

The Sealed 144,000 (Message #18)

Revelation 7: 1-8

We have spent a couple of weeks considering the divine judgment of God as He begins to pour out His wrath. The scene in [Chp.6](#) has been horrific: the Antichrist, wars, famines, pestilence, death, and great destruction. These judgments have been terrible, but things are only going to intensify as we move through the book.

Tonight we are come to [Chp.7](#), commonly viewed as a parenthetical passage, a parenthesis between judgments. It is here that God ceases His judgment for a brief time. This is the eye of the storm. The first wave has passed, but there is much more to come.

In this passage we find, again, two distinct groups: the sealed 144,000 and the multitude of redeemed gentiles. Tonight I want to focus on the 1st portion of the passage dealing with: [The Sealed 144,000](#).

I. A Compassionate Pause (1-3) – As I said, the storm has ceased for a brief time. Really this should come as no surprise. God has already begun to judge the world, but even in divine judgment God shows mercy. Notice:

A. The Purpose for the Pause – God has suspended divine judgment for a specific purpose; He has a work to do involving mankind on earth. He would've been just and right to have consumed the whole of humanity, but even in Tribulation He shows compassion.

- He has always been the God of opportunity for those who seek Him; this terrible time is no exception. God was gracious to Noah in the flood. He spared Lot before He destroyed Sodom. God wanted to destroy Israel and raise up a new people in Moses, but He gave mercy instead of what they deserved. He has always been a compassionate, merciful God.
- We deserved eternal punishment in hell, yet He extended mercy in the sacrifice of Jesus! True to His character, He is once again extending mercy to those who will seek Him.

B. The Participants in the Pause – [V.1 – And 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.](#) We find in four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, the four points of the compass. They are holding back the four winds from the earth.

- Apparently these angels were commissioned of God to carry out judgment upon the earth, v.2 – [And 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](#), The word [hurt](#) speaks of “*that which is unjust*” and has the idea of “*bringing injury without mercy*.” But, here the four angels are forbidden to bring any hurt upon the land, sea, or trees.
- Consider the mindset of those upon the earth. They have endured all that we’ve studied in [Chp.6](#), and all at once it all ceases, without so much as a breeze blowing anywhere around the world. I’m sure this will be a time of eerie calm as men ponder what the Almighty is doing. God has brought this time of absolute calm as an act of mercy to provide a means for men to come to Him in salvation.

I. A Compassionate Pause (1-3)

II. A Commanding Presence (2-3) – John sees another angel besides the four at the four corners of the earth. Let’s see what we can discover about this fifth angel.

A. His Person (2) – [And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God](#). This angel is seen ascending from the east. This is unusual as angels usually descend from above. Apparently this angel was already upon the earth.

- Some believe this angel to be Christ Himself, but the word [another](#) is translated from the Greek word *allos* and means just that, another in the Greek as well. Whoever he is, he is commissioned of God. He is holding the seal of the living God. This angel has divine orders to carry out from the throne of God.

B. His Power (3) – [Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads](#). This particular angel has the authority to call for the other angels to cease from their activity of judgment. He has come with the authority of God to accomplish the work for which he was sent.

- All of this may seem difficult to comprehend, but God can accomplish whatever He pleases. If He desires to withhold the winds from the earth, He is well able to do it! [Jer.32:17 – Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee](#). There has never been a time when God wasn’t in control and there never will be. Satan has tried, but never succeeded in altering God’s control.

C. His Purpose (3b) – So, why has this angel come? What is it that he intends to do? The angels were to do no hurt until they had [sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads](#). There are some servants upon the earth, the 144,000 that need to be sealed.

- Now, I'm not sure if this will be a literal seal in their foreheads, or if it simply means that God will give them a mind and will that is determined to follow Him. It really doesn't matter; whatever the case, these will be set apart for service unto the Lord under His divine care.
- This sealing is significant to the servants. Satan is a careful imitator. He attempts to duplicate everything God has done. During the Tribulation Satan will present a false trinity: himself- the dragon; the Antichrist; and the false prophet- minister of propaganda.
- He will also require those who follow him to receive the mark of the beast in their right hands or foreheads. The angel has been sent to mark or identify these servants with the Lord. These will need the touch of God to endure the onslaught of persecution that Satan unleashes against those who refuse to follow him.

I. A Compassionate Pause

II. Commanding Presence

III. A Consecrated People (4-8) – [v.4 – And 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](#). This group of 144,000 has been the center of controversy and debate many years. They really aren't hard to discern if we allow the Bible to speak for itself. They are mentioned as [servants](#) or literally bond slaves. They are committed to the work and will of Christ more than their own personal desires. Let's look a little closer at:

A. Their Presentation – Who exactly are these 144,000? The Jehovah's Witnesses, the Seventh Day Adventists, the World Wide Church of God, and others have made the claim that they are in fact the 144,000. There is one huge flaw in their claim. Their numbers now exceed 144,000, so who among them is in that number? Who will make it through and who will be left behind? And which tribe of Israel are they descended from?

- Some believe this to be the church, left on earth during the Tribulation period of time. Wait a minute! What about what the Bible says? It is clear that these are Jewish men, 12,000 out of each of the 12 tribes, end of discussion. I don't see how it can be much clearer than this. There is much that I can't explain in the book of Revelation, but this is clear in black and white! These are pure, undefiled Jews that are sealed, [Rev.14:1-4](#).

B. Their Preservation – As we've learned these are sealed of God. The word seal refers to "an official seal or stamp of the King." In the OT, special documents were sealed with a piece of wax that bore the signet of the king's ring. God has marked these with His special stamp. This seal for the servants, as well as you and me, is threefold:

1. A Seal of Possession – The seal represents ownership. It reveals to whom the document belongs. The saved are sealed as God's possession; we belong to Him! He has purchased us with the precious blood of Jesus. These bear that seal of possession. In the midst of tribulation, they belong to God.

2. A Seal of Protection – Aren't you glad for the hedge of God? Without it Satan would destroy us all. He walks to and fro in the earth seeking who he may devour. We are safe in the Lord. He may be able to touch my body, but he can't touch my soul! [1 Pet.1:5 – Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.](#) Just as we are secure, so shall these be. God will put a hedge about them to protect them from the attack of Satan and the judgment of the Tribulation.

3. A Seal of Preservation – The Bible teaches that we are sealed unto the day of redemption. We are going to make it home. (Illus. the canning process and how the contents are preserved.) God has a work for these servants to do and He will preserve their lives for His glory.

C. Their Participation – So what are these servants going to do here on earth? Remember [Mat.24:14 – And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.](#) Jesus predicted the preaching of the gospel during the Tribulation. These 144,000 Jewish converts will carry the gospel message, evangelizing the world for Christ.

- There will be a great harvest of souls during the Tribulation and these will be doing the preaching and witnessing to reach them. That ought to challenge us to be a better witness. We aren't faced with death to share our faith and yet there are millions who've never heard about Jesus, lost in their sin.

As I considered the 144,000 I was thankful for the seal that God has placed on me. We are kept by His power and ready to be revealed when He calls for us, halleluiah! The saved are going to spend eternity in heaven. That excites me just a little bit. If you haven't been sealed in the blood of Jesus you can be. You too can be secured for heaven!