

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Revelation 6:1-4 | Session 10 | Opening of Seals One and Two | Notes

1.2 THE FIRST VISION ON EARTH (6:1-7:8)

1.2.1 THE OPENING OF THE SIX SEALS¹

Something magnificent is about to happen. John saw in the right hand of *him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals* (5:1). There was no one to open the seals (5:3) until the Lamb came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne (5:7). This Lamb is described as the Lion of the tribe of Juda. The Root of David (5:5). We recognize Him as the Jewish Messiah, Jesus Christ (John 1:29). And when He takes the book all of Heaven breaks out in praise for the Lamb is about to make all of Israel *kings and priests: and they shall reign on the earth* (5:10-14).

But first must come judgment, and it is that which we find inside each seal of the book.

1.2.2 THE FIRST SEAL | THE RIDER ON A WHITE HORSE (6:1-2)

Verse 1—

The Lamb opened one of the seals. One of the four beasts instructs, **come and see** what is about to take place at the opening of the seal, and what is about to take place? Judgment. This phrase **come and see** will be repeated in verses 3, 5, and 7.

You recall in chapters 4 and 5 that four living creatures (Greek: zoa, zoons) had some special servant role around the throne. John hears the voice of the first creature and will hear each of them for the second, third, and fourth seals. They must be high-ranking created beings in the Heavens who can lead the charge in announcing (but not causing; that is the role of Jesus) the judgments upon the earth.

Verse 2—

John saw a **white horse**.²

Some say the rider is Christ because of the **white horse**. Here are two examples:

¹ The seventh seal will be opened in the second vision in Heaven (8:1-6).

² Based on verse 8, since "death and hell" can't ride a horse, I lean toward these horses and riders being figurative. But I would leave room for the fact that when the events actually happen, we might say (from above), a horse is the best way that could be described, no other picture would have worked.

“Most commentators see the white horse rider as a picture of the Beast (i.e., Antichrist). But nowhere in Revelation is the Beast portrayed in such a way. White is a symbol of purity in Revelation, and the only other reference in Revelation to a rider on a white horse clearly refers to Christ (Revelation 19:11-12).”³

Yet this rider is coming to deceive, as we will see in a moment. A counterfeit, at first glance, looks like the real thing.

One of my favorite books and probably the best cross-reference tool by far is *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*⁴. It typically doesn't give commentary, but this verse includes a note: *“This seems to be a representation of the person and dignity of Christ, and the mind and beneficent triumphs of his Gospel over all the powers of paganism.”*

Verse 2 states that in the rider's right hand was a **bow, and a crown was given unto him**. The fact that arrows are not mentioned is implied. This rider **went forth conquering and to conquer**. The word **conquer** is in Greek, *nikaho*, meaning to prevail or carry off the victory. We can assume that through his conquering, a form of peace will be established on the earth because, in the second seal of judgment, peace will be taken from the earth. You have first to have peace before it can be taken.

There are several problems with this rider being Jesus Christ. First, if it is Christ, the chronology is way off since Christ returns to the earth as a conqueror not at the beginning of the Tribulation but the end. Second, there are three more horses and riders still to come in verses 3-8, and I think we will see they will bring destruction and judgment; if so, it would make plain sense that this first horse and rider is also one of judgment. Third, why would Christ be represented as the Lamb and the one **that sat on the white horse**? That *does not* make plain sense.

Who is the **rider** on the **white horse**?

Thomas Newberry, a theologian, who died in 1901, compares the first six seals in Revelation 6:1-17 with the prophecy found in Matthew 24⁵. In that chapter, Jesus speaks to the disciples on the Mount of Olives. In Matthew 24:3 they asked him, *“Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world?”*

Seal #1 The False Messiah	Matthew 24: 4,5	Revelation 6:1,2
Seal #2 Wars	Matthew 24:6,7	Revelation 6:3,4

³ Vacendak, Robert. “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” *The Grace New Testament Commentary*. Ed. Robert N. Wilkin. Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2010. Print.

⁴ Blayney, B., Thomas Scott, and R.A. Torrey with Canne, John, Browne. *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*. London: Samuel Bagster and Sons. Print.

⁵ E.W. Bullinger includes the following chart in the Companion Bible. Bullinger, Ethelbert W. *The Companion Bible: Being the Authorized Version of 1611 with the Structures and Notes, Critical, Explanatory and Suggestive and with 198 Appendixes*. Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2018. Print.

Seal #3 Famines	Matthew 24:7	Revelation 6:5,6
Seal #4 Pestilences	Matthew 24:7	Revelation 6:7,8
Seal #5 Martyrdoms	Matthew 24:8-28	Revelation 6:9-11
Seal #6 Signs in Heaven	Matthew 24:29,30	Revelation 6:12-17

If this parallel with Matthew 24 holds up for all six seals⁶, then the first **rider** on the **white horse** is one who deceives and is a false Christ. The fact that he comes riding on a **white horse** is apparently part of the deception Jesus refers to in Matthew 24:5, for this rider *shall deceive many*.

It appears that this rider, through conquering, may solve many of the problems on the earth since, again, there will be peace on earth which will be taken away in verse 4. Daniel 9:27 describes a peace treaty between Israel and Antichrist and may give us more context, but we will look at that more closely when we reach that passage to see if it aligns with this revelation passage. There is nothing in this seal that mentions a peace treaty. Suffice it to say that this rider comes to **conquer**, and in so doing, a *false peace* may be restored upon the earth.

It is true that in Revelation 19:11, Jesus Christ will return on *a white horse*, but He is not returning to deceive. John records that when Jesus rides in, *He is called Faithful and True*; He is the antithesis of the rider in 6:2. When Christ comes on *His white horse*, He is not wearing one measly **crown**. Rather, *on His head were many crowns* (19:12). The Lord Jesus Christ does not come with a **bow**, but a *sharp sword* coming *out of his mouth*, and it is with that sword He *smites the nations* and subsequently will *rule them with a rod of iron* (19:15).

Whether or not this is the Antichrist, it is no secret in Scripture that the Antichrist will come in the future. Many names throughout the Bible refer to him:

1. The little horn (Daniel 7:8).
2. The king of Babylon (Isaiah 14:4).
3. The Assyrian (Isaiah 14:25).
4. Lucifer, son of the morning (Isaiah 14:12).
5. The prince that shall come (Daniel 9:26).
6. The king of fierce countenance (Daniel 8:23).
7. The vile person (Daniel 11:21).
8. The willful king (Daniel 11:36).
9. The man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

⁶ We should always question the assumptions.

10. The son of perdition (2 Thessalonians 2:3).
11. That wicked (or lawless) one (2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 13:18).
12. The beast with ten horns (Revelation 13:1).

A word of caution: We in the *body of Christ* are not looking for the Antichrist. Yes, he is certainly coming on the world stage at some point, and we can even see how things might fall into place for him to captivate people; but we are to look for the Blessed Hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:13).

Whoever this is, riding on the **white horse**, he is not our blessed hope.

1.2.3 THE SECOND SEAL | THE RIDER ON THE RED HORSE (6:3,4).

Verses 3—

I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

The second seal...another horse that was red, the Greek word for **red** is *pyros*. The word *pyros* is only used twice in the N.T. Both are in Revelation, here, and in 12:3, where it refers to Satan as *a great red dragon*. We might say this **horse** was fiery.

Power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth. This probably means the *whole world*, not just the Land (of Israel). Our Lord, in Matthew 24:6,7, says, “*And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of war...and nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.*”

From our study in the book of Daniel, we know that near the end of the Times of the Gentiles, there will be a 10-nation alliance of some kind that will be broken up and absorbed into the Antichrist’s universal Kingdom (Daniel 2:43; 7:8).

And that they should kill one another. In Ezekiel, referring to the battle of Gog and Magog, “*I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man’s sword shall be against his brother*” (Ezekiel 38:21). The prophet Jeremiah tells of this second seal, Jeremiah 25:15-33, “*I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts... for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations*” (25:29,31).⁷

And there was given unto him a great sword, given to the rider, in which the point should be made that these judgments are initiated from the throne of God. Daniel (11:33) may describe the second seal, “*Yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.*”

⁷ For further study, see also Leviticus 26:25-33; Ezekiel 14:13-21.