***How Long Must we Wait for Judgment?

RV122-02***

We are studying Revelation 6:9-11. We are on the fifth seal, and this is the third segment.

The tribulation era, following the rapture of the church, begins with every one unregenerate; that is, once the Christians have been taken out of the world, everybody left on earth is an unbeliever. Even though that condition will be the case at the beginning of the tribulation, very early on, people will be born again, and soon there will be a large number of people who again are believers in the living God. Consequently, the gospel will again be proclaimed. However, for large numbers of these tribulation-era believers, their trust in Jesus Christ as Savior will result in their personal martyrdom. They will be killed for their faith.

**The Martyrs of the Fifth Seal**

John the apostle is informed, therefore, under the fifth seal, of the status of these tribulation martyrs in heaven. Here, in verses 9-11, John is seeing in heaven the condition of these martyrs. He sees these disembodied souls as poured out at the foot of an altar in heaven. This altar in this scene is a symbol of the sacrifice for salvation that was necessary. As we have learned in other Scriptures, there is no need for an altar in God's New Jerusalem. God is the temple, and He Himself is the altar, and no further sacrifice is necessary. But here we do see a symbol. This altar here is signifying the sacrifice necessary for sins. And as in the Old Testament, they poured the blood at the foot of the altar, signifying the pouring out of the life. So, these believers have been sacrificed for God. Their lives were poured out at the foot of the altar.

So, John sees this vast number of disembodied souls here at the foot of the altar. Their witnessing to the truth of Scripture has resulted in their death by violence. That's the important thing to note. The Scriptures indicate that this is not death by natural causes, but by an act of violence against them at the hands of the antichrist's followers.

These people will be telling the tribulation society that they, as believers in the true and living God, who possess the Bible, have a source of information by which to judge everything that the antichrist says and does and thinks, and what people are doing in that time. That will make them a hated minority. The tribulation saints will take a public stand against all the evils that are now muted and ignored by Christians today: Christians who do not want to be ridiculed; who do not want to be rejected; but, who want to be part of the functioning of Satan's world system.

The issue for these tribulation saints will be simply applying divine viewpoint. These martyrs, obviously, are going to be willing to hold and to proclaim views which are not popular in the society of that day, but which the Bible commands as truth. The situation that will face them is whether they want to be accepted or not by the society through which they move. The issue will be that they will follow the tradition of the New Testament Christians, and will seek to be accepted by God rather than by the people of their day and the opinion-makers of their day.

**Obey God Rather than Men**

That tradition of the early New Testament church is recorded for us, for example, in Acts 4:18, where the day of Pentecost is taking place. The church has been born. The apostles are preaching the gospel of salvation through the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Jewish leaders murdered. All of Jerusalem has been turned upside down by their preaching. So, in Acts 4:18, we read, "And they called them (the religious leaders called the apostles) and commanded them not to speak at all, nor to teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, 'You judged whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God.'"

**Peter**

You must picture this scene. These are the highest authorities in Israel. These are the Jewish leaders. This is the priestly caste. When they speak, they speak with authority as the representatives of God. And here they are telling Peter, who was strictly chicken liver when he sat around that fire with the soldiers and other people admitting that he was a follower of Jesus Christ, and indeed denied Jesus Christ three times as the Lord said he would. Here, now, Peter is no longer chicken. He stands right up before all the judges, the highest authorities, and says to them, "You tell me not to preach in the name of Jesus, but God does tell me to do that. Now, you tell me, intelligent leaders of Israel, whom shall I listen to? You; or, God?" It was a logical question, but it was insulting, because it implied that he understood the mind of God, which he did, and that they who should have understood it, and pretended to understand it, did not. They were totally oblivious to it.

So, in verse 20, Peter says, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." They were eyewitnesses: "So, when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them because of the people, for all men glorified God for that which was done." Even the religious leaders, because they were political type personalities, were doing what was expedient. And though they wanted to punish these men, the people were so impressed by what they had done; the miracles that were performed; and, the testimony they were giving, that the religious leaders didn't dare touch them. So, there's the tradition. Are you going to listen to God, or are you going to listen to man? Are you going to sound off, even when it might mean jail or personal punishment; or, are you going to be silent?

In Acts 5:27, the same thing continues. The apostles continued preaching; the Word of God was getting out; and, people were getting saved, so they pulled them in off the streets again. They again brought them before the religious authorities: "When they had brought them, they set them before the council, and the high priest asked them, saying, 'Did not we strictly command you that you should not teach in His name? Behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood upon us.'" Now they were becoming sensitive because the apostles were making clear that an innocent man had been executed. They undoubtedly kept repeating to the people that even Pontius Pilate, the highest authority, said, "'There's nothing about this man that is worthy of death. He's not guilty of anything of that sort.' Yet, you insisted that he be put to death. Therefore, you, in effect, have murdered Him." That's what the phrase means: "You brought this Man's blood upon us." "Here you are, throughout Jerusalem, portraying us, the religious leaders, as a bunch of murderers."

"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, 'We ought to obey God rather than men." There's the principle again: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you slew and hanged on a tree." You have to appreciate that Peter, who was not fearful to stand up and point his finger at them and say, "You killed him." When he says, "Whom you slew," he meant, "You murdered Him." He's telling these leaders of Israel, who were the authorities to obey the moral code of the Ten Commandments, that they had been guilty of murder one. They had taken a life.

God has exalted Him with his right hand to be a prince and a Savior to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. We are His witnesses of these things. So is also the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to them that obey Him." So, here again, the apostle said, "We know what we're talking about. We have a message from God, and we will not be silent to our society. We are going to proclaim this.

Drop down to Acts 5:40: "And to him they agreed. When they had called the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple and in every house, they did not cease to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Here the authorities went one step further to put punishment on these men. They put them to the beating. What was the response? The apostles were helpless in the face of the punishment, but once they turned them loose, they went out there laughing and congratulating one another, and rejoicing that they had been counted worthy to bear the stripes of Jesus Christ upon their body. What did they do? They went right down the street to the temple; stood up; and, started preaching against salvation – justification by faith. They went to every house (from house to house) in the city of Jerusalem, proclaiming the message that they were forbidden to speak. They were influencing their society.

So, thousands of people were being born again at one time throughout that city. Something was happening, and it was happening because these men would not be silent about the truth, and because they were determined to change their society from the evil thing it was, to functioning according to the Word of God. They were not seeking, obviously, to be accepted.

**The Tribulation Martyrs**

The people who live in the tribulation are going to remember that kind of a tradition. They are going to say, "We are now under the gun as those apostles once were, and we are going to follow their pattern. We are not going to seek to be accepted by the authorities or by our society, but we are going to proclaim the truth. They were not willing to be silent just to get along with people. They were, furthermore, not trying to dress up the Christian message so that it sounded like paganism.

**Watering Down the Gospel**

That's what Christians are doing today. It is the fashion today among preachers to try to dress up the leftist ideology in biblical terminology, as if it were in compatibility with Christianity, just to escape rejection and ridicule. So, the leftist ideas are being conveyed under Christian terminology. In Latin America, it's called liberation theology, which is pure-gutted Marxism which is being presented as an expression of compassionate Christianity. That's the style – to pretend that something that Satan is promoting is the same thing as what God is promoting.

Well, these people weren't about to do that. Yet that's the fashion today. What the believers in the tribulation will do is point out the failures of the antichrist's world, and those failures are going to be discrediting everything that the antichrist is standing for. All of the liberal, social, political, religious and economic concepts are going to be humiliated in the era of the tribulation, because it's going to end up in the turmoil of war. There is going to be tremendous poverty, as we've seen. There's going to be tremendous famine, and there's going to be tremendous bloodshed. So, instead of a golden age, it's going to be one of the worst times in human history.

I shouldn't call these people Christians in the tribulation. They are no longer members of the body of Christ. They are believers who are on Old Testament ground again. The believers of the tribulation era are going to refuse to be open-minded to ideas which are condemned by the Bible, and condemned by God. So, they are not to be treated as if they were indifferent, and to say, "Well, we must be loving, and we must not ignore these ideas." This is the way the word "love" is being used in evangelical circles today – that you're coming down so hard upon God's justice and God's holiness and God's righteousness, that you are not being loving. But John says, in one of his epistles, "If you do not have the Word of God in truth, then you cannot love either." So, the people of the tribulation, who know God, will have truth as their business, and the most loving thing that they will do is to give people that truth.

**Unashamed**

Furthermore, they will not be ashamed, obviously, to follow this biblical truth. They're not going to be like some kids are today who are ashamed of their biblical fundamentalist parents, and who, therefore, seek to act in some tradition of independence just to show that they're not just following their parents like parrots. For anybody who is reared in biblical Christianity, he does grow up where he's already at the top of the scale. He already grows up where he has information.

No place is this more evident than as it was again to us around the campfires at summer camp this past week, when we started asking questions – not rinky-dink questions, but deep, theological questions, and we find kids popping the answers. And I mean that little junior age kids were popping the answers. Again, is it inevitably evidenced that the kids who know what's going on are the kids who are in Berean academy; they're in the Berean Youth Clubs' and, they're in the church ministries. They've been taught doctrine. The counselors always comment on the fact: "Isn't it interesting that we sit in that circle, and there are duds in those kids? They're the outsiders when we talk about real significant spiritual things. But for the kids who have been taught, it is so evident. And they're not just the high school and the junior high kids. Even the littlest kid will come up with deep, perceptive understanding of the Word of God.

So, when you start with that kind of training in your background, you are really dumb to grow up and say, "I don't want to be like that. I don't want to be one of these fundamentalists. It makes me so different from all these other people. These people are dummies. I want to be a dummy like the rest of them when it comes to spiritual things. I don't want to walk through them, tall in the saddle, and five feet above them, because then they're going to shoot at me. They're going to take potshots at me. They're not going to accept me."

**Acceptance**

How many youngsters grow up and say, "I have to rub some filth on myself so I can be dirty as the rest of them, and look a lot like them so that they won't think I'm so odd, and I'll be accepted?" Why do you want to be accepted if to be accepted means to be practicing evil in order to get that acceptance?

In Romans 1:21, here's what happens when you are ashamed of the fact that you start off with the truth: "Because 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." People who had a knowledge of God were not grateful for it. In fact they were a little ashamed of the fact that they knew so much about God: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."

We discussed this around the campfire one night: about what happens when you are not grateful for something that God has done, or not grateful with the truth of God. The kids knew just what to say. What happens? Some kid says, "Well, you just start worshiping idols." I said, "That's right. And what then happens that's even worse?" And then they got down: "Well, they worship animals." We talked about cows and rats that you can't kill in India because they're gods that you must worship. Then I said, "It's even worse than four-footed animals." One guy said, "Yes, it is snakes – creeping things." They knew the passage, and they knew how far down you can descend in your grossness when you are ashamed of the truth, that you have of God to begin with, and that you are not appreciative of.

I told the boys, "Don't forget that while you may be that debased and gross in your spiritual understanding, you may be a magnificent, cultured person on the outside – a great empire." I told them a little about Egypt, and the fact that one of the great gods of Egypt was the beetle. They all knew what a beetle was. But I said, "The beetle that they worshiped was known as the dung beetle. Do you know what dung is?" Some kid did. He said, "That's manure." I said, "You know where that comes from, and these people said that that was their god. This was his throne – a piece of manure, and this is the God they worshiped."

That's getting low. I had to leave the subject because some of them look like they were getting sick right there at the campfire when we were talking about worshiping that kind of a god. But when you're not grateful for the truth, and you're ashamed of it, you say, "No, I don't want to walk out here and say, 'Hey, I know what's going on. I know the real God. I know how to get to heaven, and I know how you'll to hell, and I know the answers to these things.'" You do not have to grow up and say, "No, I must pretend that I'm as ignorant as the rest of you." Obviously, the people in the tribulation, who are believers, are not going to be ashamed of what they know, and it's going to cost them their lives.

**Abortion**

So, indeed, we must say, where is the salt in American society today? You must wonder why, when the American Medical Association comes out in favor of abortion, that all the Christian doctors in the United States didn't rise up with one enraged, thunderous voice sounding forth against that evil, and have said, "If that's what the AMA stands for, then we are going to form our own medical association."

**Christian Doctors**

And thousands of Christian doctors should have cut loose and gotten out of the Association of the medical world that accepts abortion, which is an evil clearly condemned by the Word of God, that tells us that every conception is an act of God's provision, and that children are a provision from God, and that as that child is developed in the womb, he is known in all of his intricate parts that God is weaving together, and that he is destined to be indeed a living soul, and that, therefore, he is special from the moment of conception. This is a terrible evil. However, where are the Christian doctors standing up and saying, "No, this is wrong, and we will not be associated with a group that tolerates it."

**Christian Lawyers**

Where the Christian lawyers who have not risen in indignation against the death-oriented Supreme Court that we have, which imposes abortion upon all the 50 states, and fights any effort to preserve life? Where are the Christian lawyers to rise up and say, "We are forming our own organization, and we are pointing to that group of evil men who sit on that court, and we call them for the evil people that they are – disoriented to God's thinking, and we don't pretend that they're fine, upstanding citizens who can speak for the living God, because they don't.

**Christian Preachers**

Where are the preachers, indeed, who are willing to be the prophets of God, exposing the evil in our society, and in the lives of people by the Word of God, and the doctrines of truth? Where are the preachers who should be the prophets proclaiming, instead of seeking a professional acceptance and a name, and instead of seeking to shell out to people what people want, so that people have a feeling that somehow they've gotten something that's associated with God? One lady recently said that her husband has gone from church to church, and now they're in one of the biggest ones in Dallas. She said, "Every time the preacher stands up, he's a big name in the Dallas area, but I want to throw up. There's hardly a service where he's not weeping. There is hardly a service where he is not just shelling out the emotion. And I sit there so spiritually starved. And my husband grieves me that he doesn't know better – that he thinks that that's where it's at, to get out and to have that kind of an emotional charge brought, and then we sit there without any real knowledge or the Word of God.

Where are the preachers? Well, the preachers are getting away with murder because the people don't know. Once the people are informed and understand what the contents of the Word of God has for them, they won't stomach that preacher. They'll walk out. They'll never come back, and they won't tolerate it. But most of the Christian community is so benighted that they'll keep going back, and they'll keep supporting, and they'll keep sustaining the evil prophets (if not evil, the ignorant prophets).

**Christian Publishers**

Where the Christian publishers who should be resisting the latest fad, and the latest desire to make money in the world of publications? One fine author was told by a very prominent publisher of Christian literature, "We don't want any more books from you about the Bible." He said, "Well, what kind of books do you want?" And this is a Christian publisher. He said, "We want devotional books. We want books that are spiritual that inspire people. That's the kind of books we want." And this man writes tremendous things. But he also raises furor because he puts his finger on the raw ends of the evil in our society and in the religious community. But the publishers say, "We don't want to divide people. We want books that bring them lovingly together." But Jesus said, "I came to bring the sword. I came to slash and cut right between a husband and a wife, if one is a believer and one is an unbeliever; between parents and their children, if one is a believer and the other is an unbeliever. I've come to be definitive, and to separate."

**Christian Marriages**

However, we have so many of these yo-yo men around who do not have any spiritual orientation; who do not have any spiritual guidance; and, who are just the tail end of their wives. They're just like a tail on a dog. Whatever spiritual direction their wife wants to drift to, they run after her. They themselves are not men who take hold of the Word of God and take their responsibility to lead into the truth. Pity the home where the father is not competent spiritually, and thank God for the mothers who can take over, but they'll never go to the top with God under that leadership. It's not God's arrangement. Truth always results in confrontation with falsehood, but people want affluence and peace. They don't want any angelic warfare around them.

**Christian Educators**

Where are the Christian educators who ought to be standing against evolution; values clarification; and, the humanism which is resulting in illiterate ignorance – being ignorant of our cultural heritage as Christians in this nation? The educators are training children to live like animals. So, we have the results of that: the high crime; the high divorce rate; the high abortion rate; the high welfare rate; and, the high immorality. All of this is directly attributable in large measure to the educational system. But where are the Christian educators who should be standing up and striking out with both barrels against that evil in our society?

**Christian Politicians**

And where are the Christian politicians who should be enraged at the inflation; who should be enraged at the voting benefits to vested interests from public money; who should be enraged at perpetuating themselves in office; and, who should be permitting the harassment of biblical organizations by government agencies? You haven't seen anything yet, because as the government becomes more powerful, it is going to come down on Christian influences. It hates it.

So, what I'm saying is that we today need to fight back like the tribulation believers are going to fight back, and they are going to fight back. They are going to resist those who oppose the Word of God. They are going to hit so hard that people are going to sit up and take notice, and they're going to pay attention to the realities that God has spoken of in His Word. Furthermore, they're going to accept the inevitable conflicts and separation that that imposes upon them when they stand up and they hit evil hard. They're not going to be mealy-mouthed and pussyfoot around it. Those are going to be desperate days. But nevertheless, they are the pattern for us.

But the Lord Jesus warned what's going to happen if you do that. And they're going to be prepared for it? In Matthew 10:32, the Lord tried to prepare us for what it is to stand for the truth of God and to sound it within our society: "Whoever, therefore, shall confess Me before men, him I will confess also before My Father who is in heaven. Whoever shall deny Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. Do not think 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 a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. He that loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He that finds his life shall lose it, and he that loses his life for My sake shall find it."

That's the principle. You are so tempted when it happens to be a close family member that is the violator of the truth, that you want to compromise with it, and that you want to make the Word of God say something less than what it says. But our society has to hear it from Christians. The Lord Jesus Christ did not call us to be non-offensive and nonjudgmental, but to sound a warning, and to call men to God's ways. Have you ever heard some preacher say, "Well, you shouldn't be judgmental?" That's one of the favorites. The evangelical preacher just loves to say, "We must be nonjudgmental. Do not come down and say, 'This is what the Word of God says, and this is what you're doing. You're wrong.' That's judgmental." But the Word of God calls us to do exactly that.

It's important to remember that somebody is going to call the plays in our society and in our government. So, you and I have to decide whether we Christians are going to be the patsies or the pacesetters. That's what it comes down to. Somebody is going to call the plays. It's amazing how people just don't seem to get that. We are in a society where somebody is calling the plays, and we just lean back and permit, by default, for the evil ones to do the calling instead of saying, "We're going to fight, for we, who know the Word of God, are to be the ones who are in positions of authority, and we're going to call the plays. Somebody is going to call the plays. Historically, there has always been hatred and hostility toward biblically oriented Christians on the part of those who exercise the power in our society. Government power has always hated biblical principles, but the price indeed of discipleship has often been martyrdom, and will still be that in the future.

Matthew 16:24-25: "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself; take up his cross; and, follow Me. For whoever shall save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." If you want to come to real living, to real eternal consequent rewarded living, you're going to have to set your life aside, and you're going to have to permit the Lord Jesus Christ to use you as a testimony at a personal price to you. *Christian service is always not doing something else.* You don't kid me; you don't kid other Christians; and, you don't kid yourself when you explain why you cannot perform in some capacity of Christian service, and why you do not execute. It is only because you do not choose to do that. It is only because you do not choose not to do something else, and to carry on the Lord's work. It is clear that there are some people that God can count on, and some people that he cannot. But there is a price to pay.

Nowhere is that more evident than when we go to summer camp. I look upon that staff of people who go through considerable physical drain; emotional drain; and, everything else, day-after-day. It is the epitome of the example of putting a life on the line in Christian service. I can understand why some people avoid it like the plague. It is solid front-line service for the Lord. However, Romans 12:1-2 make this appeal to us: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your body as a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." How many Christians are going to offer their bodies as instruments of God's service?

**They Cried Out**

That's what these tribulation people are doing. They know all this. They'll have the Scriptures, and they're going to be executing it in the finest way that it has ever been done before. So, these believers in Revelation 6 are faced with the fact that their testimony has cost them their lives. That brings up something that is a concern to their heart. In verse 10, they express that concern. They have a question: "And they cried out with a loud voice." The word "cried" is the word "krazo" in the Greek Bible. It's a word that sounds just like what it means. "Krazo" is a cry out. It means "a real tremendous shout." These people, as martyrs now, are at a point where they're speaking up. They personally are doing the shouting. They have been killed in the tribulation, and they are ready to ask a question.

We have this same word used in several places in the New Testament that illustrated it. In Matthew 21:15, we have children praising the Lord Jesus Christ in this kind of a shouting fashion, which is the idea here: "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the temple," and there you have them shouting out in the temple saying, "'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they were very displeased." Jesus is being praised here by the children, and the religious leaders are objecting.

In Matthew 27:23, this word "krazo" is used to describe what the mob was doing in shouting things up at the Lord Jesus as He hung on the cross: "And the governor said, 'Why? What evil has He done?' But they cried out the more saying, 'Let Him be crucified.'" Here He stood before Pilate, and Pilate was trying to save Jesus. They're crying out to the governor, "Crucify Him." You can just see this mob scene of the yelling to Pilate.

This word is used to describe the cry of Jesus as He gave up His life in Matthew 27:50: "Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up His Spirit." There you have the word "cried." You have again the word "krazo."

**How Long?**

The Greek Bible further adds the word "loud." It is indicating a great intensity: "And they cried with a loud voice." This is the Greek word "phone," meaning the sound of human speech. These people: "Shout out with a loud voice (human speech), and they say." And here's what they say. The words here are stressing the meaning of what they're saying: "How long?" This is made up of two Greek words. "How" is "heos," and "long" is "pote." These are both adverbs. "Heos" means "until," and "pote" means "when." So, we put it together ("until when"), and we get the idea, "How long?" These martyrs are asking God about a time element – a time element in something relative to what they want Him to do.

**Sovereign Lord**

They address Him with the word "Lord." We know the word "Lord" in its usual meaning where it indicates deity. But this is not that Greek word. This is a different word. This is the word "despotes." And you can see that we get our English word "despot" from that, meaning someone who is a total, absolute, sovereign master. This word indicates absolute ownership and unrestricted power. We would describe it as "sovereign lord." So, this word proclaims that we're dealing with somebody who is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, and who has all the qualities of deity. He is in command in the universe. So, they address Him as: "How long, O Lord," or "Until when, O Lord."

**The Holy God (Righteous and Just)**

Then they describe Him as one who is holy ("hagios"). That means "one separated from evil," so He is sacred. God is holy because of two things. On the one hand, God is absolute righteousness. On the other hand, God is perfect justice. He is absolute righteousness – there is no evil in God; and, He is perfect justice – He does what is fair. Because of that, God is holy. Everyone is going to be judged, therefore, by the standard of God's holiness. Therefore, you're going to be judged relative to sin as an unbeliever on the basis of God's absolute holiness, and you're going to be treated as per His perfect justice. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." This word "holy" is the glory of God. It is God's absolute standard – His holiness. Everybody has fallen short of that standard, and everybody will be judged accordingly. Everyone who dies in Adam, rather than being in Christ, will receive the justice from God of death in the lake of fire forever.

In Revelation 20:11-15, we have that sober picture presented where we see the Great White Throne: "The dead, small and great, then standing before God; the books being opened concerning their human good works that they have to offer; and, Hades giving up the dead that are in it. Then death and Hades together are being cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Revelation 20:15 says, "And whoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." People go into the lake of fire because they cannot match up to the holiness of God. You cannot present absolute righteousness, and you cannot be God's perfect justice. The only way you can do that is through Jesus Christ – to have His absolute righteousness attributed to you. So, anyone who dies while in Adam is doomed to the lake of fire.

So, the book of Hebrews tries to impress upon people that it is a terrible thing to die without Christ as Savior. Hebrews 10:31 says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The Bible makes it very clear that the place that unbelievers go to is a place of pain. It is burning. It is described as a place of brimstone: fire and brimstone. That is real. That's not poetic language. Therefore, it is a very fearful thing to fall into the hands of that kind of a god. Here, these martyrs in heaven shout out, "How long, O, Lord?" And then they describe Him: "He who is the sovereign God who is holy." And, furthermore, "He is true." That is the word "alethinos." "Alethinos" means "genuine: conforming to reality." A purse which is made of imitation leather is not the real thing, and it will wear accordingly. So, God in Heaven is the genuine deity of the universe in contrast to all the false gods of the tribulation – those created by Satan, and those created by man.

**Judgment**

"How long, O Lord, you who are the true and living God out there, how long before you judge?" The word is "krino," which means to execute justice – dispensing justice against someone. The Bible makes it clear that only God can dispense real justice. He is the one who takes vengeance. Hebrews 10:30 says, "For we know Him that has said, 'Vengeance belongs to Me. I will recompense,' says the Lord, and again, the Lord shall judge His people.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 we read, "In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that do not know God, and that do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." God is going to judge, and He is going to judge as only He can judge. These people are saying, "How long, O, God, is it going to be before You judge (before you bring punishment?" The word they use is, "Before You 'avenge.'" It is the word "ekdikeo." "Ekdikeo" refers to the process of justice. "Ek" means "from," and "dike" means "justice:" "from justice:" "How long are You going to wait before the imposition of justice?" Justice for what reason? Justice, specifically, they say, "Because of their "haima" (their "blood"), meaning the fluid in their bodies which was shed, and which brought about their death. In other words, they're saying, "How long, O God, are you going to wait before you avenge our martyrdom, and particularly, the martyrdom on those who dwell upon the earth?"

The word "katoikeo" means "to settle down in a place." It's a place of permanent resident. It says here, "On the earth" (the planet earth). So, the phrase "them that dwell on the earth" is a technical phrase. It refers to unbelievers – those whose natural realm is the earth and not heaven: "How long, O, God, are we going to have to wait before You exercise justice? How long before You, who are the holy and true God, the real God, exercise justice in behalf of our blood on these unbelievers on the earth who took our lives?" These are the earth-dwellers who rejected the martyrs' testimony about heaven and God, and who killed them. These martyrs cry out, "How long? How long is the human viewpoint crowd going to get away with the brutal, evil things that they are doing."

I'm sure that you and I can enter into that feeling. How often have we been made fools of? How often have we been ridiculed? How often have we been discounted and rejected? And yet we're right. We know exactly what's going on. We know what God is doing. We know where the world is moving. How often, when we try to apply this to our society, and we sound forth on political matters; on social matters; and, on economic matters, do people give us a snide smile and say, "Oh yeah, you're one of those backward fundamentalists," and you are rejected, and yet you're just as right as rain. You have the truth. You have the perspective.

It is not unusual for us to think, "God, how long? How long are they going to get away with it? How long are they going to be able to ride high and trample over God's people and over the truth? How long? That's what these martyrs are crying out.

We have run out of time for this session, but we'll pick it up next time. The Bible is full of some tremendous examples from which we may learn of what it is to stand by and to take the stand on the position of truth, in spite of the abuse which that brings us, and to remember that there is an answer. In verse 11, their answer says, "I haven't forgot you. Stand by. All the martyrs aren't in yet." And they're given the comforting realization to know that God has not forgotten our labor of love. God has not forgotten the abuse. This may be abuse within the family, and this may be abuse from someone who is closely related to you. Don't ever forget that God is well aware of it.

You may wonder how long the world is going to get away with its wickedness; how long this person is going to get away with his wickedness; and, how long you are going to suffer the abuse. However, somewhere down the line, God is going to say, "That's it. This is the end." Then everything is going to change. These very people who are crying out in this agony are the people who are going to become the prominent personalities of the millennial world. These are the people that God will put in esteemed positions of one kind and another. Here they are – the garbage pile of the antichrist's world. Here they are like animals to be slaughtered without mercy. But when God says, "I start executing my justice," it's all going to be changed.

That was a comfort to them. It is on the one hand, a comfort to us; and, on the other hand, an encouragement to start telling our society what God thinks. That's the problem we face today. We Christians are not telling our society what God thinks. We are not putting people in positions of power and authority who think the way God thinks. Until we do that, we're going to have abuse without any changes. When once we start taking charge, and once we realize that somebody is going to call the plays, and we decide that we Christians are the ones who are going to take charge, then things will be different. May God help us to have the courage to realize that right is might, and it's on our side.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1984

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