

## Revelation 7:1-17 - A dose of reality: Who can stand?

### Revelation Recap:

- A message from the exalted Lord Jesus Christ to his suffering people
- A revelation - how things really are

What does our world look like?

*Messy, change and no change, good and bad, tears and sadness, pain and suffering – a humdrum, accidental, meaningless world - could be so much better*

- In the face of a messy world, know:
  - Rev 4:** God is on his throne
  - Rev 5:** Christ is worthy to carry out God's plan
  - Rev 6:** Christ controls a rebellious world by judgements now,
    - that warn us of the coming judgement,
    - and bring about the world God intended – Rev. 7:15-17 – *Paradise lost*

Rev 6:17 – In the face of God's righteous, just judgement ***"Who can stand?"***

### The sealed and the numbered (1-8)

The 4 angels with 4 winds (Rev. 7) are the 4 horsemen (Rev 6)– Zech. 6:1-9

*These are the four spirits (winds) of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. The one with the black horses is going toward the north country, the one with the white horses toward the west, and the one with the dappled horses toward the south." Zech. 6:5-6*

A pause before judgement - God's servants **sealed** before judgements unleashed

- ownership & protection – Ezekiel 9:1-4

*"Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it." Ezek. 9:4*

- Protected, not *from* suffering but *in the midst of* suffering

The seal is God's Holy Spirit – Eph. 1:13-14

*When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory. – Eph. 1:13-14*

The **numbered** – 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.]

- NOT 144,000 individuals, rather a **symbolic** number

12 tribes x 12 (*completeness*) x 1,000 (*many*) = 144,000 ALL God's complete, numbered

All known and sealed, owned and protected, by God before creation (Eph. 1:4)

God knows those he's saving – exact number, by name

*He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – Eph. 1:4-5*

## Innumerable worshippers (v.9-12)

*a great multitude that no one could count v. 9*

- As the stars in the sky – Gen 15:5, Gen 22:17-18
- Called to worship God
- How many is God saving?
  - a whole world – not every individual but not just the odd one or two
  - individual branches or the whole tree?
  - more sheep or more goats?

*“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.” (Is. 49.6)*

*“I myself believe that King Jesus will reign, and the idols be utterly abolished; but I expect the same power which turned the world upside down once will still continue to do it. The Holy Ghost would never suffer the imputation to rest upon His holy name that He was not able to convert the world.” - C.H.Spurgeon*

Jesus came to save **the world**, he will not be disappointed

## Those washed clean by the Lamb's blood (13-17)

*they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb v. 14*

- We don't know who:
  - God sealed before creation
  - will make up that innumerable host

No fatalism: *“Well I can't do anything, if God's chosen me I will come to him and if he hasn't I won't”*

*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me. – John 10:27*

- We do know that all those God has sealed, all those eternal willing worshippers:
  - will be washed in Jesus' blood
  - will turn to Him, trust in Him to be made clean

Additional thoughts / questions: