Who are the Sealed? February 20, 2022

*Revelation 7:1-17 Series: Understanding the Book of Revelation*

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come; 'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home. – John Newton

Intro: The bamboo pole was the beginning of the end

1. God protects His own with a seal
2. God’s seal protects believers from falling away

v. 1 *I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree.*

v. 3 *Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.*

Ezekiel 9:4 *Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it.*

9:4 *They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.*

1. Through faith in Jesus, you are sealed with the Holy Spirit

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 *And it is God who … put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*

Ephesians 1:13-14 *you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it*

Ephesians 4:30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

* Do you ever fear that you’re not strong enough or faithful enough to deal with the spiritual pressures that will come?
* How does the vision of vv. 1-3 encourage you?
* What does it mean to be sealed by the Holy Spirit?

1. God numbers His own as a spiritual army
2. The 144,000 symbolize something, but what?

14:1 *with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads*

14:4 *These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb …*

Genealogies were kept until the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.

The lines are mixed, so there’s no way of untangling them.

12 tribes x 12 apostles x 1000 = the full people of God

1. The 144,000 are the true Israel

v. 4 *I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel*

Romans 2:28-29 *For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.*

1. The 144,000 put Jesus in front and idolatry behind them

v. 5 *12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed*

Judges 18:30 *And the people of Dan set up the carved image for themselves, and Jonathan the son of Gershom, son of Moses, and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land.*

* Is it likely to you that God would refer to a group of Jewish Christians at the end of history as “firstfruits”? Why/why not?
* In what sense are believers a spiritual army?
* How should that affect how we live?

1. God will welcome His own in celebration
2. A multiethnic crowd will stand before the Lamb

v. 9 *After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne*

6:17 *… their wrath has come, and who can stand?*

v. 14 *These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

1. “How long?” will become “At last!”

v. 9 *clothed in white robes, with palm branches*

v. 10 *crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”*

6:10 *They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”*

1. God’s people will be filled and comforted forever

v. 15 *he … will shelter them with his presence.*

v. 16 *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.*

v. 17 *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.*

* How does the vision of v. 9 encourage you to press on?
* Does it matter that we will be comforted (vv. 15-17) later if we have to go through great tribulation (v. 14) now? Why/why not?
* What do you most want to remember from this chapter to encourage you when trials and temptations come?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Revelation 8:2-9:21, 11:15-19

Notes