

## THE BOOK OF REVELATION

### Revelation 6:1-2 – The Seals are Loosed; The Rider on the White Horse

6/18/17

In Rev. 4, John was told to “Come up here” – to the throne room of God. We see in the throne room the Church represented by 24 elders worshipping God w/ golden crowns on their heads – telling us that they had already rec’d rewards in heaven at the BEMA seat of Christ/judgment seat of Christ. We do not see the Church on the earth from Rev. 4 through Rev. 19:10. In Rev. 19:11 we see Jesus returning to earth followed by the redeemed on white horses. In his vision noted in Rev. 4, John was transported from earth to heaven. The Rapture ends the Church Age!

In Rev. 4 and 5 we’ve see the worship of God and the Lamb taking the scroll which I’m strongly suggesting is the title deed to the earth. It doesn’t appear that we’ve left the throne room of God. as John’s vision of the future continues from God’s perspective. I’m suggesting that God’s judgments are being poured out on rebellious man and the earth while the Church is in heaven. Keep in mind that these judgments from the throne room of God pave the way for the inheritance of the Kingdom by the Son of God!

### REVELATION 6:1-2

*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.”<sup>2</sup> 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.*

*Now I saw*

John had a front row seat. The chapter break between Rev. 5 and Rev. 6 is unfortunate. In the original manuscript there were no chapter breaks. With no chapter breaks it’s easier to observe that the worship and praise in Rev. 4 and 5 is a precursor to the judgment which follows. We need to view the judgments from God’s perspective, in light of Who He IS, in light of His glory, His holiness, His justice.

*when the Lamb opened*

The Lamb opens the first seal and the judgments commence.

We have seen God’s righteous judgments throughout the Bible. And, we’ve always seen His provision in the midst of the judgment:

God judged Adam and Eve because they sinned, they rebelled against God. When Adam and Eve sinned, God immediately promised the Redeemer (Gen. 3:15), the One Who would come to pay the penalty for man’s sin.

God judged the world in Noah’s day and sent a universal flood to destroy mankind, yet saving 8 people (Gen. 6-8). The earth will be populated through Noah’s three sons. God could have scrapped His plans regarding His creation. BUT He didn’t. God’s plan can NEVER be thwarted.

God judged Sodom and Gomorrah, engulfing those cities in hail, fire, and brimstone (Gen. 18-19). God saved Lot, his wife, and his daughters from Sodom; Lot's wife looked back (her choice) and was turned into a pillar of salt (Gen. 19:26).

God judged Egypt and unleashed upon them ten plagues (Ex. 7-12) while warning them before six of the plagues! Israel was delivered from bondage in Egypt through the blood of the Passover Lamb (Ex. 12); and a mixed multitude (Gentiles – slaves who were captured from countries Egypt conquered) was also delivered from bondage in Egypt at the first Passover (Ex. 12:38)

God judged those who worshipped the golden calf, using the Levites as the executioners (Ex. 32.26-35). Ex. 33 speaks of greater intimacy between God and Moses.

At the cross Jesus took our judgment. Through His death, we who receive His gift of forgiveness are given eternal life.

How “OF GOD”! This is His plan. Are we accepting His plan? We need to be reminded that God is not desiring that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (II Pet. 3:9).

In Rev. 20:11-15 we see that unbelievers will be judged at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15). Satan will be cast into the lake of fire. The universe will be cleansed.

We see judgments throughout Scripture. However, we need to know that what is about to transpire on the earth as recorded in Rev. 6 and following, is completely unique (Matt. 24:21 - *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*)

*one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come....”*

It's thought that *a voice like thunder* refers to the volume of this voice. The most reliable Greek text tells us that the voice like thunder proclaims *Come!* There is no *and see* in the most reliable Gk. text. Therefore, this is not a command to John. This appears to be a command issued by the living creature to the rider of the horse. *Come* appears to call the rider on the horse to come forth in judgment.

And the Tribulation on earth begins...

“He” in Rev. 6:2

<sup>2</sup> *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.*

Dan. 9:27a - *Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.*

The Tribulation begins in Rev. 6. The signing of the covenant between the antichrist and Israel launches the Tribulation (as noted in Dan. 9:27a).

There are various views as to the identity of this rider:

- The rider signifies military conquest leading to bloodshed, poverty, and famine symbolized in the next three horsemen. Not an actual person.

- The rider signifies the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ that will win victories in spite of a hostile, evil environment. Not an actual person.
- Jesus. Many think that this rider is Jesus as only Jesus can ride a white horse!? After all, Jesus is seen returning in Rev. 19:11-21 on a white horse.
- The antichrist – the coming world dictator.

“He”, the rider on the white horse is the “he” who will confirm a covenant, a peace treaty, with Israel which will impact the world.

We need to know that there are two extreme attitudes that we should avoid when studying the doctrine (belief/teaching) of the antichrist. One extreme is to ignore this study altogether as it’s seen as unhealthy!? The antichrist is in the Bible. More than 100 passages of Scripture address the person, words, and works of the antichrist. Knowing is being warned! The other extreme is to focus on this doctrine to the exclusion of other important doctrines contained in Scripture. What’s the proper approach? We need to seek to understand the whole of Scripture on all doctrines.

Observing Rev. 6:1-2:

- The first seal is broken by the Lamb, Jesus.
  - A voice thunders “Come.” Initiation of this judgment comes from the throne room of God. The rider doesn’t act on his own.
  - “He” rides “a” white horse.
  - “He” has a bow – only a bow.
  - “He” has a crown that was given to him. What type of crown? Who gave him the crown?
  - The activity of the rider on the white horse – conquering.
  - The mission of the rider on the white horse – to conquer.
  - The *white horse* is the first of four horses of different colors. White typically represents righteousness. We need to understand the four horsemen as a unit. AND, we must remember that all four horsemen are judgments!

• The second seal reveals a rider on a fiery red horse to whom it was granted to take peace from the earth (Rev. 6:4). For this second rider to take peace from the earth, peace must first exist. Thus, only a bow and no arrows. Therefore, the conquest of the first rider represents a bloodless, deceptive conquest.

There are similarities between this first rider and Jesus...

- Both are riding a white horse (Rev. 6:2; Rev. 19:11).
- Crowns are noted in describing both riders.
- Both are seen as conquering.

There are differences...

- In Rev. 6:2 we do NOT see the white horse which carries the One Who alone is Faithful and True in Rev. 19:11 - *Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.*

○ The Lamb has loosed the first seal sending out this horse and horseman. If Jesus is the One Who is riding this white horse in Rev. 6:2, who is it that is in heaven opening the remaining seals?

- The rider in Rev. 6:2 carries a bow without arrows. Jesus' weapon is a sword coming from His mouth (Rev. 2:12; Rev. 19:15).

- The rider in Rev. 6:2 is wearing a *stephanos* – a victor's crown awarded at games. The *stephanos* is a wreath or garland of honor. Jesus, however, wears multiple crowns - *diadema*. A *diadem* is a Kingly crown. We see Jesus as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" in Rev. 19.

- Regarding conquering, the rider on the white horse in Rev. 6, is carrying out a deceptive conquest. Jesus has overcome; He has conquered! Jesus has conquered the devil who has the power of DEATH (Heb. 2:14). The rider on the white horse in Rev. 6 takes the lead in bringing death and destruction!

- The rider in Rev. 6:2 is followed by three riders bringing war, famine, and pestilence/death. Jesus is followed by the armies in heaven also riding on white horses (Rev. 19:14). Jesus will establish the kingdom of God!

- The rider in Rev. 6:2 sets forth at the beginning of the Tribulation. Jesus rides forth at its end. And, the antichrist and false prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire when Jesus wages war (Rev. 19:20).

CONSIDER THIS: tragically, to an unsuspecting world, this rider looks like Messiah – the savior/political savior of the world. BUT this rider is a deceiver. He is the antichrist. "Anti" can mean "against"/"opposed to" or "instead of"/"in place of." The antichrist will be a counterfeit Christ. In Rev. 6:2 we have the documented first appearance of "the" antichrist upon the stage of the world. Although there have been numerous false messiahs throughout history, here we see "the" antichrist (II Thess. 2:3-6) – the "man of sin," the "son of perdition" who exalts himself as God.

SEE CHART comparing Christ and antichrist at end of handout.

I'm suggesting that at the appearance of this first rider, the Restrainer, the Holy Spirit, has been taken out of the way (via the Rapture of the Church) so that the antichrist might be revealed. The Church has already been caught up because we are told to watch for Christ NOT for the antichrist. In fact, the antichrist cannot be known until AFTER the Rapture. II Thess. 2:7-8 -<sup>7</sup> For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.<sup>8</sup> And then the lawless one will be revealed. Satan must wait on God's timing. Satan is a defeated foe! Satan can't make his move until God releases the restraining power of the Holy Spirit indwelling the Church. Satan does not know the exact time of Christ's return or when the restrainer will be removed as Satan is not omniscient (all knowing). So, he must have a potential candidate for the antichrist ready in every generation, as is thought by many. "Revealed" in II Thess. 2:5-8 – *apokalypso* – to uncover what had previously been veiled. What was previously concealed is now making its appearance. The picture is of someone standing behind the curtains of a stage, poised to make his appearance.

*he who sat on it (the white horse) had a bow*

He's going forth to conquer with a bow...a bow with no arrows! We know from Dan. 9:27 that the antichrist brokers a treaty/a peace covenant with Israel which he will break in 3.5 years. We know from Rev. 6:2 that his intention is to deceive – to conquer through a bloodless victory, through a deceptive peace.

Why does God unleash the antichrist?

- To refine, purge, purify Israel (Mal. 3:3).
- The antichrist will play a major role in shattering Israel's rebellion. Dan. 12:7b - *it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.*
- God will judge the unbelieving, rebellious world by giving it the kind of ruler it deserves.
- The antichrist will expose the world's unbelief in that many will take on the mark of the beast and worship him.
- To bring about the final showdown between Jesus and Satan and his forces and the defeat of Satan!

*and a crown was given to him*

This crown, in the Gk, is *stephanos* which is a victor's crown or wreath and means "a badge of royalty, a prize in the public games or a symbol of honor generally." Used during the ancient Greek games, it referred to a wreath or garland of leaves placed on a victor's head as a reward for winning an athletic contest. Jesus wears many *diadema* (the kingly ornament for the head) when He returns. They will be gold crowns (Rev. 4:4, 10).

This crown which the antichrist wears was given to him. This perhaps means that he didn't gain it/earn it. Will it be granted to him by our sovereign God? Remember, Jesus is breaking the seals. There is nothing which transpires that God Himself does not permit.

*and he went out conquering and to conquer.*

The antichrist will be given extraordinary powers

II Thess. 2:9 - *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,*

The antichrist will perform counterfeit signs and wonders and deceive many during the Tribulation (II Thess. 2:10). The antichrist is called the beast (Rev. 13:1-10). *Therion* – a wild animal; metaphor: a brutal, bestial man, a savage; ferocious; a monster. In his desire to dominate the world, he will break the peace treaty with Israel (Dan. 9:27), seek to destroy the Jews (Rev. 12:13-16), persecute believers (Rev. 12:17; Rev. 13:7), and set up his own kingdom (Rev. 13; Dan. 11:41, 45 – in the Middle East).

The antichrist will speak arrogant and boastful words, glorifying himself (Dan. 11:36; II Thess. 2:4). Antichrist's assistant, the false prophet, will seek to make the world worship the antichrist (Rev. 13:11-12). The false prophet will control the global economy by forcing people around the world to receive the mark of the beast/antichrist in order to buy or sell (Rev. 13:16-17). To receive this mark ensures one of being the recipient of God's wrath. The antichrist will eventually rule the entire world (Rev. 13:7 – authority over

every tribe, tongue, nation). The antichrist will be conquered and cast alive with the false prophet into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20)!

### Will the antichrist be Jewish?

Why I'm suggesting that the antichrist will be a Gentile:

- The one historical person who is specifically identified as a “type” (a preview; a foreshadowing) of the person and work of the antichrist is Antiochus Epiphanes who was a Syrian general, c. 170 BC. If the precursor to the antichrist in Scripture was a Gentile....
- Rev. 13 depicts the antichrist as the beast rising up out of the sea. The word *sea* in Scripture symbolizes the Gentile nations. Rev. 17:15 – *The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.* The word *sea* in Scripture could mean “the abyss” or “the deep” (Rev. 11:7 – *the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.;* Rev. 17:8 – *The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition*). We note the beast’s satanic origin.
- From Scripture we understand the antichrist as the final ruler of Gentile world power. His reign is the final phase of the “times of the Gentiles” and their rule over Israel (Luke 21:24) which began with Babylon and will conclude at the end of the Tribulation.
  - The antichrist will exalt himself as he sits on the throne in the Temple in Jerusalem (II Thess. 2:4) in the middle of the Tribulation (Matt. 24:15). A Jewish person as the final ruler of the Gentile powers does not seem likely.
- The antichrist will desecrate the Jewish Temple and persecute the Jewish people during the mid-point of the Tribulation and onward (Dan. 9:27).

### Will the antichrist be Muslim?

I am not suggesting this. Remember, Islam is a religion; it’s not a nationality! The antichrist cannot be a religious Muslim. Why?

Dan. 11:36 tells us that the antichrist shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god. II Thess. 2:4 tells us that he opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship and he proclaims himself as God.

The Muslim creed: “There is one God named Allah.”

Muslims teach that God can have no partners.

Muslim teaching states that Allah is so transcendent and beyond anything in the finite realm that he cannot be described using earthly terms. How could the antichrist, as a Muslim, claim to be God?

### Will the antichrist experience a supernatural birth?

Scripture seems to consistently teach that the antichrist is just a human being who will be empowered by Satan (II Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:1-2, 4). The antichrist is not omnipotent (all powerful), not omniscient (all knowing), not omnipresent (everywhere present). Satan is not all powerful, all knowing, everywhere present.

We read of the antichrist's lineage in Dan. 9:26b - *And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.* Who destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD? The Romans. The antichrist comes from Roman lineage!

Will antichrist come from a revived Roman empire?

Dan. 2:31-35 - Nebuchadnezzar's dream of an image made of various metals. The iron legs represent the Roman Empire, and the feet (another kingdom – the fifth kingdom) will be made “partly of iron and partly of baked clay.” The final world empire will have the strength of iron and the brittleness of clay (weaknesses; alliances falling apart) (Daniel 2:33). The fact that the fifth kingdom shares the element iron with the fourth kingdom suggests a connection to Rome, and the ten toes could imply a ten-nation confederacy (matching the ten horns in Daniel 7:20) led collectively by a single powerful ruler.

Dan. 2:36-45 – the Roman Empire is linked to the fifth and final Gentile kingdom. Thus, the final kingdom over which antichrist rules is a revived Roman Empire.

Dan. 7:23-25 – speaks of the antichrist who will arise from 10 kings arising out of the 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom, Rome. Timeframe: time, times, half a time – second 3.5 years of the Tribulation.

SEE CHART of the Gentile kingdoms from Daniel at end of handout.

Our primary focus as Christians is supposed to be spreading the gospel, not trying to identify the antichrist. REMEMBER: the antichrist will not be revealed until after the Rapture.

*...and he went out conquering and to conquer*

We know from both Daniel and Revelation that the antichrist will be defeated and cast alive into the lake of fire!

How should this impact us today?