

Pentwater Bible Church

Revelation Message 20

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Four Horses of The Apocalypse, By Sharlene Lindskog

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THE TRIBULATION BEGINS

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Chapter 7

TO BRING ABOUT A WORLDWIDE REVIVAL:

This purpose is given in Revelation 7:1-17. In verses 1-8 John describes the means by which, God will bring about this worldwide revival, while verses 9-17 portray the results of the revival.

Revelation 7:1-8

¹And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. ²And 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 given to hurt the earth and the sea, ³saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. ⁴And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

⁵Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

⁶Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

⁷Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Isachar were sealed twelve thousand.

⁸Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand (KJV).

The preceding verses state that 12,000 Jews from each of the Twelve Tribes will be selected to be the evangelists. It is through these 144,000 Jews that God will bring about the worldwide revival and accomplish another goal of the Great Tribulation. The Jews live all over the world now in the Diaspora and speak the languages of the countries they are living in. They will also have knowledge of the Scriptures to evangelize quickly. This will fulfill the prophecy found in Matthew 24:14.

Matthew 24:14

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come (KJV).

Following the vision of the 144,000 John saw the results of the evangelism of the chosen Jews.

Revelation 7:9-14

⁹ After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; ¹⁰ and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. ¹¹ And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, ¹² saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. ¹³ And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? ¹⁴ And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (KJV).

After the vision of the 144,000 Jews John saw myriads and myriads of Gentiles as well as other Jews who came to have a saving knowledge of the Savior during the Tribulation. God will accomplish His second purpose with the 144,000. The term after these things is a statement showing the cause-and-effect relationship of the choosing of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists.

TO BREAK THE POWER OF THE HOLY PEOPLE

The third purpose is to break the power or stubborn will of the Jewish nation. In Daniel 11-12, the prophet was given a vision of what conditions will be like for his people (the Jews) during the Great Tribulation. Then in Daniel 12:5-7, a question is raised as to how long this period would be allowed to continue:

Daniel 12:5-7

Then I, Daniel, looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on the brink of the river on this side, and the other on the brink of the river on that side. And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when they have made an end of breaking in pieces the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished (ASV, 1901).

So, it is clear that a third purpose of the Great Tribulation is to break the power or the stubborn will of the Jews and bring about a national regeneration. The means by which He will do this is given in Ezekiel 20:33-38:

Ezekiel 20:33-38

³³As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out, will I be king over you. ³⁴And I will bring you out from the peoples, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out; ³⁵and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there will I enter into judgment with you face to face. ³⁶Like as I entered into judgment with your

fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I enter into judgment with you, saith the Lord Jehovah. ³⁷And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; ³⁸and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me; I will bring them forth out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

Here Ezekiel uses a simile of the Exodus. What is important to note here is that after God gathers the Jews from around the world, He will enter into a period of Judgment with them. (The Tribulation) The rebels will be purged out from among them through this judgment. Only then will the whole new nation, a regenerate nation, be allowed to enter the Promised Land under King Messiah. (Jesus the Christ).

The 144,000 and the Final Worldwide Evangelization

The seventh chapter can be viewed as parenthetical in that it takes the information from the previous chapter of the fifth & sixth seals and elaborates on those activities. The earth's convulsions stop for a period until the servants who evangelize will be chosen.

Revelation 7:1

¹And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree (KJV).

The text states that after these things meaning the next vision John sees, not necessarily the next event in the Biblical chronology. The four angels who are bringing chaos on the earth are now instructed to hold the earth's convulsions in check. Each of the previous seals has caused some calamity to come on the earth. The winds indicate the scope of the judgments. i.e., the entire world. (Jeremiah 49:36; 51:1; II Samuel 11) and four corners of the earth represent the locations of the 144,000, also the entire earth. (Isaiah 11:12; Jeremiah 49:36; Daniel 7:2; 8:8; 11:4; Zechariah 2:6; Matthew 24:31). Sea means the mass of Gentiles on the earth.

Revelation 7:2

²And 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 given to hurt the earth and the sea (KJV),

A fifth angel now ascends from the east and has the seal of God and begins to communicate to the four destroying angels that are chartered to bring about destruction on the earth.

Revelation 7:3

³Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads (KJV).

A very particular sealing is about to take place. It is a divine sealing. The sealing process is one that God uses to forewarn, protect and empower. Many instances in Scripture demonstrate God's use of sealing. In the OT we have the sealing of the observant Jews during the first Passover. When Jericho fell God had Rehab mark her home with a scarlet line so the Jewish army would

avoid here home in their invasion. Antichrist in his mimicry of Christ will cause a mark or seal to be put on those that are his. This will cause those who are without the seal to not be able to engage in any economic commerce.

Ezekiel describes a similar seal in the ninth chapter of his book. Men are sealed in the vision Ezekiel receives to protect them from the slaughterers who come in judgment for God. Seals in the Bible are divine and we see the New Testament speaking of the Christian being sealed at the point of belief by the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13–14

¹³In whom ye also [trusted], after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,¹⁴Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory (KJV).

Christ Himself was sealed at His baptism for His work on earth until such time as He would voluntarily give Himself up to be crucified. (John 6:27)

We can consider this sealing of the evangelists to be the Holy Spirit in His work as God the Spirit protecting those that are chosen of God doing His work as to their special calling. If it were not for the sealing upon which every Christian has received the world would have perished before now. This sealing is the restraining influence of sin in the world.

Revelation 7:4

⁴And I heard the number of them which were sealed: [and there were] sealed an hundred [and] forty [and] four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel (KJV).

This is the official sealing and chartering of the Jewish evangelists who will bring in the last harvest of believers this world will ever see. It happens during the Tribulation, and never again. We know that their charter is to evangelize for three reasons.

Matthew 24:14 discusses the evangelistic efforts during the Tribulation.

Matthew 24:14

¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come (KJV).

The context of the previous passages of the martyrs who died during the tribulation for being a believer. With the church gone they had to hear the gospel from someone. The “multitude” of verses 9-17 discusses the new believers that are saved by some means during the tribulation. Those means are the 144,000 Jewish evangelists.

Why Jews to Evangelize?

They have a very particular position in the world.

They are presently scattered about the entire world.

They are mostly bi-lingual and many are multi-lingual, which will require little or no training to speak to the Gentiles in their native languages in the parts of the world where they start their work. Most of them have a good understanding of the Old Testament. Therefore, they will need minimal training in the New Testament to conduct effective evangelistic efforts.

Revelation 7:5–8

⁵Of the tribe of Juda [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad [were] sealed twelve thousand.⁶Of the tribe of Aser [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of [Naphtali] [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses [were] sealed twelve thousand.⁷Of the tribe of Simeon [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar [were] sealed twelve thousand.⁸Of the tribe of Zabulon [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin [were] sealed twelve thousand (KJV).

Throughout the Bible there are lists given of the twelve sons of Israel. There are nineteen different lists of the twelve tribes in the Old Testament. Each slightly differs from one another in arrangement and content. There are always twelve though. Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, had twelve sons through four wives. His second youngest child Joseph had two children that received the special Abrahamic blessing (Covenant) to be included in the twelve. They are Ephraim and Manasseh. So, in order to have only twelve in listing the twelve sons (tribes) of Israel some have to be left out. In this particular list Dan and Ephraim is left out. Various speculations abound in determining why God omits some one time and others in other lists. It is helpful to determine the objective that God is setting out to achieve in the mission wherein each list appears. In this list it is also helpful to our understanding to bear in mind that the Hebrew names have specific meaning. The following list shows the Hebrew meaning of each of the twelve names on this list.

Judah = Confession or praise of God
Reuben = viewing the son
Gad = a company
Asher = blessed
Naphtali = a wrestler or striving with
Manassas = forgetfulness
Simeon = hearing and obeying
Levi = joining or cleaving
Issachar = reward or what is given by way of reward
Zebulon = a home or dwelling-place
Joseph = added or an addition
Benjamin = son of my right hand or a son of old age

Listing the Tribal names in this order with their meanings gives us the following insight:

Confessors or praisers of God, looking upon the Son, a band of blessed ones, wrestling with forgetfulness, hearing and obeying the word, cleaving unto the reward of a shelter and home, are added to God's right hand, begotten for this particular old age (era).

It is also interesting to look at the names of the two tribes omitted to determine why they were left out. Dan means judging or judged. Ephraim means increase or growth by multiplication.

The particular role of the evangelists will be neither to judge nor increase in numbers. They are a fixed number of 144,000 never to be larger and never again to be evangelizing for this is the last worldwide harvest. Adapting the Hebrew meanings of the name of Dan and Ephraim it is apparent that God is telling us of the narrow purpose He has for them and for a short time. Now we see the fruit of their efforts

Revelation 7:9-14

⁹After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands ¹⁰And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. ¹¹And all the angels stood round about the throne, and [about] the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, ¹²Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, [be] unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. ¹³And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? ¹⁴And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (KJV).

After the vision of the 144,000 Jews John saw myriads and myriads of Gentiles as well as other Jews who have come to salvation during the Tribulation. The connecting link, after these things is here chronological and also shows a cause-and-effect relationship between the first and second parts of Revelation seven. They stand before the throne of God. Their identification is made in verses 13 and 14. They are saved because they have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. Notice how they acknowledge our God. They fall down on their faces and worship God.

Revelation 7:15–17

¹⁵Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. ¹⁶They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. ¹⁷For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes (KJV).

Because of the massive persecution that they Tribulation saints have endured this passage concluded with a description of the comfort and peace with God they now enjoy.

We can conclude from this chapter that the Holy Spirit will be working during the Great Tribulation. His ministry of regeneration will be active. The Holy Spirit's work of restraining evil has already been accomplished. This allows the Antichrist to rise to power with massive amounts of evil pouring out on the earth. He will be performing some of His other ministries such as regeneration, filling and sealing etc.

This is then how one of the purposes of the Tribulation is accomplished. Bringing about worldwide revival and finishing the great evangelistic efforts on the earth

Remembering that one of the reasons for the Great Tribulation is to cause the Jews to repent from their sin of unbelief and turn to the Lord Jesus in loving adoration. A second and equally important

reason is to free the earth from wickedness and sin. There are at least 550 direct references to the OT in the book of Revelation.

In order to accomplish this, He shall purify them and this earth from its sin. Just as George Frederick Handel wrote in his Messiah;

HE SHALL PURIFY!

Malachi 3:3

³And he shall sit [as] a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness (KJV).

The Tribulation will end when the Jews finally acknowledge Him and beg Him to come back and save them from this chaos. Thus will be the national regeneration of the Nation Israel.

NEXT WEEK: REVELATION MSG. XXI

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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