



The Real Judgement: A Series in Revelation 5/11

John Bodily – 19th July 2026 ([watch video here](#))

As we continue this series in Revelation, we're reminded that Revelation means "unveiling" or "revealing". Through powerful symbols and images, God reveals spiritual realities that are often hidden from view. Revelation pulls back the curtain on history to show that evil will not have the final word, Jesus has not forgotten his people, and those who trust in him will ultimately be vindicated and sheltered by the Lamb.

In a previous talk in this series (The Real Throne Room) Susie explained how important messages in the ancient world would be sealed and were only to be broken by one with authority to do so. In Revelation 6, Jesus, represented as the Lamb, opens six of the seven seals. As each seal is opened, dramatic images appear:

- The four horsemen symbolise **conquest, war, economic oppression, famine, and death.**
- The martyrs beneath the altar represent believers who have suffered and died for their faith and who cry out, **"How long, Lord?"**
- Cosmic disturbances and earthquakes depict God's judgment and the shaking of worldly powers.
- Humanity responds by asking, **"Who can withstand the wrath of the Lamb?"**

John emphasised that these visions are not simply predictions of future events but portray recurring realities throughout history: human sin, oppressive powers, suffering, persecution, and God's ongoing work of justice.

Zoom Out

The New testament leaves us with the impression that the first-century believers expected Jesus to return imminently. So as the decades passed and persecution intensified, they likely experienced doubts, disillusionment and fears that their sacrifices were being made in vain, leading them to ask the very questions in this chapter of Revelation: **"How long Lord?"** and **"Who can withstand?"**.

The cry of the martyrs, **"How long?"** receives the answer: **"A little while longer."** From God's eternal perspective, history is brief, even though from our perspective the wait can feel painfully long. Zooming out, these 7 seals in chapter 6 begin a chunk spanning 10 chapters, which describes seven trumpets being sounded, and seven bowls poured out each bringing repeated and escalating calamities. John mapped this out for us in this [animation video](#), helping us understand the different perspectives people may have on the rich symbolism within these chapters. We're also encouraged to study further by following the Revelation Reading Plan: trentv.org/revelation. The three perspectives offered by the seals, bowls and trumpets reveal there are a lot of things still to straighten out in this world.

The question **"Who can withstand?"** is answered in Revelation 7. Those who have placed their faith in Jesus, the Lamb who was slain, are pictured wearing white robes washed in his blood. Their salvation does not come through their own goodness, but through Christ's sacrifice. It is God's people, the faithful, who will be able to withstand the wrath of the Lamb, just as the



Israelites did during the first Passover during the plagues of Egypt when God delivered them miraculously.

Zoom In

Key passage: Revelation 6:1-17 (NIV)

For suffering Christians, both in the first century and today, Revelation offers hope that God sees their suffering and has not forgotten his promises; evil will be judged and death is not the end. Jesus is protecting and shepherding his people, even when they cannot see it and a day is coming when God will wipe away every tear.

Revelation presents a God who is patient, giving opportunities for repentance while also remaining committed to justice. A key tension throughout Revelation is that God is both:

- **Merciful** – limiting evil, protecting his people, and delaying judgment to allow people to repent.
- **Just** – refusing to allow evil and injustice to continue forever.

We see this echoed in 2 Peter 3:8b-10a.

Press In

When we experience hardship we may instinctively reach for the same questions we hear in Revelation 6: **“How long Lord?”** and **“Who can withstand?”**. Seen from the perspective of heaven, these troubles and even this age (in comparison to the eternity that lies ahead) is just a little while longer. Therefore, as Christians are encouraged to:

- **Remain faithful** even when circumstances are hard.
- **Prayer matters:** the prayers of God's people are precious to God and play a significant role in his purposes.
- **Persevere** in prayer in our own suffering and for persecuted Christians around the world. See www.opendoorsuk.org for more info and prayer resources to help you pray for the persecuted church.

Reflection questions

1. When have you found yourself asking God, "How long?"
2. How might Revelation's perspective on eternity change the way you view present struggles?
3. How does this message change the way you view current events and suffering in the world?
4. Where do you need to trust that God is at work even when you cannot see it?
5. How can you actively participate in God's work of justice, mercy, and prayerful perseverance?