

Their Plea (v. 10)

VERSE 10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying (καὶ ἔκραξαν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγοντες [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3p. krazo call out, exclaim, cry out + noun instr.f.s. phone voice + adj. instr.f.s. megas great; "loud" + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. lego say*], **"How long, O Lord, holy and true** [Ἔως πότε, ὁ δεσπότης ὁ ἅγιος καὶ ἀληθινός [*prep eos until; to denote the upper limit of a thing + interrog.adv. pote when + art.w/noun voc.m.s. despotes master, owner; a title for Christ + art.w/adj.voc.m.s. hagios holy + conj kai + adj.voc.m.s. alethinos true*], **will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth** [οὐ κρίνεις καὶ ἐκδικεῖς τὸ αἷμα ἡμῶν ἐκ τῶν κατοικούντων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς [*neg ou; "refrain" pres.act.ind.2s. krino judge + conj kai + pres.act.ind.2s. ekdikeo avenge, get justice for + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. haima blood + pro.gen.p. ego "our" + prep ek + art.w/pres.act.part.gen.m.p. katoikeo dwell + prep epi upon + art.w/noun gen.m.s. ge earth*]?"]

ANALYSIS: VERSE 10

1. In approaching the plea of the tribulational martyrs, it is important to keep in mind that believers in heaven are never maladjusted or out of fellowship; or do they entertain human viewpoint, no matter how spiritually deficient they might have been at the moment of their passing from this life.
2. At first glance it might appear that these representatives of the growing numbers of martyrs are distraught and impatient.
3. Actually, their plea is an intense longing for vindication.
4. Even though they are in heaven, they are anything but indifferent to the consummation of the spiritual warfare they knew so intimately while on earth.
5. The manner of their petition is extraordinary.
6. It is an outcry and is in a loud voice.
7. The words "they cried with a loud voice", points to the urgent need of the times (e.g., the hour of the coming kingdom).
8. The verb tense shows this to be a single appeal, not one that is repeatedly urged.
9. "How long" is found frequently in the LXX.
10. It is the well-known cry of the beleaguered psalmist (cf. Pss. 6:3; 13:1-2; 35:17; 74:10; 79:5; 90:13; Isa. 6:11, et al).
11. It poses the question regarding the ignorance of these saints at this juncture.
12. Did they not know that the seven year tribulation must run its course before they would be fully vindicated?
13. If so, then this example does suggest that believers in heaven may not know everything they could have known had they received it under GAP in time.
14. If their plea is not merely rhetorical, then it demonstrates a lack of full understanding.
15. Or, there is such a high degree of righteous indignation over the cruel and vicious indignities these martyrs had experienced under the genocide of the Antichrist, that this plea is more rhetorical than actual.
16. In other words, maybe it is more a plea for reassurance than anything else.

17. It is hard to imagine that these believers were not sufficiently briefed on the times they were living in by those who evangelized them.
18. In any case, their intense cry is not in the same category as that of John in chapter four where he clearly is out of sorts with the scene he was transported into.
19. Their cry is addressed to “the master” (*ho despotes*), probably a reference to God the Father.
20. This title carries the implication of God’s absolute sovereignty.
21. It is not the common word for “lord” in the NT.
22. It is used here and in Lk. 2:29; Acts 4:24; 2Tim. 2:21; 2Pet. 2:1, and Jude 4 of deity.
23. This title is coupled with two qualities ascribed to God, “the holy and true One.”
24. God’s holiness demands that all evil be judged.
25. The divine attribute of veracity is seen in the second term.
26. The implication is that God is faithful to His Word.
27. Being holy He cannot tolerate evil, and being true He must avenge all evil.
28. The same two qualities are applied to Christ in Rev. 3:7.
29. The carefully stated appeal avoids the mistake of telling God what He must do and when He must do it.
30. It simply poses the question of how long He is refraining from judging the wicked and avenging the blood of the righteous.
31. The object of the judging is the earth-dwellers named in the final clause (“from those who dwell on the earth”).
32. The blood (synonym for murder) of the righteous recalls the blood of the first martyr, Abel (Gen. 4:10).
33. The expression “those who dwell on the earth” is semi technical in the Apocalypse for those who are negative and in rebellion to the directive will of God (cf. Rev. 6:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:2, 8).
34. They are the opponents of the servants of God and persecute them in a variety of ways.
35. The most pronounced is the genocide sponsored by the Antichrist and the False Prophet.
36. These believers recognize that revenge is God’s providence.
37. They recognize that it is His prerogative as to time and manner, and so should we.
38. Nevertheless, it is okay to offer up a sanctified lament.
39. Unlike the first Christian martyr, Stephen, who prayed for grace for His enemies, this company plea for vengeance (cf. Acts 7:60).
40. This is similar to the pleas in the imprecatory psalms (e.g., Ps. 75:9-10).
41. This plea suggests that the time for grace has passed, and that those who did this, had spurned the grace offered to them.
42. All that is left for such types is vengeance.

God’s Twofold Response (v. 11)

VERSE 11 **And there was given to each of them a white robe** (καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἐκάστῳ στολὴ λευκὴ [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. didomi give + pro.dat.m.p. autos “them” + pro.dat.m.s. hekastos each one + noun nom.f.s. stole robe + adj.nom.f.s. leukos white*]); **and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer** [καὶ ἐρρέθη αὐτοῖς ἵνα ἀναπαύσονται ἔτι χρόνον μικρόν [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. eipon say; “it was told” + pro.dat.m.p. autos “to them” + conj hina that + fut.mid.ind.3p. anapauo rest + adv eti yet, still +*

noun acc.m.s. chronos time; “while” + adj.acc.m.s. mikros little], until the number of their fellow servants and [even] their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also [ἕως πληρωθῶσιν καὶ οἱ σύνδουλοι αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτῶν οἱ μέλλοντες ἀποκτείνεσθαι ὡς καὶ αὐτοί [conj heos until + aor.pass.subj.3p. pleroo fill (up); become full; “would be completed” + conj kai even + art.w/noun nom.m.p. sundoulos fellow servant + pro.gen.m.p. autos “their” + conj kai and+ art.w/noun nom.m.p. adelphos brother + pro.gen.m.p. autos “their” + art.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.p. mello be about “who were to be” + pres.act.infin. apokteino kill + comp.adv. hos as + conj kai also + pro.nom.m.p. autos “they were”]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 11

1. God’s response to their appeal is by way of symbolic and spoken word.
2. The symbolic act is the granting of each one of the martyrs a white robe.
3. The term “robe” (*stole*) was a robe of state, flowing to the feet (cf. Mk. 12:38; 16:5; Lk. 15:22; 20:46; Rev. 6:11; 7:9, 13, 14; 22:14).
4. The white color denotes beauty and righteousness.
5. It is parallel to the white garments promised to the church age overcomer in Rev. 3:5.
6. The color white signifies imputed righteousness that comes via justification by faith as well as the divine good production of believers (cf. Rev. 19:8).
7. Obviously these robes are placed upon bodies supplied for the intermediate state as the resurrection of their earthly bodies awaits the 2nd Advent.
8. For documentation of resurrection of trib martyrs at this time see Rev. 20:4: “Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the Word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead or hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”
9. Clearly we see an example of believers in heaven prior to the resurrection of their earthly remains.
10. A temporary body is provided to all who go to heaven before actual resurrection is the obvious teaching here; otherwise there is the problem of a physical garment upon an immaterial, incorporeal entity, namely, the living soul.
11. The spoken word to the martyrs, presumably from the Lord, is somewhat difficult to analyze because of the two possible senses of “they should rest.”
12. There is little question that it includes the thought of abstaining from their plea of vengeance and resting from their toil and pain.
13. A case can be made for limiting the advice to this.
14. The cognate noun *anapausin* (“rest”) in Rev. 4:8 is limited to rest from suffering.
15. Yet this limitation determines that the word to them was an admonition to control their impatience, an unworthy trait attributed to saints in heaven.
16. It is more in keeping with the scene to view the term as denoting rest from the cry for vengeance.
17. It harmonizes better with their Ph 3 perfection to tell them to rest in the enjoyment of the blessing of being with the Lord in heaven.

18. This is the meaning of the verb in Rev. 14:13.
19. An invitation to such rest is inseparable from the bliss of those already in glory with Christ.
20. The phrase “for yet a little while longer” expresses the extent of the proposed rest.
21. The identical expression (*eti chronon mkkron*) comes from the lips of Jesus twice, once in Jn. 7:33 and once in Jn. 12:35.
22. The same words minus the *eti* (“yet”) are used in Rev. 20:3 to tell of Satan’s brief period of freedom after the 1000 years.
23. In the former case (John’s gospel) the time is not more than a year, and in the latter, just a matter of days, weeks or months.
24. This expression of indefiniteness should be linked with the intensified wrath of Rev. 12:12: “For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has *only* a short time.”
25. It makes sense that the two periods should coincide, because Satan in his wrath will take it out on those who will yet be martyred.
26. His “short time” comes to an end when he is defeated and bound (cf. Rev. 20:1-3).
27. The little time of Rev. 6:11 of the tribulation martyrs in heaven ends then too, for that is when they are raised to sit on thrones and reign for a thousand years.
28. As far as the saints of the fifth seal are concerned, they are told that there will be a necessary delay, albeit a relatively short one, to accomplish the purposes of God.
29. Note the angelic announcement in Rev. 10:6 in which there is to “be delay no longer.”
30. This is obviously the announcement of the end of the delay of which God informs the martyrs in 6:11.
31. This fifth-seal delay coincides with the period of Satan’s special wrath.
32. The remainder of v. 11 explains the need for the delay in God’s avenging of the martyr’s blood.
33. Others were yet to offer up their lives for Christ.
34. The number set in God’s predetermined plan had not at this juncture been reached.
35. The conjunction *heos* (“until”) followed in the Greek text with the aorist passive subjunctive of *pleroo* (“to complete” or “fill up”) is used to speak of completing a stipulated period of time (cf. Lk. 21:24; Acts 7:23, 30; 9:23; 24:27), but only here does it specify the reaching of a predetermined number of people.
36. The notion here is that God has decreed a certain number of tribulational martyrs.
37. The participial phrase “who were to be killed” (*hoi mellontes anoktennesthai*) modifies “their fellow servants even their brethren” and puts them into a single class.
38. “Their fellow slaves” is made more specific by “even their brethren.”
39. The word to the souls under the altar gives them reassurance that God will soon avenge their blood, but the time for the culmination of that vengeance has not yet arrived.
40. One feature that must yet transpire beforehand is the increase of their number through additional martyrdoms.
41. The earth dwellers under the beast will take an even greater toll of human lives before Christ intervenes through His personal arrival back on the earth.
42. Until then, the already martyred are told to rest and enjoy their time of blessedness in heaven.