

How Long Will the Righteous Suffer?**Revelation 6:9-11****INTRODUCTION:**

1. Jesus said in **John 16:33**, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."
2. As John witnesses the opening of the seven seals by the Lamb that was slain, he sees a scene which could be both troubling and comforting. This scene is found in **Revelation 6:9-11**.

Body:**1. John Saw That Following Christ Could Be Costly.**

- A. Think of the prices that God's people have paid through the course of time for following the Lord (Read Hebrews 11: 32-41).
- B. Think of the price that men like Stephen, Paul, and even our Lord paid to do God's will.
- C. The souls that John saw under the throne proved that they had paid a supreme price for following the Lord.
- D. Even though Satan destroyed their bodies, their souls were with God.

2. John Saw Proof of Life After Death.

- A. Man has an eternal soul which returns to God after death (Ecclesiastes 12:7).
- B. John saw the souls of these saints near the throne of God. We need to have the desire to be near the throne of Christ (Philippians 1:22-23).
- C. John saw the beheaded saints robed in white (Revelation 7:14).
- D. These souls were at rest from the warfare, trials, and struggles against the forces of Satan.

3. John Saw That the Lord Was and Is in Control.

- A. This fact is seen because these souls were waiting for their persecutors to pay the price for their sin.
- B. Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
- C. The wicked will pay for mistreating the saints of God.

Christ is in control.

The question is, "Does He control your life?"

The Sin of External Religion**Jeremiah 7: 1-11****Introduction:**

1. Outside appearances can be deceiving.
 - A. Physical realm:
 1. Piece of fruit with nice peeling, but rotten on the inside.
 2. A package wrapped in beautiful paper that contains a worthless rock or my gift of a carrot on one of my sister's birthday.
 3. A piece of chocolate candy with an inside that leaves a little bit to be desired.
 - B. Spiritual realm:
 1. The Pharisees in Jesus had the appearance of righteousness (Matt. 23:27).
 2. The tribe of Judah in the days of Jeremiah the prophet claimed they were righteous but had fallen away from the Lord.
2. Is it possible for God's people today to commit the sin of having an external religion?

Body:

1. **External Religion Occurs When One Refuses to Recognize God's Word as the Absolute Standard and Authority.**
 - A. The Jews felt that since they had the temple, they were safe spiritually, but had exchanged obeying the Law and Prophets for a lie (Jer. 7:4).
 - B. Those in the church need to realize that being members of the body of Christ is not a substitution for obeying God.
 - C. God's word is still the absolute standard even though many do not: (1). Recognize an absolute standard, or (2). Seek sound doctrine because of itching ears (2 Tim. 4:3).
 - D. Mankind will be judged by the word of God (John 12:48; Rev. 20:11-12).
2. **External Religion Occurs When One Sees No Need for Repentance Even Though Sin is Present in Their Lives.**
 - A. Jeremiah pleaded with the people to change or amend their ways, but they refused (Jer. 7:5, 8:6-7).
 - B. Many Christians may have "religion", but it may only be a "*form of godliness*" (2 Tim. 3:5).
 - C. Christians must never compare themselves to the righteousness and holiness of others, but to the holiness of God (1 Pet. 1: 15-16) and to Christ their example (1 Pet. 2: 21).
 - D. God's people cannot serve Him with unrepented sins in their lives (Joshua 24:19).
3. **External Religion Ends When One Sees Himself as a Lost Sinner in Need of a Savior.**
 - A. Before a person can be saved, they must realize the need to return home to God (Lk. 15:17-19).
 - B. The realization of one's "lostness" leads one to have a change of heart, attitude, and life.
 - C. Lost men must see the need of repenting and confessing their sins before God and men (Jer. 3: 12-13; James 5: 16).

Are You Guilty of Having an External Religion?