

SALVATION IN SYMBOLS & SIGNS

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Corresponds to Program 19

THE WHITE HORSE STUDY GUIDE

THE FIRST SEAL

Revelation 6:1-2

Galloping horse. What do horses have to do with seals? Let's take a look.

In chapter 5 of Revelation we learned that the sealed scroll represents the title deed to this earth. By giving His life to redeem all humanity, Christ has bought us back from sin and death. The Lamb has taken from the claims of Satan the title deed to this earth (John 12:31-32). The Lamb has altered our history and destiny (2 Corinthians 5:17). We have all gone astray, each one in our own way, but God laid upon Christ the "iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). The slain Lamb was worthy to take the scroll, to unseal it and alter our destiny.

The altering of our destiny is exactly what the opening of the first seal is all about. As the Lamb opens that sealed scroll, horses go forth—one, two, three and four. These horses represent the proclamation and effect of the gospel as well as Satan's efforts to destroy what Christ has accomplished

for the world. Every single person is pictured in those four horses—white, red, black and pale. This is because the number four represents all directions of the compass, North, South, East, and West, thus representing all people.

According to Revelation 19 the white horse and its rider represents Jesus Christ and the proclamation of the beautiful gospel message of salvation (Revelation 19:11). The death, burial and resurrection of Christ as well as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost unleashed this horse in a mighty way, to go forth into all the world heralding the message of Christ's triumph over sin and death.

"Thanks be to God," says the apostle Paul, "who leads us, wherever we are on *Christ's triumphant way* and makes our knowledge of Him spread throughout the world like a lovely perfume!" (2 Corinthians 2:14, Phillips emphasis mine).

Christ is portrayed as wearing a crown on His head and having a bow in His hand. This crown is the badge of His victory over sin and a symbol of every ransomed, believing soul. Those who accept the gift of salvation are represented as "the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign" (Zechariah 9:16, KJV).

The Bow, Horse and Light

The bow is a weapon of conquest and war. It represents the war that God, in His great love for humanity, wages against sin, a war He began with the first promise of the Bible (see Genesis 3:15). God's arrows of love can pierce the sin-hardened armor that encases the hearts of humanity. The bow shoots these arrows of love deep into each heart, convicting and drawing to repentance everyone who would be saved (Zechariah 9:14).

The word for "bow" is *toxon* (tox'-on). It appears only once in the New Testament in this form, but is derived from

the base *tikto*, which means to "bear," "bring forth" as in birth, "be delivered" (in this case, that which the bow brings forth). This root word was used five times in chapter 12 of Revelation in reference to Jesus Christ being brought forth as a man-child. This Biblical evidence further supports the connection of Revelation 6 to chapter 5, which pointed to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the only means of opening the sealed scroll. Surely then Christ's sacrifice is the weapon used to conquer. Therefore this bow of Revelation 6:2 heralds the good news of Jesus Christ, who was brought forth as a man to be our Savior (Luke 2:10-11).



"He went out conquering and to conquer." **REVELATION 6:2**

KEY SCRIPTURES

Revelation 6:2 HE WENT OUT CONQUERING

Revelation 12:11 AND THEY OVERCAME

Zechariah 10:3 HORSES REPRESENT PEOPLE & POWER

Revelation 12:11 NIKAO MEANS TO PREVAIL

In the Bible horses represent people and power (Zechariah 10:3). This white horse represents God's people, empowered by Him to take the gospel to all the world. Through His people, Christ rides throughout the length and breadth of the earth today proclaiming the gospel of His love and victory to all the world. His arrows of convicting love draw all to the victory He has gained for the entire human race. Christ longs for every person possible to be a radiant jewel in His crown of victory.

Light or *Leukos* (pronounced lyoo-kos, from "luke") means "light, bright, brilliant." It is used over a dozen times in the book of Revelation, always in association with God, heaven, and righteousness (see, for example, Revelation 3:4-5,18; 4:4; 7:9; 20:11).

Conquering and to Conquer

The word "conquer" comes from the Greek word *nikao* (nikah'-o). It was the very same word, meaning "prevailed," used to describe Christ's worthiness to open the sealed book in Revelation 5:5. In fact, this word is used throughout the book of Revelation in the form of "overcome." All of the seven churches in the first vision of Revelation were admonished to "overcome" or "conquer" in order to receive the reward of eternal life. That repeated admonition to "overcome" points to placing trust in Christ in this second vision of the seven seals.

This combination of our need to overcome and the failure of any man in heaven or earth or under the earth to do so, points us away from man to Christ in order to overcome (Revelation 2:7; 5:3-4). Christ alone can take and open the scroll, changing the destiny of nations and individuals by His death. So now in Revelation 6 a white horse and rider illustrates our victory in Christ as it goes forth conquering and to conquer. No man can overcome without Christ, but united to Him as a horse to rider, we go forth "conquering and to conquer." He alone is the Conqueror, the Prevailer, the One

who has overcome. Revelation 12 affirms that Christ alone is the key to our victory when it says:

"And they overcame (conquered) him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 12:11).

The word here for "overcome" is the same one used in chapter 6 for "conquer." By His life and death, Christ conquered death. He conquered sin. He conquered the grave. As individuals unite with Him, they receive His victory and go forth to share their knowledge of Him with others as depicted by the powerful white horse.

"Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place" (2 Corinthians 2:14).

From a Biblical perspective, all the symbols of the first horse point to Christ and His people. Jesus Christ is the rider, the head of the body (1 Corinthians 12). He has empowered His people to go forth in the Holy Spirit to convict all for whom He gained the victory (Matthew 28:19-20). Through the faith of His people, Christ rides throughout the length and breadth of the earth today proclaiming the gospel of His love and His power to overcome the world (Galatians 3:20). His convicting arrows of love find their mark in our hearts, to draw all men unto Him (John 12:32).

The sealed book represents the title deed to this earth. It holds a record of our destiny as affected by sin and now altered by the Lamb. As the prophetic picture of our history continues to unravel in the mystery of the four horses, we find Christ's victory challenged. The enemy of souls will not give us up so easily.

As the prophetic scene continues to unravel the mystery of the four horses, we find three horses yet to follow. Let's continue to look at the Bible evidence to understand what they symbolize. ★