

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray...

Read chapter 7

Last week, we saw the Lamb, the one who was worthy of opening the scroll – Jesus Christ – beginning to open the scrolls one seal at a time.

As Jesus broke each seal and unrolled the scroll a little further, events begin to take place on the earth and the time that we call the Tribulation begins to unfold.

We saw the antichrist – the one riding the white horse.

And I pointed out that many people incorrectly believe that this is Jesus Christ because he is riding a white horse –

Satan is the great imitator, we will see today and next week at other things that he will do to try to imitate Christ.

So the antichrist is going to conquer the world, and the scriptures tell that how he is going to conquer the world - not through might but through diplomacy (remember, it says that he carried a bow but no arrows).

There is going to be mass genocide as people turn against each other.

We saw famine – to those that are going to choose to live through the Tribulation, it is going to cost a day's wage to buy the grain needed to make a loaf of bread.

We saw the Tribulation saints up (these are the individuals who are going to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior after the rapture of the church) many of them will martyred as they rebel against the antichrist and John tells us that he sees them in heaven asking for God to avenge their deaths.

We saw earthquakes and cosmic disturbances and the scriptures tell us at the end of chapter six that instead of repenting of their wickedness, the people try to hide from God's wrath.

So six of the seven seals have already been broken – and here in chapter seven, a few things have to occur before we get to the next seal.

So we are going to have a little break as the judgments are suspended.

[Rev 7:1-17 NKJV] 1 After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.

In ancient times, winds were almost always associated with judgment.

So what we have here in verse one are these four angels who have been given authority and power by God to bring judgment upon the entire earth.

The four corners of the earth here is letting us know that the judgments we started seeing last week until chapter 19, they are going to be felt everywhere.

No one is going to be able to hide in a remote island in the Pacific and escape God's judgment.

Now, it is possible that these angels are part of the same angels that we will see next week in chapter 8 as the Trumpets are blown.

And the reason I believe this is because of the parallels between what is written here and the destruction that will occur after each trumpet is blown (wind)

1st Trumpet: Trees and grass burnt

2nd Trumpet: Sea becomes blood

3rd Trumpet: Earth, rivers, springs polluted

4th Trumpet: Sun, moon, stars darkened

2 Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."

A few weeks ago when we looked at the scroll that had the seven seals – the word that is used here for “seal” is the same as the ones on the scroll.

Here, there will be a “seal” or “mark” put on the foreheads of God’s servants.

They will be protected from judgment because God has put His seal on them.

Just like He did to the Children of Israel during the Passover – if they had their door posts marked with the Lamb of the blood – their house was passed-over from the judgment of the death of the first born.

Now, turn with me to Ezekiel 9

Because here in Ezekiel, we have another instance where God put His seal to protect His them from judgment.

[Eze 9:3-6 NKJV] 3 Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who [had] the writer's inkhorn at his side; 4 and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it." 5 To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. 6 "Utterly slay old [and] young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom [is] the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who [were] before the temple.

So God brought judgment upon the people of Jerusalem, however, those that had demonstrated a strong emotion against the abominations that were occurring – they got a mark on their forehead and were spared.

The work for mark is the Hebrew letter Tau

Which is represented by a lower case T.

I had mentioned earlier how Satan tries to imitate God – he is going to have his own seal and it will be found on those who choose to “worship” the antichrist.

(Rev 13:16–18 NKJV) —16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

The Apostle Paul tells us in the book of Ephesians, that believers themselves have a seal upon them.

[Eph 1:13-14 NKJV] 13 In Him you also [trusted], after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

When we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, God marks us with a seal – and that seal is the Holy Spirit.

We will see these servants of God again in chapter 14 –

The implication is that they have finished their ministry and are in heaven because they have been killed by the antichrist.

And beginning in verse 4, we have the identity of those that are going to be sealed.

4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred [and] forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel [were] sealed: 5 of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand [were] sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand [were] sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand [were] sealed; 6 of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand [were] sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand [were] sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand [were] sealed; 7 of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand [were] sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand [were] sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand [were] sealed; 8 of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand [were] sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand [were] sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand [were] sealed.

Many religious cults believe they are the 144,000.

The JW's believe that they are these 144,000

However, as they started to grow in numbers – and they started to exceed 144,000 – they changed their theology to say that only the elect are 144,000 and are therefore going to heaven and the remaining JW's will spend their eternity here in paradise on earth.

Only the elect 144000 can participate and eat of the communion which they celebrate only once a year even though Jesus says in the gospel of John(6), "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. 54 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

So guess what?

The JW's are not the 144000

The bible clearly tells us that they are of Jewish ancestry who accept Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior after the rapture of the church.

Now, as I read the names of the tribes – did anyone notice anything odd about the list of the tribes???

First of all, Dan is not mentioned as one of the tribes???

And many bible teachers believe that Dan is not mentioned because the tribe of Dan is the one who introduced idolatry into the nation of Israel (Judges 18:30)

Though Dan is missing from this list, it is not totally lost.

Ezekiel describes the kingdom that is set up after Jesus comes back.

He describes how the land of Israel is once again divided up among the twelve tribes – and Dan is one of those tribes mentioned (Eze. 48:1-2)

The city of Jerusalem will have twelve gates, and one of the gates is set aside for Dan. (Eze. 48:32)

I think this speaks of God's redemption.

Also, we see the tribe of Joseph??? There is no tribe of Joseph – because Joseph (received a double portion) was represented by his two children Manasseh and Ephraim

So we see the tribe of Manasseh on the list here but not the tribe of Ephraim.

And once again, it could be because the tribe of Ephraim was also associated with great idolatry (Hosea 4)

Now, we are going to take a look at another group – the Great Multitude

9 After these things I looked, and behold, 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, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation [belongs] to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

In order to understand who this great multitude is – we have to realize that these individuals are in heaven.

John is no longer looking at the events down here on earth.

John sees a great multitude – from people from all around the world (so right away we can see that these are not the same as the 144,000 mentioned in the first half of this chapter) and they are standing before God's throne wearing white robes –

Turn back to Rev 6

[Rev 6:9-11 NKJV] 9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 Then a **white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both [the number of] their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they [were], was completed.**

So the great multitude are the saints that are going to be martyred during the Great Tribulation.

But in chapter six, they wanted God to avenge their deaths – and God told them that they had to wait until all those that were going to die as Tribulation saints had been fulfilled.

So here in chapter 7, they are waiting...

Did anyone notice what they had in their hands???

Does this mean that there will be palm branches in heaven???? Maybe

But the reason that they are holding palm branches is because the palm tree was a symbol of victory.

Remember Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem – what did the people lay on the ground as they praised Him as Savior and King while shouting Hosanna – they laid palm branches.

Look at v10 again.

The great multitude cries out

“Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

-If you want to be saved, you have to ask for it from the one it belongs to - God.

It's a gift He gives; a gift we receive by Faith in Jesus.

[Eph 2:8-9 NKJV] 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

11 All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, 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, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" 14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and **washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

So during the Seven Year of the Great Tribulation, God is going to seal the 144,000 and they are going to serve God by preaching the gospel – in response to them preaching the gospel, there will be many people who respond and will be saved and then martyred.

I asked you to make a note where it says washed their robes,

When we get to heaven, we will be clothed with the deeds we've done in this life. (Rev 19:8)

The problem is that without Jesus, the best clothing that we can ever come up with are still filthy rags.

Turn with me to Matt 22 –

Jesus described heaven as a wedding feast, where guests are invited, and it is important to wear the proper attire:

[Mat 22:11-13 NKJV] 11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. 12 "So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast [him] into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The party crasher was thrown out because he wasn't dressed properly.

The important lesson for us is to be sure to get our "clothes" cleaned with God's washing machine.

We come to Jesus and admit our sins.

We ask Jesus to forgive us. And our "clothes" become "washed" with the blood of the Lamb.

We don't think of things being made white or washed by the application of blood. But that is exactly what the blood of Jesus does to us.

Isaiah wrote,

**(Is 1:18 NKJV) “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD,
“Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they
are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.**

**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 dwell among them.**

In the Old Testament, the privilege of serving God day and night was reserved only for the Levites and the priests.

Most of the Israelites were excluded and no gentile was ever allowed to even set foot inside the Temple.

But in this temple, this heavenly temple, the way to the presence of God is open to everyone.

16 "They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat;

The Tribulation saints, while they were still alive – one of the ways that they suffered was that they were not able to buy food –

The Antichrist is going to make it where nobody will be able to buy anything or make any transactions without the mark of the beast – so those that don't have the mark of the beast are going lack food, water and shelter.

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."

Whenever I would read this verse, I would picture a dad or a mom picking up their crying child who just scrapped their knee and wiping away their tears.

However, I believe there is more to this verse.

One of the hardest things to deal with in life is the question "Why".

Why did we have to go through certain hardships in life?

Why did we lose our loved ones at such a young age?

And I am pretty sure that we all have our collections of whys?

I think that this last portion means that He will answer the "why".

We'll "get it".

We'll understand why things happened the way they did.

We too will be able to proclaim with all heaven that God is "all powerful", that He is "wise", that God is "good", that God is "just", and that He "loves" us.

While we are here on earth, we proclaim these things by faith.

But when we get to heaven, we will no longer need to live by faith because we will be in His presence and finally understand the “whys?”

Until then, we continue to be faithful because He is faithful!

Amen

Let's pray...

