

Pursuing Resilience in Revelation

The Sealed People of God

Revelation 7:1-8

Intro

Who can stand when God's judgment is unleashed? This is a question we were left with in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 answers this for us.

I mentioned C.S. Lewis's masterful work of fiction, *Perelandra*. In it he highlights that our world has been invaded by malevolent forces. These are the true ancient aliens who are the fallen angels living in active rebellion against our Father. We have participated with them but now we are called to go to war with them. Jesus is clearing the land of every unclean thing and He is building a new nation for Himself out of this world. His judgment is conquering this land and preparing it to be a habitation for His people and for Himself.

This final judgment is coming and the land will be cleaned, but now He has stayed His hand of judgment in order to give time for all of His children to come back home. This is the day we are in. We are at war with the forces of darkness which are allowed to live for now, but only because God is giving people time to repent so that the wheat is not uprooted with the weeds.

Discover

1. Four Angels and Four Winds

- a. Here we encounter four angels corresponding to the Four Horsemen from Chapter 6.
 - i. Whereas the horsemen are bringers of doom and judgment, these angels stay the hands of judgment so that the full deluge of God's wrath is held back until He has brought all of His children into His fold.
 - ii. Ezekiel 7:1-4
 1. The four winds will bring the abominations of all of mankind on their own heads.
 - a. Isaiah 41:2 says these winds will subdue kings and make the nations like dust.

2. Here we must take a moment to remember what Christ has done. He has taken all of our abominations upon Himself so that they will no longer come back on us. All who are sealed in Christ are spared from the ultimate consequences of sin due to Christ taking the consequences for us.
 - a. Isaiah 11:12 Isaiah "He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth."
3. Other passages referring to four angels, four winds, and four corners are...
 - a. Jeremiah 49:36
 - b. Daniel 7:2
 - c. Zechariah 6:5
 - d. Matthew 24:31
 - i. Jesus specifically talks about how He will gather His elect from the four winds symbolizing the entire world.

2. The seal

- a. I think the angel who carries the seal is probably the Holy Spirit who is an angel in the sense that He is sent by the Father and the Son to collect His church from among the nations in the whole world.
- b. The seal corresponds to the permanence of the position of we who have been redeemed into Christ's family.
 - i.
- c. The placing of the seal on the forehead corresponds to Deuteronomy 6, Ezekiel 9, as well as the mark of the Beast.
 - i. The seal on the forehead means that our minds have been renewed in Christ so that we are no longer the old creation which we once were, but are transformed into new creatures in Christ.
 - ii. The sealing of our minds leads us to now act as sons of God rather than as sons of Adam as we once did.
 1. This is why in Deuteronomy 6 and in Revelation 13 we have the imagery of marks on hands and foreheads. The forehead represents our mind and the hand represents our actions.
 2. A son of God is given a redeemed mind which leads to righteous living whereas a son of Adam has a depraved mind leading to wicked living.
 - a. One of the worst punishments God gives the world is giving people over to their own depravity. He doesn't need to actively do anything. People bring punishment upon ourselves since we are naturally self destructive in Adam (Romans 3).

- d. Isn't it interesting that while the seals of judgment are being opened, the seals which secure God's chosen nation are being closed?

3. A stay of hand

- a. Good is merciful, sending His angels to hold back the full extent of man's consequences until all of His redeemed are brought home.
- b. This means that although things may get messy around us, they are not as bad as they could be or will be in the very final hour.

4. The 144,000

- a. Who are the sons of Israel?
 - i. Romans 9:6-8 NKJV, "But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, [7] nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." [8] That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed."
 - ii. Genesis 17:4 NKJV "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations."
 - iii.
- b. Note the order, because it matters.
- c. Where is Dan?
 - i. Dan is not mentioned, likely because Dan gave himself over to idolatry.
- d. Where are we?

Nurture

Who is God? The Lord who presides over the host of heaven and all that happens on earth, above the earth, and below it.

What has God done? He has stayed the complete destruction our sin has brought upon us so that all of His people can be sealed in Him.

Who are we? We are the people He is sealing out of the world as His own possession.

What are we being called to do? We are to live as sons and daughters of the Father, bringing the reality of His kingdom to bear on our lives and the lives of everyone around us.

Act

So long as the angels are staying the winds of judgment there is hope that people can be sealed into Christ by the Spirit. We must remember who we are because of whose we are, and we must join our Father and His angels in doing our family business which is building His kingdom.

Aslan is on the move. One of my favorite scenes from the Chronicles of Narnia comes from The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. It is where the great Lion has returned to the land and wherever he lands, winter is erased and spring comes. Flowers grow from dead land wherever he steps and the influence of the witch in people is diminished.

Jesus is doing this for us. We are His body. When we are at work, He is glorified and Satan and Adam are diminished. Where His seal is applied people are brought into His fold and saved from Adam's world and its terrible future.