

THE REVELATION

God Will Wipe Every Tear

Revelation 7:1-17

Revelation 7 is a continuation of the events following the breaking of the sixth seal. It describes the preparation of four angels to bring judgment upon the earth, while being held back until the saints are sealed. There is a great deal of symbolism in this chapter surrounding the 144,000.

I. The Seal of God

There is great significance to being sealed by God and to having His seal. In one way or another the seal represents the validation of the covenant established between God and believers by the shedding of the blood of the Lamb of God. This is true for all of salvation history throughout the Bible.

- A. The seal of Abraham when he believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6-18)
- B. The seal of all believers with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:3-14 [v13])
- C. The seal of the 144,000 of true Israel to protect from God's wrath (Rev 7:2-4)

The seal of God is a guarantee that we will be brought safely to God's heavenly kingdom and that we will never suffer His judgment or wrath against the sinful and ungodly. We are cleansed, forgiven, and safe in Jesus.

II. The One Hundred Forty-four Thousand

Much has been written about the identity of the 144,000 and the meaning of the number. While many disagree on how the number is symbolically derived, most conservative Biblical scholars are in basic agreement that the group itself is highly symbolic for the following reasons:

- A. The list of the specific tribes differ from the usual Old Testament listing
- B. However one derives the total number, the final symbolic meaning is:
 - 1. a complete accounting (12 x 12) (24 elders, 12 tribal leaders and 12 apostles, New Jerusalem)
 - 2. a large multitude of people (1,000 x 144)
- C. Immediately after the sealing of the 144,000, John sees a large multitude from every tribe, tongue, and nation representing the saints of all the earth
- D. The New Jerusalem: 12,000 x 12,000 x 12,000 stadia, 144 cubits thick, 12 gates with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel, 12 foundation stones with the names of the 12 apostles (Rev 16:10-27)
- E. The 144,000 stand with Jesus in His return as He stands upon Mt. Zion (Rev 14:1)

Although there is still mystery surrounding the meaning of all the elements associated with the 144,000, the general consensus of the majority of conservative scholars is that the 144,000 represent the true Church comprised of all Old and New covenant believers.

III. The Great Multitude that No One Could Count

The symbol of the completed Israel immediately gives way to a more literal scene consisting of a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language.

- A. These have white robes (of righteousness) and hold palm branches (to the King) (Rev 7:9-13)
- B. They have come out of the Great Tribulation and washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb (Rev 7:14)
- C. God will care for them, the Lamb will be their Shepherd, God will wipe every tear from their eyes (Rev 7:15-17)

