed to lead "away the hearts of many people to do wickedly." <sup>17</sup> His victims included "many in the church." <sup>18</sup> The object of his cunning and the nature of the wickedness that he incited in his followers was the overthrow of Nephite "elected judgeship" and its replacement with an authoritarian monarchy.

edition: 2 february 2021 Page 10 of 16

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Alma 2.8-10

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> The events of this year are recorded in Alma 45.<sup>2</sup>-49.<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Alma 46.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Alma 46. <sup>10</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Alma 46.<sup>7</sup>

The text emphasizes Amalickiah's desiring, craving, designing nature, a nature that seemed to infect, like a plague, everyone who gave heed to him. We are told, first, that "Amalickiah was *desirous* to be a king." He gathered around him men, "lower judges," who mimicked Amalickiah in "*seeking* for power." Realizing that he and his like-minded followers, benumbed with desire, were outnumbered, Amalickiah escaped Zarahemla with a few of his closest allies and sought asylum among the Lamanites.

Here, as part of "the plan in his heart to dethrone the king of the Lamanites," Amalickiah shifted the target of his desire from kingship over Nephites to second in command over the the Lamanite military forces. <sup>20</sup> Having achieved this desired position of power through flattery, Amalickiah next conspired to encourage mutiny against the Lamanite general, Lehonti. This was consistent, the chronicler informs us, with "the thing that Amalickiah *desired*, that he might accomplish his *designs* in dethroning the king." <sup>21</sup> After assassinating Lehonti, Amalickiah set his sights directly upon the Lamanite throne. This desire was accomplished through assassination of the reigning Lamanite king. Thus "by fraud and deceit," <sup>22</sup> he "gained the hearts of the people" <sup>23</sup> and "obtained the kingdom; yea, he was acknowledged king throughout all the land, among all the people of the Lamanites." <sup>24</sup>

But, still the man's appetite for dominance was not satisfied.

"As soon as Amalickiah had obtained the kingdom he began to inspire the hearts of the Lamanites against the people of Nephi; yea, he did appoint men to speak unto the Lamanites from their towers, against the Nephites. And thus he did inspire their hearts against the Nephites, insomuch that in the latter end of the nineteenth year of the reign of the judges, he having accomplished *his designs* thus far, yea, having been made king over the Lamanites, *he sought also to reign over all the land, yea, and all the people who were in the land, the Nephites as well as the Lamanites*. Therefore *he had accomplished his* 

<sup>19</sup> Alma 46.4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Alma 47.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Alma 47.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Alma 48.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Alma 47.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Alma 47.<sup>35</sup>

design, for he had hardened the hearts of the Lamanites and blinded their minds, and stirred them up to anger, insomuch that he had gathered together a numerous host to go to battle against the Nephites. For he was determined, because of the greatness of the number of his people, to overpower the Nephites and to bring them into bondage."<sup>25</sup>

After a failed first military invasion of Zarahemla, Amalickiah "was exceedingly angry with his people, because he had not obtained *his desire* over the Nephites; he had not subjected them to the yoke of bondage." For five long years afterwards, Amalickiah stewed in his juiced-up desires, awaiting another chance to fulfil his desires for dominance over the Nephite nation. Finally, with the outbreak of civil war among the Nephites, Amalickiah saw his chance.

It is without irony and pursuant to his message that the Book of Mormon chronicler reports that the civil war was the result of Nephites who

"were *desirous* that the law should be altered in a manner to overthrow the free government and to establish a king over the land...Now those who were in favor of kings were those of high birth, and *they sought* to be kings; and they were supported by those who *sought* power and authority over the people."<sup>27</sup>

See how desire for domination grows, infects, and spirals out of control—just as we will see in the four horsemen of the apocalypse!

Finally, some six years after Amalickiah had first yielded to the impulses of the unholy desire for dominance, his personal madness came to an end at the tip of an assassin's javelin; but not before he had infected his brother, Ammaron, who carried on Amalickiah's mad desire for dominance and extended the years-long war between the Nephite and Lamanite nations. And not before one inspired writer could record his divine insight into the wickedness and pain that one man's desire to conquer and dominate can bring.

edition: 2 february 2021 Page 12 of 16

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Alma 48.<sup>1-4</sup>, emphasis added

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Alma 49.<sup>26</sup>, emphasis added

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Alma 51.<sup>5, 8</sup>, emphasis added

"Thus we see how quick the children of men do forget the Lord their God, yea, how quick to do iniquity, and to be led away by the evil one. Yea, and we also see the great wickedness one very wicked man can cause to take place among the children of men."<sup>28</sup>

The Revelator would agree wholeheartedly with the inspired Book of Mormon chronicler. This is, in fact, the very point the Revelator will make by means of his four horsemen of the apocalypse.

We will return to Amlici and Amalickiah as illustrations of John's other three horsemen and the consequences of the desire to dominate. For now, we wish simply to call the reader's attention to the men's desire for dominance, the mimetic desire for dominance that they stirred in others, and the likeness they bear to Revelation's rider on the white horse.

Before concluding this illustration, we should make one final point concerning Amlici and Amalickiah. The reader may discern a similarity in their names. Both contain the three consonants 'mlc(k).' In Hebrew, these three consonants are related to kingship.<sup>29</sup> Now, we know next to nothing about Nephite/Lamanite spoken or written language. We know nothing of so-called "reformed Egyptian. We know little of Nephite onomastic rules—how names are formed. That said, the two men seem to have names related to kingship. Amlici might mean something like "I shall be king." Amalickiah's name, a theophoric name (a name including the name of a god), might mean something like "I will be Yahweh's king," or "Yahweh will make me king."

Whatever the exact meaning of the two names, they are almost certainly names that the two men adopted in the course of their lives rather than names which were given them at birth. Most importantly, both names reflect the two men's single-minded desire, intent, and design to rule and dominate. Thus, even without the Book of Mormon narratives, their names would have informed us concerning the character of the two men and the desires and designs that drove them throughout their lifetimes.

edition: 2 february 2021 Page 13 of 16

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Alma 46.<sup>8-9</sup>, emphasis added

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> mālak, "to be king, to rule," *melek*, "king," *melûkâ*, "kingship," *malkût*, "kingly power," *mamlākâ*, "kingdom."

After five chapters of preparatory material, John the Revelator finally turns his attention directly to his anticipated apocalypse. He begins his apocalypse with his famous four horsemen. The first of these four horsemen rides a white horse, symbolic of his wealth and power and prestige. This calvary man rides with a military bow, symbolizing his military prowess. This man of action is proclaimed ruler and given a crown. He rides out from his own nation with the intention of conquering other nations. The crowned leader's personal desire for dominance is almost certainly a reflection of his nation's desire. Leader and nation are driven to dominate. This unholy desire to conquer and dominate initiates all the carnage that follows with the remaining three horsemen and, indeed, in much of the remaining apocalypse. There would be no carnage and no apocalypse without this white horse, its rider, and this inordinate and unholy desire to excel, conquer, and dominate.

This rider, military man, and national leader, along with the nation he represents on the field of battle, does not represent any single individual, nation, or time frame. Rather, he represents a pattern or type that has repeated itself over and over again in human history. He represents a human desire to dominate that is as old as this aged planet with its weapons of stone and stick and as modern as today's world with its demonic inventions of nuclear weapons, man-less drones, and a myriad of other devilishly ingenious weapons of mass destruction.

But this desire to excel, conquer, and dominate has an even longer history than that of human history. Though the Revelator will not take up the subject in his portrayal of the four horsemen, he will take it up and make it explicit later in his work: this desire to dominate is older than the world itself. It has a history in heaven, long before the foundation of this world. It is the same desire and design that Satan possessed as he attempted to unseat God from his eternal throne. This unholy desire to excel, to conquer, to dominate is satanic. It brings with it the same consequences on earth that it brought in heaven—the fraying of society and the devastation of war.

In conformity with John's call to action, we acknowledge and bear witness to the demonic

edition: 2 february 2021 Page 14 of 16

presence of this first rider in our day, in our world, in our nation. The reality of these unholy desires to dominate, and the disruption to peace that they bring influence and find their way into our prayers. Here, in prayer, we acknowledge and pray against their demonic influences in our lives and the lives of those we love. We ask that God help us as we resist these influences, and ask that he engage himself against them here on earth, today, as he did in heaven so long ago.

"O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever? Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck it out of thy bosom.

For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth." 30

"Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies:
thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.
Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven
in the time of thine anger:
the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath,
and the fire shall devour them.

Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.

For they intended evil against thee:

they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform.

Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them.

Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power."<sup>31</sup>

edition: 2 february 2021 Page 15 of 16

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Psalm 74. <sup>10-12</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Psalm 21.8-13

Even so, come, Lord, Jesus.

edition: 2 february 2021 Page 16 of 16