

Revelation 6 | The Kindness of God Revealed in His Patient and Progressive Judgment

The gist of **Chapter 6** is that God's judgment has come to earth

- Future—Tribulation period—Unfolds over time (kindness)
- It was preceded by the **Cross** and the age of grace—It will be followed by the **renewal** of all things
- Judgment is **not** ultimate (i.e. the final event)—renewal and reconciliation and righteousness are
- But before those final chapters (21-22), there are several chapters that reveal God's judgment

To be sure, the imagery and language and pictures given us in Revelation are meant to cause shock and awe

- But not so much for the purpose of fear—but rather as a wake up call
 - For the world (repent)
 - And for the church (righteousness & mission)
- This is God's kindness
 - Because sin destroys (a God of love will judge sin)
 - Calling us away from it is kindness
 - Both in escaping the destructive nature of sin—but also in escaping God's judgment of it

Last week in **Chapter 5** we saw Jesus presented as the only one who is worthy to bring God's **judgment and justice** to the world because He is the one who brought God's **grace and mercy** to the world through the Cross (CF. The **Lion** and the **Lamb**)

- Christ, having accomplished the ultimate act of grace and mercy...
- ... Is now going to unleash judgment and justice on those who deserve it (and refused mercy)

Remember:

- Grace and mercy were offered first
 - **John 3:16-17 (NASB)**
- God is surprisingly slow to judge
 - **Psalms 145:8 & 17 (NASB)**
- Some would say too slow
 - **2 Peter 3:9 (NASB)**
 - Cf. **Revelation 6:9-10**

What we see in this chapter is:

- **The Kindness of God Revealed in His Patient and Progressive Judgment**
- His wrath is not poured out all at once in an absolute manner (unfolds in discernable, foretold stages)
- His judgment comes **progressively because of His desire for people to be saved**
 - God is leaving room for repentance at every point
 - God has always done so and has always made that plain
 - **Acts 17:30-31 (NASB)**
 - Many will repent—many won't
 - See: **6:16-17**
 - See: **16:8-11**
 - This shows both the **mercy and justice** of God
 - He has shown **mercy** in leaving room for repentance
 - He is **just** in punishing those who refuse to repent (love = judgment)
 - Their refusal to repent shows their colors
 - **John 3:18-19 (NASB)**

Even though in **Revelation 6**, the day of God's judgment has come to earth—it comes patiently and progressively—because God is kind and loving

This is shown in the progressive breaking of the 7 seals (**imagery and pictures used here**)

The Seven Seal Judgments

The Seal

1st Seal (vv. 1-2)
 2nd Seal (vv. 3-4)
 3rd Seal (vv. 5-6)
 4th Seal (vv. 7-8)
 5th Seal (vv. 9-11)
 6th Seal (vv. 12-14)
 7th Seal

Contents

False Messiah
 Worldwide War
 Famine
 Death
 Justice for the Martyrs
 Nature Disturbed
 7 Trumpets of Rev. 8-11

Jesus' Foretelling

Matthew 24:3-5
 Matthew 24:6-7^a
 Matthew 24:7^b-8
 Matthew 24:21-22
 Matthew 24:9-10
 Matthew 24:29-30

Commentary on the above:

The first 4 seals (The 4 Riders of the Apocalypse)

- Sometimes God's judgments take the form of:
 - His allowing people's own desires/actions to run their course
 - And for them to experience the consequences
 - Cf. See: **Romans 1:20-32 (NLT)**
 - This seems to be the nature of this first phase of God's judgment—allowing human choices to run their courses (Cf. the first 4 seals)
 - **False Savior, War, famine, pestilence, death, inflation + injustice in the marketplace...**
 - These are the outworking of God's moral laws (Cf. Physical laws)
 - This shows us that even when the world seems out of control—God is still the one in power
- The beginning of a specific period of time of God's judgment on earth (cf. **birth pangs**) = **God allowing humanity's sin and its consequences to run its full course**

The 5th seal

- **Persecution** = major issue at the time and a major issue in the future (as it is now)
- The martyrs' prayers for justice is answered in **Revelation 16:5-7**

The 6th seal

- This may mean that there is **actual changes** in the physical universe (cosmic convulsions) caused by God
 - Certainly would be an attempt to get people's attention (as God wants to)
 - Cf. **Matthew 24:27, 29-30**
- This sort of imagery is seen frequently throughout the OT to describe social and political upheaval
 - Cf. **Jeremiah 4:23-26**, where the desolation caused by foreign invaders is intended
- May mean that the whole system of this world is so turned **upside down and in chaos**—that the language and imagery in the text **symbolizes** this chaos by speaking of the shaking of things which seem so fixed and stable and reliable (**sun, moon, stars, mountains**)

Either way, we begin to see humanity's reaction to God's judgment

- **Revelation 6:15-17**
- Even though they know this is God's judgment—they would rather die than repent

John 3:19-21 (NASB)

19 This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and **men loved the darkness** rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.

20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, **and does not come to the Light** for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

21 But **he who practices the truth** comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.

What about you now?

- Are you coming to the Light (Jesus) or do you love the darkness? Christian—Are you practicing the truth?