

REVELATION CHAPTER SIX

12. **Revelation 6:2 “And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.”** The Lamb opens the seals and one of the four beasts says, “Come.” When John looks he sees a horse. What does this all mean?
13. **To answer the question of what this means, let us take into consideration a few things.**
- a. He went forth conquering (NIKAO), and to conquer (NIKAO).” Let us look at John’s use of this word “Conquer” (NIKAO) to see who it is that is doing the conquering.
 - i. John 16:33 “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome (NIKAO) the world.”
 - ii. Revelation 3:21 “. . . even as I also overcame (NIKAO), and am set down with my Father in his throne.”
 - iii. Revelation 5:5 “. . . the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed (NIKAO) to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.”
 - iv. Revelation 17:14 “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome (NIKAO) them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings:”
 - b. To answer the question of the meaning of this first horse and horseman let us consider: the color white. Specifically, who and what is associated with white?
 - i. Revelation 1:14 - “hairs (were) white like wool . . . “
 - ii. Revelation 3:4 - “. . . and they shall walk with me in white . . . “
 - iii. Revelation 3:5 - “. . . the same shall be clothed in white raiment . . . “
 - iv. Revelation 14:14 - “. . .white cloud, and upon the cloud...like...Son of man ...”
 - v. Revelation 19:11 - “. . . behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. . . 13 and his name was called The Word of God.”
 - c. To answer this question let us consider Psalm 45:3-5 which Hebrews 1:8 says refers to “the Son.” In this Psalm we see the son 1) riding, 2) in majesty (crown), 3) riding prosperously (conquering), 4) with arrows (having a bow).
 - i. Psa 45:3-7 (KJV) “Gird thy sword upon *thy* thigh, O *most* mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. 4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness *and* righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. 5 Thine arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; *whereby* the people fall under thee. 6 Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom *is* a right sceptre. 7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”
 - ii. Hebrews 1:8 “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.”

14. The whole thrust of the book of Revelation concerns Christ as the conqueror.

- a. Rev 1:13-16 (KJV) "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength."
- b. Rev 2:26-27 (KJV) "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."
- c. Rev 3:21 (KJV) "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
- d. Rev 5:5 (KJV) "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."
- e. Rev 6:16 (KJV) "And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."
- f. Rev 7:9-10 (KJV) "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."
- g. Rev 11:15 (KJV) "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."
- h. Rev 12:11 (KJV) "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."
- i. Revelation 14:1ff
- j. Revelation 14:14ff
- k. Rev 17:14 (KJV) "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful."
- l. Rev 19:11 (KJV) "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."
- m. Rev 20:4 (KJV) "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I* saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."
- n. Rev 22:1ff.

15. **Our Lord Jesus Christ is conquering now.** That is, throughout this present dispensation his cause is going forward, for he is exercising his kingship. Our Lord is riding forth victoriously, conquering and to conquer. What could more clearly be the meaning of the Rider on the white horse?
16. **The second living one (beast) spoke at the opening of the second seal.** Revelation 6:4 “And there went out another horse that was **red**: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.”
- a. Let me suggest for your evaluation that this horse and its rider refers to religious persecution of God’s children rather than to war between nations; to **slaughter** and **sacrifice** rather than to warfare. Believers are being slaughtered. There is a very convincing line of reasoning which would lead us to believe that this is the case.
 - b. **First**, this explanation is in beautiful accord with the immediate context. The second horse follows the first; that is, wherever Christ by his Gospel makes his entrance, there the sword of persecution follows.
 - c. **Second**, this view is confirmed by Matthew 10:34 (KJV) “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.”
 - d. **Third**, it must not escape our attention that we read in our passage “that they should kill (slaughter).” The word kill is not the ordinary term which John uses to indicate the act of killing or warfare. { σφάζουσιν verb ind fut act 3rd per pl. [Fri] σφάζω SPHAZO fut. σφάξω; 1aor. ἔσφαξα; pf. pass. ἔσφαγμαί; 2aor. pass. ἐσφάγην (1) of animals, esp. when killed as a sacrifice *slaughter, slay*; metaph. of Jesus’ atoning death as the Lamb of God (RV 5.6, 9) }. Everywhere else, with only one exception, Revelation 13:3, this term in the writings of the apostle John refers to the death of Christ or the execution of believers. Notice how John uses the word:
 - i. 1 John 3:12 (KJV) “Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.” Here it is a child of God (Abel) who is said to have been *slaughtered*.
 - ii. Rev 5:6 (KJV) “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” Here it is Christ as a sacrifice for sin.
 - iii. Rev 5:9 (KJV) “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;” This, again, refers to Christ.
 - iv. Rev 5:12 (KJV) “Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” The reference is clearly to Christ.
 - v. Rev 6:9 (KJV) “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:” Here the word refers to believers.

- vi. Rev 13:8 (KJV) “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” The reference is to the sacrificial slaying of Christ.
- vii. Rev 18:24 (KJV) “And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.” The reference, clearly, is to believers.

Hence, it is not improbable that also in Revelation 6:4, our passage, the primary reference is to believers. Religious persecution seems to be the point, not warfare in general.

- e. **Fourth**, we read that when the fifth seal is opened John sees “the souls of them that were slain (slaughtered) for the word of God.” As already indicated, exactly the same word “slaughtered” is used in the Greek. But here we are definitely told that those who were slaughtered are *believers*. They were slaughtered *for the word of God!* Does it not seem reasonable to suppose that those who under the second seal are seen as being slaughtered are the same as those who under the fifth seal are described as having been slaughtered?
- f. **Fifth**, we read: “there was given unto him a great sword.” “Sword” (MACHAIRA – μάχαιρα – **Meaning:** 1) a large knife, used for killing animals and cutting up flesh 2) a small sword, as distinguished from a large sword 2a) curved sword, for a cutting stroke 2b) a straight sword, for thrusting, **Usage:** AV - sword 29; 29.) [Strong’s Concordance]. In Vincent’s Word Studies in the New Testament, Vincent tells us: “In Homer, a large knife or dirk, worn next the sword-sheath, and used to slaughter animals for sacrifice.” This great small sword is also the word that the LXX uses in Genesis 22:6,10, in the account of Isaac’s sacrifice.
- g. **Sixth**, let us constantly bear in mind that the Lord Jesus Christ in this book is speaking to believers who, when this vision was first revealed, were being persecuted unto death. *The slaughter of believers was their immediate problem*, that, more than warfare in general.
- h. Whenever the Rider on the white horse – the Christ – makes his appearance, the rider on the red horse follows.
 - i. Luke 21:16-17 (KJV) “And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and *some* of you shall they cause to be put to death. 17 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake.”
 - ii. Mat 5:10-11 (KJV) “Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.”
 - iii. Luke 21:12 (KJV) “But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.”
- i. The rider on the red horse does not refer to one definite person. He does not belong to one particular age. No century is without its rider upon the red horse. The world is ever persecuting the church. Christ always brings the sword! Yet, glory to God! The sacrificial

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knife is “given” to this rider. All things are in the hands of God. The Lamb reigns.

17. **The third seal.** “And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.”
 - a. The rider upon this third horse does not have a sword, but “a **pair of balances** in his hand.” To the prophets this represented a condition of economic hardship. When such prices as are proclaimed in this passage prevail, it makes it very difficult for a person to make ends meet.
 - b. When Ezekiel told of the besieging of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 4, he told how they would eat by weight and drink by measure indicating hardship.
 - c. It is not the case that this is a time of famine, for one can get all he can afford. The oil and wine are not touched, but the poor will have difficulty buying even the necessities. The prophets would see in this picture the rich enjoying their food in abundance and all the comforts of life while the poor have hardly enough to hold body and soul together. Remember that this is happening to the church throughout all ages (cf. Revelation 13:17).
 - d. The second and third riders go hand in hand. Both describe persecution, it is just a matter of perspective. Some martyrs are slaughtered having the blood poured out, others die daily. 1 Cor 15:30-31 (KJV) “And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? 31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.” Though all will not suffer death, from generation to generation economic hardships have come upon God’s people.
 - e. **What is the meaning of the rider on the black horse?** The black horse and its rider may be understood as spreading woe, oppression, injustice, and economic hardship throughout the centuries of the church’s existence. Throughout the entire dispensation, the world will persecute the church in every conceivable way.
 - f. But are these the only trials through which the Church must pass on its way to eternal glory? Scripture clearly tells us that it is not. Not only does the church suffer because of its unique relationship to Christ, it also suffers *along with the world*, for the simple reason that it is in the world. It is to this class of trials that the fourth horse and its rider calls our attention.

18. **The fourth seal.** Revelation 6:8 “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 (pestilence), and with the beasts of the earth.” This is the opening of the fourth seal.
 - a. This horse is of a very sickly, gruesome color, symbolical of disease and death. The rider’s name is clear: **Death**. Death in general is meant, death in its most universal form.
 - b. This passage is rooted in Ezekiel 14:21 where the same four killing forces are mentioned. “For thus saith the Lord GOD; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?”
 - c. The rider on the pale horse was given power to “kill” with a sword. Here we do not read “to slaughter” as in the second seal, but to *kill*. Also the term translated “sword” is different. It

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is not the MACHAIRA but the RHOMPHAIA. It is not the sacrificial knife or short-sword, but the long and heavy great-sword, like the one with which David cut off Goliath's head. In the LXX translation of Ezekiel 14:21 and 1 Samuel 17:51, we find the same word as is used here in Revelation 6:8, namely, RHOMPHAIA.

- 19. **REVIEW:**
 - White horse and rider - Christ
 - Red horse and rider - Slaughter, persecution
 - Black horse / rider - Economic hardship, injustice
 - Pale horse - Death - woes of humanity.

- 20. **The fifth seal does not reveal a horse, but rather, souls of saints who were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:** “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (6:9-10).

- 21. **The sixth seal reminds us of the judgment scene.** This is the way the prophets of the Lord described the coming of the Lord in judgments.
 - a. Ezek 38:19 (KJV) “For in my jealousy *and* in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel.”
 - b. Amos 8:8 (KJV) “Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it shall rise up wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned, as by the flood of Egypt.”
 - c. Joel 2:10 (KJV) “The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:”
 - d. Joel 2:31 (KJV) “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.”
 - e. Mat 24:29 (KJV) “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.”
 - f. Isa 34:4 (KJV) “And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling *fig* from the fig tree.”
 - g. Jer 4:24 (KJV) “I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.”
 - h. Isa 2:19 (KJV) “And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.”
 - i. Hosea 10:8 (KJV) “The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.”

- 22. **The seventh seal ends the vision.**
 - a. Beginning in Chapter seven John sees four angels. To these four angels “it was given to hurt the earth and the sea” (7:2). But the final judgment of God will not begin until the

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servants of God have been sealed (7:3). In the vision the seal of the servants of God can be seen on their foreheads (7:3). Their number is 144,000 of all the tribes of the children of Israel (7:4). In Revelation 14:1 we are again introduced to the 144,000, there it is not pictured as a seal on the foreheads, but the Father's name written in their foreheads. Revelation 14:4 calls the 144,000 "the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." (See also Revelation 22:4).

- b. The 144,000 is arrived at by taking 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes (7:5-8).
- c. After seeing the 144,000, John then sees a great multitude from all kindred before the Lamb clothed with white robes (7:9) crying Rev 7:10 (KJV) ". . . with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."
- d. When the question is asked concerning the identity of this great multitude "arrayed in white robes" (7:13), the answer is given, Rev 7:14 (KJV) ". . . These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."
 - i. 1 John 1:7 (KJV) "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - ii. Heb 9:14 (KJV) "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"
 - iii. Rev 3:4 (KJV) "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."
 - iv. Rev 3:5 (KJV) "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."
- e. John is then told that since the Lamb is going to feed them and lead them unto living fountains of waters, they will no longer hunger nor thirst, God also wiping away all tears from their eyes (7:14-17).
- f. It is clear that the church does not remain in tribulation but are found to be in the presence of God.
 - i. In contrast, however, the rulers of this world (Kings, great men, rich, etc.) say "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (6:16).
 - ii. Not hide us because they fear the sun being darkened, the stars falling to the earth, the moon being turned to blood, earthquakes and the like – but, hide us from the face of God and the wrath of Christ.
- g. When the seventh seal is opened, "**there is silence in heaven.**"