

Revelation 6: 1 and 2; "The Lamb opened One of the Seals", Sermon # 53 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on April 15th, 2007, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

Now it is time to proceed carefully into the prophetic section of this wonderful book. I have tried to set the stage for you in giving to you the 4 Major Views of interpreting the prophetic section. I am going to attempt to do so from the Historic Post-Millennial viewpoint. I tried to show you, whenever I could, what appears to me to be truth or error, in regard to the other three systems, in accordance with the plain teaching of the Scripture. I will leave you to evaluate what I have already written and preached, and I will allow you to make up your own mind. I believe that the book of Revelation shows us that Christ's kingdom, the Church which He gave His life for, has yet to overcome in her obedience to the truth of His blessed Word, the great systematic oppositions that Satan raised up over 1200 years ago now. I am speaking of Roman Catholicism and Islam. In facing them and overcoming them, by the preaching of the Word, the Church will be glorifying God and our Lord Jesus Christ. It shows forth the progression and advancement of Christ's kingdom upon the earth when error and falsehood are refuted and destroyed. Unfortunately, today, not enough Christians see the importance of viewing the Bible as the absolute, inerrant, infallible Word of God. And so, it is very needful that you and I study the book of Revelation in order to be aware of Satan's greatest strategies, and that we persevere in holding fast and holding forth the truth of God's Word. Our having a better understanding of the truth of these prophecies will help us to see how through suffering and apparent defeat that the Church can rise even from dead, as her blessed Lord did, to triumph and prevail at last. We will need this, I believe, in the next few years. There may come a time of great darkness in regard to faith in Christ and seeing people converted to Him. The book of Revelation tells of this. It also tells of a time of great gospel prosperity that will follow the downfall of the Antichristian powers. The Millennium is nothing other than the final, and most successful and victorious stage of the advancement of Christ's kingdom upon the earth. It is a definite time period within this final age in which we presently live. It has a definite fixed time leading up to it and a definite and fixed time that it lasts. I have tried to show you that this triumph is the thing that was and is much upon the heart of the Lord Jesus. This is one of the great things which He labored for; this is one of the greatest things that He suffered and died for. His labors and sufferings were not only for the salvation of His Elect, and the blessings of their salvation individually, but He labored and suffered and died also for the progress and the advancement of His Church upon the earth in truth and righteousness. "I will build My Church," He said, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." This is what we are seeing in prophetic form in chapters 6-19. We are seeing the "gates of hell", Satan's kingdom trying to prevail against the rightful claims of our Lord Jesus Christ to rule in righteousness over all the kingdoms of the world.

This, my brethren, is the problem that has been given us, as Christ's church, to address in every generation of this age that we live in. Christ is the King. He is the Lord. But not only do men not want Him to rule over them by nature, but Satan very actively opposes the advance of Christ's kingdom in the hearts of men, in all the nations of the earth. He is not yet bound in his opposition to the advancement of Christ's kingdom among the nations. He has been working very hard for two thousand years now, to block and stop the advancement of Christ's kingdom, and he has many strategies which are still working and still in place. We shall see these systematic oppositions revealed for us here in chapters 6-19 and we shall see how they were, and are, overcome. This afternoon, however, we want

to see that it is Christ who leads the charge against the opposition of Satan to His kingdom. But we, His Church, which is His body will be laboring with Him for the truth, and against error. He is the One who opens the seals. He is the One who goes forth to spiritual battle. He has already overcome and sat down at the right hand of the Father. Now, in our generation we labor and fight in His power and strength to forward His cause and kingdom. When this seal was opened by the Lord Jesus, He revealed His own continuing role in the history of the work of redemption. Now that He is risen, He is working through His Church to do the work of preaching the gospel and making disciples, and He has purposed that this work will bring about progress in His cause according to God's purpose. In some generations that progress will be very feeble, and in others it will be very great. But there will come a time in which Christ's cause and kingdom shall prevail in all the earth.

We are called, after we are saved, to represent Him and to proclaim the gospel in word and deed. We are "more than conquerors through Him who loved us." But as this chapter will show us, it is a very peculiar type of conquering. Christ opens the first of the seals here in verse 1 of chapter 6. I will have more to say about the seals, the trumpets and the vials in my next sermon. This afternoon I want to focus on our Redeemer King and His kingdom. One of the four living creatures, who as I said to you before, represents the ministers of the gospel, says to us this afternoon with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." Come and see how Christ leads the charge in our spiritual warfare to see His cause and kingdom established upon the earth. Christ is pictured for us here in verse 2 as going out conquering and to conquer. We want to see how Christ will do this by looking first at the horse that He is riding. Secondly, we will look at the bow that He has with Him, and thirdly, we will look at the crown that was given to Him.

1st- Let us look at the horse that Christ is riding on.

The horse that Christ is riding on, in this prophetic picture, is a white horse. It is an emblem of what Christ rides upon when He goes forth to battle and to victory in all the generations of the Church age. When He was on His way to go to the cross, when He came into Jerusalem, He rode upon a colt, the foal of a donkey. This denoted His riding to victory upon His humility; His willingness to undergo sufferings on our behalf. The white horse here denotes His riding to conquer in men's hearts and in their kingdoms. He rides upon His already won victory at the cross, and that, in conjunction with His Church fulfilling the great commission that He gave to us. The white color of the horse that He rides upon represents His gospel being preached and proclaimed in purity and power. Jesus sits upon this magnificent steed and He rides to victory among the nations upon it. He rides conquering and to conquer in the cause of the salvation of all of God's Elect. Turn with me over to Psalm 45. Speaking prophetically of the Messiah King who would come to the Jews, one of the sons of Korah says, "My heart overflows with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; My tongue is the pen of a ready writer." "You are fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured out upon Your lips; therefore God has blessed You forever." "Gird your sword upon Your thigh O Mighty One, with Your glory and Your majesty." "And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness." You can see that this son of Korah is wishing for the greatest success possible for the cause of the Messiah King. "Jesus is fairer, and He is purer than all the angels that heaven can boast," the hymn writer says. "Grace is poured out upon Christ's lips." It is by means of Christ's word, that the way of salvation is found. It is by the means of His sword, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and especially by the foolishness of preaching Christ and Him crucified, that the majesty and the glory of Christ are better seen. The Psalmist wishes the greatest prosperity upon Christ's cause and

kingdom. "And in your majesty, ride on prosperously, or victoriously, "for the cause of truth, humility and righteousness."

This same cause that Christ rode forth on a donkey for, at His first coming, is the same cause that you and I preach and promote on His behalf now, to whoever will listen to us. This is indeed how Christ goes forth conquering and to conquer. He did so in the days of the apostles, which is the context of these verses in Chapter 6 that we are studying. We preach the truth, we preach humility, and we preach righteousness, but we preach none of them apart from their perfect fulfillment in our Lord Jesus Christ. Truth, perfect truth is found in Jesus. Humility, perfect humility is found in Jesus. And righteousness, perfect righteousness is found in Jesus. It is these qualities which we pray would be riding forth to victory in our hearts, and which we long to see in the lives of many others because of the grace of Christ. It is Christ who is riding the white horse that brings the victory. It is Christ, by His Spirit, giving power to gospel preaching that wins the day, not just men preaching the gospel. Psalm 33: 16 and 17 says, "No king is saved by the multitude of an army; a mighty man is not delivered by great strength." "A horse is a vain hope for safety; neither shall it deliver any by its great strength." No, it is not gospel preaching alone which will save men or bless the nations. It is when Christ goes forth to ride the horse of the gospel that He goes forth conquering and to conquer. He did this in the days of the Apostles. In Acts 2: 48 it says, "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." And in Acts 5: 14 it says, "And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women." He has continued His glorious ride down through the Church age until now, and His greatest conquests of hearts and nations is yet to come.

2ndly- We want to look at the bow that Christ has with Him.

"He who sat on the white horse had a bow," it says in our text. A bow is for shooting arrows obviously. But this is a bow which has been given to the risen, ascended Christ. This bow shoots a special kind of spiritual arrows. We see the meaning of this figure, of Christ's having a bow, if we will look at Psalm 45 once again. In verse 5 after speaking prophetically of Christ's riding on victoriously for the cause of truth, and humility, and righteousness it says, "Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; the peoples fall under You." The arrows which Christ shoots are the arrows of the truths of His Word being preached. The truth of the Scriptures is aimed at the hearts of the King's enemies. This brings them to conviction of sin, to being wounded in their heart and conscience in relation to that truth that they have sinned against a holy God. But Christ came to seek and to save that which is lost. And so, when these arrows are dipped in His blood and are accompanied by the power of Christ, they result most definitely in that person's conversion. It is in this way that people who hear the gospel are pricked in their conscience. They begin to cry out, as those people did in Acts chapter 2 and chapter 16, "What must we do to be saved?" It is only the Lord Jesus who "has the bow," but gospel preachers and other faithful witnesses among true Christians are working together with Him. They may draw Christ's bow at a venture, but the Lord can direct the arrow to the joints of our armor, those thoughts that we resist Him with; and thus, they penetrate our hearts. It says here, "The peoples fall under You." The peoples shall fall under Christ's arrows. Either people will be convicted and converted by the arrows that Christ shoots, or they will fall in judgment by the arrows which God will shoot at the unrepentant in heart. Psalm 7, verse 11 says, "God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day." "If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready." "He also prepares for Himself instruments of death; He makes His arrows into fiery shafts." The arrows of Christ's love and grace will not kill anything but our sin, and the

arrows of His truth only our errors and misconceptions about what is righteous and unrighteous.

Then 3rdly- Let us look at the crown which was given Him.

The crown which was given to Him shows us how His glorious kingdom is to be advanced. He goes out conquering and to conquer when each Christian proclaims with their life and their lips Jesus to be both King and Lord. The words of Philippians 2: 9 and 10 come to mind immediately. "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Why should we bow to the Lord Jesus unless He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords? But He is; so why should I remain silent? You say to me, "Well I cannot see Him; when I see Him, then I will bow to Him." Ah, but that is not living by faith in the Son of God who loved you and gave Himself for you. You must bow to His Lordship, now, in order to be saved. "If you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and you believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." (Romans 10: 9) You must bow to His Lordship in order to be obedient even when it seems difficult. He has every right to rule over you. He has every right to your complete obedience to His every command. Will you not give it to Him? Just after the words of Philippians 2: 11 come these words. "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure." The Lord who works in you rules over you, O Christian, whether any man is watching over you and looking for your obedience to Christ, or not. Indeed Psalm 110 says that Christ rules in the midst of His enemies. This is what is important to remember if you would be faithful to Him. "The Lord said to my Lord Jesus, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.'" The Lord shall send the rod Your strength out of Zion." "Rule in the midst of Your enemies!" "Your people shall be volunteers (they shall volunteer freely) in the day of Your power." You see from this don't you, that if you are one who is volunteering freely to serve Christ, His kingdom and cause, to advance it by speaking the truth and holy living and loving service, that the day of His power has come to you. But we also look for a day coming, which will be a greater day of power, when many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord in Jerusalem. There will be a day of His power come, when the Lord shall be King over all the earth. "He will break in pieces the oppressor." "He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, like showers that water the earth." "In His days the righteous shall flourish, and there will be abundance of peace until the moon is no more." "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth." "Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and His enemies will lick the dust." "Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things! "And blessed be His glorious name forever!" "And let the whole earth be filled with His glory." "Amen and Amen."