A Study of the Tribulation
Revelation 6-19
Part 7
The 5th Seal of Revelation 6

Four Seals Reviewed

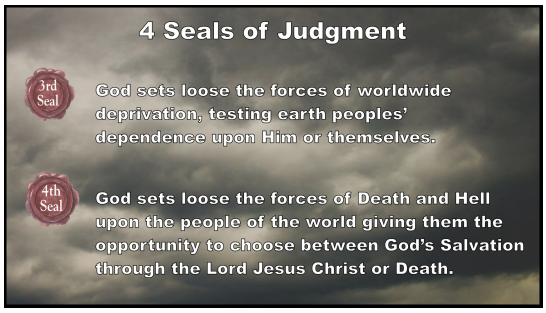
In order to understand this fifth seal, we need to briefly review the judgements of the first four seals:

With the opening of the 1st Seal...

God sets loose the forces of delusion by allowing many antichrists to compete to become earth's ruler and offer the people of earth a choice between the true Christ and the antichrists.

With the opening of the 2nd Seal...

God sets loose forces that remove peace from the world in Satan's attempts to rule earth's kingdoms and allow the people of earth to chose the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ or the war against God and His people.



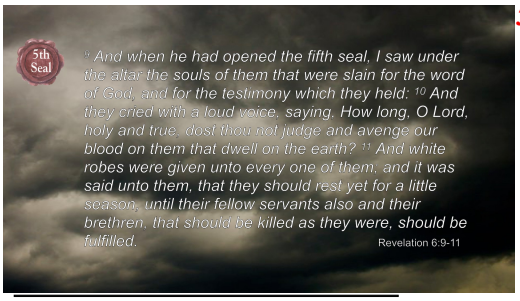
With the opening of the 3rd Seal…

God sets loose the forces of worldwide deprivation, testing earth's peoples dependence upon Him or upon themselves.

With the opening of the 4th Seal…

God sets loose the forces of Death and Hell upon the people of the world tiving them the opportunity to choose between God's offer of Salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ or choose Death - "*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death,*" Proverbs 14:12 (cf. Proverbs 16:25; Ezekiel 33:11).

Thus far, these judgments of the seals demonstrate God's evaluation/assessment of the people of the world with respect to Him and His ways so as to reveal their true nature or character with respect to Him.[1]



5th Seal – Judgment of God's Avenging Wrath, Revelation 6;9-11

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And white robes were

[1]Thomas D. Ice, *The Meaning of "Earth Dwellers" in Revelation,* Bibliotheca Sacra 166 (July-September 2009), 354.

given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

We read this passage often focusing upon the martyrs in heaven without noticing that the true focus is upon those people who are killing true believers during the Tribulation.

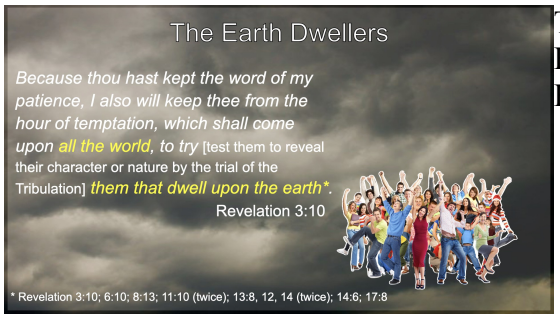
This passage distinguishes between two groups of people upon the earth during the Tribulation:

1) true believers (alive and dead) in the word of God shared by many evangelists of chapter 7 – Revelation 6:9 and

2) those rebelling against God and His people in the Tribulation – Revelation 6:10

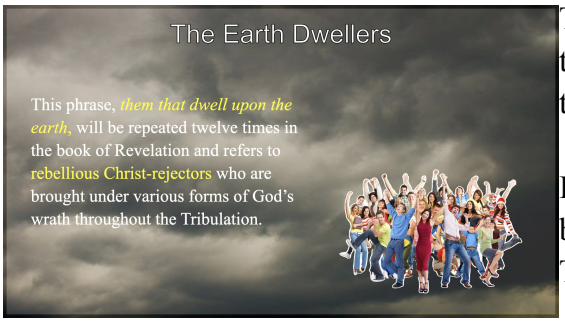
Never forget that God's acts are judgments and wrath in the Tribulation against the rebellious peoples of the earth who are called "*them that dwell on the earth.*"

Understanding the use of the word "world" in Revelation



The Lord used this exact same phrase for the first time in His message to the church at Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7) when He said in verse 10:

> *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of* [the] *temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try* [a test to reveal their character or nature] *them that dwell upon the earth.*



This phrase, *them that dwell upon* [kataoikeo – dwell throughout] *the earth* [γῆς - ghaynas], will be repeated twelve times in the book of Revelation.[2]

In each use it refers to rebellious Christ-rejectors who are brought under various forms of God's wrath throughout the Tribulation.[3]

The equivalent Hebrew phrase in the Old Testament is translated "earth dwellers," "land dwellers," and "inhabitants of the land," where in many verses it refers to a localized area or to the country of Israel. However, five times it refers to "inhabitants of the earth" in a global sense.[4]

These five Old Testament verses are very important, for some Bible teachers say that the twelve uses of this term in Revelation only refer to apostate Israel of the first century Roman Empire, ie. a localized event.[5]

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[2]Revelation 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10 (twice); 12:12; 13:8, 12, 14 (twice); 14:6; 17:2, 8.
[3]Thomas D. Ice, *The Meaning of "Earth Dwellers" in Revelation*, Bibliotheca Sacra 166 (July-September 2009), 351.
[4]Ps. 33:14; Isa. 24:6, 17; 26:21; Jer. 25:30; Zeph. 1:18.
[5]Thomas D. Ice, *The Meaning of "Earth Dwellers" in Revelation*, Bibliotheca Sacra 166 (July-September 2009), 352.

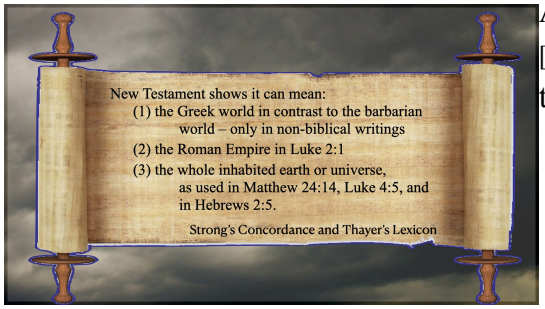
They point out that the word, "*world*," *oikoumenē* [oy-kou-men-ay],[6] refers to the Israel in the Roman Empire in Luke 2:1:

> *And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed*.

Therefore, they understand the *"world"* refers only to local apostate Israel of 70 AD in Revelation 3:10:

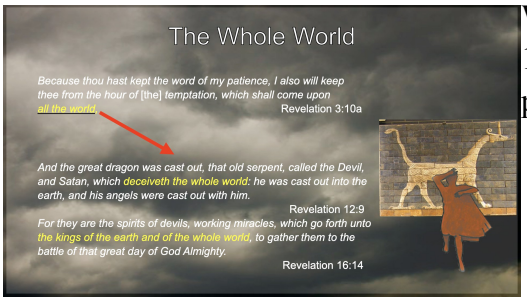
> *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of* [the] *temptation, which shall come upon all the world,*

But with the exception of Luke 2:1, the typical meaning of "world" (oikomene) in Revelation is a reference to "all the inhabitants of the entire earth."[7]



As shown by Strong's Concordance and Thayer's Lexicon [universally recognized Greek language experts] the uses of this word throughout the New Testament shows it can mean:

(1) the Greek world in contrast to the barbarian world – only in non-biblical writings;
(2) the Roman Empire in Luke 2:1;
(3) the whole inhabited earth or universe, as used in Matthew 24:14, Luke 4:5, and in Hebrews 2:5.[8] [9]



When Revelation 3:10 is compared to Revelation 12:9 and 16:14, it is seen that the world referred to is the entire population of the world, the rebellious "earth dwellers."

> *And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*
> Revelation 12:9

> *For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*
> Revelation 16:14

Does Satan only deceive local Israel? No!!!

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[6] "World" Strongs 3625. Luke 4:5; Luke 21:26; Acts 24:5; Romans 10:18; Revelation 16:14; Hebrews 1:6; 2:5;Acts 17:6, 31 (Psalm 9:9); Revelation 3:10; Revelation 12:9; Acts 19:27; Mt. 24:14.
[7] Thomas D. Ice, *The Meaning of "Earth Dwellers" in Revelation*, Bibliotheca Sacra 166 (July-September 2009), 352.
[8] "World" Strongs 3625. Luke 4:5; Luke 21:26; Acts 24:5; Romans 10:18; Revelation 16:14; Hebrews 1:6; 2:5;Acts 17:6, 31 (Psalm 9:9); Revelation 3:10; Revelation 12:9; Acts 19:27; Mt. 24:14.
[9] Thomas D. Ice, *The Meaning of "Earth Dwellers" in Revelation*, Bibliotheca Sacra 166 (July-September 2009), 352.

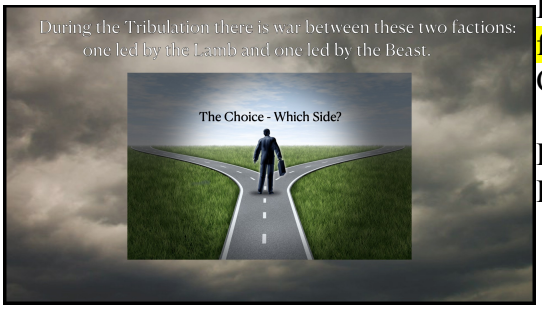
Who are the Earth Dwellers?

Therefore,

1) The Earth Dwellers are those people who reject the Lord Jesus Christ and His offer of salvation during the Tribulation. *2)* in every global use of the term, "earth dwellers," it is in a judgment context primarily with respect to the future Tribulation.[10]

Based upon the use of this phrase we conclude that 3) one of the purposes of the Tribulation will be to punish the earth dwellers and put an end to their evil in answer to the martyrs' prayer recorded in the 5th Seal judgment:

> *And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*
>
> Revelation 6:10



During the Tribulation there is war between these two factions – one led by the Lamb and one led by the Beast – the Choice – Which Side?

But of course, victory is assured to those who follow the Lamb:

> *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.* Revelation 12:11

At this early point in the Tribulation, the 5th Seal, the martyrs make a heavenly appeal for justice and God answers their prayers as we will see with the three "*woes*" of the 4th Trumpet judgment recorded in Revelation 8:13.

> *And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!*

This announcement declares the coming severe judgements at the blowing of the last three trumpet judgments upon the earth dwellers.

Until that day, when all the martyrs of the Tribulation are at the altar, each will be given white robes and rest.[11]

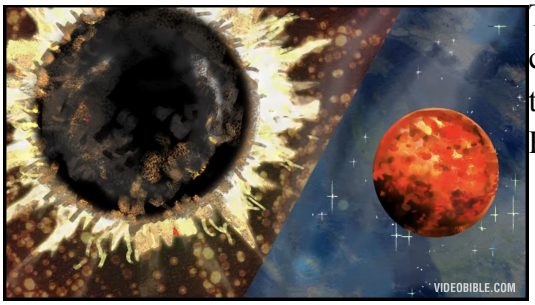
> *And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*

This 5th Seal judgment of God's Avenging Wrath speaks to all of the choice of either giving a testimony of God's Word or of attacking those proclaiming it.

For an excellent paper on the "Earth Dwellers" go to www.CMI-tv.net .

[10]Thomas D. Ice, *The Meaning of "Earth Dwellers" in Revelation*, Bibliotheca Sacra 166 (July-September 2009), 353.
[11]Thomas D. Ice, *The Meaning of "Earth Dwellers" in Revelation*, Bibliotheca Sacra 166 (July-September 2009), 358.

6th Seal – Judgment Through Cosmic Catastrophes



The sixth seal judgment of the "great earthquake" and cosmic catastrophes in the heavens reveals to all beings the heart of the earth dwellers as seen in their refusal to repent – Revelation 6:12-17:[12]

> *12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

Daniel confirms this as a time of testing that is offering all people of the world an opportunity to choose their path with respect to God, for Daniel 12:1, 10:

> *1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book….10 Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.*

With the end of the 6th Seal, we see that the earth dwellers only want to be hid from God.

In doing this, it is clear that they recognize God as the source of these judgments against ungodliness and yet rather than turn to Him for His grace and mercy, they "shake" their hand against Him.

As we move to Revelation 7, we will see that despite God pouring out His wrath upon the earth, He still is also pouring out His Grace and free offer of salvation to any who call upon His name.

With the opening of the 7th Seal will come the Seven Trumpet judgments upon the earth.

[12]See also Rev. 9:20-21; 16:9, 11, 21.