

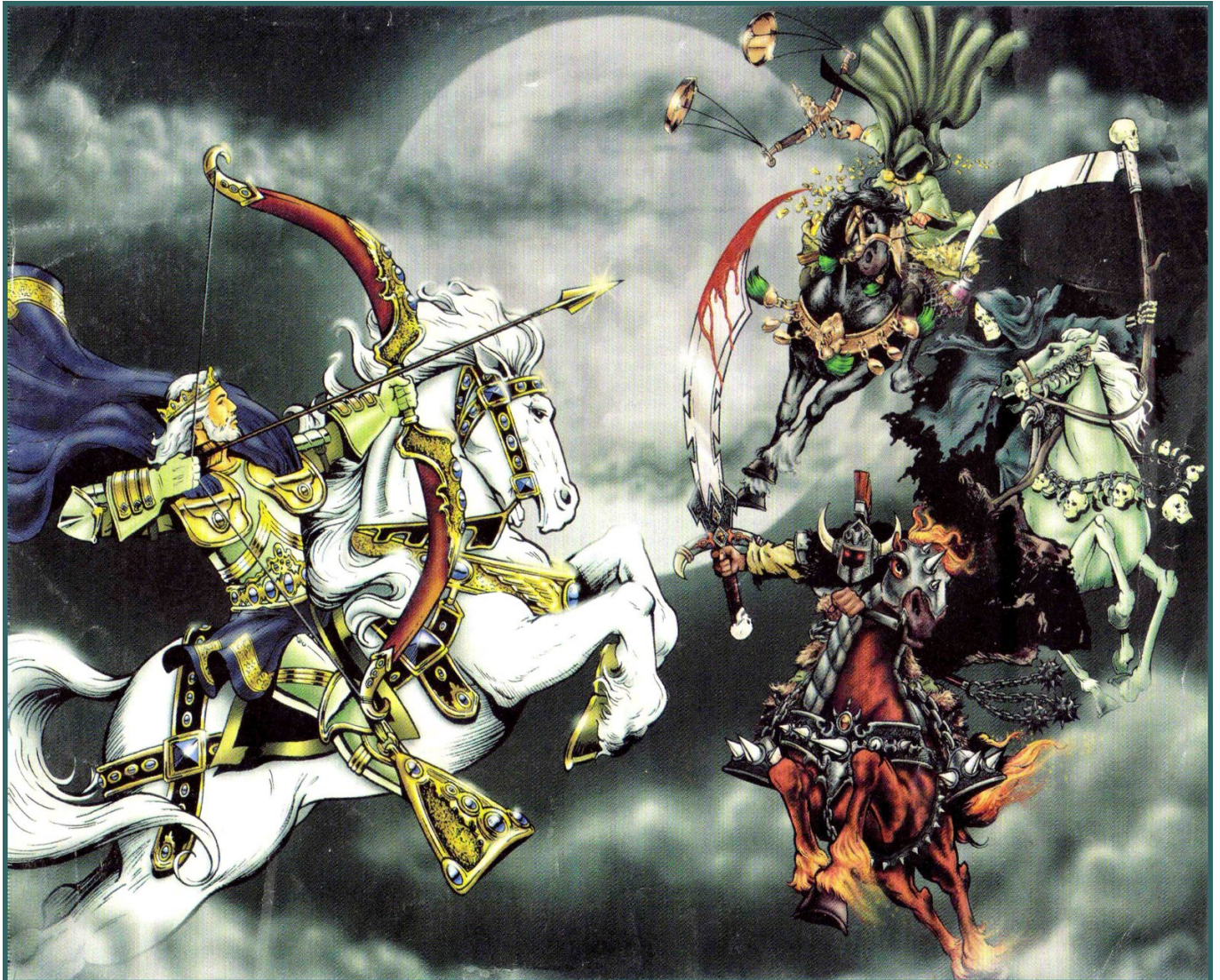
CHRIST OR ANTICHRIST? WHO IS THE WHITE HORSE?

<https://endtimeupgrade.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/White-Horse.mp3>

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[Scripture references from King James Version, unless noted otherwise]

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 above Scripture from the Book of Revelation was preceded by a vision (in chapter 5) of a *“book... sealed with seven seals”*, a scroll actually, which we might call the *“Book of the Future”*; regarding this, John the apostle says that he *“wept much”* because no one was found worthy to open it. But then along comes the *“Lamb”* (Jesus Christ) who had *“prevailed”* and was *“found worthy”* to open the Book. (5:1-7)

Now why was John weeping? Did the Book contain some desperately needed information for the realm of humankind? As we do learn later, that Book contained God’s blueprint for future world history. The unfolding of this plan leads finally to our restoration into fellowship with God. Long ago

that fellowship got derailed in the Garden of Eden.

But in the final chapters of the Revelation Book we learn that *“the tabernacle [dwelling] of God is with men, and He will dwell with them”* and that Heaven shall come to Earth. (21:3,10) So if that was the long-term promise that John sensed was held in the Book of the Future, then he had every reason to feel sorrow that the Book could not be opened.

Now when the Lamb opened the first seal of the Book, a White Horse appeared who *“went forth conquering, and to conquer”*. This “conquering” feature ties in with a statement in the previous chapter: *“behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.”* (5:5)

The word *“prevailed”* is *nikao* in Greek and is the same word translated as *“conquering”* and *“conquer”* in this verse 6:2 about the White Horse. So verse 5:5 could have been translated thus: *“behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that He can open the scroll and its seven seals.”* (ESV, RSV)

This conquering feature of the suffering Savior appears also in the Old Testament: *“Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”* (Isaiah 53:12) And of course, to picture Christ as a “Lion” (in Revelation 5:5), in addition to the picture of Him as a “Lamb”, places some emphasis on a different side to His nature - that of the “conquering” Messiah who is coming to rule the Earth.

Through His sacrifice at Calvary, Jesus Christ *“conquered”*; He triumphed over the forces of Darkness. This was an important victory in the spiritual realm, which made Him worthy to open the Book of the Future... But this great victory has yet to play out in our Earthly Realm.

The seven Seals then, once opened, would direct human history along the trajectory leading to final triumph by the forces of Light and Love over the forces of Darkness. After the glorious portrayal of the Messiah Lamb’s victory celebration in chapter 5, it seems only fitting that the first *“seal”*

of the Book of the Future should feature the One who was worthy to open the seals; it should continue the “conquering” work started by the Lamb, which had made Him worthy to open the Book in the first place. And so, not surprisingly, the first “seal” unleashes the “white horse” who does indeed go forth “conquering, and to conquer”.

This Horse resembles the “white horse” in Revelation 19 (about the Battle of Armageddon), who “in righteousness doth judge and make war”. (19:11) But for the present age, Jesus made it plain that He was not trying to create a physical kingdom; right now He is engaged in conquering hearts, for “My Kingdom is not of this world: if My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight.” (John 18:36) Romans 8:37 states, “We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” But the kind of “conquering” referred to here takes place in the spiritual realm.

Only when the time is ripe for the Kingdom of God to be fully established on Earth, then will come the physical battle. Then will “My servants fight”... alongside their Leader on His “white horse”.

The Greek word used here for “conquer” to describe the White Horse’s activities appeared 28 times in the New Testament and was usually translated as “overcome”, such as the “he that overcometh” promises in Revelation 2-3. It usually pertained to faithfulness and spiritual victory over the downward drag of the world system. Only four times does it refer to the physically violent type of overcoming. So the wording applies well to the peaceful conquest of hearts and minds that has always been the hallmark of the true followers of God throughout history. The emphasis is on triumph and victory, not on physical warfare.

Although physical warfare may be necessary at some point, victories are always won on the spiritual plane first before they play out in the physical. The Antichrist is not the winner; he is the loser, as we learn in chapter 19 of the Revelation Book. So from this viewpoint it seems unlikely that the “white horse” could be referring to the spread of the Antichrist’s rule in the Earth, or any other kind of worldly political conquest (as is taught in some study Bibles and commentaries).

Yet the fact that the rider “had a bow”, a weapon of war, shows that this White Horse and its Rider are engaged in violent struggle. In the

spiritual realm, this is where the violence and war are being waged - in the struggle to turn souls to the Light and to begin establishing God's Kingdom on Earth.

There is also the obvious identification of this White Horse with the one in Revelation 19:13, whose Rider has a *"name... called The Word of God"*, meaning Jesus Christ (as the apostle had explained in John 1:1-14). The spiritual violence that the White Horse and its Rider are presently engaged in will eventually spill over into physical violence at the Battle of Armageddon when He and *"the armies in heaven"* (also on *"white horses"*) shall arrive to take over the government of Earth. (19:14)

The phrase *"conquering, and to conquer"* suggests that the conquering is a thorough one and is destined to be completed - which, of course, is exactly what will happen at the Battle of Armageddon. That is why *"a crown was given unto him"*, because the conquering White Horse and its Rider are destined to be the final victors; and by the time the White Horse arrives at the Battle of Armageddon, its Rider will be wearing, not just *"a crown"*, but *"many crowns"*. (19:12; also 14:14) On the other hand, the Red, Black, and Pale Horses, who are destined for defeat, are not wearing any crowns .

The color of *"white"* is another aspect of the symbolism that points to the *"white horse"* as representing the forces of Christ. A look at how the word *"white"* is used in the Bible provides compelling evidence:

Psalm 51:7 *"Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."*

Ecclesiastes 9:7-8 *"God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white."*

Isaiah 1:18 *"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."*

Daniel 7:9 *"The Ancient of days... whose garment was white as snow."*

Daniel 11:35 *"And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white."*

Daniel 12:10 *“Many of them shall be purified, and made white, and tried.”*

Matthew 28:2-3 *“The angel of the Lord descended from heaven... his raiment was white as snow.”*

Mark 9:2-3 *And He was transfigured before them. And His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.*

Revelation 3:4-5 *A few names... which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment.*

Revelation 3:18 *I counsel thee to buy of Me... white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.*

Revelation 4:4 *Round about the throne were four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.*

Revelation 6:9,11 *“he souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held:... And white robes were given unto every one of them.*

Revelation 7:9,13-14 *A great multitude... stood before the Lamb, clothed with white robes... What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they?... These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

Revelation 15:6 *The seven angels... clothed in pure and white linen.*

Revelation 19:8 *Fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*

Revelation 19:11,14 *Behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge*

and make war... And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

Revelation 20:11 *And I saw a great white throne.*

Aside from the several Scriptures quoted above, there is only one where “white” is used in a negative sense: “*whited sepulchres*” - a reference to the phony appearance of righteousness in the false religious leaders of Jesus’ day. (Matthew 23:27) After seeing how much the word “white” was used in the Book of Revelation, and elsewhere, to symbolize righteousness, purity, and the Person of Christ and of God, it doesn’t seem likely that the White Horse should represent the Antichrist. These “horses” of chapter 6 are strongly symbolic portrayals of spiritual realities, so we would expect that the color “white” should fall in line with the usual symbolism of this word as it is presented elsewhere in the Bible.

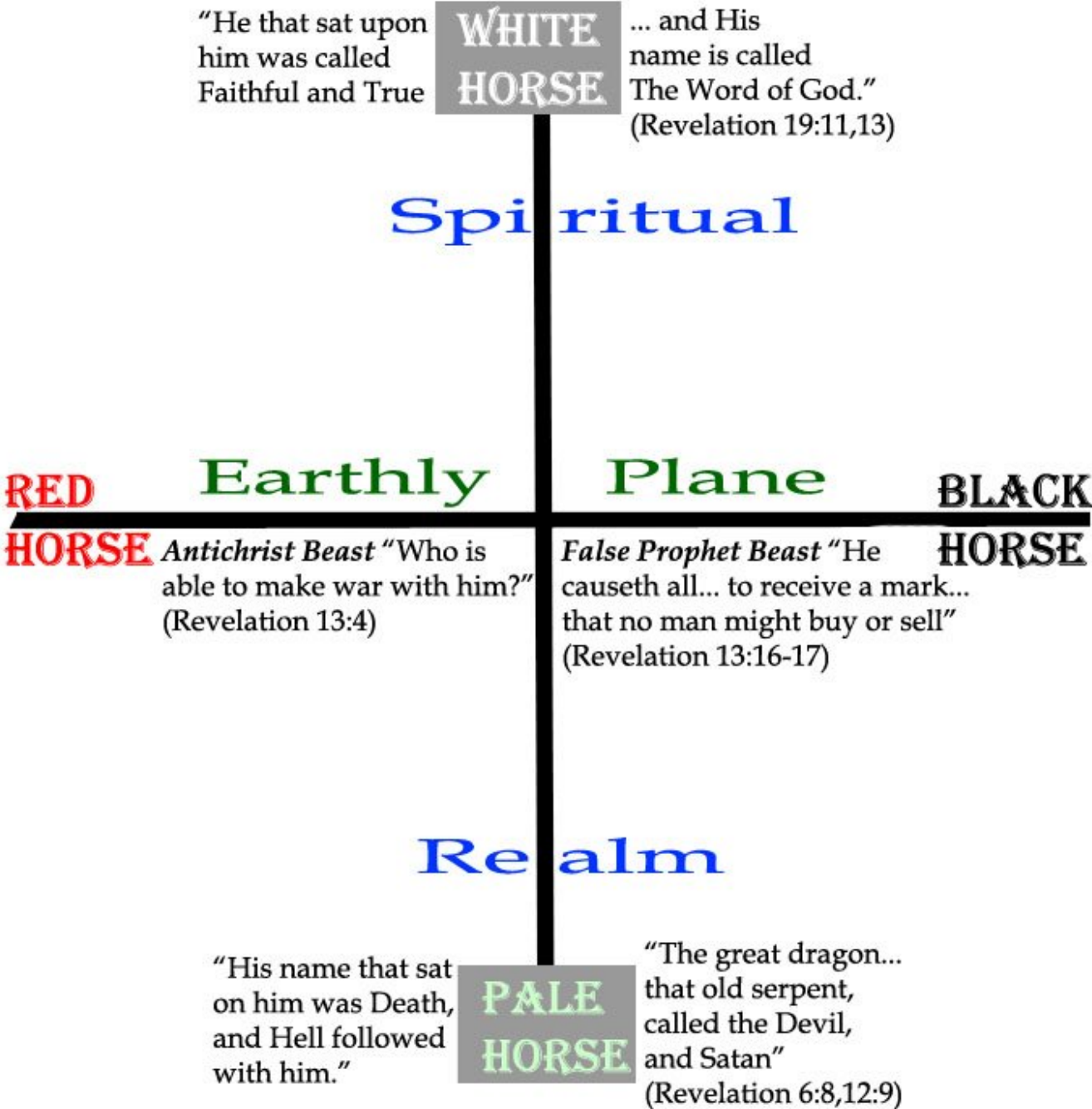
From what we have seen so far then, the Bible itself does a pretty good job of explaining what the symbolism of the White Horse is supposed to mean. Of course, it is often helpful to look to historical examples, logical reasoning, or prophetic revelation to discern the meaning of some difficult-to-understand passages.

Some study Bibles and commentaries do in fact try to point out historical examples in support of the idea that the White Horse symbolizes worldly political conquest of some kind. But in this case, since the Bible itself seems to offer sufficient explanation, then it is probably better to stick to that rather than rely so much on trying to find explanations elsewhere.

Searching through alternative theories may be helpful sometimes and lead to new discoveries. On the other hand, if done without discernment or some degree of healthy skepticism, that kind of poking around may only muddy the waters... spread confusion instead of clarity.

So far, we have focused mainly on the White Horse’s identity. But now, what else can we learn about these four Horses? One thing that seems to stand out is a certain pattern involving these Horses. As illustrated in the diagram below, two Horses seem to operate on the spiritual plane and two on the earthly plane, and all four of them match to certain personages

mentioned elsewhere in the Book of Revelation:



The cross formation above is only a proposal, but, hopefully, it makes the dynamics easier to understand of how the Horses of Revelation 6 function.

The horizontal line = earthly plane where Red and Black Horses operate and the vertical line = spiritual plane where White and Pale horses operate.

The Red and Black Horses, even though they symbolize abstract realities, or spiritual forces, are shown operating on the earthly plane. This relates to what we find further ahead in Revelation 13 - the two Beasts who rule over the earth during the End of the Age era. One of them is the great warmonger: *"Who is able to make war with the beast?"* (13:4) And the other one engineers the new buying and selling system (13:16-17).

The activities of these two Beasts reflect the descriptions given of the the Red and Black Horses. We could probably go back to the Daniel 2 vision of the *"image"* and also correlate the two *"feet"* and the two materials of *"iron and clay"* with these Red and Black Horses if we wanted to.

So, if the Horses are to symbolize something other than spiritual realities - that is, actual persons - then the Red Horse should symbolize the Antichrist, and the Black Horse should symbolize the False Prophet.

Horses seem to Symbolize both Spritual Forces and Certain Personages

Horse	Sphere of Operation	Personage
White Horse	Good News! Kingdom of Heaven Expands!	Jesus Christ/ Word of God!
Red Horse	War & devastation	Antichrist
Black Horse	Economic control & deprivation	False Prophet
Pale Horse	Physical/spiritual Death & Kingdom of Hell	Satan/Dragon

As for the other two horses, they seem to operate on the spiritual plane; the description of the Pale Horse, with its riders Death and Hell, certainly gives that impression. And the two Horses operate in direct contrast with each other. While the White Horse is gathering souls into His Kingdom of Heaven, the Pale Horse is gathering souls into his kingdom of Hell.

We don't know everything about the spirit realm, but generally, it was thought in the Old Testament that *Sheol* meant the place of the dead, which included both the unrighteous dead and the righteous dead, and the two were separated by an impassable gulf, as pictured in Luke 16:23,26. *Hades*, or Hell, was used in the New Testament to describe that part of *Sheol* where the unrighteous had to dwell. And that is the destination to which the Pale Horse sends his victims.

For the present Gospel Age, Jesus Christ does not inhabit the earthly plane nor the nether world; He dwells now in the heavenly plane. He does have His earthly agents, His true followers, who wield spiritual power, but they do not wield any temporal earthly power to speak of. Right now, the earthly plane belongs to the Devil (the Red and Black Horses who operate under the guidance of the Pale Horse).

Neither region, Heaven or Hell, exists on the earthly plane, and this is what the White and Pale Horses have in common; they both operate in the spiritual plane. And the Red and Black Horses have in common the fact that their spheres of operations are in the Earthly Realm and are manifested in what we might call the “system”, or the infrastructure of military establishment and big business interests.

Although in the minority, the White Horse with its “*conquering*” Rider is achieving spiritual conquest in the Earthly Realm: battles won against the Darkness that would engulf men’s souls; whereas the Pale Horse’s “*Death*” rider, besides killing people physically, is driving them towards spiritual death and defeat and descent into “*Hell*”. (See relevant [commentary in Appendix](#).) The White Horse, on the other hand, is bringing souls into the Heavenly Realm.

We know from the New Testament that Jesus Christ conquered Death and Hell by His death on the Cross and by His sojourn in the nether world where “*He went and preached unto the spirits in prison*”, followed by His Resurrection into the Heavenly Realm. (1Peter 4:16) And just prior to the White Horse’s appearance, we should note too that the “*four and twenty elders*” had proclaimed: “*You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.*” (5:9, NKJV) And because of this great conquest, Jesus Christ was found “*worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof.*” (5:10)

Another feature about the Horses that seems to stand out is that the Pale Horse’s means of death includes those of the Red and Black Horses - “*to kill with sword, and with hunger*”. (6:8) The Pale Horse represents the Devil, and he is like the manager of the other two Red and Black Horses. Interestingly, these three Horses seem to correspond with the three figures mentioned later on in Revelation 16:13 - the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet.

The Dragon, or Devil, or the Pale Horse operates on the spiritual plane, and his influence on the earthly plane is manifested in the activities of the Red and Black Horses. This resembles the picture we get in the Revelation Book of the Dragon who is the power behind the scenes for his earthly agents, the Antichrist Beast and the False Prophet Beast. *“The dragon gave him (Antichrist Beast) his power, and his seat, and great authority... and he (False Prophet Beast) spake as a dragon.”* (Revelation 13:4,11)

We should note also that the Revelation 12 description of the Dragon resembles the Revelation 13 description of the final Beast government: *“a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns”* (12:3); *“a beast... having seven heads and ten horns.”* (13:1)

In addition, we should note that this final government comprises, not just one Beast, but two. For in Chapter 17, verse 11, we learn, *“And the beast that was, and is not (Beast from the “sea”), even he is the eighth (Beast from the “earth”), and is of the seven.”* (If we understand that the Antichrist is the 7th Beast - after the previous six Beasts of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome - then logically, the next Beast mentioned in verse 11, the one *“coming up out of the earth”*, would be the 8th.) The peculiar thing about these two Beasts is that they operate simultaneously in the earth during the very End Time. (For more information, see [“The Eighth Head” post](#).)

The 7 + 1 "heads" of the Beasts of Revelation 13 and 17	
<u>From the "sea"</u>	<u>From the "earth"</u>
1) Egypt	--
2) Assyria	--
3) Babylon	--
4) Medo-Persia	--
5) Greece	--
6) Rome	--
7) Russia? - Antichrist	+ 8) China? European Union? - False Prophet

See [Shape of the Future](#) series for more information about what the final empire will look like

It follows then that the Pale Horse, symbolic of the Dragon, or the Devil, carries out his murderous conquests through those human governments that yield to his influence. And the final human government over which he has control is a peculiar combination of the two simultaneous Beasts from "sea" and "earth".

One carries out the war campaigns (as the Red Horse); the other, the *False Prophet* (as the Black Horse), supports the Antichrist, and wages war in the economic sphere, depriving material needs from those who refuse to follow the Antichrist. (13:4,7,16,17)

Looking at some historical examples may help: The genocide campaigns of recent history happened in nations where state control was very tight (where the Pale Horse had too much control): Hitler Germany saw the gas chambers and execution of "inferior races" and regime opponents; Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge had its "killing fields" under a communist dictatorship; communist Russia under the heavy hand of Stalin witnessed innumerable "purges" of uncooperative social elements; the French Revolution had its purge of the aristocracy by guillotine.

Even in what are considered to be free, non-totalitarian, even Christian societies, this has happened. In America, the military-industrial complex has taken over the reins of government. With no check on its power, the war-corporation industry there has exported weapons and wars that have decimated populations and devastated nations all over the Earth. In a chilling statement regarding the death of 500,000 children in Iraq (the result of U.S. sanctions), the U.S. ambassador to the U.N. remarked that “the price is worth it”. (Had the Pale Horse been there, he could have said the same thing.)

Whenever there are excessive murderous campaigns like these, it’s a sure sign that the Pale Horse has been operating behind the scenes along with his Red and Black Horse cronies. And these campaigns are usually associated with some political upheaval or “revolution”. We can expect that, likewise, the Antichrist and False Prophet’s “new world order” will also feature a “purge” of uncooperative social elements - mostly, those “religious” people who will refuse to worship the Antichrist “beast”.

Another feature about the Horses - not so clear perhaps - is that the Red, Black, and Pale ones work in opposition to the White Horse. This is not a “team” of Horses riding in cooperation with each other. The fact that the Horses are operating during the same era of history (the “*last days*”) can be compared to the parable of the wheat and tares, which had to “*both grow together until the harvest*”. (Matthew 13:30)

The four Horses have to ride together until the Day of Judgment. The symbolism merely shows the four spiritual forces that are operating simultaneously in the world; it is not meant to portray the White Horse as just another evil spiritual force along with the other three.

Other passages in the Revelation Book make this distinction clear. We learn about the personages of the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet (in chapters 12 and 13 and 16:13). And these three are lined up against the Messiah who comes (on a White Horse) at the Battle of Armageddon (16:14, 19:11-16). As the apostle noted about the White Horse (in 6:2), He “*went forth conquering, and to conquer.*” And indeed, the Dragon gets thrown into the Bottomless Pit, and the Beast and False Prophet are sent to the Lake of Fire. (19:20, 20:1-3,10)



Righteous people, by the influence of the White Horse, are trying to operate and do good in the midst of a world that is dominated by the evil deeds of those who operate under the influence of the other three Horses. So the symbolism in Revelation 6 of the four Horses makes for a complete picture. The world is not dominated totally by evil spiritual forces, but

there is this White Horse, a benign spiritual force who, for now, has to gallop alongside the other three Horses.

The activities of those who operate under the banner of the White Horse (whether knowingly or unknowingly) are the basis for Christ's intervention at the Battle of Armageddon. They are trying to build Heaven on Earth. The other three Horses are trying to tear it down so they can build their Hell on Earth.

This picture of the Four Horses is rather loaded in the Devil's favor. As Satan told Jesus in Luke 4:5-6, *"All the kingdoms of the world... All this power... is delivered unto me"* - in this present Age at least. As a result the forces of iniquity will almost succeed in destroying the Earth. Jesus alluded to this in Matthew 24:22: *"And unless those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved."* But then He adds, *"For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."*

"For the elect's sake." The plans of those (the *"elect"*) who are trying to live righteously will be honored and upheld. *"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."* (Matthew 5:5) Because of the activities of those who have worked to establish righteousness in the Earth, Jesus is going to shorten the days. He is going to descend in the Battle of Armageddon to overthrow the powers of evil.

And why? Because He wants to establish His Kingdom on Earth. And He wants to give those who have already been working towards that end free reign to build a just and benevolent society in the Earth without interference from the powers of Darkness.

The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders [who held] the prayers of the saints... sang a new song, saying... [You] have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5:8-10, NKJV)

Thus, in Revelation 19 we learn that Jesus Christ will conquer the *"nations"* (19:15), and not only them, but also the Beast and False Prophet, who are like the earthly manifestations of the symbolic Red and Black Horses; they get tossed into the Lake of Fire. (19:20) Also the Devil gets imprisoned in the Bottomless pit. (20:1-3) That is, the Pale Horse who

manages the Red and Black Horses is stopped from doing any more mischief. Thank God, no more Red, Black, or Pale Horse! Only the White Horse - Jesus Christ - will be riding in that day!

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Appendix: Commentary on [Hebrew 2:14-15](#) and Satan's rule over death

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.” (Hebrews 2:14-15, ESV)

Satan's power is not absolute, but is under the control of God, who ultimately rules over life and death (Deut. 32:29; Job 2:6; Ps. 90:3; 139:16; Rev. 1:18). Nevertheless, Satan “was a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44), and he does have power to harm people to some extent (cf. Mark 5:2-5; Luke 13:16). The verse at least means Satan has power to work in the realm of death, and to incite people into sin that leads to death (cf. Rom. 6:16, 23). However, the emphasis of the verse is not on Satan's power but on Christ's triumph over Satan and over death.

(from *ESV Study Bible*, pg. 2364, 2008 edition)

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