

## Sunday, November 6, Revelation 7 Sealing of the 144,000 from Israel; Sealing of a Great Multitude

The sixth seal inaugurates the fulfillment of God's promise to "avenge their blood." It is both judgment on the earth-dwellers and vindication for the saints. The "shaking of the heavens" was an apocalyptic sign for the coming of the day of the Lord, and this signifies that the end of world history has arrived.

This is one reason why the interlude of chapter 7 occurs after the sixth seal; the eschaton has arrived, so it is time to look at other aspects of this final period in human history. The abject terror of the very ones who have inflicted such suffering on the people of God, namely the rulers of this world and their followers, is proleptic of the final vindication promised in 6:11.

The wrath of God and the Lamb has come down on the earth-dwellers for their rebellion against God and their cruelty to his people. The message is clear: God will vindicate us for all that we sacrifice and suffer for his sake. But the question remains: are we willing to persevere and be faithful to him in the midst of terrible opposition? That is one of the primary issues in this book.

Revelation 6:9-10 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been killed because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who live on the earth?"

Revelation 6:11 And a white robe was given to each of them; and they were told that they were to rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers and sisters who were to be killed even as they had been, was completed also.

Revelation 6:15-17 Then the kings of the earth and the eminent people, and the commanders and the wealthy and the strong, and every slave and free person hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the sight 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?"

Who is able to stand? The elect

Revelation 7:9-10 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all the tribes, peoples, and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Two interludes, one between the sixth and seventh seal and one between the sixth and seventh trumpets  
Revelation 7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth,

holding back the four winds of the earth so that no wind would blow on the earth, or on the sea, or on any tree.

Revelation 7:2-3 And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, holding the seal of the living God; and he called out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth, or the sea, or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads."

Revelation 7:4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

Revelation 7:5-6 from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand

Revelation 7:7-8 from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, and from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed.

Revelation 7:9-10 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all the tribes, peoples, and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."