



SAVED TO SERVE
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THE SEVEN SEALS - THE FIFTH SEAL

1. In this Sabbath School Lesson, we will study the opening of the fifth seal found in the book of Revelation.
2. Let us read Revelation 6:9-11. What were the first things that were seen, once the fifth seal was opened? Revelation 6:9

3. Note: What was the time period of the fifth seal? Answer: It was during the time when the persecution of the saints by Popery had ceased. To confirm that point, notice that under the fourth seal, we saw that the saints of God were being slain (Revelation 6:7, 8). Under the fifth seal, the saints of God had already been slain and as a result, John sees them under the altar.
4. Approximately what year did the persecution of the saints by Popery temporarily cease? (See quotation. This date marks the opening of the fifth seal).

"...In the Saviour's conversation with His disciples upon Olivet, after describing the long period of trial for the church,—the 1260 years of papal persecution, concerning which He had promised that the tribulation should be shortened,—He thus mentioned certain events to precede His coming, and fixed the time when the first of these should be witnessed: "In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." Mark 13:24. The 1260 days, or years, terminated in 1798. A quarter of a century earlier, persecution had almost wholly ceased. Following this persecution, according to the words of Christ, the sun was to be darkened. On the 19th of May, 1780, this prophecy was fulfilled." {GC 306.1}

5. According to Revelation 6:9, where were the souls seen that were slain? _____
6. Note: Where is this altar? Answer: This altar was on the earth. These visions of the opening of the seven seals pertain to the saints of God upon the earth. What is this altar? To understand what this altar represents, we must first understand the purpose of an altar in Bible times. An altar was the place upon which an offering was sacrificed. Therefore, when the Papacy butchered the saints, God accepted the death of the saints as an offering pleasing in His sight. In addition, there are many historical accounts that show that the Papal leaders and soldiers designed make-shift altars: they would bind the saints of God to poles and place fagots/sticks, under their feet, and burn them alive. So, John sees the saints "under the altar," because they gave their lives as a living sacrifice to God.
7. Why were the saints of God slain? Revelation 6:9

8. What words did John hear? Revelation 6:10

9. According to the Bible, what does it say about the consciousness of the dead? Ecclesiastes 9:5,6,10; Isaiah 38:18-19; Psalm 6:5; 115:17

10. Since the dead do not speak and are unconscious, what does Revelation 6:10 mean? Answer: It is a figure of speech, known as personification - giving to an inanimate object, the figure or the sentiments and language of a rational, human being. Here are a few Biblical examples: Genesis 4:9,10; Hebrews 11:4; Habakkuk 2:11; Luke 19:40
11. According to Revelation 6:11, what words were spoken to the saints of God?

12. Where do the dead rest? Revelation 14:13; Job 14:10, 12-14

13. According to Revelation 6:11, what was given to the saints of God? _____

14. Note: What does it mean that white robes were given unto the dead saints? Answer: Firstly, white robes and white garments represent a person's righteous character in the Bible. See Isaiah 61:10; Revelation 19:7,8. During the time period of persecution, God's saints were accused, judged, and killed as the vilest of criminals. They were hated by all nations and called wicked sinners. Their robes were soiled, meaning their characters were maligned. However, we today judge the martyrs of Jesus as saints of God. In this sense, they have white robes, their faithful characters are restored to them before the world today.

15. When will the saints literally receive their white robes? Revelation 3:5; 7:9, 13, 14 _____

"From garrets, from hovels, from dungeons, from scaffolds, from mountains and deserts, from the caves of the earth and the caverns of the sea, Christ will gather His children to Himself. On earth they have been destitute, afflicted, and tormented. Millions have gone down to the grave loaded with infamy because they refused to yield to the deceptive claims of Satan. By human tribunals the children of God have been adjudged the vilest criminals. But the day is near when "God is judge Himself." (Psalm 50:6). Then the decisions of earth shall be reversed. "The rebuke of His people shall He take away." Isaiah 25:8. White robes will be given to every one of them. (Revelation 6:11.) And "they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord." Isaiah 62:12." {COL 179.3}

16. According to Revelation 6:11, will this scene of persecution for the saints by Popery be repeated? Ecclesiastes 1:9; Revelation 13:3, 12

17. When will the fifth seal be repeated? Revelation 13:15-17 _____

"By the decree enforcing the institution of the papacy in violation of the law of God, our nation will disconnect herself fully from righteousness. When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near." {5T 451.1}

"As the approach of the Roman armies was a sign to the disciples of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, so may this apostasy be a sign to us that the limit of God's forbearance is reached, that the measure of our nation's iniquity is full, and that the angel of mercy is about to take her flight, never to return. The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress which prophets have described as the time of Jacob's trouble. The cries of the faithful, persecuted ones ascend to heaven. And as the blood of Abel cried from the ground, there are voices also crying to God from martyrs' graves, from the sepulchers of the sea, from mountain caverns, from convent vaults: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" {5T 451.2}

18. What will the saints of God be persecuted for? Revelation 6:9; Revelation 12:17

19. Which of the Ten Commandments is one most controverted? _____

20. What is the Testimony of Jesus Christ? Revelation 19:10 _____

21. What words will the saints utter, once the Mark of the Beast is enforced and persecution begins for them? Revelation 6:10

22. What does the Bible say about the duration of this persecution for God's faithful people in these last days? Matthew 24:21, 22; Romans 9:28

"The eye of God, looking down the ages, was fixed upon the crisis which His people are to meet, when earthly powers shall be arrayed against them. Like the captive exile, they will be in fear of death by starvation or by violence. But the Holy One who divided the Red Sea before Israel, will manifest His mighty power and turn their captivity. 'They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.' Malachi 3:17. If the blood of Christ's faithful witnesses were shed at this time, it would not, like the blood of the martyrs, be as seed sown to yield a harvest for God. Their fidelity would not be a testimony to convince others of the truth; for the obdurate heart has beaten back the waves of mercy until they return no more. If the righteous were now left to fall a prey to their enemies, it would be a triumph for the prince of darkness. Says the psalmist: 'In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his

tabernacle shall he hide me.' Psalm 27:5. Christ has spoken: 'Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.'" {GC 634.1}

23. Since time is short and time is almost finished, what does the Lord expect of us? See quotations

"In this time of trial we need to be encouraged and comforted by one another. The temptations of Satan are greater now than ever before, for he knows that his time is short and that very soon every case will be decided, either for life or for death. It is no time now to sink down beneath discouragement and trial; we must bear up under all our afflictions and trust wholly in the Almighty God of Jacob. The Lord has shown me that His grace is sufficient for all our trials; and although they are greater than ever before, yet if we trust wholly in God, we can overcome every temptation and through His grace come off victorious." {EW 46.1}

"If we overcome our trials and get victory over the temptations of Satan, then we endure the trial of our faith, which is more precious than gold, and are stronger and better prepared to meet the next. But if we sink down and give way to the temptations of Satan, we shall grow weaker and get no reward for the trial and shall not be so well prepared for the next. In this way we shall grow weaker and weaker, until we are led captive by Satan at his will. We must have on the whole armor of God and be ready at any moment for a conflict with the powers of darkness. When temptations and trials rush in upon us, let us go to God and agonize with Him in prayer. He will not turn us away empty, but will give us grace and strength to overcome, and to break the power of the enemy. Oh, that all could see these things in their true light and endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus! Then would Israel move forward, strong in God, and in the power of His might." {EW 46.2}

"In a view given June 27, 1850, my accompanying angel said, 'Time is almost finished. Do you reflect the lovely image of Jesus as you should?' Then I was pointed to the earth and saw that there would have to be a getting ready among those who have of late embraced the third angel's message. Said the angel, 'Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye will have to die a greater death to the world than ye have ever yet died.' I saw that there was a great work to do for them and but little time in which to do it." {EW 64.1}