

A Journey Into the Heavens
The 144,00 and the Innumerable Multitude
January 13, 2016

In our last lesson we studied about the opening of the fifth seal...the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held...cried out for vengeance (6:9-10)

Then, at the opening of the sixth seal...there was a great earthquake... and worldwide catastrophes on the earth (6:12-17).

Now in chapter seven there is an interruption in the opening of the seals. The seventh seal will not be broken until chapter eight. Therefore, chapter seven is a _____ between the sixth and seventh seal. The opening of the sixth seal resulted in catastrophic destruction on the earth and all humankind hiding in fear. However, before the seventh seal is opened, God shows He is still a God of mercy even in time of judgement. His mercy reveals itself in the form of a break in judgement.

I. The _____ of the 144,000 (7:1-8)

In the first three verses John sees four angels hold back the four winds of the earth, which undoubtedly refers to the judgements taking place on earth, or the Great Tribulation as Jesus called it. The interlude in the opening of the seals may have been what Jesus was referring to in Matthew 24:22.

After the sixth seal has been opened, God will restrain His judgement for a short time until His _____ have been sealed. We should remember God never has and never will leave Himself without a witness on the earth, even during the Great Tribulation. During the dark and sinful days before the flood, even though no one would listen, God had a witness on earth - Noah. During the dark days of Israel's apostasy and idolatry, God raised up prophets to be His witnesses. Today, the church is in the world to bear witness to God and His Word. Likewise, even during the most dreadful time in the history of the world, the Great Tribulation, God will not leave the world without His witness.

Therefore, to seal His witnesses, God instructs the four angels through another angel having the seal of the living God...(7:2), to...Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads (7:3).

This verse makes it clear that even worse judgements than those from the first six seals are about to take place on the _____. At the opening of the seventh seal the ultimate, inevitable collision of holiness and wickedness is described. So the worst is yet to come.

However, God always lays _____ to His own. We see in Genesis 20:7 to Elijah the Lord says, "Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed to Baal (I Kings 19:18). When Abimelech tampered with Abraham's affairs, God warned "Restore the man his wife: for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee (Genesis 20:7).

God lays claim to his own, but that does not necessarily mean they will escape the common _____ on earth. It means that God watches over them and takes careful note of their affairs. There are two very different companies of people in this section. One company is Jewish: the other is Gentile. One passes unscathed through the fiery furnace of the Tribulation: the other is martyred to the very last man.

In verse 4 John gives us the number of those sealed -144,000- and their identification,...of all the tribes of the children of Israel. These 144,000 Jews should be taken literally because John goes into great detail to reveal exactly who they are, even mentioning the number from each tribe in verses 5-8.

As Christians we must never forget the Jews are a _____ people to God because of His covenant with Abraham. In addition our Savior and Lord was a Jew, the apostles were all Jews, every book in the New Testament, except Luke and Acts, were written by Jews. Furthermore, the majority of the Old Testament is simply a history of God's dealings with the Jews.

When the church is raptured from the earth, God will again work through the Jews. In Romans 11:25 the Bible clearly tells us of the Jews future. Indeed, it appears Revelation 7 is the Day of _____ for the Jews. It seems that 144,000 Jews will preach the Gospel to all the world during the tribulation, which will be the most terrible time ever to be a Christian, much less an evangelist.

It is clear from this passage that God is not finished with the Jews; He has another divine mission for them during the Great Tribulation. It will take a special kind of believer during that time, and a Jew would be perfect for the job. A genuinely devout Jew in our day puts a dedicated Christian to shame. The Jews are _____ people willing to die for their beliefs. When they turn, they turn completely. When they decide to do something, they are almost impossible to stop, as Israel's existence today proves. These are the characteristics that will be needed in believers during the Great Tribulation.

Some find it difficult to take the 144,000, or 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes, literally because Israel has _____ its tribal identity. However, it must be remembered that before the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. the Jews had the most intricate and accurate genealogical records the world has even know. Almost the entire book of I Chronicles is a genealogy of the Jews, like what was kept for every Jewish male.

The first chapter of Matthew contains an amazingly detailed genealogy of Christ. It is true for the time being, Israel has lost its tribal identity, as far as the world is concerned. But God still knows everything, including the genealogy of every Jew.

The sealing of the 144,000 in Revelation 7:4 is nothing new. God has always sealed His own. (Ephesians 1:13) In the Bible, a seal represents ownership and protection. Today, believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit, which is God's guarantee were are His.

II. The _____ Multitude (7:9-17)

You cannot read the book of Revelation without realizing the visions John sees are global in their effect - the judgements come upon the entire world. Also the people saved during the Great Tribulation will be from all over the world, including Jews and Gentiles, as verse 9 says. There is no doubt as to who this multitude is because one of the elders explains their identity to John in verse 13-14.

The innumerable multitude apparently is all those who were _____ during the Great Tribulation. The Bible says there will be so many that we will not even be able to count them, they are innumerable.

In verses 10-12, the redeemed multitude...cried with a loud voice... and gave praise to God and to the Lamb for their salvation. Also, all angels around the throne of God, the elders and the four beast fell before the throne of God on their faces and worshipped Him.

It is very probable this innumerable multitude was saved through the evangelistic efforts of the 144,000 Jews during the tribulation period. The fact John did not know who those redeemed were indicates they are not Old Testament believers nor are they the church.

This section also makes it clear that all _____ distinctions will cease in heaven, and we will all simply be people of God. However, as God is working out His plan on earth, distinctions will exist between Jews and Gentiles and the church and those redeemed during the tribulation.

Verses 15-17 describe one of the most beautiful scenes in the Bible which appears to be the fulfillment of a promise found in I Corinthians 2:9.

The innumerable multitude in Revelation 7 serve God day and night in his temple...(7:15). This host of redeemed individuals are in the immediate presence of God in His temple, and yet are without fear and are fully accepted by a holy God. Also we see in this verse that we will not just _____ around in heaven and strum on a harp but we will serve Him day and night.

The phrase in verse 15, “he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them, in the Greek says, He will spread his tabernacle over them.” In other words, the Lamb will spread a divine canopy over them for protection.

Concerning the redeemed multitude, verse 16 says, They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more... Those conditions in heaven seem to be in contrast to the earthly experiences of those saved during the Great Tribulation, because of the lack of food and water that is a part of the judgements. (6:12-17)

The phrase, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat, in 7:16 implies there must have been suffering on the earth from extreme light and heat. There is no indication as to the cause of this event, none the less there is suffering involved.

In verse 17 we find that ...the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them... The word translated feed is literally “shepherd” in the Greek. This is a fulfillment of a wonderful promise in John 10:14-16. (Turn to this passage)

The Lamb shall also lead them unto living fountains of waters...(7:17). In contrast to the burning thirst they experienced during the tribulation, now they enjoy the refreshing waters of life.

Last of all in verse 17, John says,...and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. In other words, sorrow and grief will never again be their experience.

From Revelation 7 we know multitudes will be saved during the Great Tribulation, both Jews and Gentiles, but they will suffer tremendously for their faith. On the other hand there will be multitudes during that time who will reject Christ because they prefer the terrible world they are living in to the world to come.

The promises in this chapter actually apply to all believers, for they are repeated and amplified in chapter 22. What a great _____ this chapter has not only to the original readers - the seven churches - but also to us as believers!