

THE BOOK OF REVELATION 39

The Fifth and Sixth Seals

I. Review: Remember that the Book of Revelation contains parallel accounts of heaven and earth during Daniel's 70th Week. Chapter five is a continuation of the story of heaven. In (Rev. 5:1-5 NKJV) we read about the scroll that is sealed with 7 seals.

A. *¹And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ²Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" ³And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. ⁴So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. ⁵But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."*

B. This scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals, contains the foreordained events of Daniel's 70th week.

C. It contains a perfect and complete revelation of the events which will take place during the seven-year Tribulation Period.

D. Jesus is the only one worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals.

E. Remember that Jesus opens these seals in the presence of the church who has been resurrected, raptured, and glorified.

F. The first four seals are the four horsemen of the apocalypse.

III. The fifth seal reveals the Tribulation Martyrs

A. (Rev. 6:9-11 NKJV) *⁹When 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 testimony which they held. ¹⁰And 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?" ¹¹Then 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.*

B. It is important to note that these are martyrs who die during the Tribulation Period, not during the church age. The church age ends with the rapture of the church. The opening of the seals takes place after the rapture of the church. There have been many martyrs during the church age, but by this time

they will have been resurrected and glorified and are standing before the throne of God witnessing Jesus open the seals.

1. **Martyr Stats:** The last century was known as 'The Martyr's Century' because more people lost their lives for their faith in Jesus since 1900 than in all the previous centuries combined. Christians are the most persecuted religious group in the world. During the twentieth century more of them died, as a result of persecutions, than in all of the years from the time of Christ until the 20th century. Persecution means not only discrimination, but slavery, torture and murder. All over the world there are about 200 million followers of Christ suffering today, and it's surprising that there is little talk about it either in the Christian community or the establishment. The average number of Christian martyrs per year worldwide is 163,000.

C. Now the fact that there are Tribulation martyrs is the first internal evidence in the book of Revelation that many will be saved during the Tribulation Period.

D. A great multitude of people will be saved and caught up or raptured to heaven at the midpoint of the Tribulation.

E. Those who are saved in the first half are not as likely to be martyred and those who are saved in the last half of the Tribulation Period.

F. The Tribulation martyrs will be comforted under the altar of God in heaven until their number of their company is completed.

G. At the end of the Tribulation Period, God will avenge their blood at the battle of Armageddon, and then they will be resurrected and reign with Christ. **(Rev. 20:4 NKJV)** *⁴And 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.*

IV. The sixth seal is the tremendous upheaval of nature that takes place at the Second Coming of Christ.

A. **(Rev. 6:12-17 NKJV)** *¹²I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. ¹³And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. ¹⁴Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders,*

the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

B. This event is also described in (Matt. 24:29, 30 NKJV)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."³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

C. Notice that these events occur when Jesus returns in His wrath to conquer and rule the world, not when He appears to receive the church at the rapture.

D. The results of the opening of this 6th seal are reserved for the final day of the tribulation.

V. What should be our response to these realities?

A. (1 Thess. 5:1-11 NKJV)¹ *But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.⁵ You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.⁸ But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.⁹ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.¹¹ Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

B. We should watch and be sober.

C. We should strengthen ourselves in faith, love, and the knowledge of salvation.

D. We should realize that God has not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation.

E. Also, we should commit ourselves to the corporate effort of soul winning and discipleship so that we can bring the knowledge of salvation to as many people as we can before the Lord comes.

F. In light of these realities it would be tragic to neglect these things.