

THE APOCALYPSE – A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Rev Dr Quek Suan Yew

THE WRATH OF THE LAMB

(Breaking of the Seven Seals – 6:1-17; 8:1-5)

I. DISTINCTION BETWEEN GENERAL TRIBULATION AND THE WRATH OF GOD

From Revelation 6 onwards, there will be quite a fair bit of differences in interpretation amongst the conservative Christians. Those who do not see the opening of the six seals as the wrath of God will interpret the six seals as not referring to the antichrist. Some would interpret them as describing cyclical periods of the history of the world. This view is not pertinent as the focus of Revelation 6 is on apocalyptic times. Periods of man's history have always been fraught with peace, wars, famine and deaths. So why the sudden mention of it here when the focus is on the last days? This interpretation is not tenable.

The period of the six seals is probably a summary description of the entire period of the wrath of God from the beginning to the end. As MacArthur rightly explains, "Each of the scroll's seven seals (cf. 5:1) represents a specific divine judgement that will be poured out sequentially on the earth. The seals encompass the entire period of the Tribulation (3:10), culminating with the return of Christ. It seems best to understand the first four seals as taking place during the first half of the Tribulation, the fifth stretching from the first into the second half, (called the great tribulation" in 7:14 and lasting three and one-half years; 11:2; 12:6; 13:5) and the sixth and seventh taking place during that "great tribulation." Apparently the seventh seal contains the seven trumpet judgements (8:1-11:19) and the seventh trumpet (11:5) contains the seven bowl judgements (16:1-21). The seven seals thus contain all the judgements to the end when Jesus Christ returns." [MacArthur, vol. 1, 176]

The word "tribulation" comes from the Latin word "*tribulum*." It means a "threshing sledge." The ancient farmers would use the *tribulum* to beat the heads of the grain, separating the chaff from the wheat. Tribulation, therefore, is a type of trouble designed by God to separate the chaff from the wheat in our lives.

The Bible says that all Christian will have to go through tribulation/sufferings in order to build up the faith of the believer.

Romans 5:1-5, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." [see also Jas 1:1-4]

Philippians 1:27-30, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me."

Sufferings come upon believers not to punish but to achieve in the believers' lives a Christ like disposition and character. The believer is to rejoice in tribulation when it comes. 2 Corinthians 7:4, "Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, **I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.**" [Emphasis added]

But the Great Tribulation or the Wrath of God that will come in the last days is for the unbelievers ONLY, and not the Christians, because the wrath of God that was meant for the believers was borne by Jesus Christ on Calvary. The term, "Great Tribulation" was coined by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself when He was on earth just before His suffering and death on Calvary. Matthew 24:21, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." [See also Rev 7:14]

Revelation 3:10, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, **I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.**" [Emphasis added]

John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; **but the wrath of God abideth on him.**" [Emphasis added]

Romans 1:18, "For **the wrath of God** is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;" [Emphasis added]

Ephesians 5:1-6, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish

*talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for **because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.***" [Emphasis added]

Colossians 3:5-6, "*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:. For which things' sake **the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:***" [Emphasis added]

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10, "***For God hath not appointed us to wrath**, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.*" [Emphasis added]

Revelation 6:16, "*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:***" [Emphasis added]

Revelation 14:10, "***The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God**, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:*" [Emphasis added]

Revelation 15:1, "*And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; **for in them is filled up the wrath of God.***" [Emphasis added]

Revelation 16:1, "*And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and **pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.***" [Emphasis added]

I. TIME AND NATURE OF THE WRATH OF GOD

A. TIME OF THE WRATH OF GOD

1. Daniel 9:24-27 – The Seventieth Week of Daniel gives us the time frame for the Great Tribulation. The Great

Tribulation will last seven years. What are some of the signs that will precede the beginning of this wrath?

Daniel 9:27, "*And he shall confirm the covenant with many **for one week**: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*" [Emphasis added]

a. Some of the signs that will precede the beginning of the Wrath of God would include:

i. Gospel preached throughout the world – The preaching of the gospel worldwide is not the same as the world will come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible did not say that the world will be saved before the Great Tribulation. The Bible simply states that the gospel will be preached in all the world for a witness to all the nations and then the end will come.

Matthew 24:14, "***And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world** for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*" [Emphasis added]

ii. Abomination of Desolation – cf. Daniel 9:27 quoted above.

Matthew 24:15, "*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand).*"

What is this Abomination of Desolation that will desecrate the Holy Place of Temple?

Revelation 13:11-15, "*And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not*

worship the image of the beast should be killed."

Matthew 24:21-22, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Since there will be the abomination of desolation placed in the Temple precinct, then it would suggest that there will be a rebuilding of the Tribulation Temple prior to the Great Tribulation. The abomination will be placed in the Temple in the middle of the seven years.

iii. False Prophets and False Christs will appear – They will be on the rise.

Matthew 24:23-26, "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall **shew great signs and wonders**; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not." [Emphasis added]

Notice any of them around today? Which Christian movement today call themselves the "Signs and Wonders Movement"? There is only one. It is none other than the Charismatic Movement. This is the end time satanic movement that will come and deceive the world. It is already here. It took the world by storm since her inception in 1906. She has now become the fast growing church in the Protestant Movement. It has also erased all denomination lines including the lines between the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches.

2 Corinthians 11:12-15, "But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

They are also called angels of light who will enter into churches with Christ-like appearances to deceive the undiscerning. They smile at you sweetly and dressed like Christians with the gentle and genial demeanour and many will be taken in and follow their pernicious and wicked ways.

iv. False peace will be declared—There will be a declaration of world peace before the Wrath of God. Is this not what the world is longing for, for the past centuries? They have not found it yet but they are seeking and one

day when it appears that peace is in sight, especially in the Middle East, Christians must watch out, rapture is nigh!

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3, *"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."*

v. Identity of the Antichrist revealed— This will usher in the start of the Tribulation Period

The Great Tribulation begins with the revelation of the identity of the world leader also known as the Antichrist, the son of perdition, or the man of sin.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4, *"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."*

2 Thessalonians 2:7-8, *"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."*

f. **A Falling Away** — Christendom will apostatize. What does it mean to fall away? The word used in 2 Thess 2:3 is the word for "apostasy." Protestant Christianity will return to Rome and accept other religions as one of the many ways back to God. This is the ecumenical movement which was born in the 20th Century. It has succeeded through the World Council of Churches which has three aims: the Immediate Objective—to unite all Protestant churches; the Intermediate Objective—to unite Protestant Churches with Rome; and the Distant Objective—to unite all religions. They have succeeded marvelously within these fifty odd years.

Has this not occurred already?

vi. Rapture and the First Resurrection—These events will take place before the Great Tribulation

begins. Present day Christians will be delivered from the Wrath of God. God will take us home to be with Him and then the end will come upon this wicked world.

3. When these signs are fulfilled, the end will come. Look out for these signs. Be discerning. How many of these signs have already been fulfilled today?

B. NATURE OF THE WRATH OF GOD

b. The Lamb Opened the Seals – 6:1

Revelation 6:1, *"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see."*

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamb.

John was called by one of the four beasts to come and see. It must be very exciting to see this vision. John's desire to know the endtimes was rewarded handsomely by God. He was asked to come and see!

c. The FIRST SEAL--A WHITE HORSE – 6:2

Revelation 6:2, *"And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."*

It could not refer to Christ.

i. Crown – "*stephanos*" a crown won as a prize not the kind that Jesus wears ("*diademas*" – many crowns as in Rev 19:12). What Jesus wears are royal crowns.

ii. Here the one on the white horse carries a bow whereas in Rev 19:15 Jesus Christ carries a sword. Christ comes to judge.

iii. Christ comes at the END not at the BEGINNING of the Great Tribulation.

iv. Christ was the one opening the scroll, so He could not possibly be the one riding on the white horse.

e. The rider will conquer with a bow without arrows—A Bow is a weapon of war used to conquer. But when it is depicted alone without any arrows, it signifies that the rider on the white horse will conquer using non-violence. The colour of the horse is significant as white is the colour for peace. In other words he will conquer using peace as his “weapon.”

1 Thessalonians 5:3, *"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."*

f. He will be given a winner's crown (*stephanos*). He is no real king and has no real monarch's crown (*diadem*). But nonetheless he has won a crown from the world for his triumphant achievements that will lead to some kind of world peace. Deceit and lying wonders will be his weapon for conquest.

2 Thessalonians 2:8-11, *"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie:"*

He will also make peace with Israel (Dan. 9:24-27). He will promise the world a golden age of peace and prosperity. In gratitude the world will acknowledge him as Lord, the supreme leader of the world. How will he be able to do this? Some have said that he could be a Jew.

Daniel 11:36-37, "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard **the God of his fathers**, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all." [emphasis added]

d. The SECOND SEAL--A RED HORSE – 6:3-4

Revelation 6:3-4, "And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword."

a. Red is the colour of blood and it depicts war. Blood will flow.

b. This peace will be short lived. Peace and harmony will be shattered within a short period of time. "Take peace from the earth" will be the rule with the rod of iron. Once he is made supreme ruler his true colours will come forth. His evil nature will surface. Anyone who opposes him will be killed swiftly. Hitler did exactly the same thing when he signed peace treaties with his neighbours like Italy. Soon he attacked and destroyed them.

The false peace of the Antichrist will disappear just as soon as it appears and it will be replaced with a bloody holocaust. The peace was used to usher him into office as world ruler. Once he arrives, his true colours will be seen. This modus operandi is even used today by some who will creep into churches with a demeanour of an angel of light and once they enter in, they will wreak havoc in the church to destroy it.

NOTE: it was GRANTED to him i.e. God is in sovereign control. Yes the immediate cause was the evil one. But the over-arching person in overall sovereign control is God almighty. Remember Jesus Christ took the book with the seven seals from the Heavenly Father and no one on earth was worthy to open it except for the Son of God, Jesus Christ. There will be war and chaos. Men will kill one another on a global scale.

A great sword was given to the rider who will massacre and slaughter many, especially anyone who opposes him.

i. A Great Sword – The sword used here refers to the "short, stabbing sword of a Roman soldier carried into battle [MacArthur, vol. 1, page 180]." This was also a weapon used by assassins. The vision depicts a great sword which points to the great extent of the war. Global assassinations, battles, rebellions, revolt and massacre

soon followed the false peace of the Antichrist.

The war will probably be sparked by the building of the abomination of desolation and placing it inside the holy place of the Temple. This war will last for a very short while as the opening of the trumpets and vials will swiftly ushering in the wrath of the Lamb.

e. The THIRD SEAL--A BLACK HORSE – 6:5-6

Revelation 6:5-6, *"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."*

- i. Black – associates with famine as in Lamentations.

Lamentations 5:10, *"Our skin was black like an oven because of the terrible famine."*

Famine is a logical consequence of war. The pair of balances points to a rationing of food.

- b. A measure (a quart) of wheat was barely enough to sustain one person for one day.

A penny (a denari) – a days wage for an ordinary worker. In other words a person's daily wage is barely enough to sustain one person for one day. He has to live day by day.

Three measures (quarts) of barley – Barley was considered low nutrition food commonly used to feed livestock. This was bought with the same penny (denari) for the feeding of the person's family. It was just enough to feed a three person family with animal food for a day. This picture represents starvation wages (inflation) and signifies to us severe famine conditions.

ii. A deceptive peace achieved by lying and deceptions followed by wars and deaths and global famine. In light of the scarcity of food God warned them not to hurt (waste) the oil and the wine. Both of these are used for the preparation of food and the purification of water. Do not waste!

f. The FOURTH SEAL--A PALE HORSE – 6:7-8

Revelation 6:7-8, *"And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."*

- a. "Pale" the Greek word is "Chloros" from which we get the word "Chlorine" and "chlorophyll." It refers to a sickly pale yellow-green colour. This depicts the colour of death a characteristic of the decomposition of a corpse.
- b. Death on a massive scale will occur. A quarter of the earth will be killed by the Antichrist. A world with 6 billion people will end up with 1.5 billion deaths.
- c. Sword, hunger and death and with beasts (wild, venomous animals) of the earth (perhaps rats!) Rats have been responsible for countless number of deaths throughout history. E.g. Black Death caused by rats in the 14th Century which brought the dreaded bubonic plague that wiped out one-fourth to one-third of Europe's population.
- d. This was only the beginning. When God Himself takes over and judges the earth HIMSELF directly, it will be even more devastating. Mankind will experience a pandemic of global disasters never seen before in the history of mankind. The beginning of the end of man's civilization has begun a second time!

Revelation 14:10, *"The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:"*

Revelation 14:19, *"And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God."*

Revelation 15:1, *"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."*

Revelation 15:6-8, *"And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."*

Revelation 16:1, *"And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth."*

II. SPARED FROM THE WRATH OF GOD

a. THE CRY FOR DIVINE AND HOLY JUSTICE

Revelation 6:9-11, *"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: 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? 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."*

i. The FIFTH SEAL (6:9-11) – After the focus on the earth where the antichrist will rule the final seven years of man's existence in this present world, the fifth seal will present a heavenly scene. It comes from the perspective of the heavenly saints who have been killed for the Word of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. They will cry out for the justice of God to come upon sinful men. Believers have the best sense of justice in this world because they have the Bible to guide them. They were found under the altar.

‘Under the altar’ – the altar was the place where the justice of God was dispensed. **Exodus 21:14**, *"But if a man come*

presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die." God will not protect the guilty. They will not escape His justice nor can they hide from His wrath (cf. 1Ki. 1:50-53; 2:28-34). It is thus very fitting that the cry for justice will be under the altar.

These were what the souls in heaven died for.

THE WORD OF GOD – What does this refer to? The precious and perfect Word of God will come under attack all the time. This has never stopped and it never will. Satan successfully attacked the Word of God in the Garden of Eden when he asked Eve, “Yea, hath God said . . .?” Eve took the bait and soon Adam too disobeyed God and sin and death entered humanity and the entire world. Throughout the history of Christianity the Word of God has come under constant attack. It has never ceased and never will. Thus we find the testimony of the heavenly believers as having died for the Word of God.

But the Christian world today is not mindful of such a sacrifice. The Word of God is not valued as it was in days past by most. The compromise on the Truth of God's Word is taken very lightly today. Why? The reason is because many professing Christians

a. **LOVE THE WORLD** – friendships, relationships, popularity, to be loved and adored by man, etc. are some of the reasons many professing Christians surrender the Word of God so easily today. They say that as long as my salvation is secured it is not my business whether the Word of God come under attack or not. It is small matter! There is more reaction from them when their new car is scratched than when the Word of God is attacked. They moan and groan when they lose their jobs but when they lose a word of God here and a word there they say indifferently and perhaps ignorantly “never mind.”

b. **LOVE SELF MORE THAN GOD** – Pride of life is the bane of society and God's church today. Humility is known today as merely paying lip service to one another. It is never backed up by a living example. We love self more than we love the Word of God. This is idolatry which is condemned in the Bible. When our name is maligned we shout and demand an apology and some might even threaten lawsuit if an apology is not forthcoming soon. But when the Word of God is maligned, we cover our ears and say we hear nothing and cover eyes say we see nothing and cover our mouth and say nothing like the proverbial three monkeys! Our face is more precious in our sight than the Name of God. In our estimation God must decrease and I must increase! What a shame.

c. **HAVE NO FEAR OF GOD** – There is no fear of God in man's heart today. We pander to one another's feelings to the point of sacrificing God's Truth. Some would use threats when bribery fails. The fear of man is paramount today in the church. A believer may know the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and may be the best interpreter with the deepest insights to the depths of God's mind but if he does not possess the fear of God in him, he is useless. He will not be able to speak up at the right time when he is expected to. He will clam up and silently allow

the Word of God to be desecrated with a whimper of protest. The fear of man cripples the believer. He loves the accolades of man than the commendation of God. He fears the threats of the impotent man than the warnings of the omnipotent God! How foolish is that man!

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST – What does this refer to? How is this different from the first? This refers to the name of Christ, His person, whereas the former refers to the Word of God, Christ's words.

They are not afraid to die for Jesus Christ. **Matthew 10:32-39**, "*Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*"

Are you ashamed of Christ? Dare you stand up for Him in time of persecution? Will you defend the name of Christ when it comes under attack? Will you honour His name by your life? Is He pleased with your relationship with your wife, children, and your testimony for Him at your work place?

ii. The cry for justice -- Like in the imprecatory Psalms, the people prayed for God's justice as they understood that vengeance belongs to the Lord.

What is God's justice?

What is man's justice?

Man's sense of justice is coloured by his feelings toward his fellow men. It is either over punishment or under punishment as the case may be. Ask the victim's family members and the punishment would most likely not be enough. Ask the criminal's family and most likely the judgement is too much. Sometimes punishment is meted out for the sake of deterrent and thus an over punishment is requested by the prosecutor. Is that really the purpose of justice where a criminal is over-punished so that others might not follow his foot-step?

Our judgements are affected by favours, finance, flattery, food, and fear, done to us by others. This is the trend of the world and we find them in our churches as well.

Hardly do we cry for justice anymore, unless it is leveled against one whom we have no intimate knowledge of like Billy Graham, Westcott and Hort, etc. We cry for a distorted form of forgiveness, and mercy which is unbiblical for it entails the sweeping of dirt under the carpet because the ones who have sinned are friends or relatives whom we know and love and have loved or helped us before. Remember the tribe of Levi who said that they wanted to stand on the side of the LORD in Exodus 32? They had to kill their own and on that day 3,000 died. Exodus 32:27-28, "*And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and **go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.** And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.*" [Emphasis added]

Under what circumstances can we say leave it to God to judge and when this becomes a dereliction of our duty as leaders?

iii. Wait patiently – All these have been given white robes signifying that they are believers. God says that He had heard their cry for justice but they must wait patiently for the plan of God to be fulfilled. His judgement will surely come and all who are guilty will not escape.

"White robes were given" is symbolic of the acceptance by God and a declaration of the righteousness of the saints. This is the wedding garment found in the parable of the Wedding Feast in Matt. 22:1-14.

He will wait until the last person who is to be saved is saved before His final judgement comes down upon sinful men.

The plan of God will never be too late or too early. It will always be just on time, His time.

Persecution is part and parcel of the believer's life and calling. He must not resort to personal vengeance because vengeance belongs to the LORD. Let God deal with all the persecutors of the believers. **Philippians 1:28-29**, "*And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;*"

b. THE FINALS SIGNS BEFORE THE END

Revelation 6:12-17, *"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; 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. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 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; 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: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"*

i. **THE SIXTH SEAL (6:12-17)** – See also Acts 2:17-21 and Matthew 24:29-30. From the first to the sixth seals, we are given a glimpse of the beginning and the end of the Great Tribulation. (6:12-15) This is an overview of the entire period from beginning to the end.

This is not an uncommon way of presenting prophecies. In Acts 2:17-21 (cf. Joel 2) Peter through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit gave us a glimpse of the beginning and the end of the last days on earth.

ii. **Sun, Moon, Stars and Earth changed forever** – There are parallel passages which point to the same phenomena. **Matthew 24:29-30**, *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."*

Acts 2:19-20, *"And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:"*

See also Rev. 16, the pouring of the seven vials. The world will be devastated by the wrath of God. The blowing of the seven trumpets and the pouring of the seven vial judgements describe this destruction in great detail.

iii. All mankind will face the wrath of the Lamb – Mankind will pay the price for their unbelief and arrogance. They will not escape. The blowing of the trumpets will be the start and it will gain in intensity and the torment will be beyond man's wildest imaginations. All mankind will suffer under the wrath of God. No one will escape. Kings and paupers, the rich and the poor, everyone without exception will face His penetrating wrath.

There will even come a time when sinful men will choose death over the wrath of God but they will not find it. They will cry for the mountains and rocks to fall on them to kill them just to escape the wrath of the Lamb but to no avail they will have to endure to the very end. Man is not the captain of his own destiny. God is. **Revelation 9:1-6**, "*And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.*"

This is called "the wrath of the Lamb." (6:16-17)

This is a description of what will happen within the opening of the seventh seal which leads to the blowing of the seven trumpets (8:1-6). This will lead to the pouring out of the seven vials (16:1-21).

c. THE WRATH THAT CHRISTIANS ARE SPARED FROM –

Ephesians 2:1-3, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

Romans 5:6-9, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a

righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

1 Thessalonians 5:9, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"

Revelation 3:9-10, "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

Colossians 3:1-7, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them."

III. REPENT OR FACE THE WRATH OF GOD

Romans 2:5-6, "*But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds:*"

Ephesians 5:1-6, "*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*"

CONCLUSION

John 3:36, *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."*

Romans 1:18-23, *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."*

