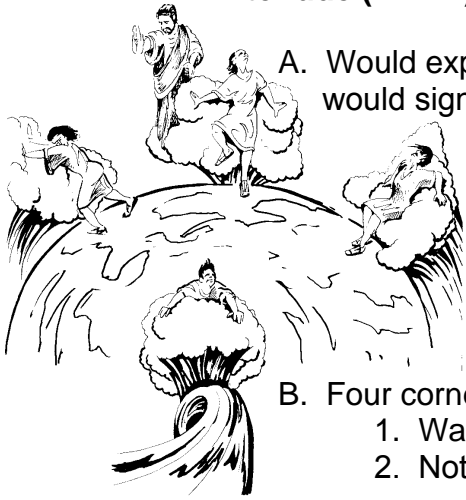


Revelation 7

I. Interlude (7:1-17) – Answers the question, “Who is able to stand?”



A. Would expect either the seventh seal or a sequel to 6th seal which would signal “the end”

1. Instead we are shown the state of God’s people
2. They are not a small, insignificant “remnant”
3. They are not isolated, God has “numbered” them, they are all accounted for, and they are formidable
4. Helps the church to avoid the Elijah complex that says “I alone am left (1 Kng 19:10, 14).”

B. Four corners of the earth

1. Way of referring to the entire earth
2. Nothing would be exempt from God’s judgment when it comes

C. Sealing God’s people on earth (7:1-8)

1. The “winds” of judgement held back until sealing takes place
 - a. Sealing denotes ownership
 - b. Seal of ownership protects the contents
2. Similar incident in Ezek 9:2-6
3. Eph 1:13-14 – Paul refers to the Holy Spirit as a seal
4. How are they protected if they are persecuted?
 - a. Answer is in the location of the seal
 - b. Forehead was seen as the seat of perception
 - 1) Dt 6:6-8 – They to be as frontals on head
 - 2) Was to be on their heart
 - 3) If in the heart, it to control their thinking
 - 4) They had correct view of life, death, and world
 - c. Because of the word in their heart, a world falling apart would not phase them. Examples:
 - 1) Psalm 23:4
 - 2) 2 Cor 4:16 – 5:1
5. Identity of those sealed
 - a. Not literal Israel
 - 1) Judah is named first rather than Reuben



- 2) Northern tribes lost after Assyrian invasion
- 3) Levi and Joseph are included in this list, and they are never included as part of 12 tribes in other lists
 - Levi was a priestly tribe, and did not hold territory (Josh 13:14)
 - In order to keep the number of tribes at 12, Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh were considered a tribe (Josh 17-19)
- 4) Dan is omitted as one of the 12 tribes in this list

b. The Church constitutes a transformed, spiritual Israel

- 1) Rom 2:28-29 – Jews are one inwardly
- 2) Rom 9:6-8 – Children of promise are descendants
- 3) Gal 6:15-16 – Church is the Israel of God
- 4) 1 Pet 2:9-10 – O.T. terminology used for church

c. Connotation behind the numbers

- 1) 1,000 has a military connotation
 - A Battalion or division typically had 1,000
- 2) 1,000 in a multiple of 12 signifies God's people
- 3) 144,000 (12,000 x 12) = All of God's people
- 4) All of God's people are accounted for
- 5) Counting of people was common to determine the strength of an army
- 6) This looks like a battle formation

d. Therefore the 144,000 is the church militant (on the earth)

- 1) They were outfitted with their "armor" so to speak
- 2) Not conventional weapons, but a seal

D. The Great multitude in Heaven (7:10-17)

1. The scene shifts back to Heaven

2. The great multitude from all peoples and nations

- a. It was so large, no one could count them
- b. In white robes – Draws mind back to white robes of martyrs in 6:11 and elders in 4:4

c. Had palm branches in their hands

- 1) Used at feast of tabernacles
- 2) Used in military victory parades, which is probably what is intended since the previous imagery is the church militant

3. They were praising God and the lamb for salvation

- a. This carries the imagery of a victory celebration which is



- consistent with the presence of palm branches
- b. The church is triumphant!
4. They are identified as those coming out of the great tribulation
- a. Tribulation means to press, or grind. It is the word used of pressing grapes, or grinding at the mill
 - Acts 14:22b – Must enter kingdom through it
 - John 16:33 – Tribulation a part of this world
 - b. This is referring to the persecution at the hands of Rome
5. The means and nature of victory
- a. This turns the worldly view of victory on its head
 - b. Believers found triumph in martyrdom
 - c. The ones who washed their robes and made them clean did not do so in water, but in the blood of the lamb
6. The results of faithfulness in the face of death
- a. Before the throne of God
 - b. Serve him day and night in the temple
 - Heb 4:11 – But we are supposed to enter into rest
 - Rev 14:13 – Rest from labors (Grk: *spoudazo*)
 - *Spoudazo* means hard, arduous labor
 - Work is not bad. In the Garden, Adam was charged to work. But work didn't because laborious till after the curse (Gen 2-3)
 - c. God will spread his tent over them – protect them
 - d. No more starving, or discomfort, Lamb will be shepherd
 - e. No more mourning – God wipes away tears
7. This shows the end result for
- a. (2:10b) – Those who are in tribulation for 10 days
 - b. (3:10b) – Those facing the hour of testing
 - c. (6:10b) – Those killed
 - d. (6:11) – The martyrs

II. Discussion Questions

1. How would you encourage a child who is being bullied?
2. What would you say to a person who questioned his or her faith due to difficult circumstances?
3. Why do you think God opened the seven seals for his people who were experiencing suffering?
4. What do they tell us about God?
5. What do they tell us about the world?
6. What do they tell us about God's people?
7. Do the seven seals give any instruction on how to handle trouble?
8. How could you use this passage to encourage someone else?