

Revelation: A Study of End-Time Events

Lesson Four: Chapters 7-8

Overview:

In Chapters 7 and 8, we will see that after the Church is “caught up” to be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17), God’s program for Israel is resumed with Daniel’s 70th week, and the task of evangelization is once again theirs. There will be 12,000 “born again” Jews who have received Christ as their Messiah, from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. A seal of protection will be placed on them before the judgments of God are released upon the earth. These are celibate males whose sole purpose in life is to bring the gospel of the kingdom to all the world (Matt. 24:14), and there will be “a great multitude” saved during the Tribulation period. The 7th seal is opened in 8:1. This seal includes all the remaining judgments to come upon the earth, beginning with the “7 trumpets.”

Chapter 7: God’s Seal on 144,000 and Tribulation Saints

Chapter 7 is an overview of God’s end-time program of grace that runs parallel with His program of judgment on earth, during the entire seven year Tribulation period. His “Grace Program” is one of evangelization and salvation, available to all who would believe. The great multitude at the end of this portion of John’s vision are the great harvest of souls.

7:1-3

- 1) A “seal” (*sphragis*) is “an emblem of ownership and security, here combined with that of destination.”¹

- 2) Here, “servant” (*doulos*) speaks of “a slave; metaphor: one who gives himself up to another’s will; those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men.”

7:4-8

- 1) The “tribes of Israel” (*phule*) are explained as “in the NT, all the persons descending from one of the twelve sons of Jacob.” (God changed Jacob’s name to Israel).

¹ Vine, W.E., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996) p.553.

- 2) These are born-again Jews (following the Rapture of the Church), who have believed in Jesus as their Messiah. Read Rev. 14:1-5.
- 3) They are servants of God to spread the gospel of the Kingdom, since the Church has been removed. Servant (*doulos*) is “a slave; metaphor: one who gives himself up to another’s will; those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men.”
- 4) They will be celibate men. Read Rev. 14:4:
 - a) “Defile” (*moluno*) means “pollute, stain, contaminate, defile. Used (here) of those who have kept themselves pure from the defilement of sin, who have not soiled themselves by fornication and adultery.”
 - b) Here “pure” (*parthenos*) specifically means “a virgin.”
- 5) While these 144,000 born-again Jewish men are singled out and protected for service, the Jewish remnant to be saved during this period is not limited to this group (see Revelation 12:13-17).

7:9-10

- 1) “After this...” After what? After the 144,000 are sealed to carry out God’s purposes to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom.
- 2) What is the significance of their “white robes”? It symbolizes the righteousness of Christ, for they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

7:11-15

- 1) These are the souls of the multitudes of people from all over the earth who will come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ before they die in the Tribulation period. The great multitude, at the end of this portion of John’s vision, are the great harvest of souls.
- 2) Chapter 7 appears to be an overview of God’s plan of grace during the time of His Judgment, beginning with 144,000 Jewish evangelists, and ending with ALL of the redeemed who will die during the Tribulation period. This passage does not state that all of these believers were martyred, as those described in the 5th seal (Rev. 6:9-11).

- a) In light of the natural disasters unleashed upon the earth, many Tribulation saints will die as a result. With the 6th seal, one quarter of earth's population will be killed (Rev. 6:7-8). That would be 1.5 billion of today's 6 billion population.
- b) At the same time, it must be pointed out that Rev. 9:4 tells us that some judgments (torment) fall only on "those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads." All believers are "sealed" in the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13), as belonging to God. Precedent for their protection from certain judgments is set in the book of Exodus when the Israelites were protected from the plagues sent against Egypt (Exodus 8:22; 9:4, 26; 10:23; 11:5-7).

7:16-17 Conditions these believers will endure during the Tribulation:

During the Tribulation, these saints will endure hunger, thirst, burning and scorching heat of the sun, and tears of suffering, but here does not speak of beheading or martyrdom, though that will be the case for those who refuse to take the mark of the Antichrist (Rev. 20:4).

Chapter 8: The 7th Seal - Includes the Remaining Judgments of God

8:1-2

- 1) "The seventh seal contains ALL the remaining judgments of God's wrath, including the seven trumpets mentioned here, as well as the 7 bowls of God's wrath that are contained in the 7th trumpet.
- 2) The seven angels mentioned here are not the same as the seven Spirits (sevenfold Spirit) which is the Holy Spirit (Rev. 1:4). These are the seven angels who will be sounding the seven trumpets of judgment.

8:3-5

"When the priest entered the Holy Place with the incense, all the people were removed from the temple, and from between the porch and the altar, **profound silence was observed among the congregation who were praying, and at a signal the priest cast the incense on the fire.**"²

² (SMT) Smith, William, Dr. "*Smith's Bible Dictionary*". <<http://www.biblestudytools.net/Dictionaries/SmithsBibleDictionary/smt.cgi?number=T2715>>. 1901. Public Domain.

8:6-7

- 1) With “trumpets” being symbolic of the voice of Christ (Rev. 1:10), the angels would proclaim the judgments of Christ. The first four of the seven trumpet judgments involve the natural elements.
- 2) We’ve seen a judgment of hail before, in the Egyptian plague of hail brought by Moses when the Pharaoh refused to let the Hebrew leave Egypt.

Read Exodus 9:22-26.

8:8-9

- 1) This mountain all ablaze may be a volcanic eruption with smoldering lava pouring into the sea.
- 2) This is literal blood (Hebrew = *dam*), perhaps from the living creatures that will be killed as a result. In the Egyptian plagues, the Nile was turned to blood (Exodus 7:20).
- 3) A “third of the ships” implies the area covered one third of the earth, so that all the ships in that area will be destroyed.

8:10-11

- 1) The Greek word for “star” is *aster*. Scientists have told us that it’s not a matter of “if” but “when” the earth will be struck by an asteroid.
- 2) Here, “bitter” is defined as “contaminated, undrinkable, causing death.”

8:12

The earth is partially “turned dark” (*skotizo*) because “of heavenly bodies deprived of light.” This was also one of the Egyptians plagues.

Read Exodus 10:21-23.

Note that the darkness did not extend over the places where the Israelites lived. This may very well be the case for believers during the Tribulation.

8:13

- 1) “An eagle flying in midair” (*aetos*) is the same phrase used in Rev. 14:6 to describe an angelic messenger.

- 2) “Midair” (*mesouranema*) is considered “mid-heaven; the highest point in the heavens, which the sun occupies at noon, where what is done can be seen and heard by all.”

Now what? How will this lesson change the way you live?

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