

Revelation 7:9-17 | The Fifth & Sixth Seals

Introduction

With the havoc and devastation of the first four seals unleashed on the earth, the fifth seal turns our attention back to heaven before the Day of the Lord is revealed in the sixth seal.

Verse-By-Verse Notes

Verse 9

- This is temple imagery (altar), and heaven as God's temple is common in Jewish thought (Hab. 2:20; Ps.18:6). The image describes the unjust martyrdom of believers who have been killed for God's word and their witness.
- The word witness is the Greek *martyria* (μαρτυρία) – where we get the word “martyr” from.

Verse 10

- These saints are crying for vengeance. Their cry for vengeance is not a desire for personal revenge, but for righteous vindication – which is a dominant theme all throughout Revelation.
- The prayer “How Long O Lord” is a common appeal from God's people throughout history. See Psalm 119:84

Verse 11

- “Until the number . . . should be complete” Indicates 2 things: 1) God has set a limit to the suffering of believers; and 2) God is sovereign over all suffering. This is a *definite* number of believers determined by divine decree.

Verses 12-14

- The sixth seal shifts back to the earth from the scene in heaven. It is the unveiling of the great Day of the Lord (see verse 17).
- The description is of the earth *convulsing*. There will be massive tectonic activity resulting in global cataclysmic earthquakes.

Verse 15

- Judgment is the great equalizer of all humanity. From kings to slaves, all will attempt to hide from God's judgment.

Verses 16-17

- Note the irony of *the wrath of the Lamb*. A lamb is by nature gentle and non-threatening but *this* Lamb is wrathful.
- Robert Mounce: “From the day when Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of God, the guilty conscience has made people fugitives from God. But now there is no longer a place to hide. God will confront in judgment all those who have rebelled against his sovereign authority.”
- “the great day of their wrath” is the Day of the Lord (see Joel 2:11, 31)

BIG TAKEAWAY: GOD WILL COME IN WRATH TO THIS WORLD AND SET RIGHT EVERY INJUSTICE, SO ANCHOR YOURSELF TO THAT TRUTH WITH YOU ARE WRONGED BY THE WICKED.