

“...And Justice for All”

A Contextual Study of  
The Three Angels' Messages

“How Long, O Lord?”

The Promise of Justice: Part Two

The Covenant

## Revelation 6:9-11 NKJV

...and they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

# “Here I Stand”

The Promise of Justice: Part One

The Conflict

# Introduction to Judgment

- The first explicit reference to judgment in the book of Revelation is found in Rev 6:9-11
- Revelation 6:9-11 defines the conflict that is at the heart of the story.
  - The conflict in Revelation is about faithfulness to the ‘word of God’ and the ‘testimony of Jesus.’

## Revelation 6:9-11 NKJV

When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held...

# 1. The Conflict

- The conflict is about faithfulness to the ‘word of God’ and to the ‘testimony of Jesus.’
  - These are the ‘two witnesses’—what we would refer to today as the Old and New Testaments.
  - God’s people have suffered because of their faithfulness to the Bible.

# Key thoughts:

- God's people are identified by their faithfulness to His Word.
- God's people have suffered because of their faithfulness to His Word.



**What about the souls under the altar?**

## Genesis 4:8-10 NKJV

Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground..."

**What about Rev 19:10?**

## Revelation 19:10 NKJV

And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "*See that you do not do that!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”

...it is Jesus who speaks through the prophets and it is his message that forms the essential substance of their prophecy.

# Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 366

It was Christ that spoke to His people through the prophets. The apostle Peter, writing to the Christian church, says that the prophets “prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the *Spirit of Christ* which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.” 1 Peter 1:10, 11. It is the voice of Christ that speaks to us through the Old Testament. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Revelation 19:10.

“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”

...it is Jesus who speaks through the prophets and it is his message that forms the essential substance of their prophecy.

“How Long, O Lord?”

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## Revelation 6:9-11 NKJV

...and they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

# Psalm 13:1-2

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

# Psalm 35:17

O Lord, how long will you look on?

Rescue my life from their ravages, my precious life from these lions.

# Psalm 74:10-11

How long will the enemy mock you, O God?

Will the foe revile your name forever?

Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand?

Take it from the folds of your garment and destroy them!

# Psalm 79:5-6, 10

How long, O Lord? Will you be angry for ever?

How long will your jealousy burn like fire?

Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, on the kingdoms that do not call on your name...

# Psalm 79:5-6, 10

Why should the nations say “Where is their God?”

Before our eyes, make known among the nations that you  
avenge the outpoured blood of your servants.

## Psalm 94:1-7

O Lord, the God who avenges, O God who avenges, shine forth.  
Rise up, O Judge of the earth; pay back to the proud what they  
deserve.

How long will the wicked, O Lord, how long will the wicked be  
jubilant?

They pour out arrogant words; all the evildoers are full of  
boasting.

## Psalm 94:1-7

They crush your people, O Lord; they oppress your inheritance.  
They slay the widow and the alien; they murder the fatherless.  
They say, “The Lord does not see; the God of Jacob pays no heed.”



# Psalm 119:84

How long must your servant wait?

When will you punish my persecutors?

# Habakkuk 1:2-4

How long, O Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen?

Or cry out to you “Violence!” but you do not save?

Why do you make me look at injustice?

Why do you tolerate wrong?

# Habakkuk 1:2-4

Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife and conflict abounds.

Therefore the law is paralysed, and justice never prevails.

The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.

## Revelation 6:9-11 NKJV

...and they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

# OT Backgrounds

1. The Song of Moses – Deuteronomy 32

# Deuteronomy 32:35 NKJV

“Vengeance is mine, and recompense”

# Deuteronomy 32:36 NKJV

For the Lord will judge [OR 'vindicate'] His people and have compassion on His servants when He sees that their power is gone, and there is no one remaining, bond or free...

## Deuteronomy 32:40-42 NKJV

For I raise My hand to heaven, and say, "As I live forever, if I whet My glittering sword, and My hand takes hold on judgment, **I will render vengeance to My enemies, and repay those who hate Me.** I will make My arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh, with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the heads of the leaders of the enemy."



## Deuteronomy 32:43 NKJV

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; for **He will avenge the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries;** He will provide atonement for His land and His people."

## Romans 12:17-19 NKJV

Repay no one evil for evil... Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

## 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8 ESV

...God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

## Revelation 6:9-11 NKJV

...and they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

# OT Background

1. The Song of Moses – Deuteronomy 32
  - God will judge [vindicate] his people
  - God will avenge the blood of his servants
  - God will repay those who afflict his people

## Revelation 6:9-11 NKJV

When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held...

## Revelation 6:9-11 NKJV

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

## **Deuteronomy 32:43**

Rejoice, O nations, with His people; for He will **avenge the blood of His servants**, and will render vengeance on His adversaries...

## **Revelation 6:10**

“How long, O Lord, holy and true, until you judge and **avenge our blood** on those who dwell on the earth?”



## Revelation 6:9-11 NKJV

Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest **a little while [lit. 'time'] longer**, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

# Judgment announced

- In response to their cry for justice, the souls of the martyrs are given white robes and are told to rest 'a little time longer'.

## Revelation 10:5-6 NKJV

The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be **delay [lit. 'time'] no longer.**

# Judgment announced

- In response to their cry for justice, the souls of the martyrs are given white robes and are told to rest ‘a little time longer’.
- In Revelation 10 we see an angel coming down out of heaven with the announcement “that there should be time no longer” indicating that the waiting is over—God is about to judge.

### **Deuteronomy 32:43**

Rejoice, O nations, with His people; for He will **avenge the blood of His servants**, and will render vengeance on His adversaries...

### **Deuteronomy 32:40-41**

For I **lift up my hand to heaven and swear, As I live forever**... I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me.

### **Revelation 6:10**

“How long, O Lord, holy and true, until you judge and **avenge our blood** on those who dwell on the earth?”

### **Revelation 10:5-6**

Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land **lifted up his right hand to heaven, and swore by him who lives forever and ever**...

# Judgment executed

- While judgment is announced in Revelation 10, it is not until 16:4-7, the third bowl plague, that we see this judgment begin to be executed.

## Revelation 16:4-7

Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.

And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because You have judged these things..."

## Revelation 16:4-7

For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due."

And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."



# Judgment executed

- As the rivers and the springs of water become blood, John hears the angel in charge of the waters acknowledging God's justice, because in giving "them" blood to drink He has judged the slaying of saints and prophets.
- The altar—presumably the same altar as the one in 6:9—then affirms the angel's acknowledgement by saying, "Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments."

# Revelation 18:20 NKJV

Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets,  
for God has avenged you on her.

### **Deuteronomy 32:43**

Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; for **He will avenge** the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries.

### **Revelation 18:20**

Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for **God has avenged** you on her.

# Judgment celebrated

- In Revelation 19:2 we hear the triumphant proclamation that gives a final and decisive answer to the cry of the martyrs.

# Revelation 19:1-2

"Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!

For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her."

### **Revelation 6:10**

“How long, O Lord, holy and true, until you **judge** and **avenge** our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

### **Revelation 19:2**

For true and righteous are His judgments, because He **has judged** the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and **has avenged** on her the blood of his servants shed by her.”

# Judgment celebrated

- Again God's judgments are acknowledged as "true and just" but this time it is explicitly stated that the reason is because He "has judged the great harlot" (Babylon) and "has avenged on her the blood of his servants."
- This is exactly what the martyrs were longing for God to do. God has answered their prayer and in doing so has fulfilled the covenant promise of Deuteronomy 32.

# Key thought:

- God has promised justice to those who have suffered for their faithfulness to His Word.