

Morning Sermon September 5, 2021

*“God’s People, Sealed, Delivered, Saved and in Heaven”
Revelation 7*

I. *God’s people as seen by God, Heaven’s point of view –*

1. *Judgments are restrained for their welfare –*

7 After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. Revelation 7:1 (NKJV)

A. *The judgments spoken about here seem to be the judgments that will come with the first three or four trumpets, which come upon nature –*

Revelation 8:7 B And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

Revelation 8:9 ⁹ And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, ...

Revelation 8:10 ... A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.

Revelation 8:12 Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

B. *As in Egypt the first three plagues blood, frogs and lice, seem to impact everyone, there is no reference for these not touching the Hebrews, the fourth plague – flies do not come on Israel but Egypt only –*

²² And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I *am* the LORD in the midst of the land. ²³ I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be.” ’ ’ Exodus 8:22–23 (NKJV)

C. *God allows the trials mentioned with horsemen 2 thru 4, to touch His people, and persecution, martyrdom definitely hurt believers, yet Revelation 7 seems to indicate some division,*

God’s people are marked, sealed protected, at the very least from falling into the temptations which would destroy others -

2. *The sealing, marking of God’s Israel, spiritual Israel is pictured in Revelation 7:2-8*

7 After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. ² Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, ³ saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” ⁴ And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred *and* forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed:

- ⁵ of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed;
⁶ of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed;
⁷ of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed;
⁸ of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed.

Revelation 7:1–8 (NKJV)

OT List from Genesis 49 - (note Revelation changed the order and names)

**“Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob,
And listen to Israel your father.**

³ **“Reuben, you are my firstborn, (1)**

⁵ **“Simeon and Levi are brothers; (2 & 3)**

⁸ **“Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise; (4)**

¹³ **“Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of the sea; (5)**

¹⁴ **“Issachar is a strong donkey, (6)**

¹⁶ **“Dan shall judge his people (7) (*is missing from Revelation list*)**

¹⁹ **“Gad, ^{5a}a troop shall tramp upon him, But he shall triumph at last. (8)**

²⁰ **“Bread from Asher shall be rich, (9)**

²¹ **“Naphtali is a deer let loose; (10)**

²² **“Joseph is a fruitful bough, (11)**

²⁷ **“Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; (12)**

²⁸ **All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them. And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing.**

A. *This (in Revelation) is not a reference to the natural sons of Israel –*

⁶ But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, ⁷ nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, *“In Isaac your seed shall be called.”* Romans 9:6-7

B. *God’s people are NOT those born of blood –*

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, **not of blood**, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:12–13 (NKJV)

3. *If these are not physical descendants of Israel, who are they? Are literally only 12 thousand from each tribe saved?*

A. *How can this passage be symbolic? Note the tribes are not all mentioned - the tribe of Dan is left out, and Manasseh which is included, was not a tribe in OT times. If you take this passage literally to be talking about the twelve tribes what is said in Rev. 7:7 “all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed” – Revelation 7:4, would not be true, as Dan would be a tribe NOT SEALED! This means one tribe would not be redeemed and would contradict Revelation 5:9 as well.*

Yet if you count the listed tribes as symbolic of God’s people, the true Spiritual people of God, both Jews and Gentiles – it fits, it works –

B. *If symbolic for spiritual Israel this passage fits with what other Scripture tells us about being sealed –*

²⁰ For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. ²¹ Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, ²² **who also has sealed us** and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. 2 Corinthians 1:20–22 (NKJV)

- *Note in 2 Corinthians 2:22 the sealed, in context the Corinthians were primarily Gentiles, all the promises refers to promises given even to Abraham and Israelites, **sealed us** refers to Paul a Jew and all saved Corinthians, many Gentiles, all the people of God!*

• *Again, the Ephesians, also primarily Gentiles, were sealed – Ephesians 1:13 (NKJV)*

¹³ In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, **you were sealed** with the Holy Spirit of promise,

³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom **you were sealed** for the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30 (NKJV)

- Timothy, half Jew (mother) and half Gentile (father) was also sealed –

2 Timothy 2:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

Yet, the context of 2 Timothy 2:19 is not talking directly about Timothy but in 2 Timothy 2:17-18 speaks of false teachers in the church and these (false teachers) are not sealed. Those who are truly God’s, those who are sealed, show it by departing from iniquity!

C. *The Names of the tribes are symbolic, because God knows all of His people’s names, every one of them, and the number is symbolic too, just as He knows the number of the stars –*

⁴ **He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name.** Psalm 147:4 (NKJV)

He also knows each and everyone of His people, He even knows the number of hairs on our heads –

⁷ **But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.** Luke 12:7

Now, God knows the number of His people, 12 is symbolic of His people, twelve tribes X twelve apostles = 144 multiply that by 1,000 because a thousand symbolizes a great number -

Also, a list of all truly saved the people in the world, throughout all history would be (1) too long for the Book and (2) it would work against our making our call and election sure

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¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 2 Peter 1:10 (NKJV)

The comfort here is that God knows His own!

II. *The second half of this chapter shows us God's people as seen from a human view point –*

1. *They are a great multitude, no one, other than God can number them –*

⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, ... Revelation 7:9 A

2. *They are from every tribe, nation and tongue - of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues,... Revelation 7:9 B*

3. *They worship God and are saved by God, and the LAMB, as all who are saved are saved by God –*

standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" Revelation 7:9 C and :10

A. *White robes because cleansed by His blood – Isaiah 1:18, Revelation 1:5*

B. *Palm branches in their hands, a feature of the feast of Booths, celebrating their enduring the wilderness, coming into the Promised land, our promised land is Heaven!*

4. *These worshippers are identified as those who worship Christ and come through the great tribulation, these are the true people of God, the reference to God wiping their tears from their eyes fits with the Revelation 21 reference to the New Jerusalem / Bride of Christ which in Revelation 21 -*

¹¹ All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *Be* to our God forever and ever. Amen." ¹³ Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"

¹⁴ And I said to him, "Sir, you know."

So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. ¹⁶ They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." Revelation 7:11–17 (NKJV)

²¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Revelation 21:1-4 (NKJV)

III. *There is good reason for seeing unity of God's people in these verses – not two groups, but ONE - Not Jews saved by works / Gentiles saved by Jesus –*

1. *The Scripture tells us all our equally judged because, all are sinners –*

⁹ What then? Are we better *than* they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. ¹⁰ As it is written: "*There is none righteous, no, not one;* ¹¹ *There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.* Romans 3:9-11

2. *The Scripture clearly represents Jews and Gentiles being brought together as one Church saved by Jesus Christ –*

¹¹ Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has

made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. Ephesians 2:11–22 (NKJV)

3. *The New Jerusalem is not a purely Jewish City, but the Bride of Christ the Church – Revelation 21:9-14*

1. *Note in verse Revelation 21:9, we are being shown the Bride, the Lamb's wife ... "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." Revelation 21:9 (NKJV)*

2. *Note in Revelation 21:9 B - 10 the Bride, the Lamb's wife and the New Jerusalem are one and the same –*

"Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Revelation 21:9 B - 10 (NKJV)

There are not two things a Bride and a City, but rather ONE THING, a Bride which is a City, Christ marries His people, a large group of people -

3. *Note in Revelation 21:12-13 her gates have the names of the twelve tribes written on them – Jewish*

¹² *Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: ¹³ three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. Revelation 21:12-13 (NKJV)*

4. *Note Revelation 21:14 tells us the foundations of the City have the names of the twelve apostles – The Apostles were also*

Jewish but they represented Christ's Church which is Jew and Gentile -

¹⁴ *Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Revelation 21:9-14*

⁹ *And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, Revelation 5:9 (NKJV)*

of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues,... Revelation 7:9 B

5. *Note this was always God's plan –*

⁶ *Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.' " Isaiah 49:6 (NKJV)*

1 *Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!*

2 *For His merciful kindness is great toward us, And the truth of the LORD *endures* forever. Praise the LORD! Psalm 117*

²⁶ *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:26–29 (NKJV)*

⁸ *But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰ and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all. Colossians 3:8–11 (NKJV)*

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