

04b REV

Let's pick up our study now in Revelation chapter 6. We have already seen the scene in heaven and we have already had the first three, actually the first five of a total of 14 doxologies or songs of praise or statements of praise, if you will, that are found in the book of Revelation. The first one was in chapter 4, verse 8, where the four living creatures praise God the Father. The second one was three verses later, where the 24 elders praise God the Father.

Then in chapter 5, we just saw in verses 9 and 10, the 24 elders and the four living creatures praise the Lamb, praise God the Son. And then in verse 12, you have the entire company of angels who praise the Lamb. And then the verse following that, 5:13, you have every creature in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth, praising God the Father and the Lamb.

They praise the one who sits on the throne, that's God the Father, and the Lamb, who's God the Son. And what I find interesting is that you have these songs of praise all the way through Revelation. Most of them, four, seven, nine, ten, eleven, twelve of them total, are to God the Father.

And of course, some of them are in combination, but the Lamb is included in about six of them. Who's missing out of the triune God there? But if you go to modern contemporary worship services, I promise you, you're going to get a bunch of worship and praise of the Holy Spirit. I saw, this has been many years ago now, but I was horrified, as horrified as you can be looking at church on TV, but there was somebody playing the piano and singing this song that they had composed, and it was, Oh Holy Spirit, You're the greatest, and just on and on, and I mean, with taking nothing away from God the Holy Spirit, He is co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Son, but we have been instructed on who to praise and how to praise, and that is not it.

God never directs our attention toward the glory of the Spirit. We have lots of glory in Scripture. The glory of God the Father is most prominent, followed closely by the glory of God the Son, but you never see anywhere in Scripture talking about the glory of the Spirit, or let's all glorify the Spirit, or let's praise the Spirit, all hail the Spirit.

I mean, that's not His role, that's not His job, and it is a great distraction and a great misdirection to get wrapped around paying attention to the Holy Spirit and losing sight. Even the Lord Jesus Christ, we are not to be living a Christ-centered life. We had a, some of us used to go to a church where there was a big emphasis on the Christ-centered life.

Well, obviously, I would be the last one to take anything away from the Lord Jesus Christ, but the Bible does not call us to a Christ-centered life. The Bible calls us to a God the Father-centered life, what did Jesus say in John 14, 6? I am the way. No man comes to the Father, but by me.

Jesus came to bring us to the Father. It is the Father that is the focus of our relationship with God. That's why when we pray, who do we pray to? Pray to the Father, in the name of the Son.

It just, I would rather hear fingernails screeching down a chalkboard. I would rather hear new chalk screeching on a chalkboard. Of course, nobody uses chalkboards anymore.

Some people don't even know what I'm talking about. Than to hear pastors, seminary graduates on the radio praying prayers and saying, in thy name we pray, amen. Dear Jesus, be with us while we take this offering.

Or, oh God, this, that, and the other, in your name we pray. You don't pray to somebody in their own name. You pray to the Father, in the name of the Son, in the power of the Spirit.

That's how the Godhead is organized. And if you disregard and trample that, it reminds me that girls are taking a little bit of Spanish at the moment. And there have been discussions in other languages like French and German and other languages I'm acquainted with, where there is a difference between formal and informal speaking.

In Spanish, normally, if we were talking to each other at a cocktail party or a polite society, we've been introduced or whatever, you would say, como esta usted? Which is the third person singular. Which is normally he, she, or it. And you're basically saying, you're addressing someone in a more formal and distant and courteous way.

The familiar is the second person. And you say, como estas? And you say, tu. You know that famous song that was had back in the 60s and 70s, Eres tu? That's the familiar.

That's the intimate. This is your love. And you're speaking to someone who's in your family or who you're married to or in love with or whatever.

Eres tu. But when I was in my first year of Spanish at Navy, there was a fella in my class who had grown up speaking Spanish in his household, but had switched over mainly to English. And then he was in the Spanish class and thought, well, this is going to be a slam dunk.

I spoke English. But his Spanish was all familiar and colloquial. And the professor was forever jumping all over him for using the second person singular, the familiar, with the professor, which is just kind of an insult.

I mean, it's not supposed to do. You speak with respect. It would be like walking up to a senator or somebody and saying, hey, Pop, what's new? So the same kind of thing.

We should know the protocol. We should know the proper form of address. We should know who to talk to when we pray.

There's lots of people. There's hundreds and thousands of people in Dallas who pray to the Holy Spirit all the time. And so that's like praying to your telephone.

Oh, telephone, please bring the plumber to fix my leaky... Come on now, telephone. You know, you don't talk to the telephone to get service. You call somebody on the telephone who will come.

Telephones don't fix bad wiring and broken plumbing and dysfunctional cars and things. The guy on the other end of the phone does. Well, people are just praying to their telephone all the time because they don't read their Bible.

It's a shallow and superficial and disinterested faith. We ought to appreciate the Lord enough to listen to what he says and try to follow instructions. So that's what we have here.

You have 14 doxologies, 14 statements, chants, songs of praise and revelation. Every single one of them is addressed either to the Father or to the Son or both. Never the Holy Spirit.

But the Holy Spirit is present. He is represented in those seven flames of fire before the throne. And as I mentioned on the break, we just saw the Lord Jesus pictured as the Lamb with seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God.

Remember in chapter 1 where John looks at Jesus and his eyes are like a flame of fire? Well, he's got the seven eyes which are the seven flames which are the flaming eyes. It's all the same thing. What does it stand for? The Lord Jesus has perception which is accurate and penetrating and burns away the fluff and the chaff and the wood and the hay and the stubble to see what is true and what is right and what is a good report.

And that is the basis of reward at the judgment seat. That which offends and has to be weeded out and gathered in bundles and burned, that's taken care of at the judgment as well. What is the mechanism? I find this very interesting because we've talked before about the indwelling of Christ.

Most Christians, if they even talk about the indwelling of Christ, think it's automatic at salvation. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world, that sort of thing. The indwelling of Christ is not automatic for believers.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is automatic and permanent unto the day of redemption. You have the indwelling, the sealing, the filling, the gifting and the regenerating ministry of God the Holy Spirit. Five-fold ministry at salvation.

You should know those, by the way, if you don't already. He regenerates, He indwells, He seals, He fills, and He gifts. Five ministries at salvation.

Every believer that has ever come to Christ in the church age receives that five-fold ministry. It is possible to be indwelt by the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why He says in Revelation 3.20, I'm knocking.

Wasn't there a song on the radio, I hear you knocking but you can't come in? That's what a lot of people are saying. That's what a lot of people are saying. The Lord Jesus is knocking and He doesn't come in.

He doesn't sup with them. There is no fellowship. There is no indwelling.

There is no permanent residence of Jesus Christ. Now, how does that connect with what we see here in Revelation? If Jesus is not present to observe the thoughts and intents of the heart of these people who are rejecting Him and being disobedient and not doing what they're supposed to, how is He in a position to judge? To know what's going on in their thoughts and intents. The Holy Spirit is there.

And in the same way that the Holy Spirit conveys prayers to the Father, the Holy Spirit is a little tape recorder in the soul of every church age believer. And He knows exactly what's going on in our hearts and minds. There is no hiding from God.

There is nothing that He doesn't know and doesn't see. Not because God the Father is riding around with us or God the Son is indwelling us necessarily, but because God the Holy Spirit is there. That's the eyes, the seven eyes, perfect perception.

Whether it's a thing in heaven or a thing in earth. Flames of fire before the throne which God sees, which God sends forth. His throne is surrounded by flaming coals, flames of fire, flaming cherubim, the seraphim, the flaming ones, the burning ones.

You've got the sevenfold Spirit of God, the seven flames, which are the seven eyes. And that's what John sees in the first vision of Jesus Christ. Eyes like a flame of fire.

Perfect perception, perfect judgment. There's nothing that Jesus does not see. And there's nothing He does not know.

We do not go to the judgment seat of the Father. We go to the judgment seat of Christ. And no lame, pathetic argument is going to convince Him because He knows.

He's got the eyes, perfect perception. So that's what you have there in chapter 5. The taking of the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne makes sense. Because where is Jesus? Right hand of the Father.

What do we know about the right hand of God? I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. It is the righteous right hand of God that holds this scroll. It is the righteousness of God that gives this task to God the Son, the Lamb.

And it's no accident. They could just say He took it out of His hand, but it says His right hand. And we know about the right hand.

This is right. There are unfulfilled promises to Israel. There are covenants that were made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to Moses, to David, the Palestinian covenant.

All of these covenant promises to Israel are yet unfulfilled. They do not possess the land that Abraham walked. They do not have a son of David on their throne.

They have not been recompensed against their enemies. All of those are promises in the Old Testament. I will build up the tent of David that has fallen down, God says.

I will take out your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. Job, before Moses, said, I know that my Redeemer lives, and I will see Him from my flesh, not from my resurrection body, on the last day. That's a promise that Job possessed, because he lived in the patriarchal age and he knew it.

So, here's the Lord Jesus. It is right. It is an expression.

It is demanded by the righteousness of God, by God's own character, to fulfill His promises. Why do we care about that? Well, if God is sloppy and inconsistent and incomplete in keeping His promises to Israel, how do I know He's going to keep any promises to me? If, on the other hand, God is absolutely faithful, just and righteous, and keeps every covenant promise He has ever made, then what about the promises He has made to me? How firm should my conviction be that when God says, I will never leave you nor forsake you, I will never suffer the righteous to be moved. He doesn't say anything about the unrighteous being moved.

You can get moved all over the field. But if you are righteous, you can sing the song, I shall not be, I shall not be moved. I'm like a tree planted by the waters.

I bring forth fruit in my season. It's a promise of God. It is the faithful believer, it is the obedient believer, that can count on fulfillment of the promises of God.

And they are just as sure as creation. This is the one who created all things. This is the one who has redeemed us, has made us kings and priests.

And this is the one that is going to unroll this scroll and fulfill all of the covenant promises to Israel. That's what's written on the scroll. It is the fulfillment of the covenant promises to Israel.

That's why the Lion of the tribe of Judah that you read about over in Genesis chapter 49, that's why the root of David, and he is described as such in many places in Scripture, that's why he is described in those terms. So, the scene in chapter 6 opens, 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. And 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.

Who is the rider on the white horse? Is it the Lord Jesus? He's got a crown and a white horse. He's got a bow. He's going forth to conquer.

It is not Jesus. Jesus is holding the scroll. Jesus is opening the seals on the scroll.

He doesn't say, Somebody please hold this for a second. I've got to go hop on this horse. You'd be amazed at the level of confusion about the rider on the white horse.

Well, it's Roy Rogers. He's the good guy. He's wearing a white hat.

He's going to go do something good. This is the Antichrist riding on the white horse. Nobody rules unless God allows them to rule.

No one has authority unless God gives them authority. Notice, he's kind of a false front. He's got a bow.

What does he not have? Arrows. Oklahoma is a place where you can find a lot of funny town names. You know, Bushy Head, Foyle.

It's just where we live. But there is a town in Oklahoma called Broken Arrow, and there's another town in Oklahoma called Broken Bow. You think, what is the matter with these people? All they've got is broken arrows and broken bows.

But, with the breaking of the first seal, Antichrist rides forth, conquering and to conquer. He conquers initially, and he's going to conquer some more. Now, what did we see in Thessalonians last week? That day shall not come unless there comes first the standing away, and the man of sin is revealed.

The man of sin is revealed in seal number one. That day cannot come because there's something standing in the way, hindering. Paul says, now you know what hinders that he may be revealed at the proper time.

What is it that hinders? It is the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth in the church. It is the church itself on earth. God carries.

It is not the will of God, Peter says, that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. The delay is the longsuffering and the mercy of God. But there is going to come a time when that which hinders is taken out of the way.

Is it the Holy Spirit? Is it the church? Yes. Which is it? Yes. Pick one.

Either one. Both. They're inseparable.

The church is sealed with the Holy Spirit. As long as the church is down here, the Spirit is down here. When the church leaves, the Spirit leaves.

And I mean all of the Spirit leaves. That's why it's up there flaming in front of the throne of God. That's why it's up there in the eyes of the Lamb.

It's no longer down on earth. It's up in heaven. First seal is broken.

Here comes the rider on the white horse. He's got a bow. He looks like he's going to really do some damage.

No arrows. And a crown was given to him. The only reason he is going to achieve world peace and world harmony in the early part of the 70th week is because his crown is given to him.

Ultimately, it's given to him by God. You get the idea as well that he is going to be acclaimed on earth. If I had to guess right now, I would say the European Union is the revived Roman Empire.

And it's going to be the United States of Europe. Ultimately, the United States of the world. And this guy will be the president or the king or the grand honcho or whatever they end up calling him.

The prime minister or whatever title they give him. This is going to be it. And he does have some military resources at his disposal, hence the horse and the bow.

But he doesn't do the fighting. So it's kind of like the president is the commander in chief, but he doesn't have an M-16 or a 45. He directs others who conquer and will conquer.

So that is seal number one. And that is horseman number one. Verse three, when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come and see.

Now, keep in mind, you've heard of these horsemen before, the four horsemen of the apocalypse, etc. And the different colors and all that. But did you notice, and in all of the surveying and perusing, I haven't found anybody that made any notice of this, but who told John to pay attention to the first horseman, the first living creature? Let's go back and take a look at the description of the four living creatures.

Verse seven of chapter four. The first living creature was like a lion. It is the lion of the tribe of Judah that has begun opening the scroll.

And the first seal that he breaks, it is this living creature, the first living creature, the lion living creature, that announces the white. He says, come and see. And then you have the horseman.

So we want to pay attention to this. Because now, in the second seal, verse three, when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, come and see. Who is the second living creature? Go back to verse seven of chapter four.

The second living creature, like a calf. Another horse, verse four of chapter six. Fiery red went out, and it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and the people should kill one another.

And there was given to him a great sword. The first one has a bow. If he had arrows, that's like the artillery.

You fire stuff off at a distance. The second one has a sword. That's where you hack around at close quarters.

The lion represents rulership, power, domination. The bow, long reach, long range. The second living creature is like the calf or the ox.

That is the sacrificial animal. In Israel, when you talk about the ox and the calf and that sort of thing, this is the biggest blood producer of all the blood offerings. It doesn't get any bloodier than when you sacrifice the ox or the calf.

And we know from Ezekiel and Isaiah that these are the consistent faces of the living creatures, the cherubim, all the way through. This horse is fiery red, blood red, granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth. People kill one another, and there is this great sword.

So, that first seal, you get the idea that, representatively speaking, this is the first part of the 70th week, where there is everyone saying peace and safety, and they don't realize that destruction is going to come on them suddenly. And between the first seal and the second seal, as much as three and a half years may have passed on earth. But in heaven, you're outside of time.

And that's important for us to note, because as we go through the book of Revelation and decipher these symbolic elements, we're going to find that not everything is chronological. Not everything gets the space of time, so to speak, in heaven, that it does on earth. It can compress, it can expand.

It's more sequence than representative scale of time in heaven, because you're out of time up there. So, he opens the first seal. How long does it take a horse to gallop away? He opens the second seal.

A couple of minutes, in John's estimation. But on earth, apparently, three and a half years have gone by of subjugation, domination. Everything is white, it's good.

Now, people turn on one another, and the violence begins. Verse 5, When he opened the

third seal, I heard the third living creature say, Come and see. Who is the third living creature? Go back again to verse 7. The third living creature has a face like a man.

I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius. Do not harm the oil and the wine.

Now, a denarius, we know, in John's day, in Jesus' day, was an entire day's wage for a laboring man. Let's just say ten bucks an hour is a reasonable daily wage for sort of an unskilled worker. You go out there and work eight ten-hour days, a hundred dollars, let's say.

So, what does this tell us? A hundred dollars for a quart of wheat? You've seen those quart bell jars? Do you want to spend a hundred dollars for, what's that, probably four or five cups of flour? I don't know how many cups are in a quart. Somebody who bakes probably does. It's not very much for a hundred dollars.

A quart of wheat for a day's wage, and three quarts of barley for a day's wage, because barley is animal food. You only eat barley when you really don't have much else. When we studied the feasts in Israel, and you remember Pentecost, you had the first fruits of the barley harvest, and it's not until Pentecost that you get the first fruits of the wheat harvest.

It's convenient that the barley comes in first, because you've got the barley, and you can feed your animals, who are going to help you till and plant the wheat crop that you're going to celebrate in the fall festivals, the end gathering. So, three quarts of barley for a denarius. Do not harm the oil and the wine.

Oil and wine are luxury items, aren't they? This is oil, like olive oil. If you're struggling to get wheat and barley, oil and wine are out of reach. We would say in the vernacular, don't even think about it.

Don't even think about the oil and the wine. When it says don't harm them, you can't even take a swipe at it. You can't even hit it with a stick.

That's how far away oil and wine are. When it says do not harm it, it means it's out of your reach, out of your control, out of your sight, out of your mind. That's out of the question.

You'll be lucky to live on bread and water, barley bread and a tiny bit of wheat, if you've got the \$100 to pay for it. Well, what is this? At first, you had domination. Secondly, you have bloodshed and violence.

Now you have famine and economic hardship. Not so much famine, but economic hardship. Why is it a black horse? The white horse is the false peace, the false angel of

light.

The red horse, bloodshed. The black horse, death. By disease, by famine, by wasting, by insufficiency.

It's like the commercials you see for Christian Children's Fund and so on. That's the face of the man angel that said, come and see. This is the human cost, the human side of it, where people's daily life, the humanity is going to go out of it.

In the Old Testament, we don't have time to go there, but you remember in some of the prophetic passages where when famine sets in and people start eating their children and killing one another and all kinds of horrible things go on when they're under siege or in famine? That's what you have pictured here. That's the human face, the human side. Now in verse 7, when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature.

What's the fourth living creature in verse 7? Flying eagle. Come and see. So, look and behold, a pale horse.

Pale rider. The pale horse has been in mythology ever since John wrote these words probably. But really, this word, and I may tell you a little more about it next time, but I'll just cut to the chase.

This word is the word like chlorophyll. In Greek, this is the word for green. This is actually a green horse, but not like grass green.

This is like pale green, sickly green, death green. Pale is okay, but it's a greenish pale. It's unhealthy green.

I looked and behold a pale or green horse, and the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. Power was given to them over a fourth of the earth to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth. Remember in Ezekiel, in the early chapters, when God said, I'm telling you people of Judah and Jerusalem, what the sword doesn't get, the fire is going to get, and what the fire doesn't get, something else is going to get, and one thing or another is going to get you no matter what.

That's what you have here. You've already had the bloodshed. You've already had the famine.

You've already had the violence, and now you get a combination of all of them. 25% of humanity is going to die in this phase, and this is the early part of the second half of the tribulation period. This is about four years into the tribulation is when a lot of this is going to take place.

25% will die either in military bloodshed, and you see this kind of thing happening in the Middle East right now, between violence, between resistance, between armed conflict and mayhem and so on, hunger from economic hardship, death from disease, and the beasts of the earth. Beasts of the earth here represents violence. I mentioned a few weeks ago about the death toll in Iraq and how of the civilian deaths that have taken place since the invasion, a lot of those are man-upon-man violence.

It's criminal violence. It's not rockets. It's not bombs.

It's not military action. It's the fact that because of the difficulty in trying to police that society, there is a high crime rate, and Iraqis are killing other Iraqis in the process of committing thefts, in the process of settling feuds and so on, Sunni against Shia, Shia against Sunni and so forth, and this is what the beasts of the earth has to do with, is random acts of violence. That's four of the seven seals.

Four is a highly significant number. Each of these first four seals is announced by one of the four living creatures. This has gone around the throne of God to the face of the lion, the face of the ox or the calf, the face of the man, and the face of the eagle.

You have made a 360 degree circuit of the throne of God. The voices have come from the four corners. What does this tell us? It is comprehensive.

The first four seals make a package and accomplish a pretty much single phase. They are all horsemen that attack and oppress in specific areas of human society. Now, in the fifth seal, the beginning of verse nine, when 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.

And 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. 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. Now notice, nothing is said about martyred faithful in any of the first four seals.

And we're now four plus years, I would guess, into the week. Assuming that the rapture took place at the beginning of the 70th week and you're on the Israel clock and you have had the episodes that we're going to see rehearsed later in Revelation of the rule of the Antichrist, the mark of the beast, no one can buy or sell, and anyone who takes that mark is pretty well doomed and there are those who decide not to take the mark. And this is kind of one of the first decision points for people who dwell on the earth.

Am I going to hook in to the system or not? At the time of the fifth seal, there are those who have suffered a fate. It says, For the word of God and for the testimony which they

held. Now, who are these people? What are our choices? They could be Old Testament saints, they could be New Testament saints, they could be Tribulational saints.

It specifically says, How long until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? So, whoever took their blood is dwelling on the earth. Right? Wouldn't make sense if they were Old Testament saints and they got slain by the Hittites to say, Lord, kill these people down there in, you know, modern day earth, because I got slaughtered three or four thousand years ago. If he's going to avenge those who dwell on the earth, then these people were killed by those who are on the earth.

So, that narrows it down to either Late Church Age or early 70th week people. I am going to contend that the Church Age saints have all gone in a peace from whom the 24 elders have representatively been stationed around the throne. The Lamb is in heaven.

John is in heaven. Everybody that knows anything about the church is in heaven. King priests with white robes, crowns, and thrones.

So, these individuals have died since that time. And they've had four years in which to do it. They've had four years in which to wake up and smell the coffee.

Maybe nobody figures out that the rapture has happened or that God is in His heaven. But at some point, somebody has come to realize there is a God in heaven. Here's His Word, which is still present on the earth.

Notice the Spirit doesn't seem to be on the earth, but the Word is. They look at the Word. They believe it.

And they are slain for the Word and for their testimony. It doesn't mean that they're out there evangelizing. They just say, I can't take this mark.

You're the Antichrist. And I believe in God. And according to the Bible, if I take your mark, my eternal future is very dismal.

So, no can do. They are executed. They are persecuted.

They are swooped up in death. So, slain for the Word of God and the testimony which they held by people who are still alive on the earth. And they say, I want vengeance.

Now, what is the actual status of these people? We have, in other studies, come to at least a reasonable conclusion that when people die, they basically slip out of the time continuum and pop back into it at their resurrection. These people are Old Testament saints. When they die, on that model, they would go forward to the resuscitation of Old Testament saints at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom.

And I'm going to suggest to you that it is true of these people as well. This is symbolic, just as the 24 elders are symbolic. Are there going to be 24 individuals picked out of the

church age to sit around the throne? Perhaps.

But they are representative of all of the king priests. I trust God that there's more than 24 church age believers that have been faithful and have earned the rewards of the overcomers. But they represent courses.

There are 24 courses of church age believers. And that's who's being pictured here. These under the altar.

The altar is a pretty small place, right? I mean, unless it's a honking big altar. I mean, there could be several thousand people that have already been slain for the Word of God and their testimony, right? But they are represented as being under the altar. An altar is smaller than this floor rug here.

And so what does it mean? You have some representative souls there that say, we have been slain and the people who did this deserve a comeuppance. And so they are pictured as crying out. God says to Cain, your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.

Now, they're not little corpuscles down there making little tiny screaming noises. This is symbolic, right? That's what's happening here. I would submit to you.

I would suggest to you that these souls are not in actual conscious existence in heaven. It is the principle that there is an unavenged slaughter of people who have come to faith in God that needs to be remedied. And it comes up at this point because now is the time when you have the violence.

These horsemen have been allowed to go and wreak mayhem. The economic catastrophe, the military catastrophe, the resultant famine and disease and death that all started with the guy with the bow on the white horse, this is authority given to man. It's a mini-recapitulation of giving Satan his leeway.

You give Satan, make him the king of the earth, and look what happens. You put man in charge of the earth, running Satan's policies, and the very same thing happens. Separation from God, no Holy Spirit on the earth, mayhem, death and destruction.

And these people who have come to faith have been martyred. So a white robe was given to each of them and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who would be killed as they were was completed. There will be more deaths of a like kind.

These are tribulational martyrs and there are more to come. They have been assigned, they have been imputed righteousness. There's righteousness on the books.

Why? What did Jesus say in the letters to the seven churches? Be faithful unto death and

I will give you a crown of life. These were faithful unto death. They didn't take the mark of the beast.

They died for their testimony. They died for their sticking with the word of God. There's righteousness on the books next to their name.

But they are not going to receive their reward. They are not going to receive their... They rest. Wherever they started out, they stay there until the rest of the saints who are going to be persecuted unto death is completed.

Well, this brings us to verse 12 and it brings us to the opening of the sixth seal. And since this is an Old Testament age and we've covered five seals, this is a good place to stop for tonight. But why do we care about this? We've said that this is just like Old Testament and in the same way that we look to the past and observe, interpret and apply, we should be able to look at this.

Observe, interpret and apply. People have power. People have leverage.

People have an influence over our lives now. And some of them are not nice people. Some of them are completely outside the plan and purpose of God as far as positive things.

Maybe they're unbelievers or they're totally wayward believers. God allows it. God orchestrates it.

God brings us on the earth to fulfill His purposes. Now, we have two possible responses to that knowledge. We can be afraid and say, God, why are you turning these horsemen loose on the earth? Look at these believers that are dying because you let these horsemen come.

Look at these people under the altar. They died because you let the horsemen loose. What is the matter with you, God? Why are you letting Antichrist and his policies run amok? We can ask the same kind of question in this life, can't we? Why do the righteous suffer? Why do the wicked prosper? And that's why life is all about faith.

You either trust that God knows what He's doing or you don't. Wouldn't it be great if your little toddlers trusted you so much that when you tell them, little Johnny, I know this shot's going to hurt, but it's for your good. It won't hurt for long.

You'll be okay. And He would look at you with trusting eyes and say, okay. And He takes His shot and it is okay.

And He's inoculated for life. That's what we need to do with God and His plan. That's what these people are going to have to do in the future.

Well, I'll leave you with that. We'll pick up at the sixth seal next time. Father, thank You

for the privilege of studying Your Word.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will encourage us, enlighten us, prepare us for the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.