

THE WRATH OF THE LAMB Revelation 6:9-17

(Main Idea of the Text)

God revealed to John that His wrath would be poured out upon His enemies but His people were to remain faithful.

(Main Idea of this Study)

We should live faithful to Christ knowing that His wrath upon His enemies is coming.

I. The Fifth Seal: Prayers for Vengeance (9-11).

A. Vengeance Requested (9-10).

- *When He opened the fifth seal*-Again, assuming it the Lamb who is loosening the seals.
- *under the altar*- "The altar" John saw was evidently in heaven. Earlier John had seen a throne-room in heaven (chs. 4—5), but now he saw a temple. Probably the concepts of "palace" and "temple" communicate different aspects of God's central magnificent dwelling-place in heaven.
- *souls-Psyche* in Greek, literally "lives."
- *been slain for the word of God*-For their commitment to God's Word.
- *testimony which they held*-For their faith in God, how they lived during the previous opening of seals. They were slain for both belief and behavior.
- *"How long, O Lord, holy and true"*- John saw these martyrs calling out to their heavenly "Lord" or "Master" (Gr. *despotes*, where we get "despot" in English) to punish their murderers. They identify God as both holy and true. "Master" implies divine might, majesty, power, and authority, and it stresses the absolute power of God. "Holy" and "true" were attributes of Christ earlier (3:7), but here the Father is probably in view, since He is the ultimate source of the judgments.
- *until You judge and avenge our blood*-Crying out for justice!

B. Vengeance Deferred (11).

- *white robe*- "white robe" (Gr. *stole*), symbolizing God's eternal righteousness, blessedness, dignity and honor. These martyrs had been faithful and had suffered martyrdom for their fidelity to Christ.
- *that they should rest a little while longer*- God will answer their prayer for vengeance, but in His time.
- *as they were, was completed*-God had sovereignly planned how many would be martyred. The slain saints were told to enjoy rest until this group was complete.

II. The Sixth Seal: Fear of the Wrath to Come (12-17).

A. The Reason for the Fear (12-14).

- *He opened the sixth seal*-again, assuming it is the Lamb
- *great earthquake*- Next God will send a tremendous, planet-sized "earthquake" that will rock the whole world.

- *sun became black as sackcloth of hair*-No doubt the great earth quake will cause a great amount to dust to rise from the earth. Or this earthquake make cause volcanos to erupt thus spewing ash into the atmosphere and covering the sun. Sackcloth was rough cloth worn by mourner, usually made from the hair of black goats.
- *moon became like blood*-The dust and ash will eclipse the moon also. The smoke will color the moon bloodred as it attempts to pierce the smoke-darkened sky.
Isaiah 13:10: For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine.
- *stars of heaven fell to the earth*-falling stars, asteroids. “Stars” in Greek means any heavenly body including stars. This great upheaval will be vast!
- *as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind*-John used an analogy to describe what the scene would look like.
- *sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up*-Some have suggested this is a tornado.
- *every mountain and island was moved out of its place*- In the OT, whenever God visited His creation, either for blessing or judgment, it convulsed. The description is often painted in apocalyptic terms
Joel 2:10: The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness.

Matthew 24:29: Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Luke 21:11: And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

B. The Range of the Fear (15a).

- *And the kings of the earth*-politicians, heads of state
- *the great men*-highest ranking men in government
- *the rich men*-leaders of business and commerce.
- *the commanders*-leaders of the military.
- *the mighty men*-influential men.
- *every slave and every free man*-common people, lower classes.

C. The Reaction of the Fear (15b-17).

- *hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains*- As God’s persecuted people had to hide from the persecutions of unbelievers, so now the rich and powerful seek shelter from God’s wrath.

- *and said to the mountains and rocks*-they will be praying, but not to God. They will be praying to Mother Nature!
Hosea 10:8: Also the high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed. The thorn and thistle shall grow on their altars; they shall say to the mountains, "Cover us!" And to the hills, "Fall on us!"
- *hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne*-an unsuccessful attempt to hide from God. "Him who sits on the throne" has already been identified in chapter 4. These people will not turn to God in repentance, but away from Him in terror.
Luke 23:30: Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"
- *wrath of the Lamb*-The standing, slain Lamb (Revelation 5) will now be the wrathful, vengeful Lamb.
- *For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?*- rhetorical question. The "great day" is also known in the OT was the "Day of the Lord." The phrase occurs 19 times in the OT and 4 times in the NT.
Joel 2:11: The Lord gives voice before His army,
For His camp is very great;
For strong is the One who executes His word.
**For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible;
Who can endure it?**

Nahum 1:6: **Who can stand before His indignation?**
And who can endure the fierceness of His anger?
His fury is poured out like fire,
And the rocks are thrown down by Him.