

Where is the God of Justice?

Revelation Series #5

Revelation 6 & 7

Introduction: Throughout history there have been many atrocities that man has committed on one another. It was in the early 1930's when a man came to power in Germany. His name was Adolf Hitler. By the time he was finished with his reign an estimated 50 million people were killed in WWII. He oversaw the Holocaust, the murder of 6 million Jews in the most gruesome and barbaric ways.

In the late 1990's there was civil war in the Congo, in Africa. People were killed in horrible ways. There was mass rape, so much so that, rape was taking place to the tune of 48 rapes per hour: from 18 months to 80 years old.

Isis, the Islamic State, came to power in 2014 with brutal murders, tortures, turning women into sex slaves.

In America, we've had our share of serial killers.

1. John Wayne Gacy: The Killer Clown
2. Ted Bundy
3. David Berkowitz: Son of Sam
4. The Zodiac Killer
5. Charles Manson and the Manson Family

On August 24, 2016 in Albuquerque, NM, Victoria Martens was celebrating her 10th BD. Her mother, her 31-year-old boyfriend, and his cousin, shot her up with methamphetamines, sexually abused her, stabbed her, strangled her, dismembered her, and burned her. The chief of police of Albuquerque said, 'this was the most gruesome act of evil I've ever seen.'

On November 5, 2017, a man came in to First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas and murdered 26 people and injured 20 more before he was shot and eventually took his own life.

There is evil in the world, and the question in the last book of the Old Testament – Malachi, chapter 2, verse 17 is **where is the God of Justice?**

We see all these atrocities that take place in our world and in our lifetime, every day. And we wonder, how long will this last. How long is it going to go on Lord? When will you judge the earth? **That judgment comes in Revelation 6.**

Where is the God of Justice? is the title of today's message.

Today is our fifth message on the book of Revelation, written by John on the Island of Patmos in 95 AD. Revelation is laid out for us in chapter 1, verse 19, when Jesus tells John, "Write, therefore, what you have seen [chapter 1], what is now [chapters 2&3] and what will take place later [chapters 4-22]."

Last week we looked at three Incredible things that John saw in heaven.

1. He saw the Glory of God the Father
2. He saw the One who is Worthy to open the scroll
3. He saw all of creation Worshipping around the throne.

Today we're going to look at the beginning of the period known as the Tribulation. The time of anguish, the time of tremendous suffering and difficulty. It's called the time of Jacob's trouble in Jeremiah 30.

It's a period of seven years. The seven years from Daniel 9. Daniel was given a vision of what would happen to Israel in the Last Days. He was given a vision of 70 weeks, not 70 weeks of days, but 70 weeks of years. He was given a vision of 490 years that was going to take place in the world, specifically as it relates to Israel.

483 of those years have passed. We're waiting on the last week, the 70th week, the last 7 years.

And that's what is detailed here in Revelation during the tribulation when God pours out His wrath on a Christ-rejecting world. So here is the question...What Awaits those who will experience the tribulation?

[Show timeline of end times] – church age...rapture...tribulation – where God pours out His wrath on an unbelieving world.

Jesus talks about this in Matthew 24, called the Olivet Discourse. He was speaking to His disciples on the Mt. of Olives. They were asking Him questions about the future...when will these things take place...when will the end come...what will be the sign of your coming and end of the age? And Jesus talks about birth pains.

In Matthew 24: 4-8, Jesus said: ***“Watch out that no one deceives you. 5For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. 6You will hear of wars and rumors of wars but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8All these are the beginning of birth pains.” [NIV]***

Birth pains come and get more intense until the baby is born. And then we have this thing at the mid-point of the Tribulation called the desecration of the temple. The anti-Christ will present himself as God. And the bible calls this in the book of Daniel, **the abomination of desolation**. It’s when the abominable one, the Antichrist, sets himself up as God.

Jesus said when that happens, get out of the city, because there is coming a great tribulation, such as the world has never seen. And that is the last half of the tribulation. And it all ends with the return of Christ, and the beginning of the millennium kingdom.

At this point in Revelation, the church has been raptured, we’ve had a glimpse of the worship of God the Father, and God the Son in heaven, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah was found worthy to break the seals and open the scroll. [\[show pic of the scroll\]](#)

We have just experienced an amazing and uplifting worship experience, and shouts of "Worthy is the Lamb." But now the Lamb has taken the scroll from the hand of the One sitting on the throne and the attitude of this book changes as we enter the sixth chapter, and the Lamb opens the scroll. **LET’S PRAY**

I want you to notice with me, three discoveries from Revelation 6.

1. We Discover the Antichrist and the Four Horsemen.

Read Revelation 6, *“I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, “Come!” 2 I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.”*

3When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” 4Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given

power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword.

5When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. 6Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages, and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

7When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" 8I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine, and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

What do we see in Revelation 6? John Walvoord, a bible teacher, scholar, and end times expert, says Revelation, chapter 6 is one of the most important chapters in the book of Revelation. It gives us an overview as to what the tribulation period will be like.

The rider of the white horse. Some people say, 'that's Jesus,' because in Revelation 19 it says Jesus comes riding on a white horse. But I don't think this is Jesus, I think it's the false messiah. This is the one who comes presenting himself as messiah. Remember Jesus said that Satan comes as an angel of light.

He has a bow, but he doesn't have any arrows. He comes to power and that is the beginning of the tribulation. And Daniel says he makes a peace treaty with Israel. At first as he comes, daily life will seem normal. He has a bow, but no arrows, and everything is cool. There is finally peace in the Middle East. And everything is just like the days of Noah when there was eating and drinking and giving in marriage.

Matthew 24:36-39 says, ***"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 37As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."*** [NIV]

The first half of the Tribulation is the calm before the storm. The world will believe that peace has come until the mid-point when The Antichrist declares himself as God and that starts the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

2. We Discover what Hell on Earth Looks Like

2 I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.” [NIV]

And he rode out to conquer. What if you don’t want to be conquered? He has a bow and no arrows, but he’s going out to conquer, so there will be conflict.

3 When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” 4 Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword. [NIV]

There are two Greek words for sword. One is *rhomphaia* and describes a large sword used in battle. The second word is *machaira*, which describes a short sword or dagger. Rather than being used in major battles, it was employed in close-contact violence and assassinations.

This dagger is what the rider of the red horse is carrying. The weapon this horseman wielded was great in its power, not in its size. When the rider of the red horse comes, he will not be ushering in World War III. Instead, he will bring division and deception and civil unrest. The phrase "make people kill one another" has a very personal, one-on-one meaning to it. Peace will disappear-not just between nations, but within cities and neighborhoods and homes.

5 When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. 6 Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, “Two pounds of wheat for a day’s wages, and six pounds of barley for a day’s wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!”

Many of us experienced shortages when COVID hit. Stores had lines snaking through the building as people tried to purchase basic items and paper goods. When the black rider comes, the world's population will be longing for the days when they could find anything they needed in stores.

The third horseman will bring with him hunger and famine. World currencies will crash, and inflation will skyrocket. A quart of wheat is enough for one person to sustain life, and a denarius is one day's wage.

How will a person feed their family if they are earning enough money to feed only one mouth? And that is for those who are lucky enough to have a job. For those thinking, we'll just skip the wheat and get the barley at the three-for-one bargain price, understand that it takes three quarts of barley to provide the same nourishment as one quart of wheat. The oil and wine may remain unharmed, but who will have any money left over to buy them? Here's the point...it will take all your money to try and barely stay alive.

When the supply chain fails, and there are shortages, chaos will ensue. Other than a small handful of people, the world's population will not be prepared to provide for itself. First will come protests, then looting, then violent theft of basic supplies. Anarchy will prevail, and government leaders will be without solutions.

7 When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" 8 I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine, and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth. [NIV]

It's interesting where it says, he's on a pale horse. That word pale in the Greek is where we get our word for *chlorine*. If you've ever seen chlorine gas, it has a green color to it. We talk about people getting sick and looking green. This rider was death and after that came Hades. Death takes the body and Hades takes the soul. And they ride together.

Death is not a person who walks around in a shroud carrying a sickle. Death is simply a word that we use to describe the moment that a life ends.

The four horsemen of the apocalypse have come to represent strength, terror, and impending doom, and can be seen in everything from literature and comic books to television shows and movies, and even an infamous foursome who wreaked havoc from Notre Dame's famed football backfield in the 1920s.

The four horsemen are not going out as the judgments themselves, but as the ones representing the factual, tragic times that are about to befall the world.

The name of the rider on the fourth horse was Death and he was given power to kill one fourth of the earth. When I checked the population of the world this week, Google said it was just under 8 billion people. If the rapture comes anytime soon, the estimate is that there are 2.4 billion Christians in the world.

Not everyone that says they are Christians are not. Let's just say that the true number of Christians in the world is just 2 billion. So, if they are raptured out, that leaves 6 billion people on the world. And one fourth of that will be killed; that would be 1.5 billion people.

It was in the mid-1300's that the black plague killed 75 million people. Seventy-five million is a lot of people, but nothing compared to 1.5 billion. It's beyond bad and you think, that's just the first four seals. And you think it can't get any worse, **but it gets much worse**, because when he opens the seventh seal, it contains seven trumpets of judgment. So, there are 7 more things. And if that isn't bad enough, when the angel blows the 7th trumpet, that contains 7 bowls of wrath.

So, the four horsemen bring war, famine, pestilence, and death. All those things fit together. When you have someone who is conquering, he brings war. When you have war you have famine, pestilence, and death.

God keeps pouring it out on a Christ-rejecting world. It is hell on earth. Each successive set of judgments will be worse and more devastating than its predecessor. The seal judgments will kill one-third of the world's population. The trumpets will take another one-third and will devastate the earth. Finally, the bowls will come, which John describes as "the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete until a voice mercifully calls out from heaven, "It is done!" (16:17).

And then it says this in verse 9: ***When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. 10 They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" 11 Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers, and sisters, were killed just as they had been."* [NIV]**

When the fifth seal is lifted from the scroll, the lid comes off a dirty secret of the tribulation. While God has been bringing His just punishment upon the wicked, the Antichrist has been prosecuting his unjust persecution upon the righteous.

The tribulation saints will be killed for their faith in Christ. I don't believe this is talking about the church. I believe the church has been raptured before the opening of the seals. But this speaks of those who put their faith and trust in Christ during those tribulation years.

You wonder, are people getting saved during the tribulation? YES! Lots of them. Revelation 7 speaks of the 144,000 Jews, who are like apostle Pauls going out into the world to share Christ. And the Lord puts a special seal on them.

You know we have Jehovah's False Witnesses who say that's all there are...only 144,000 get into heaven. But we find that there are 144,000 Jews during the tribulation who are witnesses for Christ. And there are many who come to faith in Christ during the tribulation.

The souls that John saw under the altar, are those that have come out of the tribulation, Revelation, chapter 7 says. One thing that you need to remember that will be very helpful when you read Revelation is that it is a **book of blessing. This book wasn't given to scare us, it was given to prepare us.** This is a preview of what's to come on planet earth. So, be ready and be prepared.

Key Take-away: **Knowing God's plans for the future, can change your life right now.**

When it comes to our salvation, there are two deadlines approaching. One is death. That deadline is final. If you have not received Jesus as your Savior and Lord by the time you die, it will be too late. There are no second chances.

The second deadline is the rapture. If you have not given your life to Christ by the time Jesus removes His church from the earth, you will be left behind. However, while there will be no second chance for the rapture, there will be a second chance at salvation.

When true Christians are removed from the world, some of those who remain will recall what they heard in church as children or that they heard from loved ones about Jesus and His forgiveness. Some of them will recognize the error of their

rebellion and repent of their sins. God, in His grace and mercy, will accept them into His family based on their trust in Jesus Christ.

Now, however, these new Christians will find themselves in the worst of all physical situations. Not only will they be suffering the violence, deprivations, and disasters of the tribulation, but they will be hunted and executed for their faith.

Trust me, you do not want to put off giving your life to Christ now, thinking, well if I miss the rapture, I can just accept Christ during the tribulation.

There will be churchgoers who will miss out on the rapture. People who went to church, gave to the church, did all the churchy things, but Jesus said, "I never knew you." They will get a second chance during the tribulation, but it will cost them their life.

This group of tribulation saints are described as being "under the altar." Why are they stashed away there? **First**, these new believers **are not** part of the church. That ship has already sailed. Jesus came and took His bride in the Rapture while these men and women were still in their sins or pretending to be believers.

Therefore, there is no place that Jesus has gone to prepare for them like the ones He told the disciples about in the upper room (John 14:1-4).

They are not invited to the bema judgment seat. They are still loved by God and accepted as part of His family, they have escaped, as Job put it, "by the skin of [their] teeth" (job 19:20).

Second, while under the altar may appear to be a strange place to tuck them away, I think it makes a lot of sense. In both the earthly tabernacle and the temple, there were two altars. There was the bronze altar, which was the place where the blood was shed, and the sacrifices were made.

A second altar was inside the Holy Place near the Holy of Holies. This was the golden altar of incense, the smoke of which was a wonderful aroma before the Lord. These martyred saints have already shed their blood for their testimony and walk with Christ. Now they stand under the altar of incense crying out their prayers, which we already saw in 5:8, are an offering to God.

The content of their prayers was a plea for justice against those who had murdered them for their faith.

God's didn't say, "I'm holding off my final judgment because I must make the wicked suffer longer." Instead, He said, ***"I'm delaying the end because I'm still waiting for more sinners to turn to Me."***

Time Out: There are some chapters in the book of revelation that scholars call parenthetical chapters. What does that mean? It means that they don't flow in consecutive order. Revelation, chapter 7 is not what happens after chapter 6. Revelation, chapter 7 is like a time out and it's pulling back to talk about these tribulation saints that we find after the 5th seal is opened.

You have different chapters like this...chapters 12 & 13 talk about the Antichrist...In chapter 13 the Antichrist sets up a system for people to get the mark of the beast, 666, on your right hand or forehead. And if you don't have that mark during a time of famine and can't buy or sell, you are in big trouble. No mark...no meal; and many will die.

We Discover the Antichrist & Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, We Discover what Hell on Earth Look Like and the third discovery...

3. No One Can Stand in the Day of the Lord

The wrath of God is being poured out on a sinful world. Some people say the first five seals are just the wrath of Satan or the wrath of man. These are those who believe in a mid-tribulation rapture that occurs at the breaking of the 6th because that is when you really see the wrath of God being poured out.

But that's not what this says. Do you remember who is the one breaking the seals? It's not Satan, it's not man, it's the Lord Jesus Christ. It's the Lamb who is worthy and is breaking the seals and opening the scroll. It's all the wrath of God. The bible talks about this "day of the Lord" in both the Old and New Testaments. Jesus talked about it, Peter talked about it, Paul talked about it and here John is describing it.

There are 19 times in the Old Testament, where we find the statement, "the day of the Lord." What is this? It's not a 24-hour day, it's a period of time. Here is what some of the OT prophets said about this.

The day of the Lord is darkness, not light.

It's great and terrible, who can endure it?

It's destruction from the Almighty.

It's a time of doom for the nations.

It's a terrifying end to all the inhabitants of the earth.

Isaiah 13:9-13 says, ***“See, the day of the Lord is coming—a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger—to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. 10 The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light. 11 I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. 12 I will make people scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir. 13 Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the Lord Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.” [NIV]***

Now some say that day of the Lord doesn't begin until the Lord comes back at the battle of Armageddon, but I see that the day of the Lord begins as He opens the scroll. And this is what the bible says in Revelation 6, beginning in verse 12; ***I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, 13 and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. 14 The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.***

15 Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. 16 They called to the mountains and the 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 their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?”

Here's the thing about the judgments that come upon the earth. They are severe, they are intense, and they are terrifying. When Jesus talked about these last 3 and a half years, which He called the GREAT Tribulation, He said unless those days were cut short, no life would have been saved; because it is too severe, and no one could survive it.

Verse 15 says, ***kings, princes, generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.***

It doesn't matter if you are rich or have a high position, or have any army behind you, or live in a great fortress, the day of the Lord is so horrific and terrifying that EVERYONE is hiding in caves and want the caves to fall on them to hide them from the face of him who sits on the throne and the wrath of the Lamb.

Now I want you to notice this. All these people of the world are calling out to the rocks instead of to God. Isn't that amazing? They're calling out to mother nature to protect them and hide them, instead of calling out to Father God.

They are calling for the rocks of the mountains to fall on them instead of calling out to the Rock of Ages. The Rock of Ages, the Lord Jesus Christ when He was dying on the cross, extended grace to the thief on the cross and said, 'today you will be with me in paradise.'

They didn't call on God because they hated God. In fact, several times in Revelation as God's wrath is being poured out, it says, "They did not repent...they did not repent...they did not repent...they did not repent." They blaspheme God.

And they give the wrong answer to the right question; verse 16, ***They called to the mountains and the 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 their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?"***

How can you stand before the wrath of God on that day? That same question was asked in 1 Samuel, chapters 5 & 6, after the Philistines took the Ark of the Covenant, and put it in their temple next to Dagon their half man, half fish god.

When the people rose the next day, Dagon, was on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord! They took Dagon and put him back in his place. But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face and his head and hands had been broken off. When the people saw what was happening, they said, "The ark of the god of Israel must not stay here, because his hand is heavy on us and on our god."

So, they moved the ark of the God to a place called Beth-Shemesh, and the people looked upon it and God killed the people there with a great slaughter.

1 Samuel 6:19 says, “The people mourned because of the heavy blow the Lord had dealt them. 20And the people of Beth Shemesh asked, **“Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this holy God?”**

That’s the same question we find here in Revelation. The wrath of God has come and who can stand?

CONCLUSION: There was another time when the wrath of God came. It didn’t come on man, it came on the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ. He took all your sin, and all my sin, and all the sin of the whole world. Three times in the Garden, Jesus prayed if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not my will but yours be done. What cup? The cup of God’s wrath. And when Jesus died on the cross, God poured out His wrath on Jesus and He became sin for us.

We sing a song sometimes...This the power of the cross...Christ became sin for us...took the blame...bore the wrath...I stand forgiven at the cross.

Who can stand before a holy God? I can...you know why? I have put my faith and trust in Jesus. I put my faith where God put my sins and poured out his wrath. Jesus took my sins, and I am now free from the wrath of God.

Romans 8:1-2 ***“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.” [NIV]***

The only way you can stand before a holy God is if you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ. But if you reject Jesus like these people in Revelation 6 have, then you will receive the wrath.

I like what the Lord says in Matthew 21 as He is conversing with the religious leaders. Verse 42, Jesus said to them, ***“Have you never read in the Scriptures: “‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’”;***

Of course, they had read that. And Jesus is saying, “I’m the chief cornerstone, that you, the builders have rejected.” And Jesus went on to say this...***Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”***

This means that on Jesus we are broken to pieces in repentance, realizing that He is our only hope, and we are saved. But whoever this stone falls on will be

crushed. The non-Christian rejects what the Lord has done and must face the wrath of God on their own.

Try to think back where you were when you first heard of COVID-19. Can you remember what you were doing when the news of this virus reached you? If you can't, don't worry. COVID didn't hit us like 911. The virus was gradual.

Since the beginning of 2020, the people of this planet have gone COVID-crazy. You listen to the words of some people and watch their actions, and it is easy to think that the virus attacks the brain as much as it strikes the body. All this is for one virus! Can you imagine what this world is going to look like when the Lamb begins opening the seals of the scroll and the plagues and pestilences begin multiplying? Picture America with six or seven viruses more deadly than COVID, then add to that food shortages, economic collapse, and natural disasters on a scale never before seen since the flood.

I close with this from the book of Jude: ***“24 To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— 25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.”***

Only Jesus can keep you from falling and help you to stand in the day of the Lord's wrath. Where will you be when the wrath of God comes? Calling for the rocks to fall on you or standing securely with the Rock of Ages.