The Four Horsemen and the Four Winds

For Deeper Study

A Grammatical Consideration in Revelation chapter 6:

Revelation 6:4 - Another (allos) horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

Another - Allos and Eteros:

Allos denotes numerical in distinction from qualitative difference. Allos adds “one besides” Eteros distinguishes “one of two”. Every Eteros is an Allos but not every Allos is an Eteros. Allos generally denotes simply distinction of individuals, Eteros involves the secondary idea of difference of kind.

(<https://biblehub.com/greek/243.htm> , <https://glosbe.com/grc/en/eteros>)

See also Trench’s explanation of these words in “Synonyms of the New Testament”.

Pertinent Passages:

General Usage - Defining the use of “wind” as a symbol in the Old Testament:

Isaiah 41:16 - You shall winnow them, the wind shall carry them away, And the whirlwind shall scatter them; You shall rejoice in the Lord, And glory in the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 66:15 - For behold, the Lord will come with fire And with His chariots, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire.

Jeremiah 4:11-12 - At that time it will be said To this people and to Jerusalem, “A dry wind of the desolate heights blows in the wilderness Toward the daughter of My people— Not to fan or to cleanse— A wind too strong for these will come for Me; Now I will also speak judgment against them.”

Jeremiah 18:17 - I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will show them the back and not the face In the day of their calamity.”

Jeremiah 23:19 - Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord has gone forth in fury— A violent whirlwind! It will fall violently on the head of the wicked.

Jeremiah 49:32 - Their camels shall be for booty, And the multitude of their cattle for plunder. I will scatter to all winds those in the farthest corners, And I will bring their calamity from all its sides,” says the Lord.

Jeremiah 49:36-37 - Against Elam I will bring the four winds From the four quarters of heaven, And scatter them toward all those winds; There shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go. For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies And before those who seek their life. I will bring disaster upon them, My fierce anger,’ says the Lord; ‘And I will send the sword after them Until I have consumed them.

Jeremiah 51:1 - Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, Against those who dwell in Leb Kamai, A destroying wind.

Ezekiel 5:2 - days of the siege are finished; then you shall take one-third and strike around it with the sword, and one-third you shall scatter in the wind: I will draw out a sword after them.

Ezekiel 12:14 - I will scatter to every wind all who are around him to help him, and all his troops; and I will draw out the sword after them.

Daniel 7:2 - Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. (This leads to the vision of the four beasts from the sea)

Hosea 13:15-16 - Though he is fruitful among his brethren, An east wind shall come; The wind of the Lord shall come up from the wilderness. Then his spring shall become dry, And his fountain shall be dried up. He shall plunder the treasury of every desirable prize. Samaria is held guilty, For she has rebelled against her God. They shall fall by the sword, Their infants shall be dashed in pieces, And their women with child ripped open.

Nahum 1:3 - The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, And will not at all acquit the wicked. The Lord has His way In the whirlwind and in the storm, And the clouds are the dust of His feet.

Habakkuk 3:1-16 - A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.

O Lord, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy.

God came from Teman, The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah

His glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of His praise. His brightness was like the light; He had rays flashing from His hand, And there His power was hidden. Before Him went pestilence, And fever followed at His feet.

He stood and measured the earth; He looked and startled the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, The perpetual hills bowed. His ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; The curtains of the land of Midian trembled.

O Lord, were You displeased with the rivers, Was Your anger against the rivers, Was Your wrath against the sea, That You rode on Your horses, Your chariots of salvation? Your bow was made quite ready; Oaths were sworn over Your arrows. Selah

You divided the earth with rivers. The mountains saw You and trembled; The overflowing of the water passed by. The deep uttered its voice, And lifted its hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; At the light of Your arrows they went, At the shining of Your glittering spear.

You marched through the land in indignation; You trampled the nations in anger. You went forth for the salvation of Your people, For salvation with Your Anointed. You struck the head from the house of the wicked, By laying bare from foundation to neck. Selah

You thrust through with his own arrows The head of his villages. They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me; Their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret. You walked through the sea with Your horses, Through the heap of great waters.

When I heard, my body trembled; My lips quivered at the voice; Rottenness entered my bones; And I trembled in myself, That I might rest in the day of trouble. When he comes up to the people, He will invade them with his troops.

Narrower Usage - The Winds and the Horsemen connected:

Zechariah 2:6 - “Up, up! Flee from the land of the north,” says the Lord; “for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven,” says the Lord.”

Zechariah 6:1-8 - Then I turned and raised my eyes and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of bronze. With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses, with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot dappled horses—strong steeds. Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?” And the angel answered and said to me, “These are four spirits of heaven, who go out from their station before the Lord of all the earth. The one with the black horses is going to the north country, the white are going after them, and the dappled are going toward the south country.” Then the strong steeds went out, eager to go, that they might walk to and fro throughout the earth. And He said, “Go, walk to and fro throughout the earth.” So they walked to and fro throughout the earth. And He called to me, and spoke to me, saying, “See, those who go toward the north country have given rest to My Spirit in the north country.”

Daniel 7:2 - Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. (This leads to the vision of the four beasts from the sea)

See Also: Ezekiel 14:12-23

Summary Comments on defining the Winds:

Ron Courter explains the symbolism of the winds in this way saying: “They are symbols of God’s action. Basically, they are symbols of His destructiveness Jeremiah 49:36.”

Albertus Pieters says they are the impending judgments of God described as a storm and William Hendricksen likewise simply calls them the four winds of judgment.

Alan F. Johnson says, “Since nowhere in Revelation do we read of the four winds actually blowing, they may be taken as representing the earthly catastrophes that occur under the trumpets and bowls.”

Ray Summers, G. K. Beale, Michael Wilcock, G. B. Caird, say that the four winds are a secondary symbol of the four horsemen, of destructive, judgmental powers.

Johnny Elmore in Question 6 refers to these angels as a whole picture along with the winds they hold as the angels of destruction.

Recommended Commentaries to Check:

G. K. Beale, G. B. Caird, Michael Wilcock, Ray Summers, Albertus Pieters, Homer Hailey

I can provide you with pictures (in a PDF) of the relevant sections of these commentaries if you are interested.

Parallels Between Jesus’ Words in the Synoptic Gospels and Revelation 6:1-8

(Noteworthy comparisons continue through the end of Revelation chapter 6 and similar comparisons can be made to chapter 8 of Revelation)

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| Matthew 24:4-14 | Mark 13:5-13 | Luke 21:8-9 | Revelation 6:1-8 |
| And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. | And Jesus, answering them, began to say: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and will deceive many. But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows. “But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. | And He said: “Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and, ‘The time has drawn near.’ Therefore do not go after them. But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.” | Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.” And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come and see.” Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword. When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come and see.” So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.” When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come and see.” So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth. |

Parallels Between Zechariah chapter 6 and Revelations chapters 6-7

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| Zechariah 6:1-8 | Revelation 6:1-8 | Revelation 7:1-3 |
| Then I turned and raised my eyes and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of bronze. With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses, with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot dappled horses—strong steeds. Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?” And the angel answered and said to me, “These are four spirits of heaven, who go out from their station before the Lord of all the earth. The one with the black horses is going to the north country, the white are going after them, and the dappled are going toward the south country.” Then the strong steeds went out, eager to go, that they might walk to and fro throughout the earth. And He said, “Go, walk to and fro throughout the earth.” So, they walked to and fro throughout the earth. And He called to me, and spoke to me, saying, “See, those who go toward the north country have given rest to My Spirit in the north country.”  Notice:  North Country - Babylon, Black and White Horses  Jeremiah 1:14, Jeremiah 3:18, Zechariah 2:6, Zechariah 7:14  South Country - Egypt, Dappled Horses  Red, Sorrel (Chestnut), and White Horses  Zechariah 1:7-17 | Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.” And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come and see.” Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword. When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come and see.” So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.” When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come and see.” So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth. | After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” |