

BOOK OF REVELATION

Part 13 – Opening the Scroll Continued: Chapter 6:9-17

I. INTRODUCTION

In this previous message the attention of the Apostle John is turned to the earth, when the Lord Jesus Christ begins to open the seven seal scroll presented in Chapter 5 to the Lord Jesus by God the Father before His throne, which is described in Chapter 4.

In our last message we saw The First Seal through the Fourth Seals opened. The First Seal was the arising of the Anti-Christ that the world will welcome and accept with open arms. He will control most of the known world, if not all of it, through the ten kingdoms. The Second Seal is a world wide war, either a civil war or a war between the Anti-Christ and those areas of the world, although few in number not under his control. The Third Seal was famine, that was a result of the world wide war, with a day's wages just to buy food to eat. The Fourth Seal was the death of ¼ of world's population as a consequences of the opening of the Second Seal and the Third Seal. These judgments are what God allows man to do to his fellow man. God is allowing man's sin to run its full course but that is about to change. The judgments that are coming are supernatural in nature and man will know that these judgments are from God himself.

II. EXEGESIS – THE OPENING OF THE SEVEN SEALED SCROLL: THE FIFTH AND SIXTH SEAL.

*VERSE 9 “And when he had opened the fifth seal,
I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God,
and for the testimony which they held:”*

Now the scene shifts from the earth back to before the Throne of God in the third Heaven.

This is the first passage in Revelation that we see a large number of people who have accepted Christ as Saviour. We will see more references to the Tribulation saints in later passages in Revelation. Remember, that there will be many seeking answers after the disappearance of the Church age saints and the worldwide disruptions that will be caused by the Rapture.

The church buildings of true believers will be left behind and no doubt there will be many who will go to them, find them empty and abandoned, because the members are gone to be with the Lord in the Rapture

Many of these will accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, through the following:

- **Prophecy of the Two Witness:** Details we will study later in Chapter 11.
- **Print Media:** Commentaries, gospel tracts
- **Electronic Media:** DVD's, CD's, websites, and social media.
- **Word of God:** Copies will be in Bible believing churches, which will also be empty or mostly empty, and in many other places.

These saints will have real testimonies for the Lord Jesus Christ and will witness to many people around them. To be a believer during the Tribulation will cost you a great deal. Many will die from the natural consequences of Second Seal, Third Seal, and Fourth Seal judgments.

However many of these saints will be persecuted by the one world religion that arises during the First Seal. These saints will be considered a “thorn in the side” of the Anti-Christ and will be seen as being in the way of the world uniting to serve the Anti-Christ. They will not have the special protection of God that the Two Witnesses will have. They will be in many cases slain through probably lynch mob executions or executions done by the one world religion, as an answer to anyone who opposes them. This is alluded to in Revelation 17 which we will study later. They will be faithful to proclaim the Word of God and will be consistent in their testimony. It is for this purpose that they will be killed. Their souls will go to be with the Lord and be under the altar which is before the Throne of God.

*VERSE 10 “And they cried with a loud voice, saying,
How long, O Lord, holy and true,
dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”*

This is not a cry of doubt but of wonder and curiosity. They do not doubt that God will execute justice, or that is true in bringing that judgment. They are just not sure of God's timing in bringing that justice to pass. They do not weep for themselves as much for the saints that are to be killed in the remainder of the Tribulation. They are simply heartbroken for their fellow saints and want their killing to stop. It will but in God's timing.

*VERSE 11 “And white robes were given unto every one of them;
and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season,*

Every single martyr for the Lord Jesus Christ, not just some of them, no matter what their station in life was, will receive a white robe. White robes will also be given to the saints of all the ages as well. We see the first mention of this by the Lord Jesus Christ in Revelation 3:5 in the address to the Church at Sardis.

Revelation 3:5 “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

There will several more references in the book of Revelation later about the saints and martyred saints in heaven, each references mentions that they will be wearing white robes.

Their reward for being faithful was to rest. They would have no more temptations by their flesh to do wrong, no more being physically or mentally tortured for their faith. Their work on earth was finished and they could now rest before God's throne.

*“...until their fellowservants also and their brethren,
that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”*

More saints would die for their faith as the Tribulation continues and even many more will die in the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation, also called the Great Tribulation. Many saints will be killed by the judgments that have already happened and are yet to come. The word “fellowservants” is a possible reference to the Two Witnesses will be killed in the middle of the Tribulation when their time of ministry is concluded.

*VERSE 12 “And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal,
and, lo, there was a great earthquake;
and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair,
and the moon became as blood;”*

Now the scene shifts back to the earth. The judgments of God are now resuming after a brief pause after the Fourth Seal. This pause is indicative of the mercy of God upon the earth, even though its inhabitants are facing His judgment. Until the very end of the Tribulation you can see each of the judgments of God with some mercy in them. Notice also that none of the “beasts” or anyone else introduced them. His view was directed to the earth without introduction. The following occurs now on the earth:

- **Worldwide Earthquake:** The earth experiences an earthquake that is no doubt worldwide. Earthquakes often happen that can disrupt the lives of many and happen along fault lines on a regular basis. One of the signs of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 24:7 was earthquakes in many places:

Matthew 24:7 “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.”

However unlike the prophesy given here in Matthew 24:7, this earthquake will be felt all over the world and it will be supernatural in nature as we will see in the next few verses.

- **Sunlight turned completely dark:** Also the sun is affected by this judgment as well. The sun turns completely dark at the same time as the worldwide earthquake occurs. The expression “sackcloth of hair” indicating a clothing made of dark hair that was worn when one was in mourning or sorrow. The sun will temporarily lose its brightness
- **Moonlight turned dark red and looks like blood:** As a result of the sun losing its brightness, the view of the moon is affected as well. Notice that when the view of the sun is turned dark, one can still see the moon but it has a dark red color, the same color as blood. The moon does not turn to blood but LOOKS like the color of blood.

This could possibly be a solar eclipse that is supernatural and out of schedule with the times of solar eclipses that can be charted with current calculus based mathematics. However the scripture does not tell us for sure, but God knows for sure. Suffice it to say that even the moon will be darkened and look like the color of blood, a dark red.

- **Intense Meteor and/or Comet Shower:** Look at the next verse for the description.

*VERSE 13 “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.*

This is no doubt a supernatural meteor shower and/or a shower of supernatural comets hitting the earth's surface. Meteor showers when they hit the earth's atmosphere look similar to a star showing very rapidly and a comet can look like a star in the heavens with a long tail.

The manner of this meteor shower or multiple comet impacts indicates a large number of impacts on the earth's surface. The Apostle John draws the comparison of a fig tree being blown by a strong wind, dropping her premature figs. It happens suddenly, without warning, and the number of premature figs that drop is numerous.

If a star or multiple stars were on a trajectory with the earth, the earth would begin to break apart as the star approached and then be ripped apart into pieces to be either burned up with the extreme heat of the star surface or be pulled into the star by its enormous gravitational pull. All life on earth would have perished before the star or stars arrival. The view of that star would have filled the sky.

*VERSE 14 “And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together;
and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”*

Now we see the physical effects upon the earth. The heaven referred to here is either the First Heaven, the earth's atmosphere or the Second Heaven, which is the celestial universe. Most likely based upon the word used for “heaven” here in the original language (transliterated: ouranos) usually means the sky or as we would understand the atmosphere. This could mean a major upheaval to the earth's atmosphere of some kind. Some have speculated the ozone layer of the earth's atmosphere being ripped away due to a cosmic ray burst. In such a scenario, the earth's atmosphere would change color and in the process could look like the sky is rolling up like a scroll. Others that theorized some kind of thermonuclear detonations could cause this phenomena of the atmosphere. This is sheer speculation but one thing is clear, whatever happens to the earth's atmosphere will be supernatural in origin, in accordance with this judgment.

The worldwide earthquake will be so great that the geography of the earth is affected and the mountains and islands are moved out of place. So there is a change to how the earth appears after this judgment, from how it appears today. This will be the first time since the flood of Noah's day, that there has been a major change to the geography of the earth's surface.

*VERSE 15 “And the kings of the earth, and the great men,
and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men,
and every bondman, and every free man,
hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;*

Notice here that everyone is in the same situation: IN FEAR. This judgment does not respect any inhabitants of the earth's and treats them all the same. Notice that the scripture here makes notes of all those included: Those in authority, men that are well known or lower positions of authority, wealthy men, military officers, military personnel, men in servitude or slavery, and men that are free and may even have servants or slaves. The wealthy are able to endure the

Third Seal due to the wealth. This time, even the wealthy are affected by the Sixth Seal. All men are trying to find a place of refuge from the changes that are occurring on and to the earth's surface. They sought refuge in caves inside the mountains and in the rock formations of the mountains. But even these would have been very possibly unsafe under his judgment.

Men are trying to escape the judgment of God through their own means and will not be able to escape. This is the wake up call to the earth from God, that they are being judged, and to have a change of heart, repent, and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

*VERSE 16 “And said to the mountains and rocks,
Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne,
and from the wrath of the Lamb:*

Notice what you do not see here: REPENTANCE. This will be the decision that mankind chooses rather than repentance. Most of all of mankind begs the mountains and the rocks upon them to fall upon them and hide them rather than repent and turn to God. They acknowledge the unified wrath of God the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

VERSE 17 “For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Even the vast majority of mankind, though they have chosen to reject the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, are forced to acknowledge his supremacy through this judgment. They know now through this judgment

Some have postulated that this event here is at the end of the Tribulation and right before the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. They somehow see, when the atmospheric heavens are rolled back briefly, and get a view of the third heaven, because they see God the Father on His throne and the Lord Jesus Christ as he is opening the seven sealed scroll. This line of thought is a misinterpretation of scripture. At the end of the Tribulation you see the Lord Jesus Christ on a white horse, with millions of saints riding on horses behind him, and you do not see that here.

Even the majority of the earth's inhabitants here must acknowledge his power displayed through this judgment. They know His wrath is come and they also must acknowledge that they cannot stand against that judgment. The very things that they placed their security upon are affected by this judgment.

The last thing to notice here is what is not displayed. You do not see joy or glee from God the Father or the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead a somber or sober moment here is indicated. They do not have joy in pronouncing judgment on the inhabitants of this world that have rejected God. But however the justice of God must go forward because He is a God of love but also of justice and judgment.

In our next study, In Revelation 7, we will study the first “time out” or parenthesis in the book of Revelation. The judgments of God stop temporarily while the 144,000 Jewish witnesses are sealed miraculously by God, before the Seventh Seal opens in the first verse of Chapter 8.

III. APPLICATIONS

- **OVERRIDDING PRINCIPLE:** The Church Age saints will not go through the Tribulation. If nothing else is learned through this study, remember this.
- These judgments although strong and horrible, will not be endured by the Church Age saint and praise God for this.
- The Tribulation saints having received Christ as Saviour will have their sins forgiven and have their eternal state secured.
- However the Tribulation saint will have to suffer through the judgments with the lost.
- Many tribulations saints will be persecuted and will die for their faith, but their place will be in heaven and will receive white robes just as the Church Age saints has.
- They will be able to rest from the persecution and trials that life offered them.
- The majority of those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour will be forced to acknowledge him even though they reject Him.
- We may even see persecution before the Rapture, and some in other places in the world are already dying for their faith. However we will still have rest and rewards in heaven.
- Injustice on the earth is not forever. God's judgment against the world that has rejected him is sure and will come.