

Revelation Study 13: Chapter 7, Verses 1-17

“For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.”

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

Chapter 6 described a time of unprecedented disaster.

Chapter 6 told of a huge slaughter.

It will be so bad, that people will acknowledge God.

And it is just going to get worse from this point on.

Chapter 7 is a reminder that in the middle of His wrath, there will be mercy (Hab. 3:2).

God will preserve His people in a time of judgment.

¹ After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree.

“After this I saw” –

και **μετα ταυτα ειδον**

μετά (meta)

- gen: with, in company with, (b) acc: (1) behind, beyond, after, of place, (2) after, of time, with nouns, neut. of adjectives.
- μετά (a preposition) – properly, with ("after with"), implying "change afterward" (i.e. what results after the activity). As an active "with,"
- looks towards the after-effect (change, result) which is only defined by the context.

ὁράω (horaó)

- I see, look upon, experience, perceive, discern, beware
- properly, see, often with metaphorical meaning: "to see with the mind" (i.e. spiritually see), i.e. perceive (with inward spiritual perception)

A new vision (A new scene)

- Scene focuses on protection of the Godly
- John sees four angels
- Notice what they are doing

“standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth”

- Four corners- is what a mariner or geologist would call the four quadrants of the compass

They are holding the winds back “so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree.”

- “on the earth or on the sea, or on any tree”
 - Detailed description of what the wind will not blow on
- There will be no wind, no breeze, no waves breaking on the shore; everything will be absolutely still

- Winds are straining to be let loose; God’s judgment is being held back
- There is a moment of calmness

² And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,

“another”

- ἄλλος (allos)
- other, another (of more than two), different
- another of the same kind; another of a similar type

“From the rising of the sun”- east

- For John (On Patmos) this would be Israel

“seal of the living God”

- refers to a signet ring that kings or other officials would use to stamp into wax documents or other items, which affirmed their authenticity, and guaranteed their security (denotes ownership and protection)
- Ancient documents were folded and tied, and a lump of clay was pressed over the knot. The sender would then stamp the hardening clay with his signet ring or roll it with a cylinder seal, which authenticated and protected the contents
- ***God is protecting His people. The judgment is being restrained and God is placing a seal on people (see verses 3 and 4)
 - Ezekiel 9:3-9 is a proof text for this stance

“to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea”

The four angels have been given authority to cause harm

“it was granted to harm”- refers to the judgment that will come when God’s judgment is released

“harm”

- ἄδικέω (adikeō)
- I act unjustly towards, injure, harm
- adikéō (from adikía, "unrighteousness") – properly, doing wrong (committing injustice), especially to inflict undeserved hurt by ignoring God's justice – i.e. acting contrary to what is divinely approved

² Peter 2:12-13

But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, **suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong**. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,

Revelation 22:11

Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.”

Acts 25:11

If, then, **I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything worthy of death**, I do not refuse to die; but if none of those things is *true* of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar.”

³ saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads.”

Bond-servants- means these people have already been redeemed

- They have remained faithful to God and are probably preaching His Word, and were during the first six seals
- Rev. 14:1-5 tells of their character (cream of the crop)
- They will be the most effective missionaries the world has ever seen

⁴ And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

⁵ from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand,

⁶ from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand,

⁷ from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand,

⁸ from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed.

“those who were sealed”

God purposely set these aside for salvation to His glory

John MacArthur’s points on the list of Names

- Jewish believers and evangelists- the first fruits of Israel
- These are Jews
- No reason to not interpret 12,000 and 144,000 figuratively
- Tribal records in the Temple
- Answer to the mystery of the “Ten lost tribes”?
 - They moved south
- Does not fit with any of the 19 ways of listing in the Old Testament
 - Order of birth, order of Jacob’s blessing, order of encampment, the order of the censuses before the invasion, order of blessing and cursing, order of inheritance, order of princes

General Observations

- Rueben is the first born, but Judah is listed first

1 Chronicles 5:1

Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel; so that he is not enrolled in the genealogy according to the birthright.

- Dan is omitted in favor of Levi (Duet. 29:18-21; Judges 18; Amos 8:14)

Dan's guilt of idolatry: Judges 18

The Curse pronounced for the sin of idolatry: Deuteronomy 29:14-21

- Dan will share in the millennial reign

Ezekiel 48:1-2

"Now these are the names of the tribes: from the northern extremity, beside the way of Hethlon to Lebohamath, as far as Hazar-enan at the border of Damascus, toward the north beside Hamath, running from east to west, Dan, one portion. Beside the border of Dan, from the east side to the west side, Asher, one portion.

³² On the east side, 4,500 cubits, shall be three gates: the gate of Joseph, one; the gate of Benjamin, one; the gate of Dan, one.

- Ephraim is omitted in favor of his father Joseph because Ephraim defected from the ruling house of Judah

Hosea 4:17

Ephraim is joined to idols; Let him alone.

Conclusions

Despite the relatively recent populace shift in the view of Israel, God is not through with Israel

Israel was to be a witness nation; they will carry this burden (They failed during the Old Testament era but they will not fail in the future)

⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands;

"After these things I looked"

Different vision

He saw "a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues"

- This group
 - No specific number is mention
 - People are saved in great numbers
 - Possibly the fruit of the work of the 144,000?
 - These came from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues
 - Beyond persecution because they are already in heaven
 - They were wearing white robes
- "White robes are not literal because they have not received their earthly bodies (Rev. 6:9; 20:4)" – John MacArthur?

- Palms in their hands (celebration, deliverance, and joy)
- Standing before the throne of the Lamb

**¹⁰ and they cry out with a loud voice, saying,
“Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”**

- They are praising God (salvation is the theme)
- Exaltations offered to both God and Jesus

**¹¹ And 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,
¹² saying, “Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”**

- Innumerable believers before God’s throng were worshipping right beside the angels, the elders and the four living creatures
- Angels rejoice in the salvation of humans
- 24 elders – possibly the raptured church???

The praise: “Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and 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, “These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?”

Rhetorical question offered to John

The question is offered because the answer was to be greatly emphasized

¹⁴ I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

“I said to him, “My lord, you know.”
“lord”- great respect (Rev. 19:10)

Two things we see from this:

- John did not know the answer to his question
- John realized that the question was rhetorical

The Point is this: **People will be saved during the Great Tribulation**

Another thing that we learn from this: Many believers will die in the Tribulation

It is important to remember that they are not a result of God's wrath

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.

People are saved, but there will be a point when it will stop happening (Rev. 9:20-21)

¹⁵ For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them.

- “For this reason”
- “in His Temple
 - One in Heaven
 - One on earth during the millennial reign
 - But not one in the New Jerusalem

“and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them.”

- God will give them refuge

**¹⁶ They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat;
¹⁷ for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.”**

- Isaiah 49:10
- Sun beat down on them (Rev. 16:9)
- God will be their shepherd
- Guide them to springs of the water of life
- God will wipe every tear from their eyes