

Revelation 6 – Seeing Reality in Difficult Times



The vision of Revelation 4-5 now moves down to the earth. Jesus, the Lamb who died, is about to open the seals on the scroll he received from God's right hand, which will show the outworking of God's purposes.

The first four seals show four horsemen, bringing conquest, war, famine and death. The fifth seal shows the martyrs who had died for their witness to Jesus, calling out for God to avenge them. The sixth gives a dramatic picture of the final judgment. The seventh seal is still to be opened (chapter 8).

These vivid visions dramatically show us reality, for both the harsh Roman world and today's challenging situation:

1. The **real story** – not the sugar-coated version from the powers-that-be; we do not live in a safe world.
2. The **real ruler** – Jesus, not the emperor or other political leaders; we are safe in his hands, whatever the events in the world.
3. The **real battle** – between God and satan; Christians then and now are called, above all, to be faithful to Jesus.
4. The **real ending** – in which Jesus, the judge, makes all things right; those who have been faithful will enjoy his presence for ever.

Questions

1. What are the differences between the stories about life offered by leaders of the developed world and what John shows us in Revelation?
2. How can we cope emotionally with the uncertainties of the future, during and after the Covid pandemic?
3. What does it mean for us right now to be faithful witnesses to Jesus in the middle of this pandemic?
4. How does God's ultimate judgment of the world encourage us?

Resources

This chapter throws us into the deep end of Revelation's complex visions and symbolism. Many challenging questions might arise. For those who want to grapple more deeply with them, we recommend the commentary on Revelation by Ian Paul, published by IVP.

I will be writing two short notes, to explore some of the interpretation issues the chapter throws up and the difficult theme of judgment in Revelation. Please ask if interested (email john.davy@gatewayleeds.net).

The follow-up Going Deeper video will explore some aspects of faithfulness today; the link will be shown soon on Gateway's Facebook page.

For resources about persecuted Christians today: <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/>