

# The Book Of Revelation

## Study 33

### THE PETITION

*Revelation 6:10 (NKJV)*

<sup>10</sup> *And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"*

Note here that the deaths being cried for would not be martyrdom, as some suggest, because martyrdom could not be judgment from God. The seals depict God's wrath and judgment on the evil and ungodly, not His children.

The force then that is involved in the fifth seal is the **prayers** of the Tribulation martyrs for God to enact vengeance on their Christ-rejecting murderers.

Prayer will play a vital role in the outpouring of God's judgments on the earth.

This prayer is very different from the one by the martyr Stephen;

*Acts 7:60 (NKJV)*

<sup>60</sup> *Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

In which he prayed for his killers to not be held guilty by God.

This prayer of the martyrs is more like the imprecatory Psalms. A prayer for pardon is appropriate in a time of grace. But when grace is finished and judgment comes, prayers for divine, holy retribution is fitting.

Such prayers are not from a desire for revenge, but are a protest against all that is sinful, unholy, dishonoring to God, and destructive to His creation.

Many Christians act as if prayer were a mere formality that has little effect. Yet, amazingly, the prayers of the Tribulation martyrs will move God's hand of judgment.

Jesus illustrated that same principle in the parable of the persistent widow and the unrighteous judge:

*Luke 18:6-8 (NKJV)*

<sup>6</sup> *Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said.*

<sup>7</sup> *And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?*

<sup>8</sup> *I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.*

The prayers of the Tribulation martyrs will participate in activating the torments of the sixth and seventh seals along with the trumpet and bowl judgments which follow.

God's hand of judgment will move in response to the martyrs because their prayers will be urgent, fervent, impassioned, and consistent with His purpose and will.

**Krazo (cried out)** is a strong word that emphasizes the urgent need and denotes strong emotions. (Matt 9:27; 14:26, 30; 15:22; 20:30-31; Mark 9:24)

The twenty-four elders and the angels loudly praised God

*Revelation 5:12 (NKJV)*

<sup>12</sup> *saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"*

And the Tribulation martyrs will petition Him **with a loud voice**. In keeping with their call for vengeance and justice, they address Him as the **Lord, holy and true**, **Lord** does not translate *kurios*, the common New Testament word for Lord, but the stronger term *despotes* ("**master**", "**ruler**"). It speaks of God the Father's might, power, majesty, and authority.

The martyrs base their appeal for vengeance on two of God's attributes.

Because God is **holy**, He must judge sin (*Ps5:4-5; Hab. 1:13; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom 2:16; 3:6; 2Tim 4:1*); because he is **true**, He must be faithful to His word and keep His promises (*Num 23:19; 1Sam 15:29; Luke 21:33*).

*Revelation 3:7* applies this phrase **holy and true to** Jesus Christ, thus affirming His deity and full equality with His Father.

The martyr's question "**how long will you refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?**" Does not reflect a personal vendetta on their part. They are not trying to tell God what to do or when to do it; they are asking Him the question because they have a holy desire to see Satan and Antichrist destroyed, iniquity defeated, and the wicked judged, and Jesus Christ reigning in glory on the earth.

**How long**, is a well-known cry of suffering Israel, reflecting the perplexing question of the righteous as to when their pain will end.

*Psalms 13:1 (NKJV)*

<sup>1</sup> *To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?*

*Psalms 35:17 (NKJV)*

<sup>17</sup> *Lord, how long will You look on? Rescue me from their destructions, My precious life from the lions.*

The phrase **those who dwell on the earth** is a technical one which refers throughout Revelation to the ungodly.

*Revelation 3:10 (NKJV)*

<sup>10</sup> *Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*

*Revelation 8:13 (NKJV)*

<sup>13</sup> *And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice,*

*"Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"*

*Revelation 11:10 (NKJV)*

*<sup>10</sup> And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.*

*Revelation 13:8 (NKJV)*

*<sup>8</sup> All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

*Revelation 13:12 (NKJV)*

*<sup>12</sup> And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.*

And so on;

As was the case with murdered Abel, the very ground cries out for their **blood** to be required at the hands of their killers.

What we have here is the time of grace nearing its end. No longer do God's people ask God to forgive their enemies.

The time is fast approaching when God will judge His enemies, and the Lord Jesus Christ will take His rightful place as earth's ruler.

But since these martyrs are from the first half of the Tribulation, the "*beginning of birth pangs*," that time is still a little way out.

## THE PROMISE

*Revelation 6:11 (NKJV)*

*<sup>11</sup> Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

Two elements make up God's response to His martyred saints;

A symbolic gift

A spoken word.

The gift that **was given to each of them** by God as they arrived in heaven was a **white robe (stole, a long robe flowing to the feet)**

These long, brilliant white robes were a reward of grace

*Revelation 7:9 (NKJV)*

*<sup>9</sup> After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,*

*Revelation 7:13-17 (NKJV)*

<sup>13</sup> *Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"*

<sup>14</sup> *And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

<sup>15</sup> *Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.*

<sup>16</sup> *They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat;*

<sup>17</sup> *for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

The gift symbolizes God's gift of eternal righteousness, blessedness, dignity, and honor;

*Revelation 3:5 (NKJV)*

<sup>5</sup> *He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.*

They symbolize all the glory that redeemed saints will enjoy in heaven.

These were not actual robes, since what is depicted in this vision is before the resurrection of the bodies of the redeemed, which occurs for Tribulation saints at Christ's return

*Revelation 20:4-6 (NKJV)*

<sup>4</sup> *And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

<sup>5</sup> *But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*

<sup>6</sup> *Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*

Along with this gift came God's spoken word, namely **that they should rest a little while longer**.

That is not a rebuke for impatience, since impatience is a sin and perfected people in heaven do not sin. Rather it is an invitation to stop the cry for vengeance and to continue to enjoy the bliss of heavenly **rest** until God's time for wrath arrives.

The phrase **for a little while longer** indicates that time will not be long delayed.

*John 7:33 (NKJV)*

<sup>33</sup> *Then Jesus said to them, "I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me.*

*John 12:35 (NKJV)*

<sup>35</sup> *Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.*

As indicated earlier this seal is best seen as describing a period in the middle of the seven years of tribulation.

There is a verbal similarity to the phrase in Rev 10:6

*Revelation 10:6 (NKJV)*

*<sup>6</sup> and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer,*

This obviously ends the delay of which God spoke to the martyrs in chapter 6:11.

Some time will clearly elapse between 6:11 and 10:6. God's day of judgment and vengeance is about three and a half years ahead, and will not come **until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.**

God's sovereignly predetermined the exact number of those who would be killed.

The petitioners were told to enjoy heaven's rest until that number had been reached.

*Robert L Thomas notes,*

*The word to the souls under the altar gives them reassurance that God will eventually avenge their blood, but the time for the culmination of that vengeance has not yet arrived. One feature that must yet transpire beforehand is the increase of their number through additional martyrdoms. The earth dwellers under the dawning leadership of the beast from the sea will take an even greater toll of human lives before Christ finally intervenes through His personal arrival back on earth. Until then the already martyred are told to rest and enjoy their state of blessedness already attained. (Revelation 1-7: An Exegetical Commentary [Chicago; Moody, 1992],499)*

**Fellow servants** and **brethren** are two classes of people. The first group was alive and willing to die like the martyrs, though they may not. The second group were those who will be killed.

The world is not too enlightened, humane, civilized educated, or sophisticated to avoid repeating the atrocities of the past.

In fact, the atrocities of the Tribulation will far exceed any that have gone before. With God's supernatural restraint on sin removed and the forces of hell running rampant, the slaughter of that time will be without precedent in human history.

But out of all those dark and evil days will come thousands who sealed their testimony for the Word of God and the lordship of Jesus Christ with their own blood.

And so now we come to the sixth seal, that of fear.