

Opening the Sealed Scroll Part 2

Revelation 6:9-17

I. Introduction:

A. Context

1. Context is set in heaven. John was exiled on Isle of Patmos for preaching the Gospel.
2. John was called up to heaven to receive the revelation which he recorded.
3. He's describing events that will take place in the 7-year period called the tribulation.
4. The judgment of the tribulation is revealed in three groups.
 - a. – Seal judgments
 - b. – Trumpet judgments
 - c. – Bowl judgments

B. First four seals

The first four seals opened by Jesus revealed four horses and riders.

1. – White horse
 - a. The first seal brought forth a white horse with a rider who had a bow and a crown.
 - b. This horse and rider represent the false peace of the first half of the tribulation.
 - c. The antichrist will bring a false peace that will last three and a half years.
 - d. At ½ way through tribulation he'll break his covenant w/ Israel & declare himself god
2. – Red horse
 - a. The red horse represents war. When antichrist reveals his true nature, world war breaks out. There'll be war in the last ½ of the tribulation like world's never seen.
3. – Black horse
 - a. The black horse represents the famine that will accompany war.
 - b. Famine will grip the world as every nation fights against one another.
4. – Pale horse
 - a. The pale horse represents pestilence and disease. As the world descends into chaos in the last ½ of the tribulation, disease will spread unchecked.
 - b. Application: You do not want to be here when the tribulation begins.

II. The 5th seal (Revelation 6:9-11)

This brings us to the opening of the 5th seal.

A. Martyred tribulation saints

John saw the souls of those who were martyred for their faith.

1. – Souls under the alter
 - a. This description fits with the practice of offerings in the temple on earth.
 - b. Sacrificial animals were slain on the brazen alter standing at tabernacle's entrance.
 - c. The blood would run down under the alter representing the life of the animal.
 - d. In like manner these saints were slain because of their faith & commitment to Jesus.
 - e. They gave their literal lives as an offering to God rather than deny His name.
2. – These are tribulation saints.
 - a. The church age saints were raptured before the tribulation began; therefore, these are the saints who will be murdered during the tribulation.

- b. Many will be saved by faith in Jesus during the tribulation, but most of those who trust Jesus in the tribulation will be hunted, persecuted, & executed for their faith.
- c. Those who won't accept Jesus in this day of grace when it's so easy won't accept Jesus in a day when it will cost them everything.

B. Their question

1. Martyred tribulation saints ask God, "How long until you bring judgement on those who killed us? How long until there's justice for wicked atrocities perpetrated earth?"
2. The question is not selfish or malicious, nor driven by personal revenge.
3. Question is from hearts that understand the justice and righteousness of our Holy God.
4. Application: We might ask the same question, "How long Lord do you tarry?"

C. God's answer (Revelation 6:11)

1. – Gave each of them a white robe
 - a. The white robe represents victory in Jesus.
 - b. It represents their purity & holiness before God & eternal place as citizens in heaven
 - c. Those who are saved have an eternal relationship with God the Father.
2. – Wait a little longer.
 - a. God invited the martyred saints to wait patiently as more would be added to them.
 - b. As the tribulation continued to unfold, more would be saved & martyred.
 - c. These saints were encouraged to wait patiently as God's plan ran its full course.
 - d. Application: We long for Jesus to return for His bride, the church, but we do not know the exact time of God's plan. We're to live for Him & be patient

III. The 6th seal, a broken universe (Revelation 6:12-14)

A. The end of the tribulation

In final stages of 7-year tribulation all creation will be shaken & moved out of its natural order.

1. – Great earthquakes will shake the whole earth.
 - a. The earthquakes will be so powerful that mountains & islands will move out of place
 - b. Mountains will be leveled, and islands will disappear.
2. – Cosmic upheaval
 - a. Celestial bodies, fixed by the command of God since creation, will be moved.
 - b. The sun and the moon will fail to shine. The stars will be moved out of their places.
 - c. Jesus warned of the very thing John describes in this passage. (**Matthew 24:29**)

IV. Terror of God's wrath (Revelation 6:15-17)

A. The wrath of the Lamb

1. This is the part of God's nature no one wants to talk about today.
2. We know God is love and He desires all men to be saved.
3. There's day coming when God will pour out His wrath against wicked men & women.
4. God will bring judgment & justice to His universe thus answering the martyrs' question
5. At the end of the tribulation, God's wrath will be poured out without mitigation.

B. Response is fear.

1. The response of every lost person is fear. There is no negotiation with God!
2. The people at the end of the tribulation try to hide from God.
3. They would rather have the mountains fall on them than face God.
4. No one will be able to stand before God in the day of His wrath. (**Revelation 6:17**)