

Revelation Pt 18 The 6th Seal

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Revelation / Revelation 6:12–17

I. Introduction: From the Altar to the Throne

Revelation 6:12–17 ESV

¹² 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, ¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. ¹⁴ The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. ¹⁵ 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, ¹⁶ 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, ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

Bridging From Our Last Study

Last week, we stood at the heavenly altar with the martyred souls who cried out, "How long, O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" We saw God's tender response: white robes of righteousness, the promise of rest, and the assurance that they should wait "a little while longer" until the full number of their fellow servants would join them.

We ended by celebrating the Lamb who makes all these promises possible. Every comfort, every hope, every promise flows from Christ's perfect sacrifice. The souls under the altar found their rest in the Lamb's finished work.

The Question That Demands an Answer

But their cry for justice wasn't ignored. It was scheduled. God doesn't delay justice. He times it perfectly. Today, we witness the beginning of that answer as the sixth seal is opened.

The question that echoes through heaven ("How long until you judge?") is about to be answered in the most dramatic way imaginable.

Transition: From Patience to Power

- **Fifth Seal:** "Wait a little while longer"
- **Sixth Seal:** "The great day of their wrath has come"

The same Lamb who tenderly clothed the martyrs in white robes now reveals Himself as the Judge of all the earth. The same Jesus who wept over Jerusalem now brings cosmic judgment upon a rebellious world.

Key Questions for Today's Study

1. How does God answer the martyrs' cry for justice?
2. What do these cosmic signs teach us about God's character?
3. When faced with divine judgment, where can humanity find refuge?
4. "Who can withstand it?" **The central question of our passage:**

Preview: The Day of Wrath Arrives

In [Revelation 6:12-17](#), we move from the altar of intercession to the throne of judgment. We'll see creation itself convulsing under God's wrath. Every class of humanity (from kings to slaves) desperately seeks to hide from "the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb."

God's patience is not the absence of His wrath, but the delay of it. Today, we see what happens when that patience reaches its appointed end.

II. Context and Connection: The Unfolding Plan

The Seal Judgments Overview

We're now at the sixth of seven seals. Each seal has revealed a different aspect of God's judgment:

- **Seals 1-4:** The Four Horsemen (conquest, war, famine, death)

- **Seal 5:** The martyred souls crying for justice
- **Seal 6:** Cosmic upheaval and terror
- **Seal 7:** (Coming in chapter 8) The trumpet judgments

Notice the progression. The first four seals showed human-caused suffering. The fifth seal revealed the cost of faithfulness. Now the sixth seal shows God Himself acting directly in judgment.

Connection to Jesus' Olivet Discourse

What we're seeing in Revelation 6 isn't random. Jesus already told His disciples this was coming. Let's look at the parallels:

The Sequence Matches Perfectly

False messiahs and deception:

- Olivet Discourse: "Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ'" (Matthew 24:5)
- Revelation 6: First seal - white horse, false conquest

Wars and conflicts:

- Olivet Discourse: "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars" (Matthew 24:6)
- Revelation 6: Second seal - red horse takes peace from earth

Famines and economic collapse:

- Olivet Discourse: "There will be famines" (Matthew 24:7)
- Revelation 6: Third seal - black horse, scarcity of food

Death and persecution:

- Olivet Discourse: "You will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death" (Matthew 24:9)
- Revelation 6: Fourth and fifth seals - death and martyrdom

Cosmic signs:

- Olivet Discourse: "The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky" (Matthew 24:29)

- Revelation 6: Sixth seal - sun, moon, and stars affected

The Timing Connection

Jesus said these cosmic signs would come "immediately after the distress of those days" (Matthew 24:29). The "distress" refers to the tribulation period. The cosmic signs mark the end of that period.

This tells us something important: Revelation 6:12-17 describes events at the very end of the tribulation period, not scattered throughout history.

The Progression: From Human to Divine

Here's the pattern John shows us:

Seals 1-4: Humanity destroys itself through war, famine, and death

Seal 5: God's people cry out for justice

Seal 6: God Himself responds with cosmic judgment

The first five seals show what happens when humans reject God's authority. The sixth seal shows what happens when God reasserts His authority over creation.

Literary Structure: The Great Reversal

Throughout the first five seals, evil seemed to be winning:

- False messiahs deceived many
- Wars raged unchecked
- Famine spread
- Death ruled
- God's people were slaughtered

But the sixth seal changes everything. Now it's the wicked who are terrified. Now it's the powerful who are powerless. Now it's the proud who are hiding.

The tables have turned. The Judge has arrived.

The martyred souls asked, 'How long?' The sixth seal gives them their answer. Let's see exactly how God responds to their cry for justice.

III. Verse-by-Verse Study: Deep Dive

(25 minutes total)

A. Verses 12-14: When Creation Itself Cries Out

Revelation 6:12-14 ESV

¹² 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, ¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. ¹⁴ The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

Verse 12a: "When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold..."

John uses the same pattern he's used for each seal: "I looked, and behold." But this time, what he sees is unlike anything before.

The word "behold" (Greek: *idou*) means "Look! Pay attention! Something significant is happening!" John is telling us to stop and really see what's coming.

Verse 12b: "There was a great earthquake"

The Greek Word:

The word for earthquake is *seismos* (where we get "seismic"). But this isn't just any earthquake. It's a "great" (*megas*) earthquake. The same word describes the voice of God and the power of His works throughout Revelation.

Old Testament Background:

Earthquakes often signal God's direct intervention:

- **Exodus 19:18:** "Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly."
- **1 Kings 19:11:** "And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake."

This earthquake isn't caused by shifting tectonic plates. It's caused by God Himself shaking the foundations of creation.

Verse 12c: "And the sun became black as sackcloth"

The Image of Sackcloth:

Sackcloth was rough, dark cloth made from goat's hair. People wore it during mourning and repentance. When John says the sun became "black as sackcloth," he's saying the sun itself is mourning.

Hebrew Language Connection:

The Hebrew word for sackcloth (*saq*) appears over 40 times in the Old Testament, always connected to grief, judgment, or repentance.

Old Testament Parallels:

- **Joel 2:31**: "The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes."
- **Isaiah 13:10**: "For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light."
- **Amos 8:9**: "And on that day," declares the Lord God, "I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight."

This isn't a solar eclipse. Eclipses pass quickly. This is the sun itself refusing to shine, as if creation is joining in mourning over human rebellion.

Verse 12d: "The full moon became like blood"

The Specificity of "Full Moon":

John doesn't just say "the moon." He says "the full moon" (Greek: *selene holos*). A full moon should be at its brightest, most glorious state. Instead, it looks like blood.

The Symbolism of Blood:

Blood represents life poured out, violence, and death. When the moon appears as blood, it's as if all of creation is crying out about the violence and bloodshed that humanity has caused.

Joel's Prophecy Fulfilled:

Joel 2:31 predicted this exact sign: "The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes." What Joel saw in vision, John now sees in reality.

Verse 13: "And the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale"

The Star-Fig Comparison:

This is one of the most vivid comparisons in Revelation. Picture a fig tree in winter, holding onto its last dried fruit. When a powerful wind shakes the tree, those figs fall all at once.

The Greek Word for "Fell":

The word *pipto* means "to fall" but can also mean "to collapse" or "to lose power." This suggests the stars aren't just falling down. They're losing their position and authority in the heavens.

Isaiah's Prophecy:

- **Isaiah 34:4:** "All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree."

Isaiah used nearly identical language 700 years before John's vision. God's Word is consistent across centuries.

What Are These "Stars"?

Three possibilities:

1. **Literal stars:** Actual celestial bodies falling (though this would destroy the earth instantly)
2. **Meteors:** A massive meteor shower unlike any ever seen
3. **Symbolic:** Representing the collapse of earthly powers and authorities OR perhaps a collapse of spiritual powers

Verse 14a: "The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up"

The Scroll Image:

In John's day, books were written on long scrolls. When you finished reading, you rolled the scroll up and it disappeared from view. John says the entire sky does this. It simply vanishes.

The Greek Word "Vanished":

The word *apochoridzo* means "to separate" or "to depart." The sky doesn't just disappear. It separates itself and departs, as if it's fleeing from what's happening.

Isaiah's Parallel:

- **Isaiah 34:4:** "All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll."

Again, we see John's vision perfectly matching Isaiah's ancient prophecy.

Verse 14b: "And every mountain and island was removed from its place"

The Finality of "Every":

John doesn't say "some mountains" or "many islands." He says "every" (*pas* in Greek). This is complete geographical upheaval.

The Word "Removed":

The Greek word *kineo* means "to move" or "to shake." It's the same root word used for the earthquake in verse 12. All the stable, permanent things that people trust in are being shaken loose.

Old Testament Background:

- **Nahum 1:5**: "The mountains quake before him; the hills melt; the earth heaves before him, the world and all who dwell in it."
- **Habakkuk 3:6**: "He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered; the everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways."

What This Means:

Mountains and islands represent the most permanent, unchanging features of earth. When these move, it signals that nothing created can stand before the Creator's judgment.

The Big Picture of Verses 12-14: When God Speaks, Creation Listens

What John describes isn't just extraordinary weather or unusual natural phenomena. This is the complete breakdown of the natural order that God established in Genesis. Let's see how total this breakdown really is.

The Undoing of Creation Week

Notice how these judgments reverse God's original creative acts:

Genesis 1:3-4: "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. And God saw that the light was good."

- **Revelation 6:12**: The sun becomes black as sackcloth. The light that God called "good" is withdrawn.

Genesis 1:14-16: "And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars."

- **Revelation 6:12-13:** The sun fails, the moon turns to blood, the stars fall. God's "great lights" stop ruling.

Genesis 1:6-8: "And God said, 'Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters... And God called the expanse Heaven.'"

- **Revelation 6:14:** The sky vanishes like a scroll. The "expanse" that God named disappears.

Genesis 1:9-10: "And God said, 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear... And God called the dry land Earth.'"

- **Revelation 6:14:** Every mountain and island is moved. The "dry land" that God established becomes unstable.

This isn't coincidence. When humanity finally rejects God completely, God begins to withdraw the very framework of creation that makes life possible.

The Response of Inanimate Creation

Here's something remarkable: the sun, moon, stars, sky, mountains, and islands all respond instantly to God's judgment. They don't resist or delay. They immediately obey their Creator's voice.

Romans 8:19-22 ESV

¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

Creation has been "groaning" under the curse of human sin. When God's judgment comes, creation doesn't resist. It participates. Finally, the curse can be broken.

Think about this: The sun that has faithfully risen every day for thousands of years suddenly refuses to shine. The moon that has marked time since creation turns blood red. The stars that have guided sailors and marked seasons fall from their positions. The sky that has sheltered earth simply rolls up and leaves.

Why? Because creation recognizes its Creator's voice and chooses to obey Him rather than continue enabling human rebellion.

The Irony of Human Trust

For thousands of years, humans have put their confidence in the "permanent" things:

- Mountains (symbolizing strength and endurance)
- Islands (symbolizing security and separation from trouble)
- The sun (representing reliability and life)
- The stars (representing guidance and constancy)

People say things like:

- "As sure as the sun rises"
- "Solid as a rock"
- "Immovable as a mountain"
- "Written in the stars"

But in Revelation 6:12-14, every single thing that humans consider permanent proves to be temporary. Every source of natural confidence fails at once.

Psalm 46:2-3 ESV

² Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, ³ though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. *Selah*

The psalmist wrote this as a hypothetical. John sees it as reality. When the most stable things become unstable, where can anyone turn for security?

The Completeness of the Collapse

Notice how comprehensive this judgment is:

Vertically: From the stars above to the earth below, nothing is untouched

Horizontally: Every mountain, every island—no geographical area is exempt

Temporally: All at once, not gradually over time

Universally: No exceptions, no safe zones, no neutral ground

The word "every" appears twice in verse 14. In Greek, this is *pas*, meaning "all," "each," "every single one without exception." John isn't describing partial disruption. He's describing total system failure.

Creation's Testimony About Its Creator

When creation responds this way to God's voice, it's giving testimony about who He really is:

His Absolute Authority: If the sun obeys Him, who are we to disobey?

His Creative Power: The One who made these things can unmake them

His Justice: Creation itself recognizes that judgment is appropriate

His Holiness: Even inanimate objects cannot bear His presence in judgment

Habakkuk 3:3-11 describes a similar scene:

Habakkuk 3:3-11 ESV

³ God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. *Selah* His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. ⁴ His brightness was like the light; rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power. ⁵ Before him went pestilence, and plague followed at his heels. ⁶ He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered; the everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways. ⁷ I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. ⁸ Was your wrath against the rivers, O LORD? Was your anger against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea, when you rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation? ⁹ You stripped the sheath from your bow, calling for many arrows. *Selah* You split the earth with rivers. ¹⁰ The mountains saw you and writhed; the raging waters swept on; the deep gave forth its voice; it lifted its hands on high. ¹¹ The sun and moon stood still in their place at the light of your arrows as they sped, at the flash of your glittering spear.

When God appears in judgment, creation recognizes its Master and responds appropriately.

The Message to Humanity

These cosmic signs send a clear message to every person on earth:

"If the sun, moon, and stars obey the Creator's voice, what makes you think you can continue in rebellion? If mountains and islands move at His command, how will you stand against Him? If creation itself flees from His wrath, where will you hide?"

This isn't God being cruel. This is God being clear. He's removing every excuse, every false confidence, every imagined refuge. When the judgment is this obvious, no one can claim they didn't know it was from God.

Matthew 24:30 ESV

³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, 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.

The cosmic signs aren't random disasters. They're the announcement that the Son of Man is coming in judgment.

The Heart of the Matter

Verses 12-14 answer the martyred souls' cry of "How long?" with action that cannot be ignored or explained away. God isn't just allowing consequences anymore. He's actively intervening.

The same Jesus who gently called little children to come to Him is the same Jesus who causes the sun to go dark and the mountains to move. The Lamb who died to save sinners is the same Lamb whose wrath shakes creation itself.

This should cause us to fall on our faces in worship and drive us to warn others while there's still time. If creation itself cannot stand neutral when God acts in judgment, how much more should we make sure we're standing on the right side of His justice?

The question these verses force on every reader is this: If God's own creation obeys Him instantly and completely, what about you?

The Central Message:

When God decides to act in judgment, nothing in creation can remain neutral. Everything responds to its Creator's voice.

But how do human beings respond when they see creation itself coming apart? That's what we'll discover in verses 15-17.

B. Verses 15-17: When Terror Becomes Universal

Revelation 6:15–17 ESV

¹⁵ 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,¹⁶ 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,¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

Verse 15: The Great Leveling

"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"

The Complete Catalog of Humanity:

John lists seven categories of people in order of worldly importance:

1. **Kings** (Greek: *basileis*) - Political rulers
2. **Great ones** (Greek: *megistanes*) - High nobles, aristocrats
3. **Generals** (Greek: *chiliarchoi*) - Military commanders (literally "commanders of thousands")
4. **Rich** (Greek: *plousioi*) - The wealthy class
5. **Powerful** (Greek: *ischyroi*) - Those with strength/influence
6. **Everyone** (Greek: *pas*) - Every other person
7. **Slave and free** - The lowest and the liberated

Notice the progression: John starts with the most powerful and works down to include absolutely everyone. No social class, no economic level, no political position provides exemption from God's judgment.

The Irony of Power:

The very people who thought they controlled the world are now powerless. Kings who commanded armies now cower in caves. Generals who planned battles now flee in terror. The wealthy who bought their way out of every problem can't purchase protection from God's wrath.

The Greek Word "Hid":

The word *krupto* means "to conceal" or "to keep secret." These aren't people casually seeking shelter. They're desperately trying to make themselves invisible.

Old Testament Parallel:

Isaiah 2:10, 19-21 (ESV): *"Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from before the terror of the Lord, and from the splendor of his majesty... And people shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. In that day mankind will cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats, to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth."*

Isaiah wrote this 700 years before John's vision, describing the exact same response to God's judgment.

Verse 16a: The Impossible Prayer

"Calling 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!'"

The Desperate Appeal:

These people are literally praying to rocks. They're asking inanimate objects to save them from their Creator. This shows how completely their terror has overwhelmed their reason.

What They're Asking For:

They want to be crushed to death by falling rocks rather than face God's judgment. Physical death seems preferable to spiritual accountability.

Old Testament Background:**Hosea 10:8 ESV**

⁸ The high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed. Thorn and thistle shall grow up on their altars, and they shall say to the mountains, "Cover us," and to the hills, "Fall on us."

Luke's Gospel Connection:**Luke 23:30 ESV**

³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.'

Jesus predicted this exact response during His earthly ministry, showing that God's plan of judgment has been consistent throughout Scripture.

Verse 16b: The Two-Fold Terror

"Hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

Two Sources of Terror:

1. **The face of him who sits on the throne** - God the Father
2. **The wrath of the Lamb** - Jesus Christ

The Face of God:

Throughout Scripture, seeing God's face is either the greatest blessing (for the righteous) or the greatest terror (for the wicked).

Psalms 67:1 ESV

¹ May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, *Selah*

But for the unrepentant:

Psalms 34:16 ESV

¹⁶ The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

The same face that shines with blessing on His children burns with judgment on His enemies.

The Wrath of the Lamb:

This phrase appears nowhere else in Scripture. It's John's unique contribution to our understanding of Jesus.

The Shocking Paradox:

- Lambs are gentle, innocent, sacrificial
- Wrath is fierce, powerful, judicial

The same Jesus who was led like a lamb to the slaughter ([Isaiah 53:7](#)) is now the Lamb who brings divine wrath. The One who died for sinners is the One who judges sin.

Greek Word Study - "Wrath":

The word *orge* doesn't mean explosive anger or loss of control. It means settled, determined, righteous anger against evil. This is holy wrath - pure justice without mercy for those who have rejected mercy.

Verse 17: The Final Question

"For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

"The Great Day":

The definite article "the" is important. This isn't just any day of judgment. This is "THE" day that all the prophets spoke about.

Old Testament Parallels:

- **Joel 2:11:** *"The day of the Lord is great and very awesome; who can endure it?"*
- **Malachi 3:2:** *"But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?"*
- **Nahum 1:6:** *"Who can stand before his indignation? Who can endure the heat of his anger?"*

"Their Wrath":

Notice the plural. This is the wrath of both the Father and the Son. The entire Trinity is involved in this judgment (the Holy Spirit's role becomes clear in later chapters).

"Who Can Stand?"

This is the central question of our entire passage. In Greek, it's *tis dynamai histemi* - literally "Who is able to stand firm?"

The Expected Answer:

The question expects the answer "No one." In the context of verses 15-16, that seems right. Everyone is hiding, everyone is terrified, everyone wants to die rather than face God's wrath.

But Is There an Answer?

Interestingly, Revelation 7 (the very next chapter) answers this question. It shows us exactly who CAN stand: those who have been sealed by God and washed in the blood of the Lamb.

The question "Who can stand?" isn't rhetorical. It has an answer. But the answer isn't based on human strength, position, or goodness. It's based entirely on God's grace.

The Progression of Human Response

Notice the progression in these verses:

Recognition: They know exactly who is judging them ("him who sits on the throne" and "the Lamb")

Desperation: They prefer death to facing God

Hopelessness: They can't conceive of anyone surviving this judgment

These aren't atheists who don't believe in God. These are people who know exactly who God is but have chosen rebellion over repentance.

Romans 1:18–20 ESV

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Their terror proves they've always known the truth about God. They've simply suppressed it until it's too late to matter.

The Ultimate Irony

The people in this passage demonstrate the ultimate irony of human rebellion:

They recognize God's authority (they know who's judging them)

They acknowledge His power (they know they can't resist Him)

They understand His justice (they call it "the great day of their wrath")

But instead of repenting, they choose death. Instead of calling on God for mercy, they call on rocks for destruction. Instead of seeking the One who can save them, they seek the things that will crush them.

This reveals that the problem with human rebellion isn't ignorance. It's willful rejection of God's authority even when that rejection leads to destruction.

IV. Conclusion: The Lamb Who Judges and Saves

Pulling It All Together

Today we've witnessed one of the most dramatic scenes in all of Scripture. We've seen creation itself convulsing under God's judgment. We've watched the most powerful people on earth reduced to cowering in caves. We've heard the terrifying question that echoes through eternity: "Who can stand?"

But let's step back and see what this passage really teaches us.

The Martyrs' Prayer is Answered

Remember where we started. Last week, we heard the souls under the altar crying out, "How long, O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" They were told to wait "a little while longer."

Today, we see that wait is over. The sixth seal is God's thunderous answer to their prayer. Justice isn't delayed. It's perfectly timed. And when it comes, no one can mistake it for anything but the direct intervention of Almighty God.

Creation Knows Its Master

The sun doesn't argue when God tells it to go dark. The stars don't resist when He commands them to fall. Mountains move at His word. The sky vanishes at His voice.

If inanimate creation obeys God instantly and completely, what does that say about our rebellion? If rocks and mountains recognize their Creator's authority, how can we continue to resist Him?

The cosmos declares what many humans refuse to admit: God is sovereign, and He will not be mocked forever.

No Earthly Refuge Remains

Every source of human confidence fails in this passage:

- Political power (kings hide in caves)
- Military might (generals flee in terror)
- Economic security (the rich are helpless)
- Physical strength (the powerful are powerless)
- Social status (slave and free suffer equally)

The things people trust in prove to be worthless when God acts in judgment. The "permanent" features of creation (sun, moon, stars, mountains) prove to be temporary. Only God endures forever.

The Heart of the Matter: Jesus Christ

But here's what we must not miss: at the center of this terrifying scene stands a figure that should give us pause. They flee from "the wrath of the Lamb."

The Lamb. Not a roaring lion. Not a conquering warrior. The Lamb.

The same Jesus who was led like a lamb to the slaughter for our sins is the same Jesus who will judge sin. The hands that were pierced for our transgressions are the hands that will hold the scales of justice. The heart that broke with love for lost humanity is the heart that burns with righteous anger against evil.

This isn't two different people. This is one glorious Savior who is both perfectly merciful and perfectly just.

The Answer to "Who Can Stand?"

The people in our passage ask the right question: "Who can stand?" But they never consider the right answer.

The answer isn't found in human strength, political power, or wealth. The answer is found in the same Lamb whose wrath they're fleeing from.

2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV

²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The only people who can stand in the day of God's wrath are those who are wearing Christ's righteousness instead of their own goodness. The only shelter from the Lamb's wrath is the Lamb's blood.

What makes this scene so tragic isn't that these people are suffering. It's that they're suffering unnecessarily. The same Lamb they're fleeing from is the same Lamb who died to save them.

The Glory of Christ's Character

This passage reveals Jesus in His fullness:

His Justice: He will not allow evil to go unpunished forever

His Holiness: Even creation cannot bear His presence in judgment

His Sovereignty: All of creation responds to His voice

His Mercy: He delayed this judgment for centuries, giving time for repentance

The same character that makes Him a terrifying judge makes Him a wonderful Savior. His justice guarantees that He'll punish sin. His love guarantees that He already has - on the cross.

A Preview of Hope

The question "Who can stand?" hangs in the air as chapter 6 closes. It seems like the answer is "No one."

But next week, as we open chapter 7, we're going to discover that God has an answer. We're going to see a great multitude that no one can number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. We're going to hear them singing songs of salvation and victory.

How? Not because they're stronger than the people in chapter 6. But because they're covered by the blood of the Lamb who judges. They've found their refuge not in caves and rocks, but in the One who created the caves and rocks.

Our Response Today

If you've never trusted in Christ, this passage should drive you to Him immediately. Don't wait for a more convenient time. Don't assume you have years to decide. The same God who shakes creation will one day shake your life, and on that day, you'll want to be found in Christ.

If you are a believer, this passage should fill you with both humility and confidence. Humility, because it shows you what you deserved. Confidence, because it shows you what Christ saved you from.

And for all of us, it should motivate us to live with urgent love for those around us. The people we work with, the family members who don't know Christ, the neighbors who seem so confident in their own strength - they all need to hear about the Lamb who saves from the wrath that's coming.

The Final Word

The sixth seal teaches us that God's patience has limits. His mercy endures forever for those who receive it, but His justice will ultimately triumph for those who reject it.

The great day of wrath is coming. The question isn't whether you'll face judgment. The question is whether you'll face it covered by the Lamb's blood or exposed in your own righteousness.

Today, while it's still called "today," while the offer of mercy still stands, while the Lamb is still saving rather than judging - come to Him. Find your refuge not in caves and rocks, but in the wounded hands that bear the scars of your salvation.

The same Lamb who will terrify His enemies longs to embrace His children. The choice is yours.