



The Book of Revelation - Session #20 The 144,000 and the Tribulation Saints

September 13, 2023

Bishop Steven A. Norman – Pastor

Revelation Chapter 7

*As we continue to go through the book of Revelation, we want to get a picture that this book lets us know that **God is in complete control of the future:***

Last session we finished going through Revelation chapter 6, and in this chapter, we see Jesus Christ breaking open the seals and we walk through the first 4.

Remember this scroll is in the hand of Jesus and everything is under His control.

Nothing happens here on the earth and in Heaven that is not in the control of His hand.

I believe the opening of these six seals is Christ allowing the results of the sins of humanity to drive them to him.

Those that He had called but has not responded positively to his calling. So, they can escape the wrath of God and the wrath of satan that is to come.

First Seal: The Conqueror - We discover that this will be the antichrist coming on the scene. The first three-and one-half years. He will come in peace and will provide peace to the world. Then he will break his peace agreement with Israel, and this will make room for the second seal to be opened.

Second Seal: Conflict on Earth. The red horse comes on the scene which symbolizes bloodshed and war. The rider of this horse removes “peace from the earth.”

Jesus said in **Matthew 24:6 & 10** **And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.**

Third Seal: Scarcity on Earth. A black horse follows. This symbolizes the harshness of the results of war, a shortage of food. Particularly among the middle class and poor.

This is more than famine alone. It describes global rationing and controls by the upper class and globalists.

The Coming World Leader will control the economy (**Rev 13:17**).

Fourth Seal: Widespread Death on Earth. John next saw an ashen horse the color of a human corpse.

And death was riding this horse and Hades followed it. Don't just look at this as symbolic language. Death is really a Spirit and Hades/Hell has characteristics.



Two personages or beings. Death claims the body; Hades claims the soul. John saw these enemies going forth to claim their prey, armed with military weaponry, hunger, pestilence (death) and wild beasts. [Some of the most dangerous “beasts” are microscopic...]

Fifth Seal: The Cry of the Martyrs.

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.

We see the souls of those who have died during the opening of the first four seals who did not give in to pressure of the antichrist. They kept the faith and was killed for it.

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?"

So, we see here these first sixth seals are not the wrath of God, for the vengeance of God doesn't occur until the other saints have been gathered in the Heaven.

That is why the soul under the altar are crying out to God for Him to judge and avenge them. And God will, but not now, because the wrath of the Lamb is not completed. It won't be completed until the sixth seal is open and completed.

It seems that they may not have a glorified body yet because their souls are under the altar.

This also lets us know without a shadow of a doubt that our loved ones in Heaven knows what we are going through here on the earth and they are praying for us to get the victory.

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.

We see white robes given to them, but it does not say they are putting them on.

We need to understand that many of those who really believe and stand for Jesus both in name and lifestyle will be killed once the antichrist comes on the scene.

Sixth Seal: Cosmic Disturbances

12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. 13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the



mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Jesus will radically alter His creation.

In **6:12-17**, the scene shifts back to earth as Jesus opens the sixth seal.

In **6:12-14**, John tells us that the earth will be affected by six cosmic catastrophes.

In these three verses, God shakes the universe like a rag doll. As a result, the entire world will know that there is a God. They will also know that he is doing all He can to turn people back to Him even to the point that He will altar His creation.

The first catastrophe that Jesus brings is a “great earthquake” that will rock the whole world. In 6:14, John writes, **“every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”**

This is frightening! Then the sun will become **“black as sackcloth made of hair.”**

“Sackcloth” was a very rough cloth made from the hair of a black goat and worn in times of mourning and despair.

The blackening or darkening of the sun as a sign, speaks of God’s judgment is about to come and the withdrawal of His longsuffering.

Not only will the sun become black, John tells us **“the whole moon became like blood.”**

As a sign, this speaks of the loss of life. *How eerie this all will be, to look up at night and see a blood-red moon.*

John also says that the stars will be affected. *The word “star” (aster) is used of any heavenly body seen at night (i.e., stars, planets, asteroids, meteors, etc.). These are not stars as we often use the word, which are huge and often dwarf the earth in size. These are likely meteorites, which are small by comparison to the earth.*

In **6:14**, the sky will appear to split and roll back in two opposite directions. The universe will seem to be coming apart. Apparently, the opening of the sky will give earth-dwellers a window-like look into heaven another dimension, where they see the Father God and the Lamb our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Apparently, this lasts for at least one full revolution of the earth, so all the world sees this.

In **6:15**, John provides seven classes of society to stress the universal scope of this event. They are **“the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man”**.

He then tells us that they **hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and the wrath of the Lamb for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?.**



These verses are truly tragic. In the midst of unbelievable suffering, mankind does not pray to God for protection from the wrath of Jesus.

Instead, they cry out to the rocks and the mountains. The inhabitants of the earth will recognize for the first time the source of their trouble, yet they still refuse to respond to the chastisement of Jesus Christ.

Picture this, they will be able to look into Heaven and see God almighty and still not worship Him.

Wrath is one of God's eternal attributes, the perfect complement to His love. The wrath of God is His necessary and just response to evil that humanity will not repent of.

Psalms 7:11-13 God is a just judge, And God is angry with the Wicked every day. 12 If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready. 13 He also prepares for Himself Instruments of death; He makes His arrows into fiery shafts.

Remember this is just the opening of the seals. The trumpets and the bowl judgements are yet to come, which will be of greater intensity.

The Sealing of the 144,000 **Revelation Chapter 7**

Revelation 7:1-4 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. 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." 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:

There is a pause between the opening of the 6th and the 7th seal. What happens in this pause takes up all of chapter seven of the Book of Revelation.

We've said in prior sessions that the Book of Revelation seemed to be written in chronological order. We see more evidence of this here at the beginning of this chapter, for the word says "**after these things**".

The Greek word for this phrase is [*Meta tauta*] which means "**After these events**". After what events? The opening of the first six seals reference in Revelation Chapter 6.

This lets us know what John sees in chapter 7 happens after the 6th seal of chapter 6 and it's right before the opening of the 7th seal which will start in chapter 8 which will contain the seven trumpets and seven bowls.

Remember we must pay very close attention to all the wording so we can get a better understanding of what this book is revealing to us.



Chapter 6 concludes with the statement, “**For the great day of His wrath is come;** Who’s wrath? The wrath of the Lamb of God. He is executing His chastisement so as many who are called will come to Him.

and who shall be able to stand?”

This chapter seems to respond to that question of who will be able to stand.
The next thing John sees are four angels.

(Four angels) Four is the number of worldwide events or effects. This is the first of several global judgments which involve four angels.

(Four corners of the earth) This is figurative language indicating the four main compass directions (**Eze. 7:2**). These angels have a ministry extending over the *entire* earth.

(Standing and holding the four winds) The four major directions from which winds blow: from the East, South, West, and North. This is equivalent to saying “from every direction” which is often used depict God’s Judgement.

(Not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree) These three parts of the created order will undergo God’s judgment in events to come in chapter 8.

The *earth*, the *trees*, and especially the *sea* are all important parts of the system of nature which supports life on the planet. Because man will continue to idolize, worship and serve the creation rather than the Creator (**Rom. 1:25**), *God will set about to destroy this idol. (This may include but not limited to artificial intellect).*

Artificial intelligence may be an end time representation of the tree of knowledge of both good and evil that was spoken of in Genesis chapter 2.

Genesis 2:16-17 *And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

Eating depicts allowing it to become a part of you or what you rely on for survival.

Artificial Intelligence that’s going to be used in the future will be influenced by demonic forces, but it will still be made from the earth’s resources.

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.

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:

The 144,000 are first mentioned here in **Revelation 7:4**. This passage comes in an interlude between the judgment of the sixth seal of the tribulation (**Revelation 6:12–17**) and the opening of the seventh seal



(Revelation 8:1).

I take the futurist approach, which we consider the best, interprets the 144,000 literally. When taken at face value, **Revelation 7:4** seems to speak of 144,000 actual people living during the end-times tribulation.

Nothing in the passage leads to interpreting the 144,000 as anything but a literal number of Jew 12,000 taken from every tribe of the children of Israel, according to verses 5–8.

The seal identifies those who are set apart for special protection in the midst of the judgments from God. “*The mark which denotes ownership also carries with it the protection of the owner,*” in this case, God.

*The seal may not be visible to men, but is evident to God and the angels and demons who carry forth his judgment (**Rev. 9:4**). It is similar to the sealing of believers today, who are baptized into the body of Christ and sealed with the Holy Spirit (**2Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30**). I believe this too will be a sealing of the Holy Spirit since no one can be saved without the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Sealed Servants 144,000 from 12 Tribes of Israel.

Their assignment will be to evangelize the whole earth because the church at this point will be taken up to heaven.

Saved Servants From that come out of the Great Tribulation.

Chapter 7:9-17

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!" **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.

John sees a great number of people that surpasses numbering in his day.

John is looking at these people wondering who they are.

Notice without John asking a question, the elder answers John's curiosity, by asking a question that will stir-up a conversation about what John needs to know.

This elder is following in the path of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. When Jesus would ask a question, it wasn't that he didn't know the answer. He would ask a question to stir up a conversation that gives insight about a situation, something, or somebody that His audience needed to know.



As Born-again believers, as we mature in the things of Christ, we too need to stir up conversation about the gospel about the second coming of Jesus Christ and let it be known with enthusiasm about our blessed hope.

These born-again believers are different than the 24 Elders and the raptured Saints that are talked about in chapters 4 and five.

Contrasts

Tribulation Saints	24 Elders
Not Crowned	Crowned
Palms in their hands	Harps, No Palms
Saved “out of” the Tribulation.	“Kept out” of the Tribulation (Rev 3:10)
These stand before thrones.	Sit on thrones (1 Cor 6:, 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6)
These serve Him day and night.	Reign as kings & priests (1 Cor 6: 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6)
Not recognized by John	

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."

Why is there such exuberant praise around the throne of God when these people show up in Heaven? It's because the overall purpose of God is manifesting even in this time of tribulation, people are still being saved.

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

This is the assignment of those who come out of the great tribulation. They “**serve Him day and night in His temple**”. Their assignment is far different than us who will be raptured up before the tribulation. For our assignment will be that of kings and priest to rule and reign with Jesus for 1000 years.