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"PROVISION FOR THE REDEEMED" (144,000)

Rev. 7

The Land of No Tears - Now for more than 1900 yrs - Besides holding the world in His hands Christ has been doing 2 things for His people: Building Mansions & Interceding & answering our prayers

INTRODUCTION:

Place without Tears, Death, Tombstones, Sorrow

We have passed through some great moving things as the seals are broken.

And yet here is an interlude between the sixth and the seventh seal. There seems to be three or four things taking place in this chapter. Four angels are holding back judgement from hurting the earth. While they are doing this, the sealing of the remnant of Isreal, the bond servants of God, is taking place. And the final scene is a great victorious multitude.

This chapter is divided into at least two parts. He says, and after these things, in V. 1. And in V. 9 - He says, after this, I beheld so and so. Now the first vision is to do with the children of Isreal. And the second vision is to do with the great multitude, the Gentiles.

Now there is a difference of opinion on this idea because the theory that the 144,000 represents Jewish Christians, and the great host which no man could number, represents Gentile Christians, would be a natural choice. Dr. Dana, refers to the first group as the remnant of Israel. And the second group, as the redeemed of all nations.

But we can all settle on the fact that this is the twelve - the symbol of all organized religion.

And he comes to this last series of symbols and pictures, some destructive

enemies of Christ. What becomes of these Christian saints while the destructive work is in progress. What will happen to them while the great tribulation is going on.

We could outline this chapter, V. 1-3. The winds of God. V. 4-8. The seal of God. V. 9-17. The service of Glory.

But now for a more simple outline that will stick in your memory, and probably it will be at least 50-75% right we hope, is the church militant in the first eight verses.

Second, the church triumphant. V. 9-17.

I. THE CHURCH MILITANT

V. 1 - The vision takes place. I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth holding the four winds of the earth. That the winds should not blow on the earth, but on the sea and on the tree. Here four angels representing the power of God to hold back these four winds. Now, in the 7th chapter of the book of Daniel, the prophet saw four winds. Striving over the mighty sea. And the four beasts that represented the four great empires. And the vision here is that the angels, the emphasis is on, the holding back, of the earth. The judgement. There are visible signs of the storm and the wind is nature's element. And the judgements of the first six seals have been happening very rapidly. Now it seems that the safety of the people of God has to be made secure. And so there are four angels holding

back divine retribution. And the angel comes - it says here, to hold back. The holding on. And this is the Almighty God, the all powerful God. The picture is very vivid. The winds are striving to be turned loose. And to blow on the earth, and on the sea, and to bring restlessness, and to confuse mankind.

The Witch like the Sea cannot rest - casting up mire & dirt.

Isaiah 57:20. This whole chapter (7) is a plain interlude between the opening of the sixth seal and the seventh seal. The first six, you remember, came through with the horses coming forth. The white horse, the red horse, and the black horse, and the pale horse. And now the storms of Almighty God's judgement is about to be turned loose. And just before the judgement falls, it seems the Lord God Almighty says wait, wait, stay thy hand before that Judgement falls. We must do something first. We must first seal the servants of God, we must take care of those who belong to God. So that this terrible Judgement will not fall upon them.

Now did you know the reason why the world is standing today. It is not because of the governments of the world, but it is because of the elect of God. Were it not for them, the world would be destroyed like a branch of a tree.

✓ I could illustrate that with Sodom in that day, ten righteous men, if they could have been found - would have held back the Judgement. God would have held it back - but they could not find ten good, decent men that day.

✓ In V. 2 I saw an angel ascending from the East. Having the seal of the living God. And here comes an angel, with a seal, (a branding iron) of the living God. And he is going to put a seal upon these who are God's.

From the dawning of the sun, from the sun rising. I think that is far more beautiful to say. I saw it from the East - I saw from the dawning of the sun. I saw from the sun rising, an angel descend. Having the seal of the living God. And he sealed these who are out of the elect of Israel. And the Lord is going to place a mark and seal those who belong to him.

✓ In the days of Abraham, it was the mark of the flesh. A rite.

✓ In the days of Judgement on Israel, it was the mark in the form of the cross on the lintel and above the door post on either side. The death angel looked the mark and the seal and passed over. Rahab, there was a red scarlet line hanging from her window. It preserved her and the city was wasted.

✓ Ezekiel saw a man clothed in linen. With an ink horn in his side, and the man was commanded to go through Jerusalem. And mark on the forehead the sign, and cry out because of the wickedness of the people.

In the 13th chapter of Revelation, the anti-Christ has a mark that is put on the right hand and the forehead of men. Without which mark, one cannot buy or trade or sell. Now this arrangement of marking of God, is custom, and is found often in the book of Revelation.

✓ V. 3 ✓ He tells them that we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. Now the forehead is the most prominent part of a man and can be seen as a mark of ownership - a mark of the redeemed.

Now we believe that this is something like, the Bible says, about being sealed with the (Holy Spirit.) This mark, or distinction, is placed upon us. So God sent his servant out with his sign and seal of salvation. To impress the mark. Ezekiel 9:1-5. Those who bear it may be protected. Col. 3:3 - we are hid with Christ in God.

Now it does not mean that God's people are going to be exempt from suffering. It may increase their suffering. But it means that they cannot be deprived of the assurance of their (union with Christ) And secondly, they cannot be denied the (daily experience) of his love and presence in the time of distress and trouble.

No where does John tell us (exactly what) the sealing is or what it was. He only tells us here that there were a number who were sealed in the forehead. In V. 4. And he says, those that were sealed were 144,000 of the tribe of the children of Israel. So of God's elect, the entire congregation, the redeemed of the earth - the ideal number. Not one was missing. The whole (twelve tribes) were symbolized here in the true Israel. Which is made up of all of God's people.

The struggling church here has comfort that God will preserve it in trouble. Each member will have divine care. And there is a seal that will not be removed from the world. And each one of these 144,000 will bear this seal. It is impossible to know who those thousands are. V. 9 - And he does not even try. But we find that there are all sorts of interpretations about who these people are in this verse of Scripture.

The Seven Day Adventists says that 144,000 pertain to them. Because they are

found observing the Jewish Sabbath.

Jehovah's Witnesses say, this number belongs to them. And they are to be saved at the end of time. The great over-comers. And that is why you see one of that select group on every street corner, and knocking on doors of houses. They want to be one of that select group.

There is the third group called the Flying Roll - a sect of people who say this belongs to us.

Now John saw this great group.

Now if we take this text as to just what it says to us - that all were taken from the tribes of the children of Israel.

V. 5 There are 12,000 from each one of the tribes - of the children of Israel. And they are to be sealed. The word twelve in the Bible, with reference to the people of the Lord, always refers to Israel. Twelve is their number. There were twelve tribes. And there were twelve Apostles. And we know that the High Priest had a breastplate - with twelve precious stones on it. The show-bread table - there were twelve holy, consecrated loaves. Representing the twelve tribes. In the New Jerusalem there will be twelve gates. One gate, on each gate, will be the names of one of the tribes of Israel. There are twelve gates. And God represents all of these throughout the Bible. And so here they are - 12,000 elect called and 12 different

tribes and the Lord has - we know he is not done with the Jews yet. The fact is, that on every page of history, we find God working with them, and God dealing with them.

Where were these 144,000 marked, why were they sealed. Because they were Jews - no. I think the great spiritual reason why God does this, is because of something that is deeper than this. That these are they who have given themselves to the ministry of Christ. When all the world blasphemes and is in unbelief, but here are some who believe. And they have this seal written on their forehead - the seal of God. Eph. 4:30 - says ye were sealed after that ye trusted Christ. You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

V. 5-8 - Gives you the tribes that were sealed. You remember, this may have likely been - John first reading something like this in Ezekiel 9:1-7. And the meaning of this - the idea that the living God is going to come now and seal these individuals. And the angel comes from the East - the rising of the sun. And John maybe have gotten that from Matthew 2:2. When the wise men came to Palestine, searching for Jesus. We have seen his star in the East. And, the seal is that of the living God - that is being stamped upon each of these.

Today, we have a couple of things that may help us to understand this further. One is, baptism. We may describe this as a sealing, a mark that is put on a person. The property and possession of God.

The second, Paul talks about the Christian being sealed by the Holy Spirit. That is a sign and proof - that you belong to God. Now, the 144,000 is not a limitation

- it stands for completeness and for perfection. It is made up of 12 - multiplied by 12. And then rendered and multiplied by a thousand. And this we may take - this may be the real church. The church is the real Israel. But we know that a man in Christ - make no mistake about this. These tribes are listed here, in various orders. There is Judah who comes first. And we find that Jacob had 13 sons all together. One or the other was always omitted. Levi is more often omitted than any other. And Dan and Ephraim are omitted. Both of these tribes were connected with idolatry.

Now the reason for Dan is found in Deut. 29:18-21. This is an interesting thing - because he was connected with false worship. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, Adder in the path that fighteth the horses heels. So that the rider shall fall backwards. Gen. 49:17.

And in the book of Judges, it also says, that he set up images in Judges 18:30.

You remember when the Golden Calves were set up for worship. I Kings 12:29. One was placed at Bethel and the other at Dan. So the symbolism of Dan stands for idolatry. So his name is not included here - but some of the rabbi's used to teach that the anti-Christ was going to come or spring from Dan. Just as Christ was born in the tribe of Juda. The anti-Christ was going to be born in the tribe of Dan. That may be why Dan is missed out of this list. And why the list is completed by including Manasses, and Benjamin, and the tribe of Joseph, in this group.

I believe though that John not only uses the Old Testament here - my people for the church - but here is the inclusion of all of the tribes to emphasize that

all of God's people, are here included and are made safe and sound for that awful Tribulation. It is an absolute (completeness) of number. That is, there is not one member of a true body of believers lost. He repeats the tribes to give emphasis. That every member of God's people is here included.

He has just finished with war, famine, death, and the four horsemen. And now the four winds are about to take and turn loose - and they are going to have God's mark of protection and ownership. To identify them, and it places them beyond harm. The first group represents the true believers on earth. The storms of divine judgement may break on this world. But they are kept in the hollow of God's hands. That is why Paul could say all things are going to work together for their good.

II. THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT - V. 9-17

Now John says after these things - the sealing and protecting of these saints, he has a vision of God's people in the midst of the tribulation in this world. And the scene sort of changes from Earth to Heaven. And as the redeemed in Heaven, who will have rest from all of their conflicts. He says, I beheld a great multitude which no man could number, of all the nations - the kindred. And people of tongues. And they stood before the throne and the lamb. Clothed - dressed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. Now this group was not sealed for protection - because it had passed beyond the need of protection. And they are already out of the world and in the presence of God. And they have been victorious in trial. And this symbolized by the white robes that they wore - they are joyous.

And the palms were used on the feast days of the Tabernacle. Now who are these

that are arrayed in white robes and whence do they come. John confesses his own ignorance at this point. He says, I do not know - I never saw them before. There is not a face in this crowd that I recognize. Is not that astonishing. For if this multitude represents the church, the saved, the redeemed of Christ of the ages, - what would John have expected to see. The redeemed of Christ in Heaven. Many many of those faces, I am sure that you would recognize from your family. From your people, your friends. And there are many of them that you would know. But John says I never saw them before.

V. 14 - The elder can enlighten him. He then told him - V. 14. These are they which came out of the Great Tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. For this reason, they were victorious. They had emerged out of the distresses of the world, and now they were serving God continuously. They were before the redeemed lamb of God.

Poem by Lindsey - refrain: Are you washed in the Blood of the Lamb?

So, here is something that they (did not wash) their robes by themselves alone.

John, here, says that they had the help and were made white in the blood of the lamb. Cowper's Hymn "There is a fountain filled with blood - Drawn from innocent's veins - And sinners, plunging beneath that flood, - lose all their guilt and stains!" 1811:7 "The Blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin!"

Here is real encouragement. John sees history - and the world has never seen this. They have endured until the end. But glory will be worth all of the suffering. Put it simply, John is seeing here - what is worthwhile in the long run. There will never be in any man's death - God will make it up to him. And the martyrs are beyond count. And God's faithful ones will come from every race, tribe, people, marketplace, and land. Indeed, this is a great flock. And victory will be theirs. And the white robe will be their sign of victory.

And they are triumphant because they ascribe salvation to God.

— In V. 11 the picture is one of the inhabitants of Heaven. Here on the outer circle of the angels. Nearer to the throne of the 24 elders. Nearer are the four living creatures. And before the throne are the white-robed martyrs. And they are singing praises unto God. And they worship God. And they say — "Amen" in V. 12. And notice what they ascribe to God --

V. 12
First, blessings to God. His goodness. His kindness. God has redeemed them.

They ascribe glory to God. He is the king of Kings - Lord of Lords.

They ascribe wisdom to God. He is a source of all truth and understanding.

They offer thanksgiving to God. He is a constant provider and offers benefits.

They ascribe honor to God. They have one who hears their prayers and they will honor him.

They ascribe power to God. His arm is not short.

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They ascribe strength to God. Did you know the whole problem of life is strength. How do you find strength. How do you find -- that is the task of life. Strength. To care for our responsibilities and our demands of life. If a man can get strength - he can do a lot of things. He is unable to do by himself. These are they that came out of the tribulation. People here are going to be standing through the time of the end of history. In all of those days, shall there be afflictions. And in V. 24:21 (Matthew) it tells you something about that.

11/13
But here is a great crowd the blessed ones in the white robes. And they come in symbolizing a new life. Isaiah said that we all are uncleaned and our righteousness as filthy rags. 64:6. The picture is, that a man with stained garments is sinful. He needs to be cleansed.

Israel's history began with an unforgettable deliverance -
The "Passover lamb" - Symbolized passing over of death - The Jews
-11 on even top door & Post - When I see the Blood, I
will Pass over! bride
Sayer!

14
V. 13-14 He talks about the blood of the lamb. And this is the message of a New Testament. To the Hebrews - the blood stood for the life. They identified blood and life. When a man is wounded - and his blood ebbs away - so life ebbs away. The New Testament speaks about the blood of Jesus Christ. It means the life and the death of Jesus Christ.

It is the blood of Jesus which cleanseth us from all sin. I John 1:7.

The idea is a sacrifice - to atone, for the broken law. And this sacrifice takes care of the past, the present, and the future, of your sins.

V15
We need to ask this morning, have you washed your robes in the blood of the lamb? As simply, could you stand, purified in the victory before God. There is power in the lamb because it cost him his life. The wounds of Jesus certainly costs something.

*Near The Cross a trembling soul, Love & mercy found me.
There The Bright & morning Star, sheds its beams around me,
Near the cross I'll watch & wait, hoping, trusting, ever
Till I reach the golden strand, just beyond the river.*

What is man's part here in salvation. These blessed ones washed their own robes - that is to say they acted on the redemption of Christ. Christ shed his blood but the effect of that - man must accept it through faith and man must use it.

V16
How then can a man avail himself of this - through penitance, Godly sorrow, through faith. He does so through the means of grace - and prayer will keep him close to it.

V17
If this takes place - then you will be serving God. And in these last verses - he tells us something here about the presence of God. But they are going to serve God in the temple there - day and night. And remember this, that it is going to be his glory and his light. And this passage here exists here in the book of Revelation to show you that it is impossible for any of God's people to be lost. It is also impossible for God's people to go on without comfort - even in the hour of death. There is the spiritual promise here - here is the satisfying one - V17. He shall lead them unto living fountains of waters. And shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and the preceeding verse says - they shall hunger no more. Jesus satisfies. Augustine said, our hearts are restless until they rest in Him.

Well, that is what he ought to do. In the days of the early church - most of the

members were slaves. They were ill-fed, they were thirsty. And they knew what bread was and what water was. They ate. And remember John did not invent this passage. He found it's origin way back in Isaiah 49:10. They shall not hunger nor thirst - neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them. For he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by springs of water, shall he guide them.

From the Old Testament - here is a dream fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Here is the shepherd from the 23rd Psalm who feeds his flock. And this is a picture. George Adam Smith says the shepherd, in contrast, in that country ought to help us. I do not remember ever seeing a flock of sheep he said without a shepherd in Judea. The pasture is thin, and the unfenced land, the wild beasts, the lack of water. You could always see a shepherd leaning on his staff. With every sheep upon his heart. And so, we can understand this from history. Here is one who comes and he is going to wipe the tears from every eye. He is going to comfort every heart. He is going to make everything bearable. And we could never go on as Jesus Christ as shepherd, we can go on.

In conclusion if you ever intend to walk in the glory, and the presence of God you need to do it now! If you ever intend to make that decision - you need to make it today. You need to give your heart to God today. If you ever intend to chose Jesus, you need to choose him now. In this day of grace. In the words of the last chapter - who is able to stand. Here is your answer. If you want to join the church triumphant,