

Wednesday Evening Bible Study
The Book of Revelation
Chapter 7
Lesson 14

- The question is often asked, “Will anyone be saved during the Great Tribulation?”
- According to chapter 7 of Revelation the answer is clearly, “yes.”
- However, knowing exactly “who” will be saved is a point not so clearly defined
- Chapter 6 reveals the catastrophic events that will take place as the Great Tribulation begins and likens these events to the opening/loosening of “seals”
- There are 7 seals in all, but only 6 are opened in chapter 6. Chapter 7 begins by saying, “After these things . . .” which implies that there will be a short pause between the 6th and 7th seals
- W. A. Criswell says, “In between these awful visitations from heaven recorded in the sixth and eighth chapters of Revelation, the veil is pulled aside in this seventh chapter and the mercy and grace and love of God are revealed to His elect.” (Criswell, chp. 12, p. 136)
- Some people really struggle with understanding chapter 7. I believe that most of the interpretive problems that surround this chapter come from a failure to interpret the passage literally, and accept the passage at face value!
- I want you to understand that chapter 7 can be easily, and simply, broken down into 2 sections
- The first section is 7:1-8, and it focuses on, “the sealed of God” and the second section is in 7:9-16, and it focuses on the “great multitude”
- TRANS: Now, let’s spend the remainder of our time together discovering the identity and activity of each of these groups mentioned in chapter 7

1) The “sealed of God”

a) Identity of the “sealed of God”

- 1) This is not the first time we see that people are “sealed” in the Bible
 - (1) God sealed Noah and his family from the rest of mankind when He sent the flood
 - (2) Rahab was sealed by means of a scarlet chord during the battle of Jericho
 - (3) The first born son of all the Hebrew families was sealed by the blood of the lamb when the death angel was sent during the plagues in Egypt
- 2) In each of these instances, the seal was placed upon someone to protect them from the judgment of God
- 3) In chapter 7, we find that God is once again placing His seal of protection upon a specific group of people during the Great Tribulation
- 4) The question is, “Who are the ‘sealed of God’?”
- 5) This is not a difficult passage, for the answer to this question is found in v. 4-8
- 6) The “sealed of God” according to v. 4 are, “one hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.”
- 7) v. 5-8 gets specific as it reveals that there will be “12,000” of each of the 12 tribes of Israel who shall be “sealed” during this pause between the 6th and 7th seals
- 8) There are 2 interesting notations to make about the 144,000

- 9) Levi's and Joseph's tribes are included, even though these were non-land holding tribes, because the OT system of the priesthood is no longer in effect, and based upon their faithfulness through the years
- 10) Dan and Ephraim's tribes are not included, probably because of their idolatry
- 11) In place of Dan and Ephraim, we find the ½ tribe of Manasseh (v.6)
- 12) The 144,000 is clearly a group of Jews! For those who doubt this fact are trying to read into this passage truths that are not stated/nor implied in this passage!
- 13) There are groups today who have failed to take a very straight forward interpretation of this passage of scripture and, in so doing, have twisted/confused it greatly
- 14) The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the 144,000 refers to only them!
- 15) Seventh Day Adventists believe that this number refers to members of their church who are found observing the Jewish Sabaath when the Lord appears, and they are raptured up to glory.
- 16) Some Christians think that this group is the "true church" because to them "Israel" equals the "church"
- 17) The 144,000 are not mentioned again until 14:1-5. We find them standing with Jesus on Mount Zion and recognized for enduring the Great Tribulation
- 18) One of my study bibles says, "They (144,000) are the first fruits of the new era which began with the translation of the church. The description accorded to them, 'virgins,' probably means that these had abstained from the pollutions of earth, and not necessarily that they had never married." (Believer's Study Bible, p. 1818.)

b) Activity of the "sealed of God"

- 1) Here's where the text gets interesting! "What" will these 144,000 Jews who have become Christians do during the Great Tribulation?
- 2) Though it is not stated in this passage, it is my conviction that this group of Jews will be world-wide evangelists.
- 3) John Walvoord says, "It is implied that these who are thus sealed have been saved in the time of trouble pictured in the book of Revelation and by this means are being set apart as a special divine remnant to be a testimony to God's grace and mercy during this time of judgement." (Walvoord, p. 140)
- 4) David Jeremiah compares each of the 144,000 to have the influence of Billy Graham, and that countless people will come to Christ during the Great Tribulation
- 5) The problem is that the majority of these will be martyred for their faith, killed because of their faith in Christ!
- 6) I believe that their purpose will be to show Israel, once again, that God has not forgotten them, that Israel is still a nation precious in the site of God.
- 7) I believe that in that day, God will take this group whom He has "sealed" and use them to take the gospel around the world
- 8) I used to believe that ONLY Jews would be saved during the Great Tribulation, but 7:9 and 14 clearly show us that people, "of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues" will be in that great multitude
- 9) Concerning the Gentiles, it is my *conviction* that those Gentiles who reject Jesus during prior to the rapture will not have another opportunity during the Great Tribulation
- 10) This is based upon II Thessalonians 2:11-12 which describes the entrance of the Antichrist on the world scene, "

- 11) And what is this “lie” that Paul refers to? The lie that the Antichrist is the savior of the world.
 - 12) Simply stated, if you are given the opportunity to hear the gospel today, then your opportunity to respond to the gospel is today!
- 2) The “great multitude”**
- a) The identity of the “great multitude”**
- 1) vs. 9 and 14 give us the primary description needed to determine the identify this group
 - 2) v. 9 begins, “After these things . . .” again, telling us that this group is assembled AFTER the 144,000 has been sealed
 - 3) The description begins, “a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,”
 - 4) A key identifying point for this group is found in v. 13 where one of the “elders” (representing the church from the NT and the saints from the OT) asks John,
 - 5) “Who are these people?”
 - 6) John essentially says, “I don’t know, I thought you knew?”
 - 7) Which tells us that this is a group of people that John has never seen before.
 - 8) This question helps us to understand that this multitude is NOT the church, nor the OT saints, but another group of believers
 - 9) Some argue that if this indeed is the church, then John would have recognized some of the early NT saints within that group
 - 10) v. 14 says that this multitude, “came out of the great tribulation” which seems to narrow it down for me.
 - 11) I believe that this “great multitude” is comprised of those individuals who come to receive Christ during the Great Tribulation
 - 12) And “how” shall they hear of Christ since the church will have already been raptured?
 - 13) From the preaching of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists
 - 14) Walvoord believes that this “great multitude” is a portion of those mentioned in 6:11 as “the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.”
 - 15) TRANS: So this group is comprised of those who come to know Christ based upon the testimony of the 144,000. Now notice what they will be doing in heaven . . .
- b) The activity of the “great multitude”**
- 1) **v. 10, 15-17 tell us about what the “great multitude” will, and will not, be doing**
 - 2) **What the “great multitude” will not be doing**
 - (1) v. 16, “they shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore”
 - (2) The most basic needs of the flesh will no longer plague them
 - (3) Remember, during the tribulation food and fresh water will be scarce! God promises that they shall no longer have to endure such heart ache
 - (4) Some think that these martyrs will be forced to go hungry because they will not accept the mark of the beast so that they might buy and sell (13:16-17)
 - (5) v. 16, “the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat”
 - (6) The most basic needs of shelter will also be provided for them for all eternity
 - (7) Some think that these martyrs will be forced to live in the deserts/wilderness as they flee from the persecution of the Antichrist

- (8) This should be all the more reason to lead people to Christ TODAY so that they will not have to endure such suffering!

3) What the “great multitude” will be doing

- (1) v. 10, “and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”
- (2) This is the same message that the group of “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands and thousands” in 5:13 was proclaiming
- (3) We will also hear these words again in 19:1 coming from, “a great multitude in heaven”
- (4) Walvoord says that heaven, “is not only a place of rest from earthly toil but also a place of privileged service.”
- (5) And most importantly, notice “what” God will be doing for this “great multitude”
- (6) v. 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.”
- (7) In stark contrast to what they had to endure on earth, God promises that He will “shepherd them” meaning that He will lead them to the green pastures and beside the still waters!
- (8) The abundance of God’s provision in heaven is seen in this verse.
- (9) Notice the last phrase of v. 17, “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”
- (10) The implication here is upon past tears, not future tears.
- (11) This does not mean that we shall be moved to tears in heaven, as we are in earth, by the pain, suffering and trials of life
- (12) However, those tears that have been shed on earth shall be eternally wiped away by the loving hand of God