

## **Study 15: Revelation 7:1-8**

**1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.**

This should be the time when the seventh seal is opened, but the flow of the seals being opened is interrupted. We see angels poised to do something. Angels are powerful beings if four of them can do something that will affect the whole earth.

Angels have whatever power they need to carry out God's will and purpose.

But keep in mind that Revelation is a dream, a vision, and it uses symbolic and apocalyptic language to get a message across to the reader or listener.

The Holy Spirit is compared to a wind and here there are contrary winds being held back by four angels. Paul refers to the wind of doctrine in Ephesians 4. I wonder if this is referring to God restraining false doctrines from affecting the Church. Just a weird thought perhaps.

**2 Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea:**

**3 "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God."**

- Here is another angel with a loud voice. You may worry that you will miss God's voice or what He is doing. I think God makes it all hard not to miss and not easy to miss.
- Many people are concerned about the 666 that will be put on the forehead of men and women. But before the 666 is assigned, the righteous, the servants of God are sealed with the seal of the living God!
- God interrupts His judgment on the earth to take care of His people. God always takes care of His people. Even in the midst of the Egyptian plagues, God took care of His people, for none of the plagues affected the land of Goshen where the Hebrews lived.
- When was the message of fear attached to the book of Revelation? In the midst of horses bringing disaster and seals of calamity, God stops to seal His own.
- A seal designates something as belonging to the one who owns the seal. We belong to Jesus, no matter what the world does or what happens therein.
- Read the words of the apostle Paul to the Romans:

**What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died-- more than that, who was raised to life-- is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:31-39).**

Read the above passage one more time. Let the message sink deep into your heart and mind.

We need to settle once and for all that God is **for** us and that **nothing** shall separate us from the love of God, not even disaster and death.

The message of Revelation is a message of victory, of God's power to protect His own, of God's ability to rule in the seemingly tumultuous affairs of men. Any other message is one that is foreign to the text and is a teaching of man.

Any Revelation message that instills fear into the hearts of people is a teaching of man.

Any Revelation message that tries to assign literal historical events to the symbolic pictures of Revelation is a teaching of man and pure fiction.

Remember, we must put ourselves in the place of those who first received the book. The Lord was addressing their situation then, not 2,000 years hence.

**4      Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.**

Some sects have taught that there were to be literally 144,000 people saved based on this verse. This is nonsense. Why would we begin applying a literal interpretation at this point, when everything up to this point has been symbolic? The 144,000 must be symbolic of something and is not to be taken literally.

144,000 seems to be reached by multiplying 12 times 12 times 10 times 10 times 10. I have done a little study on the meaning of biblical numbers and twelve is the number of God's government or rule (12 tribes, 24 elders around the throne, 12

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apostles) and ten is a combination of 7 plus 3, both being perfect and complete numbers. (I am not going to take the time to substantiate these claims; you can determine whether they are true by independent study.)

My theory is that the 144,000 represents that **all** who are to be sealed **will** be sealed. God's sovereign rule and oversight will not miss or overlook one single person! He will not overlook anyone who has called on His name for salvation. No one knows what that exact number is, but God knows. And if you are His servant, you **will** be sealed, identified and preserved as God's own.

Why a seal on the forehead? Well, a seal on the forehead is hard to miss! There will be no mistaking God's protection and distinctive presence on His people. Usually nothing is worn on the forehead; something can be worn on the nose, cheeks, ears, lips and eyes. But usually nothing is worn on the forehead. When God marks His people, all creation will know that they are His! It won't be possible to overlook.

The forehead is the frontal protector of the brain. I wonder if the seal is a protection at the front of my brain to keep my mind focused on Him. This could relate to the four winds being deceiving doctrines that could seduce and affect the mind of believers. What do you think?

- 5 From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben 12,000, from the tribe of Gad 12,000,**
- 6 from the tribe of Asher 12,000, from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000, from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000,**
- 7 from the tribe of Simeon 12,000, from the tribe of Levi 12,000, from the tribe of Issachar 12,000,**
- 8 from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000, from the tribe of Joseph 12,000, from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000.**

The world may seem in chaos to me, but God proceeds about His work in an orderly fashion. And God is ultimately in the "people business." God is concerned for His people and watches out for them perfectly. Nothing and no one escapes His loving care. Each tribe receives equal attention.

Historically some tribes served the Lord more faithfully and closely. But God doesn't play favorites. No one's heritage counts more than anyone else's when it comes to God's seal. It is the blood of the Lamb that determines salvation, not earthly heritage.

There is one tribe not mentioned and that is the tribe of Dan. I wonder why? They did have a propensity to idolatry and God cannot and will not seal idolaters. And Ephraim isn't mentioned; instead, his father's name of Joseph is listed.

I don't think that the mention of the 12 tribes pertains to natural Israel here. After all, Paul refers to the true Israel as those who have faith in God:

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**It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring (Romans 9:6-8).**

My name is written in the book of life! I am sealed as His. Nothing shall separate me from the love of God. If I die, I am with Him. If I live, I serve Him.

Can someone please tell me how Revelation became anything but a book of hope and joy?