

THE REVELATION

LESSON 15: THE SEVEN SEALS: A BRIEF INTERLUDE THE FINAL SEAL (7- 8:5)

Intro:

BIG IDEA: God brings _____ in response to our _____, but _____ His people in that judgment.

Sealing God's Servants

¹After 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. ²Then 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, ³saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." ⁴And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

⁵12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Reuben, 12,000 from the tribe of Gad, ⁶12,000 from the tribe of Asher, 12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh, ⁷12,000 from the tribe of Simeon, 12,000 from the tribe of Levi, 12,000 from the tribe of Issachar, ⁸12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun, 12,000 from the tribe of Joseph, 12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed.

- 4 angels hold back the _____. They have the power to _____ earth and sea.
- Another _____ from the rising sun in the east. He carries God's _____.
- Seals are proof of _____ or _____.
- The angel is here to place God's seal upon God's _____ from the tribes of Israel.
- These people seem to be on the earth at the time.

Read Ephesians 1:13-14. Who is sealed, and with what?

Read Ezekiel 9:3-8. Who is sealed, and why?

“The seal confirms both God’s ownership and his protection.” Vern Poythress⁴⁸

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
The destructive angels are often seen as the barbarian hordes that are unleashed against	While Israel is an apostate nation, some Jews were faithful. As the destruction of	The servants of God are Jews saved during the Great Tribulation after the Rapture.	The 4 winds are the 4 horsemen (Zechariah 6:5). So this takes place before the first 4

⁴⁸ Poythress, pp. 118.

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<p>the Roman Empire. The servants are protected from the invaders. Alaric, king of the Goths, was heard saying he waged war with the Romans and not Christians. Others view this as those saved from false doctrines leading up to the Reformation.</p>	<p>Jerusalem looms, God seals them for their protection. They would be the ones who fled the region for Pella after seeing the “abomination that brings desolation” prophesied by Jesus and recorded by Eusebius and Epiphanius.</p>		<p>seals. Those terrifying judgments create the question answered here- what of God’s people? God, throughout history, has identified and protected His faithful people.</p>
<p>The 144,000 are symbolic of the entire church.</p>	<p>God always has a remnant, and knows their number (7,000 in the days of Elijah). This number is symbolic and they represent all the Jewish Christians who escaped Jerusalem’s fall as firstfruits (14:4). If before the 2nd coming, they’d be last fruits, right? Makes so much more sense in this context!</p>	<p>144,000 Jews will be sealed for their protection from the plagues to come. Non-dispensationalists like Ladd & Mounce think they symbolize the church in the Tribulation, the last generation of Christians.</p>	<p>Represents the church militant as the true and spiritual Israel. In all ages the church is preserved from God’s judgments on the nations. Usually use equations where each # represents something that is not very obvious.</p>

Talk it Out: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the various views? Which one makes most sense, or does less violence to the text?

⁹After 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, ¹⁰and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ¹¹And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."
¹³Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" ¹⁴I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

- The scene shifts back to _____.
- This _____ was beyond counting and comprised of _____.

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- They stand before the throne and worship the God who saves.
- Worship resumes before the throne of God with a _____ ascription of praise.
- The elder reveals their identity as those “*coming out of the great tribulation*”.
- “*Come*” can mean to _____ from one location to another, or to _____.
It has a _____ use, to come into _____ or _____ in influence, and to be established.
- Their robes are _____ because they’ve been washed in the blood of the Lamb: _____.

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
Elliott identifies them with the 144,000. Others that this represents the Gentiles in the church, who shall outnumber the Jews in the church.	The vision moves from those Jewish Christians preserved from the destruction of Jerusalem to the many Gentiles who will be saved through their preaching the gospel. Others say they are Christian martyrs slain by the Romans after the fall of Jerusalem.	These are the Gentiles converted after the Rapture by the preaching of the 144,000 (who apparently preach Christ). The distinction between the church (raptured in 4:1) and the rest of the saved is important. Both groups in Rev. 7 are distinct from the church responding to the gospel of the kingdom, not the gospel of grace. They enter the millennium in an inferior status to the church. Others argue this is not in heaven, but before the millennial throne on earth. Non-dispensationalists (who deny the pre-trib Rapture) see them as Christian martyrs from the Tribulation.	This is the church triumphant & glorified. Via death, they come out of the Tribulation.

Talk it Out: What interpretation(s) makes the most sense?

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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 shelter them with his presence.
¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;
the sun shall not strike them,
nor any scorching heat.
¹⁷For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of living water,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

- This song reflects a number of Psalms about pilgrimage and worship in the temple.
- They are sheltered by God himself, even in the heat (Ps. 91, 121).
- The Lamb is their shepherd (Ps. 23).

Read Isaiah 25. What is the context of this passage? How is it fulfilled here?

Read Isaiah 49: 8-11. What is the context of this passage? How is it similar to the Revelation passage?

¹When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.
²Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.
³And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, ⁴and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.
⁵Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

- Finally the 7th seal is opened by Jesus which prompts _____ for 30 minutes.
- The 7 angels are given 7 _____ which will link us to the next vision.
- The prayers of the saints are _____, with incense, before the _____.
- These prayers result in _____ unleashed upon the earth!

Read Zechariah 2. How does this passage inform our understanding of the silence? Is it a similar context?

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
The silence refers to the 70 years between Constantine's victory and Alaric's revolt. Matthew Henry thinks	Similar to Matthew Henry, it is an interval of peace between the destruction of Jerusalem (ending	The silence of expectancy and foreboding.	Heaven anticipates the completion of God's purposes- the lull before the storm.

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<p>this refers to the time between the destruction of Jerusalem and persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire (hence the prayers).</p>	<p>persecution at the hands of the Jews) and persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire.</p>		
<p>The angel is Christ exercising his priestly role. The martyrs are those slain by Rome who will soon be vindicated as God prepares to destroy the Empire with barbarian hordes, Muslim Arabs & Turks.</p>	<p>The apostate city will be burned from heavenly fire (see Deut. 13:16; Judges 20:40) in response to the prayers of the saints.</p>	<p>The prayers are those of the saints on earth during the tribulation (Ryrie). Many identify the angel as Christ. The judgments are in response to their prayers.</p>	<p>The judgments of God upon the world are in response to the prayers of the church.</p>

Conclusion: