

The Pouring Out of God's Wrath (Part II)

Revelation 6:9-17

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Introduction: Review with me what we have seen in our study in the Book of Redemption so far: The theme of our study comes from 1:1, *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ."* An outline of the Book is found in 1:19 > *"The things which thou hast seen"* (chapter one); *"The things which are"* (chapters 2 & 3 – letters to the 7 churches); & *"The things which shall be hereafter"* (chapters 4-22). We have described chapter 4 as the proclamation of God's holiness; chapter 5 as the portrait of God's love; & chapter 6 as the pouring out of God's wrath. Two weeks ago we considered the opening of the first 4 seals (of the seven-sealed book of 5:1), also known as the Four Horses of the Apocalypse. We noted the White Horse (Victory); the Red Horse (Bloodshed); the Black Horse (Suffering); & the Pale Horse (Famine). The consequence of these 4 was: Blasphemous Philosophy, Belligerent Powers; Blighted Prosperity; & Biological Pestilence (John Vaughn). We come now to the opening of the next 2 seals where we will find: Believers Persecuted (6:9-11) & Blind Panic (6:12-17).

V. The fifth seal (:9-11) - Now the scene is in heaven – "Believers Persecuted" (John Vaughn)

A. **Who** are they (:9)?

1. Martyrs, slain for their belief of the truth & faith in Christ.
2. "The souls of those new believers slain in these early years of the tribulation are seen as under the altar in the heavenly tabernacle (Heb. (9:2-9), like the blood of the sacrifices under the ancient altar in the tabernacle (Lev. 4:18)" (Henry Morris).
3. Those saved through the testimony of the 144,000 Jews (ch. 7) & the two witness (ch. 11)?

B. **What** say they (:10)?

1. *"How long...?"* - asking for God's judgment upon their persecutors. "They are not voicing mere vindictiveness, they are crying out for divine justice" (Custer). [Our society today?] Application: Compare the courage of these martyrs to the average Christian today afraid to bow & offer grace in a restaurant.
2. Compare Luke 18:7-8, *"And shall not God avenge His own elect, who cry day & night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily."*

C. **Why** wait they (:11)?

1. White robes have been given to them, cf. Rev. 7:9 & 14. [Souls clothed? The temporary bodies of those yet to be resurrected & receive glorified bodies?]
2. There will be more martyrs before the Tribulation period is over (see Rev. 13:7-15).

Summary: "God made clear to these martyrs that their sacrifice was an appointment, not an accident; & that others would join them. Even in the death of His people, God is in control (Ps. 116:15); so there is nothing to fear" (Wiersbe).

Application: "Now these saints awake in the presence of God under the celestial altar, in fires of glory & praise in the presence of God. Their suffering was an aroma of blessed incense ascending up to the presence of God" (Custer).

VI. The sixth seal (:12-17) - "Blind Panic" (Vaughn)

A. **Six** catastrophic events (:12-14) >

1. Great earthquake (Mat. 24:7). [“Great” – Global? What would it be on the Richter scale?]
2. Sun darkened (Joel 2:2, 10, 30-31).
3. Moon reddened as blood (dust, steam, gases released from volcanic eruptions?). “Accompanying the earthquake will be numerous volcanic eruptions; & large amounts of ash & debris will be blown into the earth’s atmosphere, blackening the sun & giving the moon a blood-red hue” (MacArthur).
4. Meteor showers (asteroids)? [“Stars of heaven fall” – Leaders, governmental authorities?]
5. Heaven opened (Isaiah 34:4; 13:6-13). [God’s throne now visible?]
6. Mountains & islands moved (“earth’s shifting crust”).
 “The global earthquake will cause the entire crust of the earth to shift, causing ‘every mountain & island’ to be ‘moved out of their places’ & the sky itself to appear to those on the earth’s surface to be ‘departing’“ (H. Morris). “Earthquake” is “*seimos*” – meaning: shaking.
 Summary: “There is no question that such disasters have happened in the past, but the worst is yet future. God will remove the false sense of security that lost people have. The sky veiled with clouds & the earth trembling under foot remind the earth dwellers that God is angry with their sin & is summoning them to repent” (Custer).

B. Seven categories of men (:15) >

1. Representative of all mankind.
2. "All levels of society are here. Some are great men, some are slaves. In relation to judgment of the Lord Jesus Christ, however, everyone is exactly in the same predicament... no one escapes" (Walvoord).

C. One combined cry (:16-17) >

1. Requesting an escape, even if it meant a quick destruction (cf. Isaiah 2:10-19). “What sinners dread most is not death, but the revealed Presence of God” (Swete).
2. Recognizing the Lamb's wrath - "What a terrible thought - the gentlest of all God's creatures angry! It is the wrath of love, the wrath of sacrificial love which, having done the absolute utmost for us & our salvation, tells us as nothing else could the certainty with which evil awaits its doom at the hand of God" (Torrance, by L. Morris).
 Application: “If men & women will not yield to the love of God, & be changed by the grace of God, then there is no way for them to escape the wrath of God” (Wiersbe).
 Summary: “Wicked men know that they are accountable & that they have no excuse” (Custer).

Conclusion: “As Christians we are often frustrated because wicked men prosper in their evil. We long for justice & righteousness. We wonder why God allows the cause of the Gospel to suffer so many setbacks. But we must not allow impatience for God’s judgments to discourage us from obeying the Lord. This chapter of God’s Word assures us once again that God will judge the earth & avenge His people. It teaches us not to envy evil doers because the horror that lies ahead for them far outweighs their short time of ease & prosperity for the present. Like Joseph we must wait for the fulfillment of God’s promises, our faith being tested by the prophetic vision” (Bell). Who can stand in that day? Only those who have accepted the sacrifice of the Lamb on their behalf. Man left to himself is in rebellion against God. He may “get” his own way - but one day he will face God. Where do you stand this morning? Are you getting your own way, or letting God have His way in your life? Fear Him now & be delivered. Fear Him not until then, & be lost forever. Is Christ your Savior? If not, heed his warning & be saved today! Be assured of the truth of John 3:36, “*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: & he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*”