life group study guide

October 11, 2015

Reading
Rev 6

Revelation 6 is summary of judgments to come. Each judgment is represented by a seal. This passage can be thought of as a giant scroll with a series of wax seals. As the scroll is unrolled the seals are broken one by one to reveal the next judgment. As you can see, the Lamb of God is the only one worthy of breaking the first seal.

If we were to look at the seals as bullet points, it would look like this:

Seal	Passage	Judgment
1	6:1-2	The conqueror is introduced
2	6:3-4	Conflict on earth
3	6:5-6	Scarcity on earth
4	6:7-8	Widespread death
5	6:9-11	The cry of the martyrs
6	6:12-17	Cosmic disturbance
7	8:1	Opens next series of judgments (trumpets)

To fully get an appreciation for the disarray that the earth is falling into, we should revisit earth's creation.

Discussion:

> *How God describe creation throughout Genesis 1 as it was formed?*
> *How does Paul describe creation in 8:22?*
> *What is the cause of this decline?*

God made us and all of creation in a state of perfection and peace: in shalom. Sadly, shalom was disrupted at the introduction of sin. For thousands of years the earth has been existing in a state contrary to its intended creation, which is why Paul described the earth as "moaning." We will go from shalom to moaning to utter chaos, all as a result of sin. Christians, like creation itself should feel a longing for the peace the God will ultimately restore.

There have been books written and debates waged over is moaning. Some of the most asked questions from unbelievers are, "Why do bad things happen to good people? and How can God allow death to innocent people?" The answer relates back to the end of shalom. Because sin has disrupted our peace, we (like earth) continue to live in a fallen environment that includes death and



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pain. While this answer may not bring comfort to someone in pain, it should give hope to believers, because we know that one day shalom will be restored.

Revelation 6 kicks off the judgments that Jesus describes in Mat 24. Mat 24:3-31 is a well- known passage of scripture, often referred to as the Olivet Discourse (because it occurred on the Mount of Olives). Read Matt 24:3-31 and discuss Jesus' description of end times with the reading from Revelation.

Many people have approached the book of Revelation using "crystal ball theology," trying to use God's word to predict dates and tell the future. This is clearly not the purpose of this book. In fact Jesus says in Mat 24:36, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven." However, some people have taken this passage as a freedom to be ignorant of end time theology. This too is an inappropriate response. Just before Jesus gives his well-known statement about not knowing the exact hour, he gives us the parable of the fig tree.

Read Mat 32:-34. Just as we should be able to tell that a branch has become tender and about to put forth leaves, we too should be able to discern the times that we live in. We need to know God's word well enough to properly understand God's promises at a high level (without the exact predictions).

Jesus continues in Mat 24:37 by comparing the end times to the time of Noah. People were obsessed with the mundane elements of life, eating, drinking, getting married etc. There was a purely human centered focus that disregarded God altogether. And in an instant, that life was over.

Discussion:

> *How are we like the people in Noah's day, guilty of being obsessed with our own lives?*
> *What can we do to be more like Noah?*

Closing Prayer

Dear God, thank you for your gift of creation and your promise to return peace. Thank you for your word and having the grace to give a warning of the judgments to come. Help us to live like Noah, always focusing on you and not ourselves.

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