

A Dose of Reality - Revelation 6: How long, O Lord?

Revelation:

- A message from the exalted Christ to his suffering people
 - Our Lord is THE Lord – Jesus is in control
- Look at our world: “*What’s gone wrong?*” OR “*How long, O Lord?*”

History is the story of Christ’s Conquest (1-8)

- God uses war / disaster to control a rebellious world

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!”

- Can it really be God in control of such devastation?
 - Christ, the Lamb, opens the seals,
 - The living creatures worshipping God call forth the horses
 - Christ himself is the rider on the white horse (Rev. 19:11)

Seals 1-4: The 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse

- Old Testament background: - Zechariah 1:17-18, 6:1-8
(*conquest, war, famine, plague*)
- together describe the whole era of God’s covenant purposes (scroll) not sequential

1st seal - White horse – rider has bow, crown, has conquered and will conquer – Christ

2nd seal – Red horse- takes peace from the world, allow sinful hearts to act

3rd seal – Black horse – economic hardship / famine, Ezek. 4:10-13

Weigh out twenty shekels of food to eat each day and eat it at set times. Also measure out a sixth of a hin of water and drink it at set times. Eat the food as you would a loaf of barley bread; bake it in the sight of the people, using human excrement for fuel.”

4th seal – Pale horse – covenant curses from Lev.26, Deut. 28, Ezek. 14:21)

“For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: How much worse will it be when I send against Jerusalem my four dreadful judgments - sword and famine and wild beasts and plague - to kill its men and their animals!

- All these judgements are from God, to control and judge a world in rebellion against him
see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. Ps. 46:8

His work is perfect and all his ways are just. He is a faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. (Deut. 32:4)

- But what about God’s people who are caught up in the turmoil?

How Long, O Lord? (9-11)

- When will God vindicate his people?

How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood

- A cry for vengeance
- Praying against the unrighteous and their schemes – Psalm 139:19-22

If only you, God, would slay the wicked! Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty! They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you? I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies.

- For God's justice to be seen to be done (the resurrection of Jesus)
- God's answer: "Not yet ..."
 - the wheat and the weeds must grow together until harvest (Matt. 13:24-30)

The Great Tribulation (12-17)

- God's salvation spoken of in terms of creation (2 Cor. 5:17)
- God's judgment spoken of as de-creation of the world

There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth (12-13)

- OT nations oppressing Israel (Exod. 10,19, Isa. 13, 34)

When I snuff you out, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give its light. All the shining lights in the heavens I will darken over you; I will bring darkness over your land, declares the Sovereign Lord. (Ezek. 34:4)

- Israel rejecting God (Matt. 24:29-34)

*"the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. ... Truly I tell you, **this generation will certainly not pass away** until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. (Matt. 24:29-34)*

- These words speak first and foremost to God's judgement on Jerusalem in AD 70

*Israel will be ashamed of its foreign alliances ... it is the sin of **Israel** ... Then they will say to the mountains, "Cover us!" and to the hills, "Fall on us!"*

*"**Daughters of Jerusalem**, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!'³⁰ Then " 'they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" Luke 23:27-30*

- How much more so in the New Covenant
- Flee to Christ