

THE REVELATION

MAY 12, 2024

Chapter 6:9-17

1. Seal Five – Souls Under the Altar (6:9-11b)

Rev 6:9 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;

As a result of what John had just seen play out, when the fifth seal was broken, he did not look back at the earth, he looked at the altar of the holy throne of God. There he saw souls who had died because they held to their beliefs in the Bible and they would not change their testimonies, and, for that, they were killed by those who did not believe in the God of the Bible. This pageantry leading to the Second Coming did not begin with the REVELATION, it began in Genesis. It did not begin with the start of the Church; it began with the start of human existence. But the LORD did make a separation between the saints who lived before His resurrection and those who lived after. Since His resurrection, literally hundreds of thousands of people have died for their faith in Jesus. All the Apostles except John died as martyrs; they were surely below the altar. Paul is there, too; he was beheaded for his faith. All of those who have not bowed to the demands of Islam are there. But with the breaking of the “fifth seal,” John sees the destiny of the righteous martyrs and it was not the place called “Hades,” it is the place called heaven. As a matter of fact, when they arrived in heaven, they were directed to one of the most holy of holy spots in the throne room, the altar. Can you think of a more wonderful place to be in heaven?

a) Their Cry to the LORD (6:10)

Rev 6:10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

A long time had passed since the breaking of the first seal but the cry of the dead in Christ residing under the altar was not new. That cry resides on earth, too. Here we wonder about it each time we hear of the death of a saint at the hands of an evil wretch. Why does the LORD allow it to continue? We do not understand, but He does. “How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” All the righteous have asked that same question from this side of heaven. The souls under the altar are just repeating the same earthly sentiment, but they are doing it for a heavenly reason. John needs to hear the answer.

b) Their Gift from the LORD (6:11a)

Rev 6:11a And there was given to each of them a white robe;

All martyrs who have arrived in heaven throughout the years have been given their “white robe” to wear for all eternity, the robe of purest white untainted by sin forever. Then, they joined all the other martyrs at the altar.

c) Their Answer from the LORD (6:11b)

Rev 6:11b and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

John heard the answer and recorded it. “... a little while longer, until the fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.” The LORD wants all the martyrs since His resurrection to be gathered into one place and then they will see Him rain judgment down on the self-willed unredeemed evil men of earth. How long will it take until all righteous martyrs arrive? At this point in the story, we do not know.

2. Seal Six (6:12-7:2a)

a) The Darkness Covers the Earth (6:12)

Rev 6:12 I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood;

When the Lamb broke the sixth seal, a whole host of trouble occurred. John said he saw a “great earthquake ... the sun become black ... the whole moon became like blood.” Earthquakes, especially big ones, stir up so much dust that the sun seems to cease to shine, and the moon seems to have a reddish color. Let us not make any more out of this than the plain face value of the words in this verse – a great earthquake will occur on Earth when this sixth seal is broken. If that earthquake occurred today, in man’s records, it would have to be greater than the May 22, 1960 earthquake in Valdivia, Chile, that was measured with a 9.6 magnitude.

b) The Stars Fall to the Earth (6:13)

Rev 6:13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.

With the earthquake, John also saw stars falling to earth. Through a simile he compared their fall to fruit dropping to the ground when a strong wind blew over the tree. Thud! The word for *fell* is *nekus* in the Greek language. It means the *stars fell* like a *dead body* – motionless. Thud!

The falling of stars from the sky has absolutely nothing to do with the earthquake. The violent shaking of the earth does not shake the stars in the sky. What do these stars represent? Not to get too far ahead, there is a necessity here to discover who these fallen stars are. In chapter 9, we will discover that one of these fallen stars is a heavenly creature who has the key to the pit of the abyss (9:1). Therefore, these stars are a form of heavenly beings which we can rightly call angels and they have business to do on earth.

c) The Sky and Land Moves on the Earth (6:14)

Rev 6:14 The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

As with every earthquake, even today, the earth and the topography surrounding the quake will change. But this quake was the largest ever felt on earth. The gust of its force caused the clouds to part and roll away in opposite directions. The fracture of the quake moved islands out of their place and caused mountains to sink low.

d) The Fear on the Earth (6:15)

Rev 6:15 Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains;

Then John tells us he saw a great human reaction to the breaking of this sixth seal. The godless became afraid, great and small, commander and slave, rich and poor. It caused even the kings of the earth to run and hide in their bomb shelters and hewn security caves. The quake was so great, coupled with the movement of the mountains and islands, that it caused the powerful and the lowly to consider death rather than life at that moment.

e) The Cry on the Earth (6:16)

Rev 6:16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;

Make no mistake; evil people know Who the LORD is! Especially these evil men; they knew Who the LORD was because they had made it their mission in life to hide Him from their people. They knew the truth but rejected it, and they refused to share it with the uninformed. Even Satan believes in God, but that does not mean he wants Him to be God! All these people who hid did so because they knew God, but did not like God. They hid because they knew their own deeds. They hid because they knew their deeds were in opposition to the desires of God.

f) The Wrath on the Earth (6:17)

Rev 6:17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Then John heard that “*the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?*” Surely not! Too much of the story still remains before the “great day” can occur! What is happening in the story? Why is this being said? There is still more to occur before the breaking of the seventh seal! What is going on? Let us call it this. *It is prophecy within the prophecy!* “*The great day ... of wrath has come*” because the LORD has spoken it into being as a fact. It will occur at the exact time it has been designed to occur. Nothing can stop it. Make nothing more out of this than that. The march to that “great day” has begun.