

*Morning Sermon August 22, 2021
"Witnesses / Martyrs" Revelation 6:9-11*

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. Revelation 6:9-11 (NKJV)

I. *The relation of Revelation 6:9-11, to Revelation 6:1-8, the Four Horsemen to the Death and the Cry of the Martyrs –*

1. Chronologically – All these things are happening NOW, and since the time of Christ, or before –
 - A. First Horseman, represented the preaching of the Gospel, conquering, spiritually, saving lost souls, is what the Gospel does –

6 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." ²And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. Revelation 6:1-2

And here is the CONNECTION - - -

- B. These martyrs are witnesses, they died because they were preaching Christ –

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. Revelation 6:9 (NKJV)

2. These things have been happening a long time – Who was the first Martyr? Who was the first murderer?
Hint – ¹²not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and

his brother's righteous. 1 John 3:12 (NKJV) Abel was the first martyr! Stephen was the first NT martyr; he was preaching the Gospel Acts 7 – He conquered, as his murderer was Saul / Paul ...

3. If we are asking how long have war, economic disparity and death in general, including martyrdom, have been in the world?

Almost since the beginning! Genesis 4? These seals go back at least to the time of Christ... and likely before His time on earth –

1. Persecution is the NORM for Christ's followers and witnesses –

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.

¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. John 15:18-20 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matthew 5:10-12 (NKJV)

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of sorrows.

⁹ "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. Matthew 24:4-9 (NKJV)

- A. Note: Death as from God's hand is the wage of sin -

²³ For the wages of sin is death... Romans 6:23

B. Death from the hands of wicked men is because of righteousness sake, or Christ's sake, for His name's sake -for My name's sake. Matthew 24:4-9 (NKJV)

slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. Revelation 6:9 B (NKJV)

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

³⁶ As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." ³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Romans 8:35-37 (NKJV)

¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 2 Timothy 3:12 (NKJV)

2. If we are not persecuted, why?

⁵ Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified. 2 Corinthians 13:5 (NKJV)

II. Souls, under the altar -

⁹ When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls...

Revelation 6:9

1. Under the altar, where Christ, the Lamb was sacrificed –

A. There because of Christ's death, not their own –

⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, Revelation 1:5 (NKJV)

B. But there "under the altar" is in Heaven, close to God, under His protection!

C. Souls – they are not united with new glorified bodies, yet!

III. Crying, praying souls, asking "how long?" –

1. Passionate, fervent prayer –

¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying...

2. Heavenly, perfect prayers – O Lord, holy and true... Rev. 6:10

3. Prayers for righteous vengeance – ... avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth... Revelation 6:10 (NKJV)

4. It is a prayer about time - "How long, O Lord..."

A. Militates against a preterist view of this Book, everything not fulfilled in the first century...

B. Fits with Christ's commands and our duties continuing today, these commands were not for apostles only –

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matthew 28:19-20 (NKJV)

⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:8 (NKJV)

5. Length shows God's longsuffering mercy – 2 Peter 3:1-9

C. The Gospel preached first, then the end, fits with the white horse being the Gospel preached, with fellow servants being killed ...

IV. Answer to the "how long" question –

¹¹ Then 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. Revelation 6:11 (NKJV)

1. From the time of Christ, until near the end, the Gospel will be preached, and it has been, symbolism of the white horse conquering – Revelation 6:1-2

2. In order for the Gospel to be preached, sin must be restrained, at least to a degree – Revelation 6:3-8

3. This will continue until near the end, when it will seem evil is winning – Revelation 13:7

4. After a short-live satanic rule, Christ returns, Revelation 6:12-17 in the meantime His people are covered with His righteousness – Revelation 6:11

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