

Revelation 7

Review:

-**What are the details for the writing of this book?** **By** Jesus **to** John **for** the 7 churches of Asia at the end of the First Century A.D.

-**Can anyone name the 7 churches and how Jesus described them?**

-Ephesus – lost first love

-Smyrna – faithful; only 10 more days of persecution

-Pergamum – false teaching there; Antipas killed

-Thyatira – false teaching there ("Jezebel")

-Sardis – had a name for being alive, but was dead

-Philadelphia – small in number, but totally faithful; an open door before them which no man could shut – no more persecution

-Laodicea – lukewarm; too rich; arrogant; self-confident

-**Why is lukewarmness worse than being dead?**

Revelation 4 – John saw God on the throne

-**What else did John see?** The 24 elders – white robes, golden crowns

-4 living creatures (lion, calf, man, eagle)

Revelation 5 – **Who had the scroll?** God

-**Why did John weep?** No-one was worthy to break the 7 seals

-**Who was worthy?** Jesus

-**Response of the people in heaven?** Worshipped Christ

Revelation 6 – **First seal?** Man on white horse = power (Parthians or Persian soldiers)

-**Second seal?** Man on red horse = blood/war

-**Third seal?** Man on black horse = famine, shortage of food

-**Fourth seal?** A pale horse (gray) = death

-**Fifth seal?** Blood of saints under the altar – **Their response? How long...?** – given white robes

-**Sixth seal?** Terror – sun, moon, sky rolled up like a scroll; people terrified = judgment day for the Roman Empire

Theme of *Revelation* thus far? The church will win over the Roman Empire

Revelation 7 – Introduction

-An interlude (or pause) – always in *Revelation* before the seventh of anything

-The opening of the seventh seal is delayed by two episodes: v 1-8 and v 9-17

-Notice *Rev. 6.17* – Who can survive if the seventh seal is anything like the sixth seal?

Sort of an intermission – "*Let's catch our breath! What will happen to the saved?*"

Revelation 7.1-3

V1 – "Four corners" – John did not believe that the world was flat and had 4 corners to it

-But he is referring to the four points of the compass

-Isaiah spoke of the circle (sphere) of the earth – See *Isaiah 40.22* (also see the footnote on *Job 22.14*)

-The four winds refer to the 4 horsemen who are held back for *Rev. 7* to give time for the

"sealing" of the saints

-So *v 1* speaks of the complete stopping of all activity

V 2 – **What did John see then?** Another angel coming down from God

-**What did this angel have?** God's seal

-Note: the four angels had the ability to harm the earth

V 3 – **Why did the saints have to be sealed?** For their own protection from the opening of the seventh seal

-**How would this have encouraged the Christians in the first century who were being persecuted?** – God was making provision for his people

-**A parallel situation in the Old Testament?** The killing of the first born in Egypt – God gave instructions so that death would "pass over" God's people (blood of the lamb on the doorpost, etc.)

Revelation 7.4-8

V 4 – **How many were sealed?**

-Jehovah's Witness doctrine says that 144,000 will be saved (about 1-2 members from each congregation)

-The others must earn their salvation, by going door-to-door (which explains their energy in doing that)

But the truth on this passage is this:

1. The 144,000 represent those saved under the Old Testament (12 tribes times 12 times 1000)
2. The "Great Multitude" (*v 9*) represent those saved under the New Testament (including Gentiles)

See the book *Thirty Years a Watchtower Slave* (in most church libraries) – the door-to-door people have to turn in a schedule of the hours they spend each week in this activity (in a vain attempt to earn their salvation)

V 5 – See: 12 sons of Jacob (*Gen. 35.23-26*) – However, please notice John's list carefully:

-Judah

-Reuben

-Gad

V 6 –

-Asher

-Naphtali

-Manasseh

V 7 –

-Simeon

-Levi

-Issachar

V 8 –

- Zebulun
- [Joseph – not really a tribe]
- Benjamin

Total: 12 (but not the original 12 from the Old Testament)

- There was no tribe of Joseph, but tribes for his 2 sons: Manasseh and Ephraim
- Missing tribes: Dan and Ephraim
- Tribe of Dan is not listed (the last mention of Dan is in *2 Kings 17.6* – they went into total apostasy early in the Old Testament – see *1 King 12.29* – golden calf, etc.)

Why is does this list contain inconsistencies? Because it was not a real list – it was symbolic!

- John was sending a message to the 7 churches of Asia that this book was symbolic
- Any first century Jew (which was what John was) could have seen the list as a message to the churches of Asia
- For our friends who are Jehovah's Witnesses, the 144,000 is not literal!
- This is not a literal list, but is saying that God saved his people under the Old Testament, and he will do the same for those in the Christian Age
- If the list of tribes is not literal, then the figure of 144,000 is not literal!

Revelation 7.9-11

V 9 – Describe the scene? Notice the white robes

- "The great multitude" was sealed – meaning that God would watch over his people who were saved by obedience to the gospel of Christ
- Again, the Witnesses are wrong – the great multitude will be saved, just as the "144,000" who were under the Old Law
- What is the reference here to the palm branches?** A reference to the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem on the Sunday before his death on the cross

V 10 – God is on his throne, with Jesus beside him

V 11 – Notice again the people and creatures in heaven praising Jesus Christ

Revelation 7.12-17

V 12 – More praise for Jesus Christ

V 13 – Which elder? One of the 24 before the throne of God

- What question does the elder ask John?** "Do you know who these people are who are clothed in white?"

V 14 – What was John's answer? John didn't know, but he knew that the elder knew the answer

- What was the answer?** The people clothed in white were the ones who had come out of the great tribulation
- The premillennialists today say that the "Great Tribulation" will be a 7-year period of terrible warfare and destruction between the second and third comings of Jesus (before he

establishes a period of 1000 years of peace on the earth)

-Is there any evidence of this from this passage? Absolutely not

-It is a reference to the period of persecution of the 7 churches of Asia toward the end of the first century

Notice from this verse how important is it to keep the setting for this book in mind – it is not a foretelling of events thousands of years into the future, but an encouragement to these 7 churches (and all churches that will be persecuted in the future)

V 15 – Tabernacle – **What was it?** The tent of worship in the days of Moses down to Solomon

V 16 – **Rewards to the faithful Christians?** No hunger, no thirst, no sun beating down of them, no extreme heat

V 17 – **What does this verse say about Jesus?** He will be the lamb in their midst (in heaven) and will guide them to the springs of the water of life (a reference to *Rev. 22*).

-What will God do on our arrival in heaven? Wipe away our tears (a reference to *Rev. 21*)

Message of *Rev. 7* – more encouragement to the persecuted Christians

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