

The White Horse

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[0 : 0 0] 6 and at verse 2 Revelation chapter 6 verse 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 book of the Revelation is a fascinating book it is however a much neglected book this probably is because it is so full of symbolism and people find the symbolism at times difficult to understand it is however a book that we ought diligently to study it is of course part of the inspired word of God and for that reason we should diligently study it it is a book that has much to say to the church in every age and it does a very great deal to say to the church today to the situation in which we find ourselves in the church at the end of this 20th century the theme of this book is the victory of Christ and of his church it is essential that we bear that in mind always when we study this book if we do not we will become bogged down in the details and we will fail to grasp its essential message the victory of Christ and of his church the purpose of this book is to strengthen and to encourage Christian people as the church faces affliction and opposition and persecution and suffering in this world the church faces opposition and persecution in every age and this book I stress this it is most important that we remember it this book is not speaking of the afflictions and opposition and persecutions the church will suffer at one particular period of history it is talking of the afflictions and the sufferings of the church throughout the whole of this dispensation throughout the whole period between Christ's ascension and his glorious second advent here in this sixth chapter we read of the seven seals

John in his vision sees this book this scroll rolled up and sealed with seven seals the book the scroll contains the purposes of God for his church and for the world till the end of time the purposes of God unrevealed and unexecuted not carried out those purposes cannot be revealed they cannot be carried out until the seals are broken and the scroll is unrolled the book is opened but there is no one found no one in heaven and no one on earth who is worthy to break those seals and to open this book no one that is except the lion of the tribe of judah the lamb with the seven horns of the seven eyes we read of that in the previous chapter and this incidentally is really one of the reasons why many people find this book so difficult to follow in one verse you find that a person called a lion and in the very next verse the same person is called a lamb but this lion of the tribe of judah this lamb is the lord jesus christ he has prevailed to break to open those seals to open this book and that is what he does and in chapter six we read of the the breaking of the seals of the breaking of the seals of the first six seals the first six of those seven seals as the first four of those seals are opened john in his vision sees as each of the seals is opened a horse with its rider as each seal is broken a horse rides forth with its rider upon it and uh the we have there then the first four seals broken and with them we are introduced to the four horsemen of the apocalypse the apocalypse means of course the revelation the book of the revelation the famous four horsemen of the apocalypse let me for a moment or two before i come to this first horse refer you to the second third and fourth horses and their horsemen the second horse of the apocalypse here is a red horse red is the color of blood and this horse represents this horse and his rider represent war slaughter killing to the rider on this red horse is given a great sword and that is given to him power to take away peace from the earth throughout the dispensation there is there are to be wars and rumors of wars that is the story of the last two thousand years and it shall be the story of what remains of history also till the end of time there shall be fightings and conflicts till the end of this dispensation a world from which war is completely banished before christ returns is but a fond dream then we have the third horse a black horse and its rider upon it is carrying weighing scales this represents economic hardship there has always been throughout the centuries those who have found it difficult to make ends meet

they cannot buy sufficient to feed themselves and their families or if they do buy sufficient to feed themselves and their families as we discovered here they can afford none of the luxuries of life they have to use all their earnings on buying the necessities and they can have none of the luxuries the poor cannot have that the rich enjoy those luxuries the wine and the oil we're told here that the wine and the oil were not hurt that has always been the case and to some extent there shall be economic hardship until the end of time though we should always be striving for better conditions it is the case that perfect perfectly just distribution of wealth is ultimately unattainable in the sense of it being a perfectly just distribution economic hardship economic hardship then we have the fourth horse a pale horse a livid horse a a greenish yellow horse a pale horse and its rider this horse represents death death by the sword death by famine death by famine death by pestilence death by wild beasts we are told here that was common in the first century it has been common down the centuries since then and in some parts of the world it is common still more common in some parts of the world than others and throughout the whole dispensation there always will be those who suffer in this way those horses those three horses of the apocalypse and their riders still stalk the earth and will do so till the end of time but i want to concentrate attention this morning for a little while particularly on this first horse this white horse that rides forth there rides forth this white horse and its rider carries a bow he is given a crown and he is riding forth conquering and to conquer who is he what do we learn from this this horse is a white horse now white in the scriptures always is connected with holiness and purity and righteousness it speaks of what is holy and heavenly in this book of the revelation we read in the first chapter of the white hair of the glorified son of man we read of white garments they redeemed in glory are those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb we read of a white stone that will be given to those who overcome we read of a white cloud we read of the great white throne on which the judge the lord jesus christ shall sit at the last this white horse and the rider on this white horse is the holy christ himself the lord jesus christ he is the first horseman of the apocalypse in the 19th chapter of this book of the revelation we again meet a white horse and its rider and we are told there that the rider on the white horse there is called the faithful and the true he is called the word of god and he has his name written on his vesture and on his thigh and that name is king of kings and lord of lords we are told there you see explicitly that the rider on that white horse is the lord jesus christ himself

now if we let the apocalypse interpret the apocalypse for us then surely we will have to conclude that the rider on this white horse in chapter 6 is the same as the rider on the white horse of chapter 19 none other than the lord jesus christ himself i stress this because there are those commentators who do not make this identification but it seems to me that there is overwhelming there are overwhelming arguments for making it in chapter 5 at verse 5 we're told of the lion of the tribe of judah the root of david he has prevailed we are told to open the book and to loose the seven seals he has prevailed and the word there translated prevailed is exactly the same word as we have here rendered conquer the one who is riding forth conquering and to conquer throughout the rest of that fifth chapter we have adoration of this one the lamb the christ the lord jesus christ it's all given to adoration of him and remember that the chapter divisions are not in the original as john wrote the book of the apocalypse they were added centuries later by the translators it is surely natural then that what we have immediately following should refer also to this christ to the lamb in psalm 45 we read of one who rides forth in great majesty to victory with a sword upon his thigh he shoots arrows from his bow and those arrows bring down the king's enemies they pierce the hearts of his enemies and bring them down surely you see the illusions here in revelation chapter 6 to psalm 45 the book of the revelation is adeptly is steeped in old testament imagery and who is that one that rides forth in psalm 45 in great majesty with his arrows well we're told in the new testament who he is we're told in the book of hebrews who he is the writer there guided by the holy spirit himself tells us that it is the lord jesus christ he is the first horseman of the apocalypse and i remind you again of what the theme of this great book is the theme of this book is the victory of christ the victory of christ the the interpretation i've given you that this white the rider on this white horse is indeed the christ is surely entirely in keeping with the theme of the book itself he carries a bow from his bow he shoots those arrows that bring down his enemies he is given a crown we are told and the term that is used here for crown the greek term stefhanos is a term that denotes the victor's crown he rides forth conquering and to conquer he is the conquering christ how does he do it how does he conquer how does he win those great victories he is a king he is king of kings and lord of lords it is in the exercise of his kingship that he wins those victories that he conquers he is a king he exercises a spiritual kingship and a universal kingship

he rules in the hearts of men in the hearts of his people he is king and head of his church he is a king over the whole universe all power in heaven and on earth is given unto him he conquers this great king and when he enters into a soul he enters into that soul to conquer he does so subduing the lusts of his people subduing their sins conquering their sins he does this in the gradual and progressive work of sanctification so that they die more and more to sin and live more and more unto righteousness he subdues he conquers their sins and eventually eradicates corruption and lust and sin from them all together if you are his sin shall not have dominion over you he conquers too in the various judgments of this dispensation as you read through the book of the revelation you will discover that there are many judgments mentioned here against the persecutors of christ's church those who oppose christ and his church there are many many judgments mentioned throughout this book of the revelation they come throughout the whole of this dispensation and they all of course lead up to the final judgment the judgment of the last day of the judgment day when satan and his hosts and all who have sided with him will be shut up in the lake of fire in hell itself he shall conquer they shall not win the day he conquers he rides forth conquering and to conquer but what is primarily highlighted here is the conquering power of the gospel we read in matthew chapter 24 we have there the words of our lord himself and this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations that gospel shall be preached and many shall be its conquests glorious victories have already been won in many parts of the world as this gospel has gone forth christ sends forth those to preach his word he conquers by his word and spirit the exalted christ has raised up and equipped and sent out men to preach his word and his word has been heralded by them and heralded to the personal witness of his people everywhere and when that happens he sends his holy spirit as well to accompany that word in power and what happens the arrows are shot from his bow arrows that bring conviction they pierce the hearts of his enemies and they bring conviction of sin they bring enlightenment and the knowledge of the truth the holy spirit works convicting of sin giving enlightenment and understanding and knowledge of god's truth the holy spirit works and sinners are renewed renewed in their very nature they can become believers in the lord jesus christ they repent of their sin and begin to live a life of obedience to him they become the wholehearted

[19 : 01] followers of the lord jesus christ of course sometimes his arrows go forth and pierce the hearts of his enemies bringing them to destruction everlasting destruction everlasting destruction but there are many whose hearts they pierce who are brought low in subjection a willing and a glad subjection there the arrows pierce the hearts of those people and transform them from being his enemies into his friends and they become wholehearted followers of the lord jesus christ the conquering power of the gospel this occurs in the nations of the world it has occurred amongst jewish people the gospel was preached first to the jews on the day of pentecost there were three thousand of them on that one day converted it is preached to the gentiles as well peter went to the home of cornelius and he preached there and there were those who became believers in the lord jesus christ the apostle paul is pre-eminently the apostle to the gentiles he was called and equipped by christ and sent forth to preach the gospel to the gentile world and under his preaching churches were established throughout asia minor he carried the gospel across into europe he preached and established churches at philippi and thessalonica and at corinth the gospel took root in rome eventually it came to these shores it reached our own island probably brought here in the first instance by roman soldiers who were themselves christian people the conquering power of the gospel christ riding forth conquering and to conquer and this gospel has been spreading throughout the world christ has been riding forth conquering and to conquer in the early centuries it reached the great continent of africa there were flourishing churches very early on in this christian era in north africa tertullian and augustine were two of its brightest lights and in more recent in more modern times the gospel has penetrated to the heart of that great continent david livingston mary slessor and many others carried it to the heart of africa there have been thousands tens of thousands i should think hundreds of african people one for the lord jesus christ the gospel has gone to asia to china for example to its teeming millions william chalmers burns from scotland james hubson taylor from england india and alexander duff and john mcdonald the son of the apostle of the north they did a great work there in that vast a country india hindu land though india is there are many christian people there today it has gone to the americans the puritan pilgrim fathers brought it with them when they crossed over in the 17th century the great george whitfield in the 18th century had a number of preaching tours in america he crossed the atlantic seven times and had most fruitful preaching tours proclaiming the gospel there on that continent jonathan edwards and others were mightily used in making the gospel known

in more recent times the gospel has had a great impact in the republics of south america and there are strong and flourishing churches there today christ on his white horse the rider on the white horse has been riding forth conquering and to conquer of course there are and have been periods sometimes periods of considerable length that have seen terrible decline in christian work and in gospel work in the churches but then the lord has come god has come christ has come riding upon his white horse and he has revived his work he has revived his cause this has been the pattern down the centuries this is the pattern the gospel makes an impact many are converted there's decline and after a period of time god comes again christ comes riding upon his white horse and there is great and glorious revival that changes whole communities sometimes even whole nations this is the story of our own nation in fact the middle ages was a period of dreadful decline into superstition and a wickedness the dark ages we call that period then there came the glorious reformation of the 16th century a work carried on the following century in the puritan revival that was followed by fearful decline the church at the end of the century the beginning of the 18th was in a terrible state throughout the land but then before the middle of that century around about the 1730s there broke out the magnificent evangelical revival that evangelical revival that in the opinion of secular historians saved this nation from the horrors of the french revolution god raised up men like the wesleys and george whitfield and many others blessed their ministries so that thousands were converted to himself the whole face that the whole tenor of life in the nation was changed in that a glorious outpouring of the spirit of god christ rode forth conquering and to conquer the 19th century too saw many revivals in scotland in england in wales in the north of ireland the year 1859 was a year of revivals christ rode forth conquering and to conquer of course since then there has been dreadful decline for the end of the last century theological liberalism modernism a new critical approach to the scriptures entered into the church and its devolution deadening influences spread throughout the church and throughout the land in the past 30 years there has been a new interest in our nation in the doctrines of grace the doctrines of sovereign saving grace many of us had hoped that that would be the herald of revival blessing and for that we still wait you see the same pattern in other parts of the world as well there's decline in them the lord comes and he revives his work and i believe that there is yet to be a period of great blessing of glorious blessing on a vast scale we are we know that there is coming a time when there will be a great turning of the jewish people to christ and that will mean for the gentile world tremendous blessing but of the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead

we sing in psalm 86 that all nations shall come and worship before him the day is coming when the glory of the lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea we read in the old testament an old testament prophecy of the messianic age a period of glorious blessing during the messianic age we read of it in isaiah 2 or in isaiah chapter 11 when men beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb the wolf shall dwell with the lamb the leopard shall lie down with the kid the calf and the young lion and the fatling together and a little child shall lead them some of course refer those prophecies to the eternal lord after christ returns i used to think in that way myself but it seems to me that there are strong reasons biblical reasons for referring them to our glorious age before the lord returns christ is riding forth conquering and to conquer the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church i know of course that the bible teaches that there is to be before christ returns a terrible falling away a period of great apostasy shall he find faith on the earth when he comes till the son of man find faith on the earth we must reckon with that that he will conquer when he comes he shall slay the antichrist with the spirit of the spirit of his mouth and destroy him with the brightness of his coming and all shall be damned who believed not the truth and who found pleasure who took pleasure in unrighteousness we are told christ christ shall be victorious christ shall be victorious and when he comes there shall be a new universe the elements shall melt with fervent heat and out of the conflagration shall emerge new heavens and a new earth in which shall dwell only only righteousness that is our hope the regeneration of all things satan and all his demons and all those who have sided with them opposing christ and his church all who have not believed shall be shut up in the great abyss in the bottomless pit forever and forever christ shall see of the travel of his soul and he shall be satisfied he shall have with them in the everlasting glory all those for whom he died they shall be a great multitude innumerable you read of them in the following chapter in chapter 7 a great multitude no man could number of all nations and kindreds and people and towns they will be those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb they shall be perfectly holy all corruption removed from them they shall be perfectly holy in body and in soul they will enjoy forever more a bliss that knows no bounds god shall have wiped away every tear out of their eyes they shall be with christ their lord in the realms of everlasting day in the lamb that is fairer than day it is the church triumphant he triumphs no foe shall then evermore oppose christ or his people he reigns the lord he reigns and this people reign with him having suffered with him they shall also reign with him

all those who are his people by the crystal sea they ascribe all the honor all the glory all the credit all the praise to christ the lamb they cry with a loud voice saying salvation to our god which sitteth upon the throne and unto the lamb oh christian believer christian believer take heart be faithful be faithful to christ no matter what opposition or persecution or suffering such faithfulness may bring be true to him and he will bring you through the tribulation into emmanuel's land the king there in his beauty without avail is seen it were a well spent journey those seven deaths lay between the lamb with his fair army upon mount zion stands and glory glory dwelleth in emmanuel's land in this dark day this day when the cause of christ is so low in our land this day of when the true church of christ seems to count for so little to the vast majority in this dark day i say take heart christ rides forth conquering and to conquer in all things he shall have the preeminence