**These Perilous Times**

**Vol. 16, No 10, May 21, 2024**

**Introduction to Revelation**

**Part IX**

**The Seven Seals-The Fifth Seal**

The Lamb Opens the Fifth Seal “…I saw those under the altar the *souls* of those who had been slain for the Word of God…” Rev. 6:9-11.

Seventh-day Adventists Bible Commentary, Vol 7, pp. 777-779.

First, let me bring to your attention to the fact that the word *altar* is mentioned in Scripture over 375 times. Second, this fact presents an enormous problem. If souls were literally under the altar which altar is John referring to? Therefore, souls under the altar are not to be taken literal no more than Jesus’ ***‘parable’*** of the rich man and Lazurus (See John 16:19-31) but Christians martyred for the Word of God-Stephen being one of the first martyrs in A.D. 34, (See Acts Chapter 7). Thirdly, their voices crying out for vengeance is symbolically referring to a future time of Judgment, when God will avenge their death. The altar is also reminiscent of sacrifice.

The altar presented in this ‘***prophetic’*** picture may be suggesting the bronze altar of the Hebrew Sanctuary, and martyrs thought of as sacrifices presented to God (See Rev. 12:11).” Abel’s blood crying out from the ground…” (See Genesis 4:8-10). What about trees talking to one another (See Judges 9:7-17 another ***parable***). Fourth, “*souls* under the altar, crying out for vengeance is used by many theologians to support their doctrinal belief of disembodied spirits, and the conscious state of the dead. “ [[1]](#footnote-1) The word *soul* in the Bible denotes the whole person (Gen. 2:7). The martyrdom of God’s faithful and persecuted people is portrayed here in the terms of the sacrificial blood poured out at the base of the earth’s sanctuary altar of *sacrifice* (Ex. 29:12; Lev. 4:7) … [[2]](#footnote-2) The altar of sacrifice, of the earthly sanctuary and the sprinkling of lamb’s blood pointed forward to the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus (See Isaiah 53:4-8; Hebrews 9:1-28).

**What does this mean for us”**

**Obvious Signs Do Tell The Season**

The good news about God’s Word is, it will interpret itself! God’s ***remnant*** people are known as people of the Book-the Bible, and they are diligent students of His Word (Acts 17:11; II Tim 2:15). With so many false teachings being propagated concerning the state of the dead and other Bible doctrines, it’s important that we have a clear understanding, of what God’s Holy Word is articulating. ***Parables*** and ***allegories*** are stories, not to be taken literally, but to help illustrate certain aspects of Bible truth. According to Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10; 12:7; Ezek. 18:20 the dead know nothing. There is no life after death until Chrit’s Second Coming (I Cor. 15:51-55; I Thess. 4:16, 17 Rev. 20:4-6)! It’s vitally important that we study, and search the Scriptures daily for ourselves to discern what Bible truth is, and not accept someone else’s interpretation of ***what they*** ***believe*** the Word of God is saying. Just remember, “…the demons ***believe*** and tremble…” James 2:19.

1. Uriah Smith. Daniel and Revelation, pp. 432-439. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Large Print Adult Sabbath School Lesson, “The Book of Revelation,” Jan.-Feb., 2019. p. 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)