

Lesson 11
Revelation 7
Judgment and Redemption

Memory verse: "Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honoured his name." (Malachi 3:16 NIV)

Chapter 7, is somewhat of a significant milestone in this book, it means that the foundational six seals are behind us, which lay out really the judgment of God over the period of time called the Tribulation which is yet to come. And seven is slid right in between the sixth and the seventh seal. If you look at chapter 8 verse 1, "When He broke the seventh seal there was silence in heaven for about a half an hour." So we're taking a bit of a respite here in the fury of the sixth seal before the seventh and final seal is broken.

After all of the furious devastating judgment of chapter 6, the first six seals, this chapter offers a moment of calm, a moment of promise, a moment of hope. It offers insight into escape. To borrow the words of an Old Testament prophet: "In the midst of wrath God remembers mercy."

Now as we have been learning, the future of our world will bring a time of unbelievable terror, a time of horror, a time of slaughter. It will come from the hand of the very one who made the world, the very one who entered the world as a baby, the very one who was crucified and rose again, even the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the One who is unrolling the seven-sealed scroll. He is the one who is taking charge of His universe in this prophetic picture. He along with the one who sits on the throne, His Father, God Almighty, are effecting these powerful judgments on the earth.

As we went through the sixth seals we saw how the period of wrath to come is described in six different phases. First there is a false peace, then war, then famine, then pestilence and death, then vengeance, and then fear as the final day of the Lord comes crashing with the opening of the sixth seal. The sixth seal described in chapter 6 verses 12 to 17 is what triggers the day of the Lord. The sixth seal and the day of the Lord are really synonymous, as we understand Scripture, although what has come before is the work of God and the wrath of God, it is preliminary to the final great day of wrath as it's called in verse 17 which we could call the day of the Lord. And that's typically what God does. There are preliminary judgments that act as a warning, and then the final day of the Lord comes. We see that historically even as we see it here prophetically.

The world up to this time, that is up to the sixth seal, has not been willing to acknowledge God. Believers in the world, people have been converted and so there are believers in the world, and believers in the world have been giving testimony to the Word of God and telling people that this that is happening to them is the judgment of God. But they are not believed. Ultimately they are persecuted and killed, if possible, in an attempt to silence them.

Finally when the sixth seal hits, however, the world cannot escape that this is God. They know it. And in verse 16 they say, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come. And who is able to stand?"

What they say at the very end of verse 17 is very important for understanding the next chapter, because they ask the question, "Who is able to stand?" And that question is in part answered in chapter 7. In fact, we could safely say that chapter 7 is the answer to that question. "Who will survive the divine fury? Who will survive the anger and wrath of God? Who will survive the collapsing universe?" And the worst is yet to come. Trumpet judgments in chapters 8 and 9, bowl judgments, as they're called in chapter 16, and all of them seemed to be embraced within the horrors of the sixth seal. Who can survive it? When you look at the sixth seal and the seven

trumpets and the seven bowl judgments and you add the cumulative effect together, the question is a very good question...who can survive? And chapter 7 helps us answer that.

Matthew 24:14 introduces the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom throughout the whole world, and this may well be where Revelation 7 fits in. God may use the sealed 144,000 Jews to share His Word with the world, resulting in the salvation of multitudes. Redemption is still available. Indeed, God is merciful in the midst of His judgment.

Things to learn: 1) Evangelism during the tribulation 2) Protection of the redeemed survivors 3) Worship by the tribulation saints.

Discussion questions:

1) What much do you know from the actions of the angels in verse 1 to 8?

Q2. What will happen to Gentiles during the tribulation period when God's wrath is released? (refer to verses 9 to 17).

Q3 Based on what we have been reading, is salvation still be possible for people before the end comes?