



**Martyrdom and the Big Shake
It is all Going Per God's Plan...He IS in Control
Revelation 6:9-17**

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Why is it we simply cannot stress enough, how important it is to come to Christ now and not wait until after the rapture of the church?

Well, the first point is simple, none of us knows if we have a tomorrow.

But since we all tend to believe we are bullet proof and invisible, why?



Those who become believers after the rapture has taken place are so out of place for the rest of the unbelieving earth dwellers, that there will be a false religious system arising after the rapture that will systematically hunt down and ritually slaughter all believers they find.

We already know this to be the case because of the second seal judgment. The second seal being opened which effectively ends the false peace of the antichrist replacing it with war, murder but as we determined from the language used here, systematic slaughter, and military rule.

We have seen the unreal number of dead resulting from the judgements being poured out on the earth dwellers referenced in the first four seals. But what about the Tribulation saints? Now we find out about those who were left behind and have trusted in Christ after He came and removed the church. These are Tribulation believers.

Revelation 6:9–11

“When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been killed because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who live on the earth?” And a white robe was given to each of them; and they were told that they were to rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers and sisters who were to be killed even as they had been, was completed also.” (NASB 2020)

A quick note here for us. The first four seals were judgement on the earth dwellers. The seals are all about judgement on an unbelieving planet. The fifth seal is not martyrdom for Tribulation believers. Many do take it as that, but what is the impact on the unbelieving world?

We will see it is the very specific promise made by the Lord to those who have already perished at the hands of the earth dwellers because of their prayer here.

Consider this as a warning for the earth dwellers that their time is rapidly ending. God will indeed avenge those they have murdered. That makes sense too as we will look at the sixth seal in a bit.

We need to remember this as well, the seal judgements are sequential, but we do not know if they begin before the or after the antichrist signs a deal with Israel for 7 years. Again, the context leads me to believe they start off after the rapture but prior to the revealing of the antichrist. It could be the 7-year deal is signed because of the first seal; we are not told.

These are those who, since the same word for ritual slaughter is used here as in the second seal, have been ritually killed because of their faith in Christ.

Unlike the previous four times, as the seal was broken there was a command to come and out comes a horse and rider representing for us what was taking place on earth. Now we are shown a scene in heaven, and it strikes us as a bit of a shock because we now realize that we are in the Temple in heaven.

This is not simply a large auditorium, but it is much more.

How do we know that there is a Temple in heaven. Is what was done here on earth simply a copy of true reality in the unseen realm?

Isaiah makes a rather definitive statement.



Isaiah 6:1–3

“In the year that King Uzziah died **I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.** Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”” (ESV)

Isaiah was in the same room that we now see the events John is relating to us taking place. Yes, there is a Temple in heaven. Moses was shown it as part of the plans for the Tabernacle.

Exodus 26:30

“Then you shall erect the tabernacle according to the plan for it that you were shown on the mountain.” (ESV)

Hebrews 8:4–5

“Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, **he was instructed by God, saying, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.”**” (ESV)

In other words, the Tabernacle and the Temple were based on the original that is in heaven.

Got it, but we see that “underneath the altar the souls of those who had been killed because of the word of God.”

Many point at that and use it as a basis to deny the pretribulational rapture of the church. But we already know the church is in heaven as represented by the 24 elders. All the church, past and present was met by Jesus as He fulfilled His promise to take us to be with Him prior to the beginning of the Tribulation.

These are not OT saints either as they have not yet been resurrected.

The altar in Revelation is always in the heavenly temple.

Why are the souls seen under the altar. Ah, once again we are being challenged to think like a Jew. This comes from the sacrificial system.

Leviticus 4:5–7

“The anointed priest will then take some of the bull’s blood and bring it into the tent of meeting. The priest is to dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of it seven times before the LORD in front of the curtain of the sanctuary. The priest is to apply some of the blood to the horns of the altar of fragrant incense that is before the LORD in the tent of meeting. **He must pour out the rest of the bull’s blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering that is at the entrance to the tent of meeting.**” (CSB)

These souls of those who have been martyred during the Tribulation being seen under the altar emphasizes that their life blood was poured out as an offering to God. This comes from what we just saw in Leviticus. Because of the rapture, this cannot be the church.

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17

“For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel’s voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.” (CSB)



What John sees are the souls of those who have been murdered, post rapture. These are those who, per the second seal, have been ritually slaughtered by the false church. He reuses the same Greek word. It also tells us the size of the “revival,” all the salvations being experienced around the planet even though the church has already been removed.

We have not yet arrived at the sealing and setting apart of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, but also remember, during the worship service we were in earlier here in heaven, what we were told that took place.

Revelation 5:13

“And I heard every created thing which is in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, or on the sea, and all the things in them, saying, “To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be the blessing, the honor, the glory, and the dominion forever and ever.”” (NASB 2020)

Hearing your dog or cat give honor and praise and glory to the Lamb would indeed have an impact. Finding yourself dropping to your knees, and doing the same, while all around you at work are doing the same, that will indeed make an impact. Not all will come to Him as a result, but there will indeed be those who do.

Since the rapture of the church, and during the time covered by the first four seal judgements, there have been salvations taking place here on the planet. How many we do not know, but most are suffering the same fate, martyrdom, because of their faith in Christ.

“Removal of believers from the world at the rapture will not remove the Scriptures, and multitudes will no doubt be constrained to read the Bible in those days...With the sudden disappearance of the Christians...and the great catastrophes coming on the earth, great numbers of people will acknowledge that there really is a God and Creator who has finally come to judge and cleanse the world He created. Thus, multitudes will turn to their Creator and Savior in those days, and will be willing to give their testimony for the Word of God and even to give their lives as they seek to persuade the world that the calamities it is suffering are judgments from the Lord.” (Morris 1983, 119)

These have been slain solely because they are believers.

Revelation 6:10–11

“and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, **“How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who live on the earth?”** And a white robe was given to each of them; and they were told that they were to rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers and sisters who were to be killed even as they had been, was completed also.” (NASB 2020)

This sounds like the church today, how much longer Lord. But this is different, they are looking for justice from those who still live on the earth. Isaiah referenced this as well.

Now wait a minute, if the antichrist has been revealed, then they would know how long. Why are they asking the question? Because it is possible, even at this point, that he still has not been revealed.

We are talking about post-rapture, interim before the official start of the Tribulation, saints. So, these post rapture pretribulation martyrs are asking how long, if the beast had been revealed, they would know, but they do not know so they ask. The answer could have been 7 years, or 3 ½ years, but it is not. This implies there is still some time to pass prior to the beginning of the Tribulation period or Daniel’s final week of years.



They are asking for judgement on those who caused their blood to be shed, those who killed them in a ritualistic slaughtering manner. That moment is coming, but it is later in Revelation. We are not told the time period simply because at this point, we do not have a need to know, and from an OPSEC/COMSEC perspective, the enemy does not need to know either. Remember, spiritual warfare is real and ongoing. Some things in the Bible are intentionally kept vague to throw the enemy off. Consider it a form of jamming.

Are there two separate sessions of persecution during the post-rapture period? Possible.

Isaiah 26:21

“For the LORD comes out from his place to punish **the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will disclose the blood shed on it and will no longer cover its slain.**” (NRSVue)

Their killers are still living and operating on the earth. They know that God is in the operation of judging the planet and they want to know how much longer before those responsible for their deaths are dealt with. “It was not so much impatience that their blood was not avenged, as their perplexity about the hesitation which seemed to retard the ongoing of what they knew had commenced.” (Seiss 1901, 368)

Just as when we ask the Lord how much longer, we are not doubting He will take care in His time, these Tribulation saints are asking the same question. It is a question of trusting concern. We know they are saints because of the clothes they are wearing, white robes.

God tells them that there are more yet to join them. For those who are still living at this point of the Tribulation, that is not a lot of encouragement. But it does tell us that some of those who were involved in the murders, may also come to Christ as well.

When He tells those under the altar to wait until their brothers and sisters to be killed were added to the number, He uses a different word for killed. See, the first group was ritually slaughtered implying that there is a religious motivation for the murders.

ἀποκτείνω – apokteino - to deprive of life, kill, of bodily life. (Arndt, et al. 2000, 114)

Before it was a religious duty, but of those in the future, now it is a community duty to kill believers. This points to all out warfare against anyone who comes to Jesus. And John reports that it is in the same manner as those who are already under the altar. Think Revelation 20:4.

Even though we are in the middle of judgement, we still see God wanting to save.

That is the reason why, in response to our question of how much longer, He tells us to wait.

2 Peter 3:8–9

“But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. **The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.**” (NRSVue)

If you don't know Jesus, today can be the first day of an entirely new life.

Incredibly soon now, the waiting will end.

Also, by telling us to wait, it shows us that God is indeed in complete control and command of all that is going on. Not only today, but also during the Tribulation.



We may look at all going on today and ask how much longer of the Lord because we believe everything is falling apart, but for Him, it is all falling into His plan. He is in control and has never not been in control.

But for the earth dwellers, after the impact of the first four seals, they are terrified. We now are allowed to see that terror enhanced with the sixth seal, a response to the prayers. Direct intervention.

Revelation 6:12–17

“And I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became as black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the eminent people, and the commanders and the wealthy and the strong, and every slave and free person hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the sight of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of Their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”” (NASB 2020)

Up to this point there has been false peace but a consolidation of power globally. There has been global war, the advent of military government and religious based persecution and slaughter of Tribulation believers. There has been the death of over 1.4 billion people here on the earth as well as a rather severe destruction of the ecology of the planet. This may include a change in the degree of tilt in the earth, a loss of the ozone layer and more.

Some of this may also be in an answer to the question asked in verse 10, “how long...”

I tend to include the interlude which we will talk more about next time. Just tuck that into the back of your minds.

Events:

- Earthquakes, sun turning black, moon turning blood red, stars falling from the sky to earth, sky rolling up like a scroll, mountains and islands being moved.

We have already pointed out that this is spiritual warfare that is now also impacting the physical universe. We will see that happen multiple times in this book.

My view here is this is history written in advance. We are reading, and the language is very consistent with the prophets, what the day of the Lord looks like.

John witnesses the Lamb, Jesus Christ, break the 6th seal. It is then various events begin to take place. John lived in Asia Minor and was very familiar with earthquakes and what the outcome of one was. First, he says there is a great earthquake. This is not a single location epicenter quake. This quake is global. Universal.

The Greek word here is seismos from seiō which means “to shake, agitate, cause to quake.” Our word seismology comes from this Greek word. “Great” is megas and means “large, great.” It is used of (a) an extension in space in all directions, as to length, numbers, or size, and (b) figuratively of measure, intensity, quantity, of natural phenomenon (strong, severe, intense), and of rank or importance. This will be the most severe, intense, shaking which the world or universe has ever known—one reaching out in all directions so that the whole universe is shaken like a rag doll. (Keathley III 2002, Re 6:12)

Every fault line everywhere on the planet moves all at the same time. This will result in tsunami’s globally, multiple volcanoes becoming active, and this all happens at the same time. Most coastal cities around the



planet wind up being inundated. That makes the warning Jesus gave of earthquakes in various places and increasing in frequency exactly that, a warning of coming events.

At the same time this takes place, not scheduled per orbital mechanics, we also have, at the same time of the quakes, a full eclipse of the sun and the moon. And visible from all vantage points too. The heavens are also being shaken.

But then again, this might not be a lunar and solar eclipse both at the same time, it could also be the results of the debris being lifted into the atmosphere from the earthquakes, volcanic activity, tsunamis and multiple asteroids crashing into the planet all at once.

This is God catching the attention of an unbelieving world now being shaken back and forth and thrown into turmoil of astronomical events never before seen since the flood. Oh, and while all of this is going on, at the same time, there are now multiple fireballs in the sky, everywhere all at once. In order to catch the volume of fireballs, John tells us it is no different than a fig tree losing figs in a wind. A strong enough wind will knock every fig out of a tree in a moment. So, now, it appears that every meteor falls to earth all at the same time.

Or is this something more? Remember, there is indeed a spiritual war going on.

We are told in Revelation 12:7-9 that as the result of ongoing warfare in the heavenlies, while all of this going on, on the planet, Satan and all of his fallen followers are once and for all, kicked out of the heavenlies to earth and restricted to the planet.

Revelation 12:7-9

“And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they did not prevail, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.” (NASB 2020)

We see all the heavenly host referred to as “morning stars” in Job 38:7, that makes this a possibility as well. We are not told here that what is being witnessed are the events of Revelation 12, but it is something to tuck back in our minds. So, what is this?

All of the fallen ones being cast down to earth all at once? Possible. Meteors? Possible, it could also be multiple re-entering nuclear warheads too. We just read in the text “stars of the sky fell to earth.”

Then that is followed up with another astronomical event from the shaking combined with the results of all the global tectonic activity.

Revelation 6:14

“The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.” (NASB 2020)

The sky seems to be unfolding, just like Isaiah said it would.

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.” (ESV)



Does it mean that for a short time, a visible wormhole, a portal, appears over the planet providing a view into heaven?

Could this be connected to the casting out of Revelation 12?

There are a number of reasons for preferring to take this passage in its literal meaning. While this is not the final breakup of the world as described later in Revelation, when a further period of terrible judgments will be poured on the world, it does seem to indicate that beginning with the sixth seal God is undertaking a direct intervention into human affairs. The judgments of war, famine, and death, and the martyrdom of the saints have largely originated in human decision and in the evil heart of man. The judgment described here, however, originates in God as a divine punishment inflicted upon a blasphemous world. (Walvoord 2008, 136)

There is also the possibility that what is being described as the heavens being like a scroll is connected to all the events which have taken place immediately prior to this. Massive global earthquakes connected with meteors and asteroids impacting the planet at the same time, when you consider the mountains and islands being removed, something else could be happening as well. Large sections of the crust of the planet are no longer stable and in place and they begin to "float" from the instability. Dr. Henry Morris postulates:

"The other possibility is that... great segments of it will actually begin to slip and slide over the earth's deep plastic mantle. Geophysicists for many years have been fascinated with the idea of "continental drift" (although strong evidence has been accumulating against any such phenomenon occurring in the present age). Several have published theories of a past naturalistic catastrophism involving what they call "the earth's shifting crust." Some such phenomenon may actually be triggered under this judgment of the sixth seal, dwarfing the damage occasioned by all the mighty earthquakes of the past. Those who reside in regions above such shifting crustal plates will observe the heavens appearing to move in the opposite direction, and it will seem as if they are being "rolled up." (Morris 1983, 123)

We do know that every mountain and island are moved from their places due to continental crust slippage connected with the tectonic activity as well as the orbital bombardment.

All of this is the kickoff. This is the result of God's direct intervention in response to the prayer we read in the 5th seal from those who had been martyred. There is still much more to come.

For those who do not know the Lord, the earth dwellers, how do they react to all of this? Do they repent?

No.

The entire planet may have just seen the throne room of heaven if this was a portal opening. The response is the same as the Kings hiding from Joshua.

Revelation 6:15–17

"Then the kings of the earth and the eminent people, and the commanders and the wealthy and the strong, and every slave and free person hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the sight of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of Their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (NASB 2020)

No one is missed in this. And notice the special emphasis on the elites. Everyone responds the same way, bunkers, caves become high value.



What everyone had accepted as normal day to day natural functions of the planet, had all just been turned upside down. I struggle to find the wisdom of hiding in a cave during an earthquake, but what do you do when rocks are also falling out of the sky at supersonic speeds?

We are given a view of reality for those who do not know the Lord. Nothing has changed since Genesis 3; man, still is trying to hide from God and does not want to face their creator face to face. We will see here in Revelation though, that everyone will indeed face their creator. We all have the opportunity to decide under what conditions. As our Savior, or as our judge.

This is direct supernatural intervention, and everyone knows it. It is the violent collapse of fallen creation. God is beginning the process of terraforming the planet for the coming Millennium.

Will some come to Christ because of this? Probably. For most of the earth dwellers though, this is far more basic, they will not repent. What they dread, more than death, is the sight of God on the throne, which they may have just been provided and he wrath of the Lamb. This term shows up a lot in Revelation. It is a technical term for temporal punishment on an unbelieving planet.

Those who have moved to hiding from God identify clearly what is happening to them the “great day of Their wrath.” They are indeed correct. Many take this as the midpoint of the Tribulation period, it might be but we are not told that.

We currently live under grace. “Today God is not attempting to bring divine judgment to bear upon sin. Though there may be some forms of immediate retribution, for the most part God is not settling accounts now. Neither the righteous are rewarded nor the wicked judged in a final sense today.” (Walvoord 2008, 138)

That creates a false sense of security for those who do not know Jesus. What we are seeing here in Revelation is a change, it is no longer a time of grace. Clearly, those who are witnesses to what takes place with the 6th seal know they are now in that time period identified by the prophets as the Day of the Lord.

Where they are in the timeline means turning to Christ would virtually guarantee martyrdom. The time to make certain you are not here when this takes place is now.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)



ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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