

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Revelation 6:1-4 | Session 10 | The Beginning of the End; The Four Horses and Their Riders.

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

The opening of the six seals¹

Seals One and Two

Something magnificent is about to happen. In our last session, 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 identified as the *Lion of the tribe of Juda, and The Root of David* (5:5). We recognize Him as the Jewish Messiah, Jesus Christ (John 1:29). John reported, when He took the book, all of Heaven broke 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).

Before the return of the King, Israel must come to what I am calling *The Beginning of the End*, which *comprises worldwide control, war, pestilence, and death*. All of those things are about to be unleashed on the earth by the four horses and their riders. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse is what we find inside the first four seals of the book (or scroll). In today's class, 1 we will look at the opening of seals one and two; False Messiahs and Wars.

Seal #1	Revelation 6:1-2
Seal #2	Revelation 6:3-4
Seal #3	Revelation 6:5-6
Seal #4	Revelation 6:7-8
Seal #5	Revelation 6:9-11
Seal #6	Revelation 6:12-17

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

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 (Or, *living one*) instructed John to **come and see**. The word **come** can also be translated as “Go.” The phrase **come and see** can mean that the **beast** instructs John to come over and see what is about to take place at the opening of the seal, or the **beast** is not speaking to John, rather he is giving orders to the horseman to *Go* as he is sent out. Whichever way we interpret this, it does not change the fact that something awful is being unleashed on the world. This phrase **come and see** repeats in verses 3, 5, and 7.

You recall in chapters 4 and 5 that four **beasts** (Literally, living one, or living creatures, Greek *zoa, zoons*) had a special servant role around the throne. John heard the voice of the first creature and will hear each of them for the second, third, and fourth seals. These must be high-ranking created beings in the Heavens who can lead the charge to announce judgments upon the earth, but not cause them. Jesus causes the charge and the judgments. Keep in mind that God orchestrates the events of Revelation, including the opening of these Seals and the ensuing tribulation. It is not Satan’s doing.

Verse 2 —

John saw a **white horse, and he that sat upon him**². Some say this rider is Christ because he is riding a **white horse**. But does that make sense? Why would Christ be identified as the Lamb (vs. 1) *and* the one **that sat** on the horse? Many make that claim.

Here is a commentator who says this is Jesus on the white horse:

*“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

My counter argument is that this rider is coming to deceive, as we will see in a moment.

Here is another example of one who believes that this first rider on a white horse is Jesus. It comes from one of my favorite books and probably the best cross-reference tool by far, *The*

² Based on verse 8, since “death and hell” can’t ride a horse, I lean toward all four of the horses and their riders being figurative. While figurative, John could only describe what he saw as a horse and rider.

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

*Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*⁴. This book rarely gives commentary, but this verse includes an author's note:

"This [rider on the white horse] seems to be a representation of the person and dignity of Christ, and the mild and beneficent triumphs of His Gospel over all the powers of paganism."

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, *or before*, but at the end (See Revelation 19:11-21).

Second, we will see, this rider is coming to deceive (Compare with Matthew 24:4-5).

Third, as I already stated above, why would Christ be represented as the Lamb and the one **that sat** on the **white horse**? That *does not* make plain sense.

This rider on a white horse is a counterfeit messiah or deliverer. A counterfeit at first glance, looks like the real thing. But, if he is not The Christ, does it follow that he is the Antichrist? Not necessarily. We will look at that in a moment.

All the horses are judgment horses. They are given the authority by Christ to inflict judgment. This first rider will **conquer** by the authority of Christ. More judgment will come in Revelation through not only the seals, but also the sounding of seven trumpets and the pouring out of seven vials (or bowls). All are sent from God.

In this rider's hand was **a bow, and a crown was given unto him**.

Although arrows are not mentioned, they could be implied (more on this below). This first rider **went forth conquering and to conquer**. The word **conquer** is the Greek word *nikaho (nike)*, meaning to prevail or carry off the victory. We can assume that through his **conquering**, peace is established on the earth. We have to speculate on what that means. Could it be this is **conquering** without war? Is it a **conquering** of the minds? Is it mandated peace that is forced upon the population? Is it some kind of mass compliance? Whatever this means, in the second seal of judgment (vss. 3,4), the next rider *will take peace* from the earth. You have first to have peace before it can be taken away.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

It is an age old question, when will the end of the world come? In Matthew 24, Jesus was speaking to His disciples on the mount of Olives. "*As he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately.*" In Matthew 24:3,A they asked Him when the end of the age

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

would come: *“Tell us...what shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world?”* The Greek word for **world** is: *aion*, which can be translated as *world* or *age*.

I am glad they asked this question. It is significant, and we are all curious to get His answer. Is there a parallel between Jesus’ answer in Matthew 24, and what John describes in Revelation 6?

Thomas Newberry, a nineteenth century theologian, was perhaps the first to compare the first six seals in Revelation 6:1-17 with the prophecy of Jesus in Matthew 24:1-30⁵⁶. We will look at this parallel throughout the opening of the first six seals.

Opening of the Seals in Chapter Six



Seal #1	False Messiahs	Matthew 24:4-5	Revelation 6:1-2
Seal #2	Wars	Matthew 24:6-7	Revelation 6:3-4
Seal #3	Famines	Matthew 24:7	Revelation 6:5-6
Seal #4	Pestilences, Death	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

⁵ E. W. Bullinger also notes the comparison between Matthew 24 and Revelation 6. He is likely to have gleaned from Newberry’s work, who began studying the book of Revelation and wrote his commentary around 1840, three years after Bullinger’s birth. Newberry died in 1901 at ninety years old.

⁶ 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.



If this parallel with Matthew 24 remains consistent for all six seals⁷, then the first **rider** on the **white horse** represents many who will deceive and are a false Messiahs. A Messiah is a deliverer, and Jesus said there will be several. This rider then is not the Antichrist, since Jesus said, *"Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ"* (Matthew 24:5). These *many false* Messiahs might come as a person, or an organization, or even a vaccine! Someone or something that will deceive mankind, take control to avert disaster or tragedy under the guise of *deliverance*.

That the rider comes on a **white horse** is apparently part of the deception Jesus refers to in Matthew 24:5. These *many* false Messiahs will have authority, they will be believed, and they will *deceive many*. These false Messiahs are something or someone who will **conquer** the world, or at least some portion of the world. It is not stated when this will happen, or for how long it takes this deception to establish the desired results of **conquering**.

These *many* false messiahs differ from the Antichrist. Daniel 9:27 describes a seven-year alliance that Antichrist will make with *many*. That alliance or treaty will precipitate the seven year Tribulation. There is nothing in this first seal that mentions an alliance, or a peace treaty, or the confirmation of a treaty.

Speculation Alert!

⁷ We should always question the assumptions.

This first seal is not that alliance. Is Seal #1 a pre-tribulation event? Is Seal #1 a pre-rapture event? Could we be living *now* in the time of the *rider on the white horse*?

This rider comes to **conquer**. What does it mean to conquer? It can't mean war, since that will come with the next rider. Notice also this rider on the white horse has a **bow**, but there is no mention of arrows. The English word **bow** is from the Greek word *toxon*. Toxon means bow. But the modern words *toxic*, or *toxin*, derive from the Greek word *toxon*.⁸ Also from Greek *toxikon* (*Pharmakon*) "poison for use on arrows⁹."

Does the conquering come via some mass vaccination that will deceive the world into thinking *all will be well if I just take this jab*? Or, if it is something like that, will it be forced upon the public? More likely people will be duped into it, believing it, and once awakened, it will lead to war (which is the next horse and rider). All of this is speculation, but it is interesting.

While we are speculating and developing conspiracy theories, look at the **crown** given. It is the Greek: *stephanos crown*. It is a victor's crown, and it is given to this rider. Later in Revelation 14:15, "*One sat like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden (stephanos) crown.*" The Son of Man has victor's the crown, it is not given to Him.

But it is interesting that the logo for the World Health Organization has a *stephanos crown* surrounding it.

Let me be clear, I am not implicating the WHO as the first rider on the white horse, but a People can be conquered without a shot being fired. If we learned anything from the recent pandemic, it is that a lot of deceit took place and more is being planned. The **conquering** that takes place when the first seal is opened could mean this rider gains victory over the world by unmitigated power, like a Messiah. Perhaps receiving confirmation by the U.N. or the World Health Organization? The conquering could be done by decree, and all the world governments go along with it (Think the COVID pandemic). This rider will be a deceiver.

Conversely, 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 this rider in 6:2. When Christ comes on *His white horse*, He is not wearing one **crown**. Rather, *on His head were many crowns* (19:12). *The crowns on the Lord's head when He returns are not stephanos crowns, but diadem crowns!* 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).

⁸ Thomas J. Johnson. Associate Professor of Respiratory Care and Health Sciences Division Director, Respiratory Care, School of Health Professions. History of Biological Warfare. <https://web.archive.org/web/20120702154119/http://www.aarc.org/resources/biological/history.asp> Accessed July 15, 2023.

⁹ <https://www.etymonline.com/word/toxic>

Whether this first rider is the Antichrist (personally, I do not think it is), he will appear later in our study. In Scripture, the Antichrist will come in the future and he will be called by many names:

The <i>Names</i> of Antichrist In Scripture	
The little horn.	Daniel 7:8
The king of Babylon.	Isaiah 14:4
The Assyrian.	Isaiah 14:12
The prince that shall come.	Daniel 9:26
The king of fierce countenance.	Daniel 8:23
The vile person.	Daniel 11:21
The willful king.	Daniel 11:36
The man of sin.	2 Thessalonians 2:3
The son of perdition.	2 Thessalonians 2:3
The wicked (lawless) one.	2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 13:18
The beast with ten horns.	Revelation 13:1

A WORD OF CAUTION: WE IN THE *BODY OF CHRIST* ARE NOT LOOKING FOR THE ANTICHRIST. OUR HOPE IS FOUND IN THE *“GLORIOUS APPEARING OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.”* TITUS 2:13

Yes, Antichrist 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 *“That Blessed Hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.* (Titus 2:13).

Whomever this is, riding on the **white horse**, he is not our blessed hope. The world will go through suffering due to his actions.

The Opening of the Second Seal



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

Verses 3,4 —

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. and both are in Revelation, here, and in 12:3, where it refers to Satan as *a great red dragon*. We might say this **horse** is fiery.

Power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth. Is this referring to a World War III? This probably means the *entire world*, not just the Land (of Israel). It parallels Matthew 24:6,7, Jesus said, “*And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of war...and nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.*”

And that they should kill one another. This could be a world war, or it could be the war 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). Many nations of the world will take part in that invasion of Israel, although it is not world war.

The prophet Jeremiah likely 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).¹⁰

And there was given unto him a great sword. Not just a **sword**, but a **great** (megas) one in showing that these judgments are emanating 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.”*

¹⁰ For further study, see also Leviticus 26:25-33; Ezekiel 14:13-21.