

"The Grace of God"

Part 1

Revelation 7:1-17

Introduction: Today we are returning to our study of the book of Revelation and as we do we have come to chapter 7 which you will see is a very interesting chapter. I have titled this chapter "THE GRACE OF GOD" because that is exactly what we see within this chapter. This chapter gives us a pause between the 6th and the 7th Seal Judgment and it is a needed pause.

The previous 6 Seal Judgments continued to increase in intensity. They started with the rider on the WHITE HORSE who is the Anti-Christ. Then there was the wars which break out as the RED HORSE is turned loose and the red speaks of bloodshed. Then we looked at the 3rd Seal Judgment which came upon the BLACK HORSE and he brought great famine on the heels of the devastating war. The next horse was a PALE HORSE and when he was sent out one fourth of the world's population was killed. They were killed by sword, hunger, disease and the beasts of the earth.

When the 5th Seal Judgment was opened John was able to see saints who were martyred for their testimony and for their stand for the Truth of God's Word. Their souls were under the altar in heaven and they cried for God to unleash vengeance upon the earth dwellers.

The 6th Seal Judgment was by far the most severe of all the previous Seals. The first 5 could have possibly been explained away as natural disaster but that will not be the case with the 6th Seal Judgment. When the 6th Seal is opened there will be a great earthquake so severe it will shake EVERY ISLAND and EVERY MOUNTAIN out of their places. This is not the earth quakes which we see today for the earth quakes of today are the result of the curse and the earth groaning and travailing in pain as it waits for the future day of redemption. But the earth quake of the 6th Seal is the result of God shaking the earth and He will not just shake the earth but He will shake the heavens also.

Haggai 2:6-7

*⁶ For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and **I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;***

⁷ And I will **shake all nations**, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

When God shakes the heavens the stars/asteroids fall from the sky and pummel the earth. Then the sky is rolled up like a scroll. All of this causes the EARTH DWELLERS to cry out to the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him that sits on the throne. They then acknowledge that they are under the judgment of the GREAT DAY OF THE WRATH OF GOD.

Now we come to chapter 7 and here we shall see the calm before the storm and at the same time we shall see the GRACE of God in the midst of the Judgments which are being poured out upon the earth.

I. The Restraints of God

Notice Revelation 7:1

Here we see that there are 4 angels who are standing on the 4 corners of the earth. This does not mean that the earth is flat. The winds which they are holding back are the winds of judgment which will be unleashed on the earth.

In the Old Testament we can read of the "WINDS" being used as judgment from God.

Let me show you the words of Joseph as he interpreted the dream of Pharaoh.

Genesis 41:25-27

²⁵ And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do.

²⁶ The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one.

²⁷ And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted **with the east wind** shall be seven years of famine.

When God sent the locust on Egypt they were brought in with the wind.

Exodus 10:13

¹³ And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, **the east wind brought the locusts.**

Psalms 48:7

⁷ *Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.*

Jeremiah 18:15-17

¹⁵ *Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up;*

¹⁶ *To make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head.*

¹⁷ *I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.*

We could go on but from these verses we can see that the wind often speaks of judgment and especially the EAST WIND. East is the direction of God. The Tabernacle faced the East and the Temple faced the East. When the Bible speaks of the East wind we can know it is directly from God.

Let me now get your mind back to these 4 angels holding back the 4 winds. This shows clearly that God is in control of all that will be poured out on the earth in the tribulation. God has not unleashed His wrath and then stepped back to let it all happen by chance but instead He is in complete control of what is happening during this time.

When these angels release these winds in the next chapter the EARTH, SEA and the TREES will receive the judgment of God.

Notice Revelation 8:6-8

But here in chapter 7 the judgment is stayed for a brief period of time.

A. The Purpose

Notice Revelation 7:2-4

The judgment is stayed until 144,000 Jews are sealed in their foreheads. There is much for us to consider within these verses.

These verses make several questions come into my mind...

1. **Who are these 144,000 Jews?**

Revelation 14:1-4

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

² *And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:*

³ *And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*

⁴ *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*

Here we see that these 144,000 are Jewish men who are virgins. They are men who will be given completely over to serving Jesus Christ.

2. What is their purpose?

Most likely these men are missionaries. Let me remind you that after the rapture of the church there will not be one saved person on the earth. The missionaries which carry the Gospel today to the 4 corners of the earth will be raptured away. Therefore there will be a need to reach the world in the tribulation and God will not be without a witness so these 144,000 will be saved and they will be the missionaries in the tribulation.

Matthew 24:14

¹⁴ *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

Let me show you a verse from Revelation 14 again.

Revelation 14:4

⁴ *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*

These men are the firstfruits which means there is a greater harvest yet to come. These then appear to be the first of the nation of Israel to turn to God in the tribulation. These men will come to Christ in the early part of the Tribulation.

3. How will these men be saved if the church is not here?

Revelation 11:1-6

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

² *But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.*

³ *And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.*

⁴ *These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.*

⁵ *And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.*

⁶ *These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.*

Ryrie believes these 2 witnesses will come on the scene following the rapture and their ministry will be for the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation. If that is the case then the 144,000 Jewish men will be saved from the testimony of these 2 witnesses.

Notice Revelation 6:9-10

These would also be saved through the testimony of the 2 witnesses as well as the testimony of the 144,000.

4. What is the seal and is the seal a visible mark?

Notice Revelation 7:3

These men are sealed on their foreheads.

Revelation 14:1

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

Let me show you something from the Old Testament.

Ezekiel 9:4

⁴ *And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.*

Ryrie tells us the "MARK" here is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet which is "A TAW". This mark was the shape of a cross.

The mark on the Jewish men here in Revelation 7 is most likely a visible mark. It could be the name of God or it could be a cross but it seems to be visible to all. There is something else which makes me believe it is a visible mark.

Revelation 13:15-17

¹⁵ And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

¹⁶ And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

¹⁷ And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Satan will counterfeit this mark when he works through the Anti-Christ and the false prophet to establish the mark of the beast and this mark will be visible.

This counterfeit mark will be for the purpose of causing confusion in an attempt to lead Israel into destruction.

5. What is the significance of the mark?

This can be seen in Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 9:4-6

⁴ And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

⁵ And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:

*⁶ Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: **but come not near any man upon whom is the mark;** and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.*

The mark is for the purpose of protection.

Revelation 14:1-5

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

² *And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:*

³ *And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*

⁴ *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*

⁵ *And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.*

Not one of these men will be lost!!!

Conclusion: This chapter is full of God's grace.

2 Peter 3:5

⁹ *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*