

Revelation Class: THE FOURTH SEAL :- Chapter 6:7&8

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



The apostle John relates how the colour of the fourth horse is pale, this paleness in Greek conveys the idea of greenness the colour of approaching death. It represents the coming destruction that engulfed the Roman world. During a period of almost 70 years some thirty nine emperors came to the throne not one of them died a natural death. With the exception of one who died of pestilence and two or three who fell in battle, they all died by assassination. Death then was an appropriate name for the Roman ridership during this period, for as soon as a man obtained the imperial power, he was doomed in time to destruction.

The history of this period is one of constant blood shed on a large scale. It began with the promotion of Maximin a Thracian peasant of immense stature and great strength, who came into notice and obtained popularity in the army through these qualities, the first soldier who rose through the ranks to become Roman emperor by the assassination of Alexander Severus (the hurt not the oil and the wine emperor of the third seal). The Roman nobles were outraged at the appointment of Maximin to be the Emperor, considering him to be little better than a barbarian. He laid hold on Magnus an accomplished Senator and put him to death together with 4,000 persons of the respectable classes who sympathised with Magnus and put them to death. He filled the Empire with spies and informers. Roman nobles, governors of provinces, commanders of armies were chained together and driven to a

place where he himself happened to be at the time. Then having divested the ranks of respectability he turned his hand upon the common property of the public. He appropriated the local taxes and revenues of towns to provide funds for his own use and that of the army. The temples were stripped of the most valuable offerings of gold and silver and the statues of gods and heroes and emperors were melted down and coined into money. These measures excited the public tumults and led to organised revolt and bloodshed everywhere.

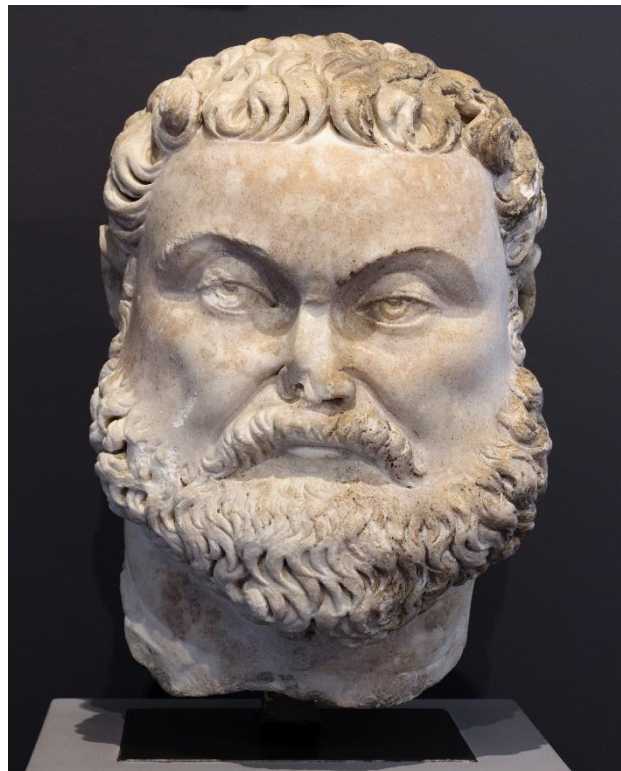
In Rome the senate threw off their allegiance and appointed a new emperor. But a party in Rome comprised mainly of the Praetorian Guard, were favourable to Maximin and between them and the rest of the citizens there was fighting which lasted many days and filled Rome with desolation and death. The soldiers besieged in their own camp by the citizens attacked and set fire to many parts of the city and filled the streets with the blood of their inhabitants.

Maximin himself, after marching the army into Italy on his way towards Rome, was killed by his troops and civil strife ceased for a while.

This seal speaks of “the fourth of the earth”. This is understood by the fact that the empire at this time was divided into four parts, called prefectures, over each of which was a prince called a prefect, exercising authority in subjection to the emperors. The four parts were the East (including Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor) Secondly Illyricum or Turkey in Europe today. Thirdly Italy and fourthly Gaul (comprising France, Spain Britain etc.) The leading forth was the prefecture of Italy, the head-quarters of the Roman Empire. In addition to the sword, the death- rider of the horse in his fourth seal was to “kill with hunger and with death and with the beasts of the earth”. This shows that famine and pestilence were the results of the acts of government. And it was so. It could not fail to be so in such a disturbed state of things. With a constant change of emperors and constant fighting among the people, together with the rapacious

demands of public officials who were compelled at the peril of their lives to find supplies for the government. Industry and agriculture fell into neglect and suppliers began to fail. History testifies that there was a long and general famine of a very serious kind and the pestilence came as a result of scanty and unwholesome food. From A.D. 250 to 265 there was a plague that raged without interruption in every province and city, and almost in every family in the Roman Empire. For some time five thousand persons died daily in the Roman and many towns were entirely depopulated. It has been computed that at this time within a few years war, pestilence and famine consumed nearly one half of the human species. The imagery of the fourth seal adapted to express this fearful time of public calamity, a death-pale horse ridden by Death and followed by the Grave.

Robert Roberts amended DHH



MAXIMIN ROMAN EMPEROR