

TEXT - Revelation 6:9-17

REVIEW

### **What do the seven seals tell us?**

It is the Lord Jesus who opens the seals. He is the executor of God's will.  
He is Lord! He sits enthroned over all.

The pagan Roman Empire would go through four kinds of experiences.

Rev 6:1-2 military conquest and resulting peace (verse 4 "take peace...")

Rev 6:3-4 civil war

Rev 6:5-7 shortages

-high taxes, ruthlessly exacted

-either resulting from or causing severe shortages of necessities

Rev 6:7-8 widespread death from many causes; vast depopulation

All of these things will happen, as they almost always do everywhere, but these things will predominate in this order.

The pagan Roman Empire would make a last great persecution of Christians (6:9)

-the pagans believe or say that the gods are angry at them for tolerating the Christians

-vicious men see an opportunity to seize the property of Christians

Rev 6:10 the saints will pray

Rev 6:11 the Lord will comfort the saints, telling them to wait just a little longer

The pagan Roman Empire would be overthrown in a great convulsion (6:12-17)

The Christians first receiving the Revelation could not know what period of time into the future this all would take. But they could know it would be starting then.

We now know in history that this was about the next 200 years from when John wrote, the 2nd and 3rd centuries, plus a little more. Approximately from the death of Domitian a.d. 96 to the reign of Constantine w/ Edict of Milan a.d. 313

## LESSON - **What about the great persecution under the fifth seal?**

[Much of tonight's material from Hanserd Knollys and John MacArthur.]

Christians/saints shall be persecuted by the government, even killed

-of course there are people who are punished by the government for crimes they have committed; but this is not about that

-the government will say that the Christians are being punished for treason or some other crime; sometimes people fall for that, and talk as if any Christian that gets in trouble with the government must have been committing some crime

-but these saints will not be punished by the government for some crime, but instead

-for the word of God

-which says that what the world does is sin, for which they must repent

-which says that Jesus is the only way to heaven, and everyone who is not a Christian shall go to hell

-they would obey only the word of God, not the government, in matters of religion

-they would obey only the word of God, not the government in anything the government ordered contrary to the word of God

-for the testimony which they held

-they would not worship idols

-they would worship God through Jesus Christ

The Christians under persecution are represented by the souls of the martyrs in heaven; they are praying

-from under the altar

-the golden altar of incense, which always represented the prayers of the saints

-to the Lord (6:10) as holy and true

Revelation 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

-holy: MacArthur - He must judge sin

-true: MacArthur - He must...keep His promises

-crying out for justice/judgment

-to avenge their death

Genesis 4:10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

-on those who have persecuted them

-asking "how long?"

-2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

-Romans 8:23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

The Lord comforts the persecuted saints with

-vindication: they are being accused of crimes worthy of punishment; but here the Lord Himself gives them white robes to wear, showing their innocence

Matthew 5:10-12 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

1 Peter 4:12-16 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. 16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

-exhortation to rest until the persecution is complete

-not that no one else will be persecuted or even killed; but that the

persecution is under God's control, and His plan is being fulfilled

-not that it won't go on any longer; but that it won't go on too much longer

The Lord overthrows the power that had persecuted the saints (6:12-17)

-more about that another time

## APPLICATION

No matter what pressure the world puts on you, be faithful to the word of God

-believing its promises

-obeying its commandments

When you experience persecution from the world, whether slight or extreme, pray to the Lord. If it seems that He is taking too long, be reminded that He knows what to do, and when to do it.

Take care not to do something wrong, and face punishment for that! Do what's right, so that no one has any valid reason for wanting to hurt you. Then don't believe the world's lies, that your obedience to Christ is the problem, and constitutes some crime worthy of punishment. If you find yourself falsely accused for the sake of Christ, rejoice in the privilege!

Trust that the Lord will overthrow the sinful system that has been persecuting His people.

-sometimes to those people's destruction

-sometimes to those people's salvation (e.g. Saul of Tarsus)