**When? (Revelation 6:9-11)**

The martyrs of our genocide are already justified in heaven and will be justified on earth in God’s perfect timing. Greetings to you all on this Armenian Martyr’s Sunday in which we commemorate our martyrs and vow to keep their faith burning brightly within our lives. It is very difficult for a people group to deal with a situation in which an injustice happens to it and it does not see an immediate vindication within its lifetime. In the case of the Armenians, already a couple of generations have passed and almost no survivors are left; and a portion of this small nation asks each other and God, “When?” I have also personally heard many who not only ask “When,” but also, more pointedly, “Why?” Today we have gathered together to see the answer to this “When” question, as well as to hear just how to answer those who ask God the latter question (as to why the genocide happened). The martyrs of our genocide are already justified in heaven and will be justified on earth in God’s perfect timing. Let us speak, therefore, about our Armenian Cause, but from the perspective of the Scriptures.

To our “When” question, God has answered us by considering them just in heaven, and saying to all of us, “Wait a bit more” until the number of martyrs is completed. Very often, we forget as believers that the Bible has many examples of God’s vengeance and vindicating punishments. It is almost as it we forget that God is indeed able to exact vengeance on the unjust. For example, God answered the cries of the Israelites in Egypt after 400 years suddenly all at one time. He did that in His way, and in His timing. Also, God punished the Israelites for their pagan practices and exiled them as a punishment; concurrently, He was sifting the Godly among them from the unbelievers who were only cultural Jews. Even when the Israelites were exiled in Persia according to the Book of Daniel, God allowed the judgment of the three youths, but rather than death claiming them in the fiery furnace, the Lord Himself, by his angel was present with the other three in the fire, and that miracle became a testimony to the unbelieving king! Following that history, the Lord had planned a new return for the people, after which archaeologists have found that the Israelites had indeed been purified spiritually. There were virtually no idols found in the Holy Land after the exiles returned from Persia. In this same vein, after God had been silent to His people for roughly 400 years after the last prophet Malachi, He sent His Son Jesus as the beginning of a New era of salvation, and yet barely a few accepted Him and were persecuted everywhere they went. However, God allowed that believers in Christ temporarily deal with suffering until Christ’s prophecy became reality and a new era began in the lives of the Jesus-followers without the persecution and pressure of the unbelieving Jews. God, throughout the centuries, especially if we read the history of the Christian Church worldwide, has always been patient regarding the injustices perpetrated against His (Redeemed) people, always waiting for the right time, and especially waiting until the number of martyrs for each occasion was complete. Thus, before asking “Why” or “What” the above has to do with our unique case as Armenians, let us consider for a moment the following example:

When we have a goal in life, we work towards it at all costs, often sacrificing in order to bring about the goal. It is the same and on an even greater scale with God, whose goal is the salvation of all mankind! (For example): Polycarp (A.D. 70-155) was bishop of Smyrna and a godly man. He had known the apostle John personally. When he was urged by the Roman proconsul to renounce Christ, Polycarp said: "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury. How then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?" "I have respect for your age," said the official. "Simply say, 'Away with the atheists!'(*meaning the Christians*) and be set free." The aged Polycarp pointed to the pagan crowd and said, "Away with the atheists!" He was burned at the stake and gave joyful testimony of his faith in Jesus Christ.

Therefore, now go ahead and ask “When” and “Why”. When you ask “When”, God answers you and says, “I have already considered them justified; but you must wait a bit longer for my timing to act.” When you and I ask “Why”, we must consider God’s plan of salvation for a moment: If there had not been persecution, the Good News of Jesus Christ would not have spread 2000 years ago as it did. If there had not been martyrs, the value of our faith would not be proclaimed. If God had not been changing the evil of Satan and his followers’ plans to good by causing the church to grow and keeping the faith of Christ alive in the survivors, we might suppose that God did not get involved with such issues. In other words, if we are also being crucified with Christ, we also will rise up again (like Him).

Often, we think that every vindication must take place in our desired manner. We supposed that every injustice must necessarily be answered immediately, visibly, all the while forgetting that (the reason for injustice is) the presence of evil people and Satan, who rules over all unbelievers. We try to force God to vindicate us during our lifetime, during our era, using our methods. Today, however, God is reminding us through the Scriptures, that *“They were given a white robe…”* In other words, that God has already considered them justified, which is the opposite of what unbelievers judged them to be worthy of a death sentence. In addition, it is written that they were, *“told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.”* In other words, God will vindicate the cause of the believers, in our case the Armenian Cause, in His specific time, in His specific manner, when the number of martyrs reaches His decided amount.

To our “When” question, God has answered us by considering them just in heaven, and saying to all of us, “Wait a bit more” until the number of martyrs is completed. The martyrs of our genocide are already justified in heaven and will be justified on earth in God’s perfect timing. Therefore, let us today put our minds at ease that the Lord has already judged our martyrs to be justified; let us also ask the Lord to give us patience until God, in His timing, in His manner of working, vindicate us and do justice, whether it be through our working, or directly through His Divine intervention. Let us remember and let us be patient. Amen.