



A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES

Week 41: The Seal Judgements, Part 9

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Review:

- A. We are presently studying the Fifth Seal Judgement in **Revelation 6:9-11**.
- B. Unlike the previous four Seal Judgements, this one is not associated with a rider on a horse. It is not part of that initial group known as “The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.”
- C. But, it is still one of the Seal Judgments, and there will be two more to follow this one.
- D. This particular Fifth Seal Judgement concerns the martyred saints in heaven:
 1. John’s view shifts from earth to heaven at this stage, and he records for us what he sees there.
 2. Prior to this point, he has been focused on the earth and he has been recording what has been taking place down there: the rise of global socialism, war, famine, plague, economic ruin, and a worldwide genocidal campaign.
 3. But now, John’s view is taking in the scene around the throne room in heaven, and he notes an exception to all the joy and praise that he has recorded to this point
- E. John records that there are the ‘souls of the martyred saints’ under the altar, and as we noted last week, it is most likely that this altar is high and prominent, and these souls are around and below its height
- F. These souls are crying out for justice. They are appealing to God to do something about the terrible conditions on earth that led to their own deaths.
- G. That led to our lesson’s main focus last week on the triune composition of mankind, meaning:
 1. We are made in the image of God, and that means, among other things, 3 parts.
 2. We are comprised of body, soul, and spirit.
 3. For the true believer in Jesus Christ, their spirit is ‘quickened’ or made alive at the moment they are ‘born again’ at the moment of salvation.
 4. But before that point, as **Ephesians 2:1** says, we are “*dead in our transgressions and sins,*” before we come to saving faith.
 5. Over and over the Scriptures drive home the point that the non-believer is dead in spirit.
 6. However, it is at that point of true salvation that one receives ETERNAL LIFE. A true believer in Jesus Christ is made ‘alive in Christ’ and their spirit is no longer dead.
 7. So, the unbeliever is essentially functioning with only two parts of their composition: body and soul. The believer is functioning with all three elements: body soul and spirit.
 8. We learned last week that our fleshly bodies are nothing more than a temporary house for our soul. Our bodies we have now will die and decay; they are mortal bodies.

9. It is at the time of the forthcoming resurrection (which will be the time of the Rapture) that true believers in Jesus Christ will get an immortal, glorified and imperishable, body.
 10. It will be a very different body than the one we have now. It will be a body like the one Jesus Christ has according to **Philippians 3:21**.
 11. But until such a point, the “real you” (your soul), is confined to this earthly and broken, temporary, condemned house.
 12. That brings us to your soul, which as we learned last week, is the ‘real you.’
- H. Your soul feels emotion, distress, comfort, pleasure, conscience, agony, and so on.
 - I. Your soul is the part of you that fully senses and responds to its environment. That part never ceases to function.
 - J. We see that in our text in **Revelation 6:9-11**. The souls of these martyred saints have form, location, cognition, communication, will, and emotion. The real “them” was still in existence.
 - K. That is why in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in **Luke Ch. 16**, the soul of each man went in one of two directions after they both died.
 - L. Both men had full cognition and awareness after their physical death. The ‘real them’ was still in action.
 - M. One was in agony in Hades, and the other was in blissful peace and comfort in Paradise.

NOTE: Let’s return to our text in **Revelation 6:9-11**, and let’s unpack the balance of what this passage has to tell us.

And to do that, I want to approach this text with a three-point outline: The Crowd, The Cry, and The Comfort.

- I. THE CROWD (*Who are they?*)
 - A. IMPORTANT: They are Tribulation Saints (not raptured saints).
 1. **They have come to saving faith AFTER the Rapture.**
 2. They missed the “*blessed hope*” (**Cf. Titus 2:13**) because, by that time, they had not placed their full trust and faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 3. But at some point between the Rapture and the time of this 5th Seal Judgement, they HAD been saved. They had chosen to fully believe in Jesus Christ, and they HAD confessed His death and resurrection.
 4. They became true believers through the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.
 5. I do not believe these saints are those who “*rejected the love of the truth that would have saved them*” (**Cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:10**), because it is to this population that the Bible says God sends a “*powerful delusion so they will believe a lie and be condemned*”
 6. It’s a very dangerous thing to hear and know the truth of the Gospel and then to consciously reject it.

7. Likewise, it's a very dangerous thing to place higher value on certain parts of God's Word over other parts, or to mock or ignore certain doctrines, truths, or themes of the Bible.
8. In another manner of speaking, this is a cousin to "*rejecting the love of the TRUTH which would have saved them.*"
9. It's not a rejection of the Gospel, but the attitudes behind this irreverent posture, which are very common in the church these days, get dangerously close to putting some people in the "wrong bucket."
10. All said, this is a bit of a gray area that we cannot put hard boundaries around, but these saints pre-Rapture (for whatever reason) did not fully comprehend, hear, or know the Gospel.
11. They had not previously actively rejected it according to what **2 Thessalonians 2:10** says.
12. It's only AFTER the Rapture that they do embrace the love of the truth that will save them. God, in His great mercy and grace, gives them opportunity for that.

B. ALSO IMPORTANT: The Holy Spirit does not leave planet earth at the time of the Rapture (I read commentators and scholars that make this claim, but they are wrong; the Holy Spirit is omnipresent).

- I. This errant assumption is made by a wrong interpretation of **2 Thessalonians 2:6-7**
 - a. It is in this passage that we learn the Holy Spirit, acting through the corporate ministry of the church, is holding back the arrival of the antichrist.
 - b. The Bible is clear: the antichrist cannot be revealed as long as the church is on earth (this changes AFTER the Rapture).
 - c. Because **2 Thessalonians 2:6-7** uses the language that the Holy Spirit will be "taken out of the way," some shortsighted scholars assert that this means the Holy Spirit, after the Rapture, has been removed from earth altogether.
 - d. That is not what this passage is saying. When you take millions of Christians, and you suddenly remove their role and their influence on culture and society, and when you create a sudden vacuum of good ethics, wisdom, values, and morals by snatching up the church, it is only then that the restraining power of the Holy Spirit has been providentially "*taken out of the way.*"
 - e. Christians are called "salt and light." Consequently, they preserve a society that they are part of, and they expose depravity and all sorts of deeds of darkness. That comes with being "salt and light."
 - f. When that influence is suddenly gone, that's when all the chaos really starts happening.
 - g. When the traditional accountabilities are no longer present, Satan can unleash on the world his depraved agenda like he never could have before.

- h. When all the Christians are removed, and with them the restraining powers of the Holy Spirit, the globalists will get the conditions we see them trying so hard to get right now.
- i. And that's exactly what we see with the onset of the first four Seal Judgements:
 - It is AFTER the Rapture that the antichrist is revealed, and he ascends on the world stage to implement a worldwide socialism, and a global governance.
 - It is AFTER the Rapture that a huge surge in lawlessness, wars, and conflicts breaks out, and people start killing each other as they had never done before.
 - It is AFTER the Rapture that intentional economic ruin, food shortages, and famines can be FULLY manipulated to create a totally dependent class, to further depopulate earth, and to end the lives of many others.
 - It is AFTER the Rapture that intentional pandemics and diseases will blossom in unprecedented fashion.
 - It is AFTER the Rapture that depraved agents and followers of globalism will openly and strategically kill anyone that disagrees or takes issue with their deceptions and agenda.
 - In summation, it is AFTER the Rapture that the early signs of everything we see starting to take place now will markedly graduate and surge to levels we cannot even imagine at this time.
 - The Seal Judgements show us what happens when the 'restrainer is taken out of the way' and the depraved world gets to do all the things it's already showing it wants to do.
 - The Seal Judgements show us what the world will be like without the functioning church around to preserve it and to hold it accountable.
- j. But again, keep in mind, the Holy Spirit, as one-third of the Trinity, is omnipresent.
- k. He has not left, but His direct role through the church has been dramatically lessened because all the true believers are precipitously gone.
- l. Also, keep in mind the point of **John 16:8** where Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit. In this passage, Jesus says the Holy Spirit, "...will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment."
- m. In other words, the ministry and impact of the Holy Spirit is still present AFTER the Rapture in order that others might still be saved. That process will not change.

- C. Back to the souls in **Revelation Ch. 6**) - - Immediately, upon death, we see they have been ushered up to heaven, and based upon **Luke 16:22**, it is likely that angels escorted them there.
1. As I shared last week, they are seen to be 'under' the altar.
 - a. The Greek term "hypokato" that is used here indicates "a position below another position or object > therefore, 'under.'
 - b. NOTE: The throne has probably the highest elevation (**Cf. Isaiah 6:1** – "...high and exalted" or "high and lifted up"); there is order to the throne room
 - c. The altar could be analogous to the 'altar of incense' in the temple (prayers = incense; **Cf. Revelation 5:8**), but we don't know much about this altar
 2. These souls have three qualifications (**Cf. vs. 9**)
 - a. They have encountered the Gospel one way or another and they have believed it,
 - b. They have proclaimed the truth of the Word of God,
 - c. They have been killed as a direct result of their testimony.
 3. **Note: For another detailed account of this, see Luke 21:10-18.**
 - a. The "*But before all this...*" of vs. 12 indicates this persecution begins right at the beginning.
 - b. Jesus reminds us in **Matthew 24:6** (a parallel passage) that this will all happen in a timeframe where "*the end is not yet*" (This is another pre-Tribulation consideration to take into account).
 4. **NOTE:** As in the days of the early church, severe persecution of Christians will be the rule.
 - a. The price for real faith will be death. *Many will die!*
 - b. NOTE: How will they die? (We have a clue in **Revelation 20:4** – "*beheading*")
 - c. The point is: No backsliders or '*convenient Christians.*' All will be true followers of Christ.
 - d. QUESTION: Are we that genuine now? (*Many Christians in the persecuted regions of the world today are ready*).
 5. **NOTE:** Even after all the destruction, many on earth will not repent. (Review Seal Judgements #1-4).
 - a. Nothing will convince them, least of all the truth that these faithful saints are proclaiming (**Recall Luke 16:29** – "*...they have Moses and the prophets...*")
 - b. Instead, they will seek to silence the truth. Truth is never popular because it forces personal accountability.
 - c. They'll direct their angst against God's people who point the way to truth and righteousness.
 - These martyred saints will die for two reasons: (1.) "*because of the Word of God*" (They will lift up a standard and point to a truth that the world will actively reject), and 2,

- “the testimony they had maintained” (They will personally speak of and show righteousness; they won’t be silent about it).
- d. We already have smaller picture of these very same dynamics today.

II. THE CRY

A. They are wondering why God does not instantly destroy the murderers.

1. They are crying out to God asking Him when He is going to stop all the persecution and bloodshed and avenge them for being killed as they were.
 - a. Conditions on earth are unbelievably bad. *It is worthwhile to reflect on how bad!*
 - b. These martyred saints know what is right and what is holy. They have experienced so much that is wrong, and they want justice.
 - c. I’m of the opinion that a passion for justice is a hallmark of a true believer. Those so-called “Christians” who are not bothered much by a lack of justice are showing, in my opinion, that they may not have the control of the Holy Spirit in their lives.
2. So, specifically, they ask God for His JUDGEMENT.
 - a. They know there is coming a time when God will act against the unbelieving world, and they want to know when that will start. One could say these martyred saints are confused, they don’t see the situation they are in adding up.
 - b. They know a specific time of God’s wrath is coming (His judgement), but it hasn’t started yet, and these martyred saints want to know when that will start.
3. **NOTE:** This is another key insight that also suggests this is all happening in the gap of time between the Rapture and the start of The Tribulation
 - a. Once the Tribulation begins, any saint alive at that time knows it has begun and that it will last a certain period of time.
 - We know it is seven years long according to **Daniel 9:24-27**
 - We know half of the Tribulation is 42 months according to **Revelation 13:5**
 - We also know one-half of the duration of the Tribulation is 1,260 days according to **Revelation 11:2-3**
 - The saints of this future time will know all of that too. All they have to do is read and study God’s Word and take it at face value.
 - In other words, they’ll know if the Tribulation has already begun. And - - they’ll know if it hasn’t!
 - Apparently, it hasn’t, as these saints are asking God when it will start(?) / when are you going to impose your judgement, your time of wrath (?)
 - As I’ve shared before, the weight of Biblical evidence suggests that, at least, Seal Judgements #1-#5 will occur in that

timeframe between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation.

- B. Let's get back to the specifics of the saints' lament. Even in heaven, there is emotion. Here are some things to think about:
1. The angels and the elders are rejoicing (*Cf. Revelation Ch. 4*)
 2. John wept in **Revelation 5:4** when he thought nobody was worthy to open the scroll and redeem the earth.
 3. Here in **Revelation 6:9-11**, the slain saints are crying out for justice, one can sense their passion and extreme frustration as they do so.
 4. The petition they make is an intense one. 'KRAZO' (cried out) is a strong word that emphasizes an urgent need and denotes strong emotions.
 5. Chronologically, it is not until "a new heaven and new earth" (*Cf. Revelation 21:4*) that God will "wipe every tear from their eye" and "the old order of things will pass away."
 6. Remember, we are made in God's image, and that includes emotion, the ability to feel and respond to our surroundings and circumstances.
 7. Somehow, even in the time before a new heaven and new earth, there is a state of bliss, comfort, and peace that is indescribable. However, alongside it, in a way we cannot fully understand now, there is also awareness which elicits emotion.
- C. There is the suggestion that these martyred saints are observing the state of affairs on earth and are responding.
1. Do those in heaven see what is on earth? Hard to say.
 2. **Luke Ch. 16** also seems to suggest some sort of cognizance that souls have about what is happening on earth.
- D. These saints are crying out with a great deal of energy and emotion because that is what they are FEELING. They want God to have His vengeance (*Cf. vs. 10b*), and they want God to set in motion His judgment.
1. (Observation): Society has recast God in forms that pleases and appeases it and has put God in a box where He can be measured and controlled. Why? *Because people do not want any personal accountability.*
 2. The church today has virtually eliminated any thought of God being a vengeful God. They want only a God of mercy, love, and grace. However, the God of the Bible is also a God of vengeance.
 - a. He Himself says in **Deuteronomy 32:35**, "*Vengeance is Mine and retribution.*"
 - b. Also, in that same chapter, **vss 41 and 43**, He says, "*I will render vengeance on My adversaries.*"
 3. David, the psalmist recognized this avenging nature of God, and like the cries of these martyred saints, David wrote numerous 'imprecatory psalms and prayers.' Here is a sampling:

- a. **Cf. Psalms 94:1-3** – “O Lord, the God who avenges, O God who avenges shine forth. Rise up O Judge of the earth; pay back to the proud what they deserve. How long will the wicked, O Lord, how long will the wicked be jubilant?”
 - b. **Cf. Psalm 79:10** - “Let there be known among the nations in our sight vengeance for the blood of Thy servants which has been shed.”
 - c. **Cf. Psalm 64:7-10** - another similar passage, and further **vs. 10** adds that “...the righteous man will be glad in the Lord.” It's a sobering thought, that the righteous will see the destruction of the wicked and be happy of that?
4. **No mistake about it! Our God is a God of vengeance!** Vengeance displays God's glory, His justice, His holiness, and His righteousness.
- d. When all of that is put on display and God is vindicated, the righteous will be glad.
 - e. That is a Biblical truth we should not be uncomfortable acknowledging.
5. **Which brings me to conclude that this seal judgment is an appeal for a judgment of vengeance.**
- f. It is what the martyred saints are praying for,
 - g. It is consistent with **Luke 21:22** which states, “...because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.”
 - h. The “days of vengeance” are one and the same with the seven years of Tribulation.
 - i. But meantime, the full outpouring of this judgment is still being delayed in **Revelation 6:9-11**, and that’s a fact these martyred saints have noticed.
 - j. Nothing bad happens to the unbelieving world in **vss 9-11**. It is, but that’s not the focus of the narrative concerning the 5th Seal.
 - k. The 5th Seal is a commentary on what happens to true saints of that era.
 - l. The judgment of The Tribulation is not waived, and it is not cancelled in any way. But at this time, it is still being postponed, and its fulfillment is promised to happen at a later date.

III. THE COMFORT

A. First, God says “Wait.” Wait and be patient.

- 1. We always believe we have a good case for God for God to act in our timeframe and according to our desires.
- 2. The martyrs crying out for God to do something, to act shows how bad this persecution is going to be on the earth.
- 3. They have a good case to make, and they know it. Their appeal is consistent with the truth of the Scriptures, but it is not in God’s perfect timing.

- B. They are told to wait for the providence of God to play out according to His plan – “*until the number of their fellow servants still on earth are killed and martyred as they were.*”
1. REMINDER: Days for life are literally numbered (**Cf. Hebrews 9:27** “*Just as man is appointed to die....*”)
 2. God sovereignly gives life and death, including how one will die. For these: they will be martyrs!
 3. God is providential over affairs of earth, “*...until the number of their fellow servants...*”
 4. SOBERING NOTE: Sometimes our prayers run against the providence of God.
- C. Wait for the promise of justice – *vengeance will come!*
- D. NOTE: Some translations say ‘rest.’
1. The verb “anapauomai” means “to become physically refreshed after ceasing activity or work which means: ‘rest, to rest,’
 2. Let’s go...to a quiet place and you can rest awhile’ (**Cf. Mark 6:31**)....the meaning seems to be upon the restorative character of pausing and resting
 3. This passage in **Revelation 6:9-11** is probably meant to communicate some blend of ‘wait’ and ‘rest’ as we understand the two terms today.
- E. Instead of immediate vengeance they are given clothes.
- F. The Greek word “stole” is “a long, flowing robe (i.e. ...‘a young man sitting on the right and wearing a white robe’ **Cf. Mark 16:5**; ...or those ‘who like to walk around in long robes’ **Cf. Mark 12:38**. Also same as the robe that was put on the prodigal son.
- G. The cultural significance of ‘long robe’ would be high social status and dignified occupation or activity” (this is the meaning of this passage - - it is a sign of honor and recognition)
1. This is why in the letter to the church at Sardis (**Revelation 3:4**), God promises to those “*who are worthy*” that they will be “*dressed in white*”
 2. It is a promise or assurance of future glory and worthiness
- H. NOTE: Here we see souls can wear a form of clothing...
3. This obviously means that souls have some sort of form or structure
 4. We cannot adequately understand this concept in our time and space of physical dimensions only, but it is still true all the same.
 5. This is different than the saints who return with Jesus Christ on white horses wearing white linen – **Cf. Revelation 20:14** (these saints have their glorified bodies at this point in time)

CONCLUSION: “*He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.*” (**Jim Elliot**). These martyred saints have gained the greatest prize by giving up what they were unable to keep in the first place.

