THE BOOK OF
REVELATION

Revelation 7

- Chapter 7 answers the question posed at the end of 6:14—*"who is able to withstand [the wrath of the Lamb]?"*
- Whereas chapter 6 overviews the coming destruction of the 70th week, chapter 7 overviews God's protection of his people during that time

If all Christians are gone, who is left to protect?

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Revelation 7:1–3

- The angels will not be allowed to *“damage the earth or the sea or the trees until”* a specific group of people is sealed
    - The earth, sea, and trees will be affected during the first two trumpet judgments (8:7–8), probably during the second half of the 70th week (the “great tribulation”).
    - A seal provides proof of ownership, identification of the item, and protection

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Revelation 7:4–8

What is the seal?

- God's seal is probably intended to be set against Satan's seal, the "mark of the beast"
- Will protect them from God's judgments on the world (9:4)

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Revelation 7:4–8

Who are these 144,000?

- Literal Jews—not symbolic; a major focus of the 70th week is bringing Israel back to God
- 144,000 is a definite number, contrasted with the indefinite "enormous crowd" in 7:9
- Called *"servants of our God"* so may have a ministry or evangelism role, especially with the context of the crowd of martyrs

Revelation 7:4–8

Why the strange list of tribes?

- The Bible lists the 12 tribes in several different ways, depending on the context

  Land divisions did not include Levi. Sometimes Joseph is mentioned, other times just his sons.

- Reuben was the firstborn, but his birthright was taken away and given to Joseph (via his two sons)

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Revelation 7:4–8

Why the strange list of tribes?

- Judah is the tribe of Messiah, the major context of the Revelation, so he is listed first
- Some early church fathers thought Antichrist would come from Dan
    - Dan and Ephraim were the "worst" of the tribes when it came to idolatry
    - Dan is not listed; Ephraim is replaced by Joseph

Revelation 7:9–16

A second group of God's people

- Not just Jews; this crowd comes from everywhere
- Their presence in heaven leads to another worship scene
- They came *"out of the great tribulation"*; possibly martyrs for their faith (fifth seal; 12:11, 17)

The 144,000 are at the beginning of the 70th week, while John saw these at the end of the 70th week

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Revelation 7:9–16

A second group of God's people

- They will live with the Savior in the Millennial Kingdom and Eternity
  - *"Hungry…thirsty…sun…burning heat"* —This was God's promise to Jews to be fulfilled in the coming kingdom (Isaiah 49:8–10)
  - *"Wipe away every tear from their eyes"* —This was a promise to all nations in the kingdom (Isaiah 25:6–9; Revelation 21:3–4)

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