

THE SIXTH SEAL

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Revelation chapter five tells about a “*book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.*” The book was in “the right hand of him that sat on the throne” (Rev 5:1). In Revelation 5:2, a “strong angel” then proclaimed with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” Verse three says, “And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.” The Apostle John then wept because no man was found worthy to open the book (Rev 5:4). But Jesus Christ, the “Lamb as it had been slain,” and “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David,” was found worthy and was given the book to open its seals. Revelation 6:1-11 records the opening of the first five seals of the book. The opening of the first four seals brought forth a horse of a different color and an accompanying statement about their respective riders. “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: 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? 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, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled” (Rev 6:9-11). There are some great lessons to learn about God’s judgment from the opening of the sixth seal.

The end of this world

When the sixth seal was opened, “*there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casts her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places*” (Rev 6:12-14). This seal moves forward to the end of time, to the end of the “little season” that the martyrs in verses 9-11 were told to wait for. This is the time in which God was going to judge all the wicked and avenge the blood of the saints that they had killed. Revelation 6:12-17 presents a graphic description of the end of the world. When Jesus comes again, this earth *will* be destroyed (Matt 24:35; 2 Pet 3:1-14; Rev 20:11). When the Lord comes, the dead in Christ will rise first, and then the living faithful Christians will be caught up in the air to be with them

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(continued)

and the Lord (1 Thes 4:13-18). Revelation 6:15-17 tells us what the wicked will be doing at that time. *“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; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”* We can notice a major difference between the judgment that is seen in the fourth seal versus that of the sixth seal. In the judgment of the fourth seal, only the fourth part were killed. That was only a partial judgment, not the final judgment of all the wicked. In the judgment of the sixth seal, no one was able to stand. *None* of the persecutors were able to escape that judgment. In the final judgment of all men at the end of the world, the wicked will try to run and hide, but they will not escape. They too will be taken on that very same day to be judged by the Lord before being cast into hell for all eternity (Rev 20:12-15; 21:8). Notice that there will be only *one* resurrection day for all men (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15), and there will be no millennial reign of Christ on earth, and no “second chance” for anyone.

Comforting words

The opening of the first six seals in Revelation 6 offers great comfort to Christians. Yes, we will be persecuted. But we must continue to spread the gospel to the lost and faithfully serve the Lord and keep all of his commandments in spite of it. If we do that, even if we are killed as a result, we will be given the white robes of victory and be rewarded with eternal life. We can also be comforted by the knowledge that Judgment Day is coming, and God will punish all wickedness on that day. It might have appeared to some people at the close of the First Century A.D. that the Roman Empire was beyond everyone’s control and judgment. We may be tempted to think similar thoughts in our day and time, especially when we are facing tribulation. But God *is* in control of all things, and He will judge all men one day, including “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” (Rev 6:15). Let us be comforted and take courage, and prepare ourselves for the judgment by serving the Lord more diligently and faithfully each day that we live!