

A Journey Into the Heavens
The Fifth and Sixth Seals
January 6, 2016

At the beginning of chapter four we saw John caught up to the very throne room of God, where he saw the rainbow-encircled throne of God and what we might call the “royal court of God.”

In chapter five the attention shifted to the seven-sealed book... in the right hand of him that sat on the throne... (5:1) and the One worthy to open it. We discovered that in essence the seven-sealed book was the title deed to the earth that gave the Kinsman Redeemer the legal right to reclaim His lost inheritance. As the seals are broken on that scroll (book), the unfolding of the consummation of the age - God’s plan for the redemption of all creation - is revealed.

As has already been mentioned, the book of Revelation is for the most part a book of judgement, beginning with the opening of the first four seals and the four horsemen. At the breaking of the fifth seal, the scene shifts from events on earth to happenings in heaven.

I. The _____ Seal (6:9-11)

The scene is now back to the altar in the throne room of heaven, where John sees...the souls of men that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. (6:9). Who are those who have been slain? In order to be correct in our determination, we must go on to verse 10, which tells us the murderers are still on the _____. Thus, these martyrs were only recently killed if their executioners are still alive, so they cannot be Christians of the first century.

Neither can they be the church because the church was raptured out in Revelation 4:1 and is represented by the 24 elders around the throne (4:10). Therefore, by process of elimination, we can only conclude these martyrs may be the souls of tribulation believers who were slain _____ in the tribulation.

This brings us to a subject that we have briefly talked about thus far - the tribulation. Shortly after the rapture of the church, the seals are broken, the first of which speaks symbolically of peace on earth. However, at the breaking of the second seal, peace is taken from the earth, and people begin... to kill one another (6:4). This is the beginning of what the Bible calls the “great tribulation.” (Matthew 24:21; 29-31).

The judgements are not called the “tribulation” in the book of Revelation itself, but we can clearly see that what Jesus described in Matthew 24 are these judgements, and He called them the “great tribulation.”

From Matthew 24, it is evident people _____ be saved during the tribulation, but it will be the most horrible time to be a Christian because of the incomparable persecution. However let's look at this question from a Biblical Perspective. **(Look at Handout on back)**

Thus, from all this information, we may assume the souls “under the altar” in Revelation 6:9 are those who were saved after the rapture and were martyred during the Great Tribulation. Now, they cry out to God for vindication. This cry for vengeance is in complete contrast to how Jesus and Stephen responded to their executioners. (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60)

The age of grace is now over, and the day of judgement has begun on the earth for all who have rejected the Lord Jesus. However, during this age of judgement upon the earth, the Lord will be long-suffering, allowing many to turn to Him.

Revelation 6:11 says, “And white robes were given to every one of the them...” How can souls wear white robes? The answer may lie in the fact that “souls” is the Greek word from which we get our English word “_____”. It has various meanings in the New Testament, such as “lives” or “persons.” Thus, we know that these were not spirits without substance. It could be those who are martyred during the Great Tribulation are immediately translated to heaven and given their glorified bodies, but the Bible does not say.

So what is God's answer to the request of the souls under the altar? For them "to rest and wait until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." (6:11). This answer offers us a glimpse into the complicated problem of why God allows evil to go unchecked in the world - so His own purpose can be fulfilled, which can only be seen and understood from His vantage point of eternity.

II. The _____ Seal (6:12-17)

At the opening of the sixth seal...there was a great earthquake... (6:12). During the opening of the first four seals, there had been war, famine, pestilence, and general violence on the earth, but now the judgements intensify, as Jesus stated in Matthew 24:8. This great earthquake could be a natural earthquake of catastrophic proportions, resulting in volcanic ash that would blot out the sun and make the moon appear red. The earthquake and resulting tidal waves would cause worldwide _____.

Or, what John sees might very well be nuclear warfare. The atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima shook the earth for several miles, and the sun became darkened by a pillar of smoke and ash that rose 20,000 feet. It has been said that for several nights the moon appeared to be blood-red through the ash and smoke. We must also remember that after the atomic bomb came the hydrogen bomb, and today we have thermonuclear bombs that are graded by megatons. A megaton is the explosive force of a million tons of TNT. A one megaton bomb would literally make the atomic bomb dropped in Hiroshima look like a _____.

Before the discovery of the atomic bomb, the accounts in the book of Revelation of one-fourth of the world's population begin killed in a short time were thought impossible. Today, it is not only a possibility, but also a grim reality. It has been estimated that in the arsenals of the world is the equivalent of _____ tons of TNT for every human being living on earth.

Verse 13 says, "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." Lets compare that verse to Matthew 24:29.

Remember, the only weapons John had ever seen were the Roman sword, a spear, and a bow. If what he saw was a nuclear war, how else could he describe it? It is interesting note however, that his description that “the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together” in verse 14 is shockingly close to the mushroom effect of modern nuclear weapons.

No one can say for certain whether this terrible judgement that takes place at the opening of the sixth seal is natural or nuclear, but whatever the cause, it will be one of the most awesome judgements ever to come upon the earth. These terrible happenings will strike _____ in the hearts of people living on the earth, and they will hide “themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains (vs 15).

It appears heaven will be open for a moment, or perhaps through the preaching of tribulation believers, the people on earth will know that these awesome judgements are a result of “him that sitteth upon the throne, for they cry out to be saved from the wrath of the Lamb” (vs. 16).

It should also be shocking that even in the midst of this terrible judgement, people will still not _____ to God. Even suffering and pain cannot cause a person to change his behavior. Apparently, during the great judgements described in the book of Revelation the people on earth will know...the great day of his wrath is come... (vs. 17). However, there will be no widespread turning to God in repentance with a plea for His mercy, but rather seeking to ...”hide...from the face of him that sitteth on the throne... (vs.16).

This seal proves that judgement alone does not change the human heart, for the people on earth would rather run from God in fear than to come to Him in faith. Like Adam and Eve after their sin, people will try to _____ themselves from God, but the day is coming when there will be no place to hide.

This chapter ends with a very pertinent question...”who shall be able to stand?” (vs. 16). The answer is found in John 3:36. The sixth seal brings us to the final seal that, when opened, will reveal what will happen at the end of the world and at the establishment of Christ’s eternal kingdom.

A Journey Into the Heavens

Will there be a Second Chance for Salvation After the Rapture?

Some Bible interpreters believe that there will be absolutely no chance for salvation after the Rapture. However, there is no place in the Bible which says this or even hints to it. There will be many people who come to Christ during the Tribulation. The 144,000 Jewish witnesses (Revelation 7:4 - We will talk about this next week) are Jewish believers. If no one can come to Christ during the Tribulation, then why are people being beheaded for their faith?

Revelation 20:4 - And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Another view is that those who hear the gospel and reject it before the Rapture cannot be saved. Those saved during the Tribulation, then, are those who had never heard the gospel before the Rapture. The “proof text” for this view is II Thessalonians 2:9-11.

II Thessalonians 2:9-11 “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

Those who are hard-hearted toward the gospel before the Rapture are likely to remain so. And the Antichrist will deceive many.

Matthew 24:5 - For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

Revelation 6:9-11 speaks of those martyred during the Tribulation because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained. These martyrs will correctly interpret what they see during the Tribulation and will believe the gospel themselves and call on others to repent and believe as well.

The Antichrist and his followers will not tolerate their evangelism and will kill them. All of these martyrs are people who were alive before the Rapture, but who were not believers until afterward. Therefore, there must be opportunity to come to Christ in faith after the Rapture. This opportunity is somewhat explained in Romans.

Romans 11:25 - For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

The only question remains is of those “who have never heard the gospel” this is full of speculation and I am not going to make a definitive declaration other than saying that if you desire to seek the Lord here on earth, He will reveal Himself to you!

Psalm 19:1 - The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

Joel 2:32 -And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered:for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance,as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.