

# REVELATION

Who Can Stand?  
(Revelation 6:9~17)

The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> seals contrast the salvation of the repentant and judgment of unbelievers.

Only those who are saved by Christ can stand before God.

Sceptics often set up a dichotomy between the Old Testament and New Testament, claiming God is harsh and judgmental in the Old Testament while being loving and gracious in the New Testament.

God absolutely *could* pour out judgment quickly. He *could* zap us the first time we sin.

But typically, He does not.

# 1. Consider God's mercy to the nations of Canaan.

## A. See God's promise to Abraham.

- ❖ Genesis 15:13-16: Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

# 1. Consider God's mercy to the nations of Canaan.

A. See God's promise to Abraham.

- ❖ God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendants.
- ❖ The Lord gave a timeline: Israel would be oppressed in another land (Egypt) for 400 years before taking over.
- ❖ *Why would there be this delay?*

# 1. Consider God's mercy to the nations of Canaan.

B. Consider the timeline of these events.

- ❖ Genesis 16: Ishmael born when Abraham was 86.
- ❖ Isaac born when Abraham was 100 (14 years later).
- ❖ Jacob born when Isaac was 60.
- ❖ Jacob went to Egypt at 130.
- ❖ Exodus 12:40-41 says Israel was in Egypt for 430 years.
- ❖ After Egypt, 40 years in wilderness.

# 1. Consider God's mercy to the nations of Canaan.

B. Consider the timeline of these events.

❖  $14 + 60 + 130 + 430 + 40 = ???$

❖ In Genesis 15, God already knew He would judge the nations of Canaan. But He showed them mercy for at least **674** more years.



# 1. Consider God's mercy to the nations of Canaan.

C. But did they have a chance to know God?

- ❖ Rahab specifically said the Canaanites knew what God had done in Egypt and to some of Israel's enemies in the wilderness.



## 2. When Christ opens the 5<sup>th</sup> seal, John sees a unique scene in heaven.

- ❖ Revelation 6:9-11: When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

## 2. When Christ opens the 5<sup>th</sup> seal, John sees a unique scene in heaven.

A. This seal points to genuine believers who are martyred during the Tribulation.

- ❖ These martyrs ask when God will judge those still on the earth (implies the martyrs came out of the Tribulation).
- ❖ Revelation 6:11 says more martyrs will come from the Tribulation.
- ❖ Some people will be saved during the Tribulation.

## 2. When Christ opens the 5<sup>th</sup> seal, John sees a unique scene in heaven.

B. These martyrs ask that God would avenge them and judge those who live on the earth.

❖ Much like the imprecatory psalms, they are asking God for vengeance.



## 2. When Christ opens the 5<sup>th</sup> seal, John sees a unique scene in heaven.

C. As we see their request, consider their view of God.

- ❖ What do they call Him in verse 10?
- ❖ “Sovereign Lord” = Despotes (an absolute ruler, whether good or bad)
- ❖ The Lord is absolutely sovereign over the events of the Tribulation.
- ❖ He is also *holy* and *true*.
- ❖ Genesis 18:25: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?

## 2. When Christ opens the 5<sup>th</sup> seal, John sees a unique scene in heaven.

C. As we see their request, consider their view of God.

- ❖ These martyrs have believed in Christ, yet faced persecution and martyrdom.
- ❖ They rightly acknowledge God is sovereign, yet He permitted them to be martyred.
- ❖ They still realize He is holy and true.
- ❖ How do we view God in the midst of difficulty?

## 2. When Christ opens the 5<sup>th</sup> seal, John sees a unique scene in heaven.

D. The Lord gives them an unexpected answer.

❖ Revelation 6:11: Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

## 2. When Christ opens the 5<sup>th</sup> seal, John sees a unique scene in heaven.

D. The Lord gives them an unexpected answer.

- ❖ More martyrs are coming, and there will be a delay before the completion of judgment.
- ❖ This statement is similar to the statement in Genesis that Israel would be oppressed in Egypt because the iniquity of the Amorites wasn't yet full.



## 2. When Christ opens the 5<sup>th</sup> seal, John sees a unique scene in heaven.

D. The Lord gives them an unexpected answer.

- ❖ Despite the delay, the martyrs can rest from the trials and persecutions of earth.
- ❖ They can also rest in the holy and true God who will complete the judgment that He has promised.

In contrast to these martyrs,  
unbelievers who face the  
judgment of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal cannot  
stand before God.

### **3. The opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal brings a terrible worldwide earthquake.**

- ❖ Revelation 6:12-14: When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

### 3. The opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal brings a terrible worldwide earthquake.

- ❖ Announcement of such a terrible earthquake could terrify cities like Philadelphia and Sardis (destroyed in AD 17 by earthquake).
- ❖ Isaiah 54:10: “For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,” says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

### 3. The opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal brings a terrible worldwide earthquake.

A. The physical effects of this earthquake will be widespread and devastating.

- ❖ Shaking of the earth may include volcanic activity.
- ❖ The sun will temporarily be darkened and the moon will appear red.
- ❖ Stars will fall from the sky (likely refers to a meteor shower).
- ❖ Every mountain and island moved.



### 3. The opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal brings a terrible worldwide earthquake.

A. The physical effects of this earthquake will be widespread and devastating.

❖ Revelation 6:14: The sky vanishes like a scroll.

❖ Perhaps this is simply a physical event visible from the earth.

❖ Perhaps the people of earth are given a view of the throne room of God and the Lamb.

### 3. The opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal brings a terrible worldwide earthquake.

#### B. The people of the earth react with terror.

❖ Revelation 6:15-17: Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”



### 3. The opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal brings a terrible worldwide earthquake.

B. The people of the earth react with terror.

- ❖ Every mountain and island are moved, yet people run to the mountains and caves to try to hide.
- ❖ They would rather die than face the wrath and judgment of God, although death would bring eternal judgment and punishment for unbelievers.

### 3. The opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal brings a terrible worldwide earthquake.

B. The people of the earth react with terror.

❖ Their fear is directed toward the One on the throne and the Lamb that we saw in Revelation 4-5.

❖ Perhaps the vanishing of the sky gave them a view of this scene in heaven.

❖ They attribute the natural events to the judgment of God, and they rhetorically ask who can stand before Him.

### 3. The opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal brings a terrible worldwide earthquake.

B. The people of the earth react with terror.

- ❖ They cannot stand before God and fight back against His judgment.
- ❖ Only those who are saved by Christ can stand before God.



The martyrs of the 5<sup>th</sup> seal find that they can rest in a holy and true God while the unbelievers of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal find that they cannot stand before God.

# Conclusion: What do we do with what God has revealed?

- 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11: For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore **encourage one another** and **build one another up**, just as you are doing.

# Conclusion: What do we do with what God has revealed?

- Ecclesiastes 8:11-13: Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil. Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, **yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God**, because they fear before him. But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.

# Conclusion: What do we do with what God has revealed?

- Antipas was martyred in Pergamum, and Smyrna faced coming persecution.
- Revelation 2:10: Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. **Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.**

# NEXT TIME: REVELATION 7:1-12

- The Remnant of  
the Tribulation