**Revelation 6**

I. The Nature of the Judgment

A. Revelation gives us these vivid images of judgment that are, in part, symbolic portrayals of the same realities Jesus describes in Matthew 24:4-8

B. Seals 1-4: The 4 horsemen

Judgment takes the form of conquest, war, famine, and death

C. Seal 5: The cries of God’s martyrs for justice

D. Seal 6: Cosmic and cataclysmic events towards the end of history

E. Seal 7: Probably a picture of the very end

II. The Source of the Judgment

A. The lamb is the one opening the seals and initiating these events. God the Father and God the Son are recognized as the source of these judgments (see v. 16)

B. Interesting juxtaposition: a sacrificial lamb who took on himself the judgment of God who is now initiating judgment on the earth

C. We have a God who is both a God of mercy and judgment

1. It can be hard to hold together these various aspects of God

2. Characters such as Aslan or Aragorn help us envision a person who is good and loving and also fights and judges evil as an expression of his goodness

D. Our Christian culture today has a hard time acknowledging God’s judgment, as it strikes many people as offensive and inconsistent with a God of love

E. It’s important to let Scripture shape our view of God, rather than our own cultural or personal sensibilities (which are subject to change)

F. The good news about God’s judgment

1. God’s judgment comes in response to the cries of his people (Rev 6:9-11)

2. God’s judgments are always right and good (Rev 16:5-7)

a. God is perfectly objective and he never makes mistakes in his judgments (analogy: electronic line judge in tennis)

b. God is also deeply invested (Christ became human and experienced judgment himself), and so he doesn’t impose judgment in a mechanical, impersonal way.

3. God’s judgment comes with warnings and has the intent of bringing about repentance (Revelation 9:20-21)

III. Practical implications of embracing the judgment of God

A. His judgment is a call to evangelism

1. Our compassion and love for others and our desire for them to escape judgment and experience life leads us to share the gospel with them

2. Example of an atheist who believes Christians should proselytize

"I don't respect people who don't proselytize. If you believe that there is a Heaven and a Hell, and people could be going to Hell ... and you think it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward, ... how much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize . . . to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that? I mean, if I believed beyond a shadow of a doubt that a truck was coming at you and you didn't believe it . . . there's a certain point where I tackle you, and [everlasting life] is more important than that." (Penn Jillette)

3. “There is no refuge from the judge, there is only refuge in the judge”

B. His judgment is a call to forgiveness

1. When we believe in a God who will judge rightly and set everything right in end, it frees us from having to play the role of a judge with others to make sure we get justice all the time. It frees us to forgive

2. See Romans 12:17-19 and 1 Peter 2:23

**Discussion Questions**

1. As you considered Revelation 6, what verses or images stood out to you most? What questions are still left unanswered for you?

2. Consider the comments made on Sunday regarding our Christian culture’s movement away from a view of God that includes judgment. Where do you find yourself in that movement, and how do you react to what was said on Sunday?

3. Consider the “good news of God’s judgment” as outlined in point II. F. above. Were any of those ideas helpful to you as you considered God’s judgment?

4. Consider the first practical implication of God’s judgment mentioned on Sunday. Is there anyone in your life right now who doesn’t know Jesus that you’d like to pray for and engage more intentionally in the coming weeks?

5. Consider the second practical implication. How sensitive of an “internal justice meter” do you have, and where do you see that pop up in your life? How is an acknowledgment of God’s justice and judgment helpful for you in that issue, if at all?