

Revelation: The Two Interludes

Lesson 18

Rev 7:1-8: First Interlude: 144,000 Sealed

- After the first six seals are opened, John is shown two rather unique events.
- First, there are four angels standing at the four corners of the earth holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land, sea, or any tree.
 - A fifth angel coming up from the east,
 - has the seal of the living God
 - Instructs the four angels at the four corners of the earth to continue holding back the wind until God's servants have had their forehead sealed.
 - Four angels were told to withhold judgment on the earth until the servants of God were sealed.
 - The Seal
 - The seal on their foreheads symbolizes protection and ownership and God's intention to protect the 12 tribes that are mentioned
 - God sealed Noah and his family ([Genesis 19](#))
 - God sealed the firstborn male of Israel ([Exodus 12](#))
 - God sealed Rehab and her household ([Joshua 2, 6](#))
 - God sealed 7000 Israelites in Elijah's day ([1 Kings 19](#))

Rev 7:1-8: First Interlude: 144,000 Sealed (2)

- Second, John is given a special vision of 144,000 Jewish individuals who are tasked for a special mission. They are also sealed for protection throughout this great tribulation
 - 144,000 thousand were sealed, 12,000 each from all the tribes of Israel. This does not represent the Church Age saints.
 - Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin
 - All of Israel is represented.

Meaning

- The most important meaning of these verses is that God continues to watch over Israel even in the times of great distress.
- While the antichrist is crushing those who refuse to bow before his statue, the greatest spiritual awakening of all time will take place. This awakening will be the direct result of the testimony and ministry of the 144,000 sealed Jews from the 12 tribes.
- The first three verses answers the questions if anyone is saved during the tribulation. Two classes of saved are mentioned specifically: (1) Those of Israel who are saved, and (2) those of all nations, who though saved spiritually, are martyred in great numbers

Meaning (2)

- The 144,000 represent the believing Jewish remnant ([Isa 10:21-22](#)), (Some claim this symbolizes all believers, but this is doubtful as ...
 - the twelve tribes are specifically mentioned by name and number. ([Rev 12:17](#), [Eph 2:19-20](#), [Rom 10:12](#)). Israel will go through the Tribulation.
 - The 24 elders and the 144,000 are present in heaven in two distinct groups
 - The seals on the foreheads appear to be a mark that identifies the 144,000 as redeemed—possibly an external sign of the inner sealing of the Holy Spirit ([Ephesians 1:13-14](#), [Revelation 22:4](#), This is not the first time God has 'sealed' his people
 - When God sent the Flood upon the earth, He sealed Noah and his family from the rest of the human race so the waters would not hurt them (Genesis 6-8)
 - God told Lot and his family to get out of Sodom before the fire descended, thus sealing them from terrible judgment. ([Genesis 19](#))
 - God sealed the first born of all Jewish families who applied sacrificial blood to the door posts of their homes in Egypt ([Exodus 12](#))
 - God sealed Rahab and her household by means of the scarlet cord when he destroyed Jericho ([Joshua 2, 6](#))
 - Even though Elijah didn't realize it, God sealed seven thousand Israelites in his day, who had not bowed down to Baal ([1 Kings 19](#))
- Since the world's land, sea and trees are as yet unharmed in this interlude, the sealing of the 144,000 seems to take place before the disruptions of the 6th seal and perhaps even before the onset of the final 3 ½ years of distress

Powerful, Protected Witnesses

- **Powerful Witness**

- The Jewish witnesses possess tremendous strength of character and their example will bring revival to Israel during this time of distress.
- Because of the witnesses' loyal and truthful declaration of the gospel, millions will come to Christ during this time of distress.
- These witnesses are unspotted by the world and pure in their thoughts and words.

- **Protected Witness**

- Just as the three young Hebrew men were kept alive in King Nebuchadnezzar's red-hot furnace, so these 144,000 sealed Hebrews will be protected from Satan and the Antichrist throughout the entire Tribulation period.
- All 144,000 have been divinely preserved by the Lord. Not one has been overlooked, nor perish.
- The 144,000 will be specially preserved all through the seven years of the Tribulation so that they will be alive when the Millennium begins
- When the Millennium begins, the 144,000 will enter the Kingdom and reign with Christ and His glorified church
- This will fulfill God's promise to His people through the prophets Ezekiel and Zephaniah

Rev 14:1-5: The Lamb And The 144,000

- Jesus is on Mount Zion with the 144,000 previously mentioned.
 - This group of believers are on hand at Mount Zion to welcome Jesus at his return.
 - They are not the only surviving believers. There will be many other Jews and gentile believers who have escaped martyrdom and are honored to welcome Christ at His return.
 - Again the scene in heaven is dramatic with a loud noise similar to rushing water, thunder, and harpists (compare thunder to [4:5](#), [6:1](#), [8:5](#), [11:19](#), [16:18](#), [19:6](#))

A New Song Is Played That Only The 144,000 Could Sing

- Harps are playing and a new song is being sung before the throne of God that only the 144,000 could sing.
 - They are virgins (purity)
 - Some people believe the 144,000 to be evangelists, but there is no scriptural indication that they were either preachers or prophets; however, they do give testimony to the extent God needed to seal them with protection. In essence, their testimony is as powerful and effective as any evangelist or preacher.
 - They follow the Lamb (Jesus) wherever he goes
 - They have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb. The word firstfruits suggests that these converted Israelites precede many others who at the Lord's second coming will turn to Him.
 - They do not lie and they are blameless.
 - Blameless comes from the hebrew word used of sacrificial animals without defect.
 - They are free from lying which is quite a contrast to the great satanic deception which was all built upon lies.
 - People hated these witnesses – not only for their message but also because their pure and holy lives exposed the immorality of the hearers.
 - Only the 144,000 could sing this new song of victory as they were the only ones sealed by God from martyrdom and giving testimony.
 - Harps are mentioned some fifty times in the Old Testament. In each instance, they are associated with joy. A Harp is never played during a time of mourning or sadness.

Second Interlude: Multitude Before The Throne

- [Rev 7:9-17](#)

- The great multitude standing before the throne
- Dressed in white robes
- From every nation, tribe, people and language
- Waving Palm branches in celebration
- Giving praise and thanks to the Lamb for their salvation
- They have come out of the great tribulation so they were in it.
- This group had repented and turned to God during the intense suffering they were experiencing during the tribulation judgments
- This is not the same group of believers as seen under the altar.
 - The altar group had seen death.
 - The multitude endured the hunger, thirst and scorching heat in the last 3 ½ years.
 - The altar group was waiting for vindication, the throne group was celebrating.