

Revelation

Of Jesus Christ

The Seven Seals

Study Guide #3 - Revelation 4-8:1

I. Introduction

- A. Revelation 1-3 introduce the book of Revelation as a whole, and contain the letters to the seven churches in particular. These letters are Jesus' "State of the Church" address. They chronicle conditions negative and positive, spiritual and physical, revealing God's view of His church not only at the time of writing, but down through the ages to the end of time, presenting Jesus as the fulfillment of every need. These letters provide the landscape upon which the remainder of the REVELATION is portrayed. Those who apply Jesus to the needs of their lives, as pointed out in these letters, are the ones who are ready to study and understand the rest of the book.
- B. Revelation 4 to 8:1 forms the second part of the book of Revelation -- The Seven Seals.
1. Chapter 4 - Takes us on a tour of the throne room of heaven. There we will recognize many things which we have seen already in the earthly sanctuary of the Old Testament. We will also meet several groups of living beings there who are involved in various activities.
 2. Chapter 5 - Introduces a book or scroll which is tightly sealed. Someone of extraordinary credentials is needed to unseal the seals and allow the contents of the book to become known. Thus we are introduced to the Lamb which was slain. He alone bears the lofty credentials required to unseal the scroll.
 3. Chapters 6 to 8:1 - Chronicles the unsealing of these seven seals. These seals contain many strange symbols and word pictures. What do they mean? By comparing scripture with scripture we will seek to learn the message which the Lamb presents through this scroll as it is unsealed.
 4. Chapter 7 - Forms an interlude between the 6th and 7th seals which answers a crucial and final question necessary to settle the judgment procedure in God's favor. This answer brings up the issues of the "seal of God" and the 144,000. What is this seal? Who are the 144,000?

II. Chapter 4 -- The Throne Room of Heaven

- A. Verse 1 -- A door open IN heaven - See 3:8
1. Not a door into heaven, but a look into some building there - 3:8
 2. A Voice - "the first voice...like a trumpet" - See 1:10
 3. "Things which must take place after this" - See 1:19
 - a. Invitation to look ahead into the future
 - b. Sanctuary perspective - Must be events prefigured by the fall feasts. All other events are past.
- B. Verses 2-11 -- Tour of the Heavenly Sanctuary - Throne Room set for Judgment
1. God seated on His Throne - vs.2,3; See Ezekiel 1:26-28
 - a. "set" = was setting - See Daniel 7:9,10; Psalm 122:1-5
 - b. The Ark of the Covenant - See Exodus 25:10-22; 40:3; Leviticus 16:2; Numbers 7:89; 1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel 6:2; 2 Kings 19:15; Psalm 80:1
 - c. In the Most Holy Place - Exodus 40:3,20,21; Hebrews 9:3-5
 2. 24 Elders on thrones - vs.4; 5:8
 - a. "Elders" = presbyters - Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2-6,22,23; 16:4
 - b. Seated as kings in judgment
 - 1) Seated on thrones - 20:4-6; Daniel 7:9,10; Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30; 1 Corinthians 6:2,3
 - 2) Crowns of Gold on their heads - See 2:10; 3:11
 - c. Clothed in white robes - 3:5,18; 6:11; 7:9-14; 19:8; Isaiah 64:6

- d. Functioning as priests - See 5:8 - 24 Divisions of Levitical Priesthood
 - 1) Harps - See 1 Chronicles 25
 - 2) Golden Bowls of incense - See 1 Chronicles 24:1-18
 - 3) Judges - See Deuteronomy 17:8-13; Ezekiel 44:24
 - e. Worship
 - 1) God as creator - v.10,11
 - 2) Lamb as redeemer - 5:9,10
 - f. Redeemed human beings - How did they get here? - First Fruits
Matthew 27:50-53; Ephesians 4:8
3. Lightnings, thunderings, and voices - v.5; See Psalm 18:7-15
 - a. 4:5 - Before Seals - *Rumblings from heaven* - Judgment beginning
 - b. 8:5 - Before Trumpets - Add earthquake - *Begin to shake the earth* - Judgment time
 - c. 11:19 - 7th Trumpet - Add Hail - *Shake earth to decision* - Choose NOW
 - d. 16:18-21 - 7th Plague - Great earthquake and hail - *Shake earth to destruction* - Final judgment
 4. Seven lamps of fire = Seven Spirits of God - v.5; See 1:4,12,20
 - a. Seven branched candlestick - Exodus 25:31-40
 - b. In the Holy Place - Exodus 40:22-24
 5. Sea of glass like crystal - v.6 - See Exodus 24:10
 - a. Bronze Mirrored Laver - See Exodus 30:17-21; 38:8
 - b. In the Court between the altar and tabernacle - Exodus 40:7
 - c. Called the "sea" - 1 Kings 7:23,24
 - d. Laver in the New Testament - Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5
 6. Four living creatures - vs.6-8; See Ezekiel 1:5-26; 10:20-22
 - a. Full of eyes - Ezekiel 10:12 - All seeing heavenly record keepers
Jeremiah 2:22; Malachi 3:16; Revelation 20:12
 - b. Four Faces - Ezekiel 1:10 - Ezekiel's living creatures each had all four faces
 - c. God's Coat of Arms -- Four Faces Parallel the Four Standards of the Tribes of Israel
See Numbers 2; Ezekiel 1:4-10

<u>Likeness</u>	<u>Direction</u>	<u>Tribe</u>	<u>Symbolic Meaning</u>
1) Lion	East	Judah: Issachar & Zebulun	Strength & King
2) Calf (Ox)	South	Reuben: Simeon & Gad	Highest Sacrifice
3) Man's Face	West	Ephraim: Manasseh & Benjamin	Son of Man
4) Flying Eagle	North	Dan: Asher & Naphtali	Safety and speed

See 12:14; Exodus 19:4; Psalm 57:1; 61:4; 63:7
 - d. Six wings - Seraphim - See Isaiah 6:2-6
 - e. Worship with the 24 elders - vs.8-11; 5:8-14
 - 1) 5:9,10 - Literally: (according to the oldest, most reliable manuscripts)
"Because you were slain and purchased ~~us~~ to God by your blood out every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and made ~~us~~ them a kingdom and priests to our God, and ~~we~~ they will reign upon the earth."
 7. NO Veil separating the Holy from the Most Holy Place
 - a. Hung independent of tent structure - Exodus 26:31-37; 40:3,21
 - b. Identical to inner lining of sanctuary - Exodus 26:1,31
 - c. Used as a cover for the Ark - Numbers 4:5
 - d. Purpose - to isolate the SINFUL priest from the shekina glory of God
 - e. Jesus is our SINLESS priest. He IS God. HE NEEDS NO PROTECTING VEIL.
 - f. Jesus IS the veil - Safe separation yet open communication - Hebrews 10:19,20

III. Chapter 5 -- The Scroll with Seven Seals

- A. Verses 1-4 -- Scroll
 1. In God's RIGHT Hand - Ecclesiastes 10:2; Psalm 98:1
 2. Written on both sides - Ezekiel 2:9,10; Genesis 15:16
 4. The "books" of evidence for the judgment - Daniel 7:10
 3. Sealed with seven seals - Complete history of sin
 5. Who is "worthy" to open - John 5:22-27; Romans 2:16; 14:10-12
- B. Verses 5-7 -- Worthy is the Lamb
 1. Lion of the Tribe of Judah - See Genesis 49:8-10
 2. Root of David - See Isaiah 11:1-10
 3. Prevailed - See Genesis 3:15

4. In the midst of the throne - See 4:6
5. Lamb - See John 1:29; Isaiah 53:7
6. As though it had been slain
7. Seven horns - See Deuteronomy 33:17; Jeremiah 48:25
8. Seven eyes - 1:4; 4:5 - See Proverbs 15:3; Zechariah 4:10; Ezekiel 1:18; 10:12

C. Verses 8-14 -- A Crescendo of Praise and Worship

1. The Original Song (4:8-11)= Worship God as Creator
2. The New Song (5:9,10) = Worship the Lamb (Christ) as Redeemer
3. Assembled unfallen universe concurs (5:11,12) - The Lamb is WORTHY
4. All creation joins in (5:13) - Both God and Christ deserve honor and praise

IV. Chapter 6:1 to 8:1 -- The Seven Seals

A. General Considerations

1. The Seven Seals symbolically portray the complete (seven) history of the Great Controversy as reviewed by the heavenly audience during the pre-advent investigative phase of the judgment. The evidence is pictorially portrayed in seven scenes. The first five scenes show the evidence of the past, the sixth previews the sentence God plans to execute at the close of the judgment, and the seventh presents the jury's final verdict.
2. Subdivisions of the Seven Seals
 - a. 1-4 - Four Horsemen - Review of Spiritual Movements throughout History
 - b. 5 - Plea for Justice and Judgment
 - c. 6 - Preview of Execution of Judgment
 - d. -- Interlude -- Chapter 7 - WHO will survive the execution, and HOW?
 - e. 7 - Chapter 8:1 - The Jury Returns the Verdict
3. Commands to the Four Horsemen
 - a. "Come and see" = an imperative command - means either "Come!" or "Go!"
 - b. Command given by the living creatures, in order - See vs.1,3,5,7; 4:7

B. The First Seal - vs.1,2 -- Command by the FIRST living creature = Lion - 4:7

1. White horse - Pure and powerful
2. Bow - Advance warfare. Ability to eliminate enemy at a distance
3. Crown - Victor
4. Conquering and to conquer - See 2:2; Colossians 1:23
5. Perspective - Like the Apostolic Church (34-100; Ephesus), each spiritual generation has begun with a small but spiritually pure and powerful group which does great exploits for God.

C. The Second Seal - vs.3,4 -- Command by the SECOND living creature = Calf or Ox - 4:7

1. Fiery Red horse - Embattled, bloodied
2. Took peace from the earth - See 2:9,10 - Time of trouble and persecution
3. Great Sword - Hand to hand combat
4. Perspective - Like the Persecuted Church (100-313 AD; Smyrna), Satan has sought to discourage, fatigue and annihilate each spiritual generation through the combat of persecution, terror, and bloodshed.

D. The Third Seal - vs.5,6 -- Command by the THIRD living creature = Face like a Man - 4:7

1. Black horse - Dirty, blackened - Change of color from white to black
2. Pair of scales - Weights and measures - For rationing limited quantities
3. Voice from the midst of the four living creatures
 - a. Quart of wheat and three quarts of barley for a denarius
 - 1) Six to eight times the normal price = Short supply and high cost
 - a) Quart of wheat = Days ration of food
 - b) Barley = Food of the poor and animals
 - c) Denarius = A days wage for a laborer
 - 2) Spiritual food is always available for those willing to give ALL
 - b. Do not harm the Oil and Wine = Always plenty of the blood of Christ and the Holy Spirit available for those who seek it - See Psalm 23:5
4. Perspective - Like the Compromising Church (313-538; Pergamos), Satan has largely nullified the effectiveness of each spiritual generation through the infiltration of error and compromise, resulting in spiritual famine. But God protects the supply of spiritual food for those who truly seek it.

- E. The Fourth Seal - vs.7,8 -- Command by the FOURTH living creature = Flying Eagle - 4:7
See Matthew 24:28; Luke 17:37; Revelation 12:14
1. Pale horse - Color of death
 2. Death is the rider - No life remaining
 3. Grave followed - 2:23 - Nothing left but to bury the remains
 4. Power over the earth to kill - See Ezekiel 14:21
 - a. Fourth part - Partial, not universal
 - b. Sword - War, persecution
 - c. Hunger - Famine
 - d. Death - Pestilence - See 2:22,23
 - e. Beasts - Nations
 5. Perspective - Like the Corrupt Medieval Church (539-1798; Thyatira) Satan has succeeded in corrupting each spiritual generation until it becomes lifeless, having only the power to impart death. See Matthew 6:22,23; Luke 11:34,35
- F. The Fifth Seal - vs.9-11
1. Souls = "pseuche" - Under the altar
 2. Slain for word of God and for the testimony which they held - Martyrs
 - a. Blood poured out at its base - Leviticus 4:7
 - b. The life (soul) is in the blood - Leviticus 17:11
 3. How long?
 4. White Robes
 5. Rest a little while longer
 6. Literally - "Until also their fellow servants and their brothers should be perfected (matured), the ones about to be killed as they."
 - a. "number" is supplied by the translators and not necessarily implied
 - b. "was completed" = same Greek word as "perfect" in 3:2 - MATURE
 7. Perspective - Though each spiritual generation has apparently failed, there have always been a few, a minority, who chose to trust and follow God, even to the point of death. Now their blood cries out to the heavenly jury in favor of God's right and responsibility to execute judgment against evil.
- G. The Sixth Seal - vs.12-17
1. Cosmic Upheaval - Sun, moon and stars - See Matthew 24:15-31; Isaiah 13:6-13
 - a. Historical Application
 - 1) A time of Tribulation to follow the destruction of Jerusalem - Matthew 24:15-21
 - a) 1260 years of Papal Supremacy = 538 to 1798
 - b) "Those days will be shortened" - Matthew 24:22
 - 2) "Immediately after the tribulation" - Matthew 24:29
 - a) Great Lisbon Earthquake -
 - b) Dark Day and Moon to Blood - May 19, 1780
 - c) Stars Fell - 1833
 - b. Eschatological (end-time) Application
 - 1) Next event is the Second Coming - v.15; See Matthew 24:30,31
 - 2) Pictured in 6th Seal as one great event at the Second Coming
 2. Sky receded as a scroll - See Isaiah 34:4; 64:1-3
 3. Every mountain and island was moved - See 16:20
 4. Wicked long to be hidden - Jesus is coming - See Matthew 24:30
 5. Who is able to stand? - The one question that must be answered in the judgment
 6. Perspective - God previews His planned execution of judgment. The scene is so awesome that the cry is heard, "Who will possibly survive? Will anyone be saved?" The heavenly jury seeks assurance that God's faithful ones will indeed survive. Chapter 7 presents an interlude which answers this question by previewing WHO will survive and HOW they are able to stand.

V. Chapter 7:1-3 -- The Sealing of the Saints

- A. Verse 1 - Four angels holding four winds
1. After these things... - After viewing the first 6 seals
 2. Four angels - Divine agencies
 3. Four corners - Four points of the compass
 4. Four Winds
 - a. Winds - War and strife - Daniel 7:2; Jeremiah 25:32; 51:1,2
 - b. Four winds - From every direction - Jeremiah 49:36 - Global

5. Not to blow on earth, sea or trees
 - a. Earth - 12:16 - Physical world, refuge for God's people
 - b. Sea - 17:15 - People
 - c. Trees - 9:4; Daniel 4:20-22 - Leaders

B. Verses 2 - Another angel from the east

1. East = Rising of the Sun - When God steps in
 - a. Genesis 3:24 - Angel posted at the EAST of Eden to guard the gate
 - b. Numbers 2:3 - Tribe of Judah camped EAST of the Tabernacle
 - c. Isaiah 41:25 - Rescue for Jerusalem will come from the north and EAST
 - d. Ezekiel 10 - God's glory exited the defiled temple to the EAST
 - e. Ezekiel 43:1-4; 44:1,2 - God' reenters the rebuilt temple from the EAST
 - e. Daniel 11:44 - News from the EAST and north disturbs the end-time apostate power
 - f. Matthew 2:1,2 - A star in the EAST led the magi to Bethlehem
 - g. Revelation 16:12 - Kings from the EAST form God's side in the final battle
2. Seal of the living God - God's act of clearly identifying his faithful ones before the final conflict hits
 - a. Seal - Word Study
 - 1) Official stamp of authority - Matthew 27:66; Daniel 6:17
 - 2) Close or shut tight - 5:1; 10:4; 20:3; 22:10; Daniel 12:4,9
 - 3) Tangible, visible verification of an intangible or invisible reality
John 3:33; 6:27; Romans 4:11; 1 Corinthians 9:2
 - 4) To complete a transaction - Romans 15:28
 - 5) Sealed **BY** the Holy Spirit as the guarantee of our eternal inheritance -
2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 4:30
 - b. Must be studied in comparison with Satan's mark - the "mark of the beast" - 13:11-18

<u>Seal of God</u>	<u>Mark of Beast</u>
Identifies those loyal to God's side	Identifies those loyal to the beast's side
Received in forehead - v.3	Received in forehead or hand
<i>Mental acceptance, faith, inner belief</i>	<i>Inner belief or external compliance</i>
Protected from wrath of Satan	Subject to wrath of God
Labeled for eternal life	Marked for eternal destruction
3. "Granted to harm the earth and sea..." - By releasing the restraint and letting Satan have a free hand

C. Verse 3 - Do not harm till we have sealed - Restrain the final conflagration until this work is completed

D. Time of the Sealing

1. Looked forward to in the 5th Seal - See 6:11
2. Must take place before or during the 6th Seal - 6:17 - Answers question - "Who will be able to stand?"

VI. The 144,000 and the Great Multitude

A. Verses 4-8 -- Who are the 144,000?

1. Servants of God - v.3
2. From "ALL the tribes...of Israel"?
 - a. Not just JEWS
 - b. Jews = Tribe of Judah (and Benjamin)
3. Not Literal "blood" Israelites
 - a. Israel's special position as God's missionary nation ended in 34 AD at the close of the 70 week prophecy due to their rejection of the person and message of the Messiah - Daniel 9:24-27
 - b. Christ taught that being a true "child" of Abraham is a matter of FAITH relationship and dependance, not BLOOD line and physical descendance -
 - 1) John 8:37-44
 - a) vs.33,37 - "descendants" = GREEK: sperma
 - b) v.39 - "children" = GREEK: tekna
 - c) Who your "Father" is determined by who you "depend" on, not who you "descend" from.
 - 2) Matthew 3:9 - God can make children ("tekna" - dependents) of Abraham from stones.
 - c. Paul make the same point - Romans 9:6,7
 - d. Paul taught that ALL who accept Christ by FAITH, regardless of national origin, constitute TRUE ISRAEL after the cross - Romans 2:28,29; Galatians 3:7,26-29

4. THEREFORE: The number 144,000 must be symbolic and descriptive, not literal
 - a. Actual 12 tribes do not exist except for Judah - the Jews
 - b. The setting of the passage is clearly symbolic - See vs.1-4
 - c. Many more than the 144,000 will be saved in the end time - See v.9
 - d. God has no quotas - John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:3,4
 - e. God focus is and always has been on QUALITY, not quantity
 - 6:11 - Literally: "...it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until also their fellow servants and their brothers should be perfected (matured), the ones about to be killed as they."
 5. "12" is used to describe totality, completeness, maturity in terms of God's people and church before and after the cross
 - a. 12 Tribes = Total of Israel before cross - Natural born mankind
 - b. 12 Apostles = Total Church after cross - Spiritually reborn disciples
 - c. Age 12 = transition from boyhood to manhood - Luke 2:42
 - d. Out of all His disciples, Jesus specifically called and chose (elected) 12 to be His apostles
 - Luke 6:13; Mark 3:13,14
 - e. The disciples will sit on 12 thrones judging 12 tribes of Israel - Matthew 19:28
 - f. After one disciple fell (Judas) it was important to restore the number to 12 again - Acts 1:15-26
 - g. God's woman (church) of Revelation 12:1 wears a crown of 12 stars
 6. "144" = 12 x 12
 - a. 12 - complete, mature, *reborn* in Christ - 12 *disciples*
 - b. x 12 - out of all *naturally born* mankind - 12 *tribes*
 7. "Thousand" - Literally "thousands" (plural)
 - a. Does not necessarily mean more than 999 and less than 1001
 - b. Used to describe a large, indefinite number or multitude - See 5:11
 8. John does not SEE the 144,000, he only HEARS them described - v.4
- B. The Great Multitude - vs.9-17 - John now SEES a group of redeemed people
1. Innumerable multi-ethnic multitude
 - a. Unrestricted by race or quantity
 - b. In contrast to 144,000, who are identified by both race and quantity
 2. Clothed in white robes (v.9) - Washed in the blood of the Lamb (v.14)
 - See 3:5,18; 6:11; 19:8; Isaiah 64:6
 3. Palm Branches - v.9 = Victory
 4. Came out of the great tribulation - v.14 - Which has two phases
 - a. One "great tribulation" goes from after the fall of Jerusalem until the 2nd Coming - Matthew 24:21
 - b. Medieval phase - 538 to 1798 by Little Horn power
 - Daniel 7:25; Revelation 12,13
 - c. End time phase - short revival of Little Horn power
 - Daniel 11:40-45; Revelation 12:17; 13:1-18
 - d. Must here refer to the END TIME phase - as the context is the 6th Seal which poses the question as to who will survive the execution of judgment at the 2nd Coming.
 5. Survive the 2nd Coming - 6:17 - Remember the CONTEXT of the question!
- C. What is the relationship of the 144,000 to the Great Multitude?
1. 1:10-13
 - a. John HEARS a trumpet-like voice described as the Alpha and Omega
 - b. John turns and SEES one like the Son of Man dressed as a Priest
 2. 5:5,6
 - a. John HEARS about a Lion
 - b. John looks and SEES a Lamb
 3. 7:4,9
 - a. John hears about 144,000 Israelites
 - b. John looks and SEES a great, innumerable, multi-ethnic multitude
 4. The symbolic description HEARD and actual object SEEN combine to portray the reality intended.
- D. Additional description of on the 144,000 - 14:1-5
1. Have God's name ON THEIR FOREHEADS = Yahweh Elohim - See Exodus 20:10
 2. Context - Contrasts God's seal and number with that of the Beast (13:11-18)

3. New Song = Unique experience
 - a. 6:17 - They live to see and survive the day of God's wrath
 - b. 7:14 - They experience the great, final time of tribulation
 - c. 15:1-4 - They sing the song of Moses and the Lamb - The Final Exodus
 4. Redeemed from the earth
 5. Virgins - SYMBOLIC - not defiled with women
 - a. Sex, in the proper context of marriage, is not a sin. God did not create anything evil, instill evil desires, or command man to commit sin - See James 1:12-14; Genesis 1:28,31
 - b. Israel is called the Lord's virgin
Isaiah 37:22; Amos 5:2(794); Jeremiah 14:11; 18:13-17; 31:4,31; Lamentations 1:15; 2:13
 - c. Two women (churches) in Revelation
 - 1) Pure, virtuous woman = Christ's virgin bride - 12:1; 19:7,8
 - 2) Adulterous harlot - 17:1-6
 - d. Spiritual virginity vs. Spiritual fornication (14:8; 18:2,3)
 - 1) Matthew 5:8 - Singleness of purpose, allegiance, commitment
 - 2) Spiritual fornication = mixture of truth and false doctrine
 - e. They follow the lamb wherever he goes - No other lovers on the side
 6. No GUILT - Greek = "dolos" -- Translated...(in the New King James Version)
 - a. Guilt -- John 1:47; 1 Peter 2:1,22; 3:10
 - b. Trickery -- Matthew 26:4; Mark 14:1
 - c. Deceit -- Mark 7:22; Acts 13:10; Romans 1:29
 7. Without fault - perfect, mature, complete
 - a. Symbolized by the number 144,000
 - b. Looked forward to in the 5th Seal
 - c. Able to survive the 6th Seal
- E. The New Jerusalem, is built to the dimensions of those who will live there - 21:12-21
1. 12 pearl gates with names of 12 tribes - 21:12,21 - Natural born people
 2. 12 foundations with name of 12 apostles - 21:14 - Reborn disciples
 3. The city "measured" 12 thousand furlongs - 21:16 = A CUBE
 4. The WALL "measured" 144 cubits - 21:17
 5. Measure of an "angel" = messenger - 21:17
- F. The number 144,000 describes in "sign language" the spiritual QUALITY and DIVERSITY of this special group, not the specific numerical quantity or ethnic origin.
1. 1000s - A multitude, large number, where there is room for all, no quota...
 2. x 12 - From every possible natural origin and spiritual disability,
 3. 12,000s - regardless of race, creed, social or economic background
 4. x 12 - Who are reborn disciples, totally committed to spiritual maturity
 5. 144,000s - Who survive the final tribulation and are alive to see Jesus come

VII. Chapter 8:1 -- The Seventh Seal - Silence IN HEAVEN

- A. Previews the outcome of the judgment. Court is silent -- No further questions.
 1. Luke 14:1-4; 20:26
 2. Acts 11:18
 3. Acts 15:12,13
- B. 1/2 hour -- IN HEAVEN - Not dealing with an earthly event or time frame
- C. The evidence has fully vindicated God of all complicity with the sin problem.

VIII. Summary

- A. The seven seals review in symbolic form the evidence which has been faithfully recorded in the scroll, as it is now unsealed by Christ in the judgment. We see how each time God develops a group of faithful people, Satan attacks them with persecution and compromise until the movement is dead from corruption. But the faithful ones who endured Satan's attacks cry out in God's favor for judgment to be executed. God previews the execution of that judgment which elicits the question, "Who will survive the day of God's wrath?"

- B. The context and content of Revelation 7 is clearly symbolic. In the heavenly judgment scene seven seals are opened and the evidence of the Great Controversy is reviewed before the unfallen universe. God is exonerated and Satan condemned (Seals 1-4) by evidence so clear that it elicits a call (5th Seal) in favor of God's right and responsibility to execute justice and judgment against Satan's destructive actions. God previews that day of execution (6th Seal) with a picture so devastating that it appears no one could possibly survive. The final question rings out, "Who will be able to stand?" Will God be able to be both "just and the justifier" of those with "faith in Jesus"? - Romans 3:26
- C. The answer comes back loud and clear. God will mature a group of people (looked forward to in the 5th seal) who are so totally serious about their faith relationship with Christ that they will follow Him wherever He leads, in spite of Satan's wrath, and without any compromise or illicit mixture of truth and error. They have a pure "virgin"-like commitment to Christ as their only "way... truth and... life." - John 14:6. They never say "I don't think it matters," when God clearly lays out truth in Scripture. They step out and follow even when it is contrary to what everyone else is doing.
- D. This true, end time, spiritual Israel is numbered with God's symbolic number of spiritual maturity - 144,000. Seen as a multitude (1000s) unrestricted in numerical quantity, they come out of every segment of naturally born humanity (12 tribes), being spiritually reborn into true discipleship (12 apostles). They are marked in a special, visible way by the "seal of the living God" (7:2), which comes to be imbedded in their minds (foreheads) and lived out in their lives by faith. And this seal has a very distinctive correlation with God's seventh-day Sabbath. Represented by the church of Philadelphia, they are packaged for eternity, labeled with the name and address (3:7,12) of the city custom built especially for them according to the same spiritual dimensions as their rebuilt characters. These will survive the great day of God's wrath (6th seal), being translated at the second coming.
- E. With this final question answered the heavenly host falls silent (7th seal). God has been vindicated as the one telling the truth in the Great Controversy. It is time to begin moving through events here on the earth to ultimately culminate the sin problem. Just how this all fits together into the prophetic scenario will come clear as the prophetic picture of Revelation continues to unfold.
- F. There is no room among the 144,000 for those who compromise. The only difference between the 144,000 and the rest of the saved is that they "come out of the great tribulation" (7:14) -- a special experience due to the times in which they live. But the attitude and commitment of the 144,000 is no different from that which is required of every serious follower of Christ. Without this total uncompromising commitment to follow Jesus, no one will see the kingdom of God.

If you are unwilling to make the type of commitment that would make you eligible to be part of the 144,000, then you are unfit for heaven. You will never make it. If you are willing to be a spiritual virgin - betrothed only to Christ, with no flings of compromise on the side, and follow close to Christ wherever He leads, you are guaranteed a place in the Kingdom.

- G. Where do you stand right now in the light of Scripture? Are you having an illicit affair with compromise? Are you looking for loopholes? Or are you giving all? Are you trying to hide behind the smoke screen of what you THINK in order to avoid responding to what you KNOW is right based on the clear testimony of Scripture? Or do you stand "pure" before God, willing to be His and only His, willing to "follow the Lamb wherever He goes"?

The choice is clear. The decision is up to you. The consequences are eternal.