

## Revelation 7 – Witness and Trumpets

### Introduction:

1. The Book of Revelation is the grand and noble conclusion to the Bible.
2. It captives our attention, stirs our imagination, and points us to our glorious future destiny.
3. It shows the living relationship between the risen Christ and His Bride, the Church.
4. It also records the final days of this world and reveals the glorious new world yet to come.
5. The book of Revelation gives us hope for the future when God will make "*all things new*" (**Rev.21:5**)
6. Not only have we systematically been surveying the general content of this captivating book of prophecy with a view to keeping the big picture in mind, but I have approached it from the perspective of us not getting lost in the minutia and crazy speculations many others indulge in and I did not want us to get lost in all the details.
7. My approach is to keep the study focused on the key issues in each chapter.
8. It's God's road map to help us understand where human history is headed
9. As with many other Bible prophecies, Christians disagree over what will happen in the end times.
10. Different theories exist for the tribulation the rapture and second coming.
11. Regardless of which version comes to pass, Jesus himself said two things are certain.
  - First, Jesus will appear (**Matthew 24:30-31**)
  - Second, Jesus emphasized that no one, including modern interpreters of Bible prophecy, can foretell precisely when these events will happen (**Matthew 24:36**)
12. As we go through the Book of Revelation, we are reading the description of a mere mortal like you and I in the Spirit observing all this that is going on in the heavenlies
13. **Revelation 5:1-8** speaks of thee one worthy to open the seals
14. **Psalm 56:8** says "*You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book*"

### God's Justice (Revelation Chapters 6-16)

1. God's judgment activity is portrayed as a series of three 7-fold judgments:
  - The seal judgments (6:1-17; 8:1),
  - The trumpet judgments (8:2-9:21; 11:15-19), and
  - The Bowl judgments (15:5-16:21).
2. They describe 21 judgments to be released against wickedness and the Antichrist's empire
3. Two common views:
  - Equivalence – these judgements represent different ways of describing the same judgements
  - Consecutive – these judgements are sequential
4. The main point is that they describe God's temporal judgment on humanity, and that they end with Jesus' return to defeat his enemies and establish God's kingdom but is distinct from His final judgment.
5. All of these events are ultimately his judgments.
6. But many of them are passive judgments—initiated by wicked people but allowed by God for his purposes.
7. The Bible is full of examples of God's active and passive judgment – most are passive

8. He removes his normal restraint of evil and permits wicked persons (demonic and human) to do what they want and to give rebellious humanity what it wants.
9. Why does God passively allow his enemies to do so much damage before he intervenes directly?
10. Part of the answer seems to be that God is demonstrating the folly of rebellion against Him.
11. Maybe this should be part of our prayer that through all the craziness of what is going on in our nation and the world that people will recognize the futility of their ways and turn to God once more.
12. Many people recognize that this is the hand of God but refuse to repent and so harden themselves irretrievably.

### **God's Redemptive Activity:**

1. At the same time that God pours out his judgment on humanity in an extraordinary way, he also acts in extraordinary ways to reach out to people and invite them to come to his Son Jesus for salvation.
2. These same chapters describe extraordinary ways God does this.
3. Martyrs - *"the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."*
4. The ultimate witness for Jesus is when His followers actually die for their faith.
5. This was true in 1st and 2nd century Rome, and it is true today

### **Recap of the Seals:**

1. To open the scroll was to loose its seals, which we find out that release of judgments of God across the earth.
2. The first four seals are brought about by the actions of sinful men.
3. In the first four seals it is not like God had to do anything overtly - He just lifted His hand.
4. ***Revelation 6:1 "the lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with the voice of thunder "Come"***
5. John describes seeing four horses each one symbolizing some kind of coming devastation, conquest, sword, famine and death.
6. They are under God's complete authority
7. First there is the White Horse - ***Revelation 6:2*** - the rider of this horse bring judgment by conquest.
8. Secondly the Red Horse - ***Revelation 6:3-4*** - this rider was to bring a cessation of peace to the earth, causing a war between people and between one neighbor and another – civil war.
9. Thirdly the Black Horse - ***Revelation 6:5*** - this was the judgment of famine – a shortage of food disrupts everything and creates havoc
10. The fourthly - the pale (ashen) horse was released for its mission; John clearly saw its riders name - death. ***Revelation 6:7-8***. John further reported that Hades was following him.
11. One of the great lessons to learn from these *'four horsemen'* is that our Lord is in control over their release.
12. And let's remember that this is not yet describing the outpouring of the wrath of the Lamb.
13. That is a dreadful event of a completely different nature; and it doesn't begin until the sounding of the seventh trumpet
14. The events described with the four horsemen are sovereignly commenced by the Lamb and are the judgements that human beings bring about upon themselves when God removes His merciful hand from them and allows fallen human nature to have free rein.

15. They show us what happens when human beings completely turn away from God; and how such a turning impacts such vital things as politics and government, global and international relations, economic and commercial soundness, and world health and safety.

16. Remember that idolatry was the main problems amongst all of the seven assemblies mentioned in Revelation.

17. ***Revelation 6:9-10 "The lamb broke the fifth seal. I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who've been slain because of the word of God ...."***

18. John saw people under the altar of God waiting for justice - these are people who were persecuted for their trust and in allegiance to God.

19. ***Revelation 6:11 And was given to each of them a white robe, and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also"***

20. ***Revelation 7:9 we read "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the lamb, clothed in white robes"***

21. ***Revelation 12:11 - saints overcoming the evil one "through the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives, even when faced with death."***

22. We see the collective punishment for the sins of many generations is poured out upon the generation chosen for such a punishment.

23. For a while sin go unpunished because of God's mercy, and His patience is great.

24. In ***Revelation 7 and in 14*** we meet 144,000 people, who ***"had the name of Jesus and the Father on their foreheads."***

#### **What does the number 144,000 mean?**

1. One thing that's helpful to remember in Revelation, is that numbers mean something in a different way than they do in historical narratives because Revelation is an *"apocalyptic work"* that shows this thing by pictures.

2. The Lamb and the 144,000 (***Revelation 14:1-5***) ***"Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless."***

#### **Who are the 144,000 – symbolic or literal?**

1. ***"And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel."*** (***Revelation 7:4***)

2. who is included in the 144,000?

3. The 144,000 does not denote the total of souls throughout history who ultimately will be saved from the wrath of eternal damnation.

4. *Literal Theory:* 144,000 Are the "Sealed Jews"

5. *Problems with this Theory* - The tribal distinctions referred to in Revelation were eliminated well before the writing of John.
6. *Symbolic Theory*: 144,000 Is the Symbol of Completeness
7. No one will be excluded or granted partiality based upon lineage.
8. *Symbolic Theory*: 144,000 Is the Symbol of Completeness
9. Spurgeon declared "*the day shall come when first and last shall rejoin together in the equal blessing of the Most High.*"
10. Hank Hanegraaff said, "*The 144,000 and the great multitude are not two different peoples but two different ways of describing the same purified bride. From one vantage point the purified bride is numbered; from another, she is innumerable—a great multitude that no one can count.*"
11. Problems with this theory - It may encourage delaying a decision for personal salvation.
12. Many Christians prefer a literal interpretation of Revelation. Those who prefer a strictly literal interpretation of Revelation have issue with the symbolic approach of the 144,000.
13. *Jehovah's Witness Beliefs about the 144,000* – They hold to the belief the 144,000 represent the total number of saints who will ascend to the heavenly church.
14. Problems with this theory - Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not belong to a specific tribe of Israel. if we were to accept that the only saved individuals will originate from the designated 12 tribes, we would adhere to the resulting logic that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not make it as they were not from any of the tribes of Israel.
15. The God of the Bible, who will eventually judge all unrepentant rebels, is also the God who cares about people, does not wish for any to perish, and takes extraordinary measures to reach out to them
16. ***So we need to work while it still day for when night comes no man can labor*** – people matter to God and so they should matter to us