

REVELATION

The Remnant of the Tribulation
(Revelation 7:1-8)

*Habakkuk 3:2: O LORD, I have heard the
report of you, and your work, O LORD, do
I fear. In the midst of the years revive it;
in the midst of the years make it known;
in wrath remember mercy.*

Revelation 6 shows God's wrath coming with the great earthquake of the sixth seal.

Revelation 7 shows God demonstrating mercy to a remnant.

Ezekiel 9:1-6: Then he cried in my ears with a loud voice, saying, "Bring near the executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand." And behold, six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his weapon for slaughter in his hand, and with them was a man clothed in linen, with a writing case at his waist. And they went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub on which it rested to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed in linen, who had the writing case at his waist. And the LORD said to him, "Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it."

And to the others he said in my hearing, "Pass through the city after him, and strike. Your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity. Kill old men outright, young men and maidens, little children and women, but touch no one on whom is the mark. And begin at my sanctuary." So they began with the elders who were before the house.

Throughout Scripture, the Lord preserves a remnant of believers:

1. Israel was preserved when they put blood on the doorposts when the angel of death was coming.

2. Rahab was preserved when she hung a scarlet cord out the window.

3. The Lord preserved 7,000 faithful ones when Elijah thought he was alone.

1. Revelation 7 pauses the revealing of judgment to mark the faithful ones of the Tribulation.

- ❖ Revelation 6:1-19:10 records the events of the Tribulation.
- ❖ But like most writing, it is not strictly chronological.

1. Revelation 7 pauses the revealing of judgment to mark the faithful ones of the Tribulation.

A. Illustration of a news article

- ❖ Headline: Florida Man Mistakes Girlfriend for Hog, Shoots Her
- ❖ Summary: “Steven Egan, 52, was hunting with his girlfriend, Lisa Simmons, in the northern part of the state when he mistook her for a hog and shot her.”

1. Revelation 7 pauses the revealing of judgment to mark the faithful ones of the Tribulation.

A. Illustration of a news article

- ❖ *Why* did he mistake her for a hog?
- ❖ Important info: “The mistake was not actually related to her appearance.”

1. Revelation 7 pauses the revealing of judgment to mark the faithful ones of the Tribulation.

A. Illustration of a news article

- ❖ Play-by-play details
 - ❖ Shot at hog that ran into brush
 - ❖ Told her to stay but she hunted oranges
 - ❖ He hears rustling in bushes and shoots at it, but hits her in the leg
- ❖ Article is generally chronological while also giving extra important info.

1. Revelation 7 pauses the revealing of judgment to mark the faithful ones of the Tribulation.

B. The section of Revelation containing the Tribulation is laid out in this way.

- ❖ Generally, the seals, trumpets, and bowls are chronological (play-by-play)
- ❖ Some sections summarize longer time period while others show scenes in heaven that explain events on earth.
- ❖ Often these breaks are called “parentheses.”

1. Revelation 7 pauses the revealing of judgment to mark the faithful ones of the Tribulation.

B. The section of Revelation containing the Tribulation is laid out in this way.

- ❖ Revelation 7: Remnant of the Tribulation
- ❖ Revelation 10-11: Mighty Angel, Temple, Two Witnesses
- ❖ Revelation 12-14: Satan's War, Antichrist, Angelic Announcement
- ❖ Revelation 17-19:10: Spiritual and Economic Babylon, Victory Celebrated in Heaven

1. Revelation 7 pauses the revealing of judgment to mark the faithful ones of the Tribulation.

C. Why do we have this pause at this point?

❖ Revelation 6:15-17: Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

1. Revelation 7 pauses the revealing of judgment to mark the faithful ones of the Tribulation.

C. Why do we have this pause at this point?

❖ We have this parenthesis to show God protecting His remnant even in the midst of His great wrath and judgment.

❖ In wrath, remember mercy

2. In mercy, God sealed 144,000 of His servants.

- ❖ Revelation 7:1-8: After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”

2. In mercy, God sealed 144,000 of His servants.

- ❖ And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: 12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Reuben, 12,000 from the tribe of Gad, 12,000 from the tribe of Asher, 12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh, 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon, 12,000 from the tribe of Levi, 12,000 from the tribe of Issachar, 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun, 12,000 from the tribe of Joseph, 12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed.

2. In mercy, God sealed 144,000 of His servants.

A. Consider when this sealing takes place.

1. It could be between the 6th and 7th seals.

❖ This is where it is recorded in answer to the question of Revelation 6:17.

❖ The angels are preventing the wind from affecting the earth, sea, and trees, which are affected by the first two trumpet judgments.

2. In mercy, God sealed 144,000 of His servants.

A. Consider when this sealing takes place.

2. It could be before the judgments start.

- ❖ It could be summarizing a previous event to help understand this section.
- ❖ The phrase “after this” (7:1) refers to when John saw this vision, not specifically when the events take place.

2. In mercy, God sealed 144,000 of His servants.

B. Consider who is sealed.

- ❖ God directly said that 144,000 Jews are sealed.
- ❖ Verse 4 specifies the whole number and verses 5-8 detail that 12,000 are from each of twelve tribes.

2. In mercy, God sealed 144,000 of His servants.

B. Consider who is sealed.

- ❖ Revelation 14:1: Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.
- ❖ Christ and the Father's name are written on their foreheads (doesn't specify exactly how).

2. In mercy, God sealed 144,000 of His servants.

B. Consider who is sealed.

- ❖ Revelation 14:4: It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are **virgins**. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as **firstfruits** for God and the Lamb.
- ❖ Unmarried Jewish men
- ❖ Firstfruits: more harvest, could mean they were the 1st saved in Tribulation

2. In mercy, God sealed 144,000 of His servants.

B. Consider who is sealed.

1. God is sealing 144,000 unmarried Jewish men.

- ❖ How many tribes are in Israel?
- ❖ In a sense there are thirteen, since Joseph is split into Ephraim and Manasseh.
- ❖ Twelve tribes received land, while the Levites were scattered among the nation.

2. In mercy, God sealed 144,000 of His servants.

- ❖ Revelation 7:4-8: And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: 12,000 from the tribe of **Judah** were sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of **Reuben**, 12,000 from the tribe of **Gad**, 12,000 from the tribe of **Asher**, 12,000 from the tribe of **Naphtali**, 12,000 from the tribe of **Manasseh**, 12,000 from the tribe of **Simeon**, 12,000 from the tribe of **Levi**, 12,000 from the tribe of **Issachar**, 12,000 from the tribe of **Zebulun**, 12,000 from the tribe of **Joseph**, 12,000 from the tribe of **Benjamin** were sealed.

2. In mercy, God sealed 144,000 of His servants.

B. Consider who is sealed.

1. God is sealing 144,000 unmarried Jewish men.

- ❖ Dan is not listed here, but this does not mean God is done with them.
- ❖ Ezekiel 48:1: These are the names of the tribes: Beginning at the northern extreme, beside the way of Hethlon to Lebo-hamath, as far as Hazar-enan (which is on the northern border of Damascus over against Hamath), and extending from the east side to the west, Dan, one portion.

2. In mercy, God sealed 144,000 of His servants.

B. Consider who is sealed.

2. The sealing of 144,000 does not refer to all Christians everywhere.

❖ Revelation 7:9: After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.

2. In mercy, God sealed 144,000 of His servants.

B. Consider who is sealed.

2. The sealing of 144,000 does not refer to all Christians everywhere.

a. Some think God would seal and protect all believers.

- ❖ They don't think God would give special protection to some and not others (cf. Rev 9:4).
- ❖ It is *possible* that others are sealed as well, but Revelation 7 does not tell us this.
- ❖ Acts 12: Peter was delivered from prison, but James was killed

2. In mercy, God sealed 144,000 of His servants.

B. Consider who is sealed.

2. The sealing of 144,000 does not refer to all Christians everywhere.

a. Some think God would seal and protect all believers.

❖ As we study Scripture, we must let God's Word speak for itself instead of reinterpreting it to say what we want it to say or because we think God should act a certain way.

2. In mercy, God sealed 144,000 of His servants.

B. Consider who is sealed.

2. The sealing of 144,000 does not refer to all Christians everywhere.

b. Some believe the church has replaced Israel in God's program.

- ❖ They believe God is finished with national Israel.
- ❖ Romans 9-11 speaks of Israel being cut off and Gentiles grafted in, but it also speaks of Israel being grafted back in and Israel being saved after the fullness of the Gentiles has come.

2. In mercy, God sealed 144,000 of His servants.

B. Consider who is sealed.

2. The sealing of 144,000 does not refer to all Christians everywhere.

b. Some believe the church has replaced Israel in God's program.

❖ As we study Scripture, we must let Scripture speak for itself instead of reinterpreting it to fit our theological system.

Conclusion: What do we do with what God has revealed?

- How have we been sealed?
- Ephesians 1:13-14: In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
- The sealing guarantees we'll receive the full inheritance.

Conclusion: What do we do with what God has revealed?

- We can struggle like Elijah.
- 1 Kings 19:14: He [Elijah] said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”

Conclusion: What do we do with what God has revealed?

- 1 Kings 19:18: Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.
- We can get discouraged, but our sealing guarantees the completion of God's promise, and we are not alone.

NEXT TIME:
REVELATION 7:9-17

- The Hope
of Heaven