



Citadel Of Faith Covenant Church

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ALPHA AND OMEGA

As we witnessed six seals opened, we have seen unparalleled judgment exacted upon the earth and its inhabitants. The last seal we saw heralded earthquakes, the sun turning black, the moon blood-red, the stars falling to the earth and the every mountain and island being displaced! (Rev. 6:12-17) The previous chapter concludes with a haunting question to those who are left on the earth to experience this terrible series of events, “who will be able to stand?” Well, chapter seven answers that question...the remnant will. Before we affix our sights to the next chapter, it’s critical that we reflect on this truth that there is always remnant. God throughout history has always reserved a faithful group of followers who remained true to both their faith and their devotion regardless of the challenges which they may have faced. As we continue to be a part of the arc of God’s work in the earth, we must know that there is ALWAYS a remnant. A remainder of those who are willing to follow Christ regardless of the circumstances or challenges are “the remnant”. Let’s look at Revelation chapter seven. This chapter acts as a type of interlude. In the midst of so much judgment and peril, there is worship and God’s mercy and grace shown. Rev. 7:1 shares that John saw four angels standing on each of the four corners of the earth holding back the wind from blowing on either land or sea. Then another angel (vs.2) came out of the east with power to harm the land and sea (to bring calamity through natural disasters). This is important. The angelic forces have many duties and responsibilities. Some of them are to be messengers (Gabriel: Luke 1:11), others minister natural needs (food, etc.) (Matthew 4:11/ I Kings 19:5-8), and yet others are warring angels, (2 Kings 6:17). Here we see that these angels were given charge over keeping judgment and releasing it. Angels are real. Just because we cannot see them, they are a part of the invisible kingdom of God. Since we are born of flesh, we are limited to the kingdom of the flesh, but because we are also born of Spirit, we are able to get “glimpses” into the spirit realm or the realm of the unseen. Thus as John was in the spirit on the Lord’s day, he was allowed to visit the kingdom of the unseen or the spirit. (Rev. 1:10). The more we are “in the Spirit” the more we will be able to experience the things of the supernatural, unseen, yet very real realm of God’s kingdom. The angel in Revelation who was given power to unleash havoc made the proclamation let’s not do this until we “seal” the foreheads of the servants of God. (Rev. 7:4). John then found out the identity of this remnant that was to be sealed, they were 144,000 from the twelve tribes of Israel. This is a very important part of our text to examine for several reasons. Well, let’s notice that this 144,000 number has been used by many religions to speak of those who would enter into heaven. (Jehovah’s Witness). Regardless of what others claim this means, let’s look at what the text says...God selects 12,000 from 12 tribes of Israel. These are Jewish people who will convert to Christianity during the Tribulation and will be sealed and thus protected and empowered during the Tribulation.



Although it may not seem like a huge deal, it's important to note something in the list of the twelve tribes delineated in Rev. 7:5-8. The list includes Levi, it leaves out Dan, it replaces Ephraim with Joseph. As it pertains to Joseph being mentioned and not Ephraim, throughout the Old Testament, the descendants of Jacob's son Joseph were divided into two tribes named after Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. In Rev. 7, God retains the name Manasseh but refers to the people of Ephraim with the name of the original Patriarch, Joseph. Perhaps Dan is omitted here because it was one of the first tribes to go into idolatry (Jud. 18:30; I Kings 12:28-29) We simply know that **THESE** are the twelve tribes God mentions: Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin. 12,000 from each of the tribes. They were sealed on their foreheads with the seal of the Living God. After this, John then noticed a great multitude that was innumerable (Rev. 7:9) These individuals were from every nation, tribe, people and language standing before the throne and before the Lamb. Chapter six, the heathen hiding in caves praying for the mountains to hide them from the face of the one sitting on the throne contrasted by this multitude right before the throne and the Lamb! They were wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. This was similar to what we would do with our cell phones with our flashlights at a concert, or pom-poms at a rally. These palms were a sign of celebration. So while there is terror on the earth, there is celebration in heaven with this remnant.

(Rev. 7:10-13) The multitude cried out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." Then all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces and worshiped saying, "Amen, Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength to our God for ever and ever." What a HUGE scene. I think of watching the Inauguration when millions fill the mall in Washington D.C. Well, as far as the eye can see all we see are the remnant, angels, elders, the four living creatures and the One on the throne and the Lamb. One of the elders asks John, does he know who the ones in white robes are and from whence they come. Then the answer comes (Rev. 7:14), "These are those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. As a result their reward is that they are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple. And God will 1) shelter them with His presence, 2) never again will they hunger or thirst, 3) the sun will not beat down on them nor any heat. The reason for this divine protection is that the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; He will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Wow! What a contrast from the earlier seals we see in chapter six. This reminds us of Psalms 23 that tells us what happens to those with whom the Lord is their shepherd. What a reminder of the peace and comfort we have as followers of Jesus that He is our protection. Although this is specifically speaking of those who will be during the tribulation. Can you imagine the promise given to us pre-tribulation? Psalms 27:5 promises that in the day of trouble He will hide you in His pavilion in the secret of His tent will he keep you concealed, he will set you high upon a rock! This is **YOUR PROMISE**. Psalms 56:8 You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded every one of them in your book (NLT). Ephesians 1:13 "You were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise." Although we are not in the great Tribulation (Praise be to God!!!), we can still enjoy the promises of God's protection, provision, and compassion like those who will stand before the throne in that terrible day.

Questions to Ponder:

1. Why is chapter seven so important in the saga of Revelation so far?
2. Who are the 144,000 (what answer can we give to people who ask who they are)..who are they NOT?
3. What do white robes represent. (to the Jew and the Gentile)?
4. How does this stir your heart about evangelism?
5. What comfort does chapter seven bring to you about your current challenges?