

REVELATION: HELP FOR LIVING, HOPE FOR LEAVING

**Sermon no. 12**

**THE SEALED AND THE SAVED FROM THE GREAT TRIBULATION**

Revelation 7:1-17

## INTRODUCTION

The message we heard from Revelation 6 last week clearly portrays for us our God in judgment mode. We have become so used to God's grace and mercy that when we see His justice displayed we think He's just cruel. We cannot imagine Him pouring out His wrath like He does in chapter 6, and yet that's just the beginning of the end; only a foretaste of His judgment.

The passage today is a pause between the six seals of judgment in chapter 6 and the opening of the seventh seal in chapter 8. It contains the answer to the question raised in Rev. 6:17 — “who can stand?” — who can survive the wrath of God expressed in the great tribulation revealed in Revelation 6:1-17. We can relate with the one who asked that question because God's judgment are indeed so incredible that they really make one wonder whether there is any grace and mercy left. And the answer is -- yes, there is.

Revelation 7:1-17 answers that question by revealing to us that two groups of people will be spared and saved from the great tribulation — first, 144,000 Jews composed of 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel (Rev. 7:1-8) will be sealed from and protected from the wrath that God will pour out upon the earth at that time; and second, a great multitude of saints from all the nations who are martyred physically will be saved spiritually and secure in the presence of the Lord in heaven (Rev. 7:9-17).

## **I. THE SEALING OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL: GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISE TO HIS PEOPLE (Rev. 7:1-8)**

A. He will hold back the winds of judgment, Rev. 7:1-3.

B. He will seal each of the sons of Israel as a fulfilment of his changeless promise to them, Rev. 7:4-8.

God is a promise-keeping God. All throughout the history of the nation of Israel, He has proven Himself faithful to His covenants to them, even if they were always stubborn and unfaithful to Him. He exercised His awesome power and authority to preserve and protect His chosen people, and to bestow grace and blessing upon them, even if they did not deserve the same because of their idolatries and immoralities.

And because the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the same promise-keeping God that we worship today, we can be sure that He continues to expend His great power and authority to call out His "chosen from the foundations of the world," to complete the good work which He has begun in them "until the day of the Lord Jesus Christ," and to present us a radiant church without spot or wrinkle for the glory of our Father in heaven.

## **II. THE SAVING OF A MULTITUDE IN HEAVEN: GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISE TO THE NATIONS (Rev. 7:9-17)**

- A. He will be worshipped by all the redeemed from all of the nations for His great and mighty work of salvation, Rev. 7:9-12.
- B. His salvation will include the saints of the tribulation who will serve in His temple and delight in His presence forevermore, Rev. 7:13-17.

In Acts 2:39 Peter preached on the day of Pentecost to both Jews and Gentiles who were present in Jerusalem that day — "For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself." In John 10:16, Jesus taught about being the Good Shepherd and taking care of His sheep and He said — "And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd."

These are both references to a global multitude of redeemed saints who will be led by the One Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep. Rev. 7:17 ends this hope-filled chapter with these words — "For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and He will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

## **CONCLUSION**

Our God is mighty to save. He will fulfil His promise to His chosen people that He would bring them salvation, and that would turn to Him whom they have pierced (Zech. 12:10). The sealing of the 144,000 sons of Israel will bring that about in the 70th week prophesied by Daniel for the nation of Israel. They will also be instrumental in proclaiming the gospel to the other nations (Israel will finally fulfil her ordained role as a missionary nation!) and cause the salvation of a multitude of tribulation saints who will serve the Lamb of Glory and delight in His presence forevermore!

Yes our God is a holy God and He will bring His wrath upon those who will not heed His gospel call and put their faith in His only provision for the salvation of sinful men — our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ. But even in the midst of the outpouring of His wrath against all ungodliness, He will save a remnant for the glory and the majesty of His Name!