

The Prayers of the Tribulation (Message #17)

Revelation 6: 9-17

Tonight we continue our journey through the future as the wrath of God continues to be poured out.

Remember, the Tribulation is a 7 year period of 3 ½ year segments. In our last study we saw the appearance of the Antichrist, wars, famines, and plagues that claimed ¼ of the world's population. The 1st four seals were broken during the 1st 3 ½ years.

Tonight we will consider the next 2 seals broken during the last 3 ½ years. In the text we find an unusual event, saints in heaven and sinners on earth, both engaged in prayer. Tonight I want to look at these groups as we consider: [The Prayers of the Tribulation](#).

I. The Triumphant Saints in Heaven (9-11) – We are taken back to heaven as we see the souls of the martyred saints under the altar of God. The altar is where the blood of the sacrifice was placed. The souls under the altar are bearing witness to the sacrifice they've made for Christ. Notice:

A. Their Condition (9) – [And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:](#) These were literally slain for their faith in Christ. The word [slain](#) means to "*butcher or slaughter.*"

- These were saved after the rapture of the church and have given their lives for their faith. Satan will unleash a reign of terror and murder upon those who don't conform to his mark and follow the Antichrist.
- Christians have been martyred since the birth of the church. They were beheaded, crucified, burned at the stake, sewn in animal skins while wild beasts were released on them, dipped in wax, impaled on stakes, and set on fire to light Nero's dinner parties.
- The Maranatha Christian Journal stated that since Jesus' crucifixion there have been some 43 million Christians martyred for their faith, with 165,000 of those in the year 2,000 alone. The persecution of Christians is intensifying around the world with the rise of Islam. This will only worsen in the Tribulation.
- So, this raises the age old question, Could I be saved after the rapture? Well clearly there will be people saved in that time, but most will die for their salvation. Why not accept Christ in the day of grace? But, even if you were willing to die for your faith, you won't have the opportunity. For those who've heard the gospel, there won't be an opportunity in Tribulation, [II Thes.2:8-12](#). You've heard the gospel, now is the time for salvation!

B. Their Cry (10) – *And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* The martyred saints are seen crying with a loud voice unto the Lord. They aren't praying for mercy for those who've wronged them; they are praying for judgment for the shedding of innocent blood.

- We now live in the day of grace. Jesus prayed from the cross, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.* He taught us to love our enemies. *Mat.5:44 – But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*
- The day of grace will have ended during the time of the Tribulation. God's mercy will no longer be extended. This will be a time of divine judgment. The saints are praying that God's name be honored and those who have killed the saints be judged for their wickedness.
- I'm certainly glad to know I am saved. I wouldn't want to face the wrath of God. You don't either; make sure you're saved while there's still time!

C. Their Comfort (11) – *And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.* These are given *white robes*, clothed in the purity and righteousness of Christ. They are told to *rest yet for a little season*. There are going to be others who will die for their faith. The Lord isn't finished with His work. They are to be patient and rest while He finishes His plan.

- The soil of every inhabited place has been stained with the blood of those who wouldn't deny the Lord. One day Jesus will be silent no more! He will come with a rod of iron to avenge their blood and His precious name.
- I don't understand why good people have to suffer. I don't see how the wicked continually prosper. All we can do is trust God and know that He is in control of all things. There is coming a day when the wicked will be cut off and the redeemed will share the glory of God as we stand in the presence of our Redeemer for all eternity!

I. The Triumphant Saints in Heaven (9-11)

II. The Tribulation Sinners in Horror (12-17) – While the saints in heaven are praying for judgment, the sinners on earth are praying for deliverance from God's wrath. Their lives are filled with horror as God pours out His wrath. Let's take a look at the horrors revealed on earth.

A. The Devastation of the World (12-14) – [And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;](#) The earth is seen enduring a great earthquake. This is the 1st of 3 earthquakes mentioned in Revelation. Great clouds of ash and debris will fill the atmosphere as a result of the enormous cataclysms, dimming the powerful light of the sun and moon. The sun will look black as a garment worn by mourners. The moon will appear red as it tries to shine through the contaminated atmosphere.

- We are no strangers to earthquakes. Scientists estimate that more than 13 million people have died in earthquakes over the last 4,000 years.
- On March 27, 1964 an earthquake in Alaska was felt over an area of almost 500,000 sq. miles. There were 114 killed, some as far away as California. On May 18, 1980 Mount St. Helens erupted, triggered by an earthquake. The explosion toppled 150 sq. miles of forest in six minutes. The total energy of the explosion was equivalent to 400 million tons of TNT, approx. 20,000 Hiroshima-size atomic bombs. Towns as far as 250 miles away were showered with volcanic ash. On Dec. 26, 2004 an 8.9 earthquake in the Indian Ocean triggered a giant tsunami affecting 20 countries on 2 continents. The confirmed death toll stands at 228,601; with 125,000 more injured; 40,000 missing; and 1.5 million displaced. These events were terrible and horrific, but they will pale in comparison to the big earthquake of God's wrath.
- Earthquakes won't be the only devastation. Notice [V.13 – And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.](#) The earth will be pelted with meteor showers in those days. The Barringer Crater in Winslow, AZ. was formed by a meteor hitting earth. It was estimated to have been between 90' and 150'. It left a crater 4,000' across, 2.5 miles in circumference, and over 550' deep. Imagine the impact as God unleashes the stars of heaven upon the earth.
- As the heavens roll back there will be great geological shifting upon the earth. [V.14 – And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.](#) Mountains and islands will literally be moved out of their places, creating devastation unlike the world has ever known. I'm glad I'm saved!

B. The Despair of the Wicked (15-17) – Here we see all men, great and small, facing God's wrath. [V.15 – And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;](#) Places of position, power, and prestige will not matter. All will stand equal before God! All their worldly accomplishments will not prevent the hand of God. Notice:

1. Their Position (15b) – They hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains. Mankind is found seeking some type of shelter from the Almighty. For thousands of years they have stood defiant in the face of God. They have refused His tender mercies and consumed their lives on sinful lusts.

- In that terrible day they are no longer standing in open defiance, but desperately trying to hide from Him. The realization that He is God is sinking in, but it's too late. All they can do is hide in fear!

2. Their Plea (16) – And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: They cry out for the mountains and rocks to cover them from the face of God. They literally want to die to escape the wrath of the Lamb.

- They wouldn't receive the Rock of Ages, but are crying out to the rocks of the earth. They wouldn't accept the sacrificial Lamb, and now are left to face His wrath. The time of mercy has ended. Their pleas for protection and deliverance go unheard. They are left to stand before the Lamb as He pours out His wrath for the sin of the world.

3. Their Perception (17) – For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? At this point, mankind realizes that the end is near. All of the preaching and warnings they've heard were true. The time has come to face God for the sins of this world. The reality of judgment has gripped their hearts as they stand before God.

- These were praying, but not unto God. They are calling upon the natural world to save them. Man has always worshipped creation more than the Creator, but here the gods of this world will have no power to deliver them from the hand of Almighty God. They are fully aware of what is coming, but they are helpless to do anything about it. It is far too late for mercy!

We have considered the prayers of two separate groups. The prayers of the saints will be answered as judgment is poured out. The prayers of the sinners will fall on deaf ears; there will be no escape.

Dear friend where do you stand with God? If you are here tonight, you have heard the gospel truth. You are responsible for what you've heard. If you reject Christ today, there will be no opportunity in the Tribulation. You would be left to face the horrors of God's wrath. Why not come and be saved today? **Now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation.** Don't wait until it's too late. All men will either be comforted in heaven or tormented in hell.