

Daniel & Revelation End-time Prophecies Sermon Series
Study #41: 144,000 & Seventh Seal
Revelation 7:5 – 17; 8:1
Bible Sermon Study Notes by Cary Rodgers, pastor

Today we are going to continue to examine the interlude between the sixth and seventh seals in Revelation chapter 7 concerning the seal of the living God and the 144,000. We will conclude today's study with the understanding of the seventh seal.

In our previous study we learned that the angels of God are holding back the winds of strife on the four corners of the earth until God's true faithful remnant people are sealed with the seal of the living God. Only those sealed with the seal of the living God will be able to stand during a time of trouble since there was a nation and the second coming of Jesus Christ. The seal of the living God or official mark of God that authenticates His Ten Commandments is the seventh-day Sabbath. Remember, the seventh-day Sabbath stands as a monument of God's creation, salvation, and the everlasting covenant. Only those who are covered with the righteousness of Jesus and are obedient to the seventh-day Sabbath and all the commandments of God will be sealed with the seal of the living God.

Don't wait. NOW is preparation TIME!

"It is now that we must keep ourselves and our children unspotted from the world. It is now that we must wash our robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. It is now that we must overcome pride, passion, and spiritual slothfulness. It is now that we must awake and make determined effort for symmetry of character.... What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation? Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity... Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God--candidates for heaven. Go forward, my brethren and sisters. I can only write briefly upon these points at this time, merely calling your attention to the necessity of preparation. Search the Scriptures for yourselves, that you may understand the fearful solemnity of the present hour." Ellen White, Testimonies For The Church, Vol. 5, p. 215-16

Remember, who are specifically sealed with the seal of the living God?
Revelation 7:3... "sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."

Remember, the servants of our God are voluntary and active workers for Jesus! They are DOERS of God's Word and unspotted from the world. They are true soldiers of Jesus Christ that go to battle with the Enemy by living and sharing God's everlasting Gospel! They give no excuses.

The servants of our God have the character of Jesus and His law stamped and etched in their hearts. The servants of our God sealed with the seal of the Living God are totally transformed in character by the wonder working power of the blood of Jesus Christ. Their characters are in the image of Jesus Christ and not the image of the beast.

From our previous study we learned that the “servants of our God” who were sealed with the seal of the living God were described as “an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel in Revelation 7:4

Do you remember why God describes the “servants of our God” as the 144,000 from all the tribes of the Israel?

God gave the name Israel to Jacob after his character was totally transformed from a dishonest thief into an obedient child of God.

Israel (Hebrew) = “God prevails”

The name Israel reveals the transformational power of the everlasting covenant! It reveals the true character of all who yield to the power of the Jesus Christ and are covered by the his righteousness.

The servants of our God who are sealed with the seal of the living God are spiritual Israelites! The Bible teaches that all those who are of the literal blood lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must also be covered by the blood of the Lamb. They do not get automatic citizenship in heaven just because of their blood lineage. They too must become spiritual Israelites, in which their characters have been totally transformed in the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:13, 14, 28, and 29

13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The 144,000 represent the servants of our God who are spiritual Israelites, heirs to the promise of the everlasting covenant. (**144,000 = Servants of our God = Spiritual Israelites**)

How are the 144,000 described of all the tribes of the children of Israel?

Revelation 7:5-8

5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

The name of each tribe reflects the character and mission of all those who are part of the 144,000

Notice that one of the tribes listed here is actually from the tribe of Joseph; Manasses, Joseph's oldest son. The tribe of Dan of the original 12 was deleted here and replaced by Manasses in Revelation because Dan's sin of backbiting and slander as described in Genesis 49:16, 17.

Genesis 49:16, 17

16 Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

Original 12 Tribes of Israel (Genesis 49:1 – 28)	144,000 12 Tribes of spiritual Israel (Revelation 7:4 – 8)
1. Reuben	1. Reuben
2. Judah	2. Juda
3. Gad	3. Gad
4. Asher	4. Aser
5. Naphtali	5. Naphalim
6. Simeon	6. Simeon
7. Levi	7. Levi
8. Issachur	8. Issachur
9. Zebulun	9. Zabulan
10. Benjamin	10. Benjamin
11. Joseph	11. Joseph
12. Dan	12. Manasses

Dan was a type like Judas who was a backbiter and betrayed God and rejected His everlasting covenant.

Spiritual Israel, 144,000 from each “tribe” represents God true church as a whole as one body in which Jesus Christ is the head of the church. This membership is not by name only but by character that is transformed by the Word of God. They have a diversity of gifts but are one body in Christ Jesus. For example the 12 disciples were 12 different individuals, personalities and gifts but one body all with the same mission.

Ephesians 4:4-7

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 8-11

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Why does Jesus use the number 144,000 to describe the servants of God sealed with the seal of the living God?

God loves numbers and there are certain numbers that He uses in the Bible to represent His purpose, mission, or character. For example: Seven is used throughout the Bible to represent perfection and completion. Seven such as the Seventh-day Sabbath also stands as a monument of God's oath. Forty represents a time of preparation to execute serious work and plans of God. For example, Moses was in the mountain with God for 40 days taking instructions to be prepared to execute God's plans for Israel. Israel was sentenced to the wilderness for 40 years because of their lack of faith to prepare a generation of people 20 years old and below to enter into the Canaan land. Jesus was in the wilderness of temptation preparing to execute his plan to go to the cross of Calvary for the sins of the world.

12 is also a special number to God with special meaning. God had 12 tribes of Israel, 12 disciples, and 12 apostles. Each one was chosen to be a living witness and a mouth piece for truth about the living God in Heaven. This was the main purpose of the 12 tribes of Israel, 12 disciples, and 12 apostles they were to be a beacon of light to a fallen world.

The 12 tribes of Israel were taught by God to be examples of His character and to teach others about the everlasting covenant. Unfortunately, the literal 12 tribes of Israel failed, as a whole they rejected Jesus as the Messiah, King of kings. Even though the literal 12 tribes of Israel failed in their mission and purpose, Jesus came himself and trained his chosen 12 disciples. This was a miniature model of what the 12 tribes of Israel were supposed to do.

The 12 disciples were personally trained by Jesus. The word “disciple” (Greek) means pupil or students. After Judas betrayed Christ and after the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples were known as apostles. The word “apostle” (Greek) is a messenger or ambassador for Jesus. The 12 disciples became 12 apostles because they were converted, equipped, and ready to be true ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

After Judas betrayed Christ, why did they have to replace Judas with another to retain 12?

The number 12 stands as a monument to our mission to evangelize and teach the world about Jesus Christ. The 12 apostles were not the only ones to give the gospel, but the number 12 stands as a monument to the mission to evangelize and teach the world about Jesus Christ. It was important to keep the number 12. In Acts 1:23 – 26, it reveals that Judas, an original of the 12 disciples, was replaced by Matthias to keep the number of 12 disciples/apostles.

Even though Jesus specifically had literal 12 disciples he calls us all to be a part of his discipleship.

John 8:31

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

John 15:8

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

144,000 is a multiple of 12 in which 12,000 come from each tribe. 12 tribes x 12,000 = 144,000

144,000 (multiples of 12) 12,000 from each tribe represents a last day people who will go through the seven last plagues, but will be trained by God as disciples and given the commission as apostles to be ambassadors of truth to give the end time message of the third and fourth angels message. This will get louder and louder like a lion's

roar during the period of persecution and before the seven last plagues. (This is what we learned in the Revelation 10 study).

Like Judas, Dan from the original tribe of Israel was replaced, because he was a backbiter like Judas. They both were replaced because of their evil deeds against God's truth.

Jesus says,

Mat 22:14 For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

Only a few are chosen because they raised the hand in response to the call.

The 12 disciples and apostles were a small number chosen by Jesus because they said yes to the call and they did some powerful things for Jesus. The same is true with all those who are a part of the 144,000; they say yes to the call.

Like the 12 tribes, 12 disciples and 12 apostles were a whole literal number, the same must be true with the 144,000. Even though the numbers have a symbolic meaning that represent a mission or purpose, the number itself is literal. When God says seven in the Bible it is not arbitrary or infinity, its seven. Seven means seven. Twelve means twelve in literal number. Yes, 144,000 is symbolic in its meaning like the number seven, but it is a literal number. Think about it. Seven symbolically represents completion, perfection, and a monument of God's everlasting covenant, but the number is still literally seven. Seven cannot now become eight, ten or an unknown number, it is seven. When the 12 disciples lost Judas due to his apostasy and rejection of Christ, it was important that they retain the number 12. If not it loses its significance and meaning.

144,000 is 144,000 that's a literal number on the number scale. The number itself cannot become 1 million.

As a whole literal number what does 144,000 represent, why does God use the number?

Think about it, the 144,000 are 12,000 times larger then the original 12. So the 144,000 represents a larger worldwide discipleship and apostleship who have the Father's character and sealed with the seal of the living God in their forehead. They will go through persecution. They will be alive when Jesus comes. They will not experience the first death. 144,000 trained by Jesus will give the loud cry message during the mark of the beast. Their work like the time of the 12 apostles will have results. They will have a harvest who will stand with them through the seven last plagues sealed with the seal of the living God.

144,000 = Servants of our God = worldwide disciples and apostles.

As we mentioned before in the Bible, the name reveals the character. In the 12 tribes described in Revelation 7:5 - 8 their names reveal the Father's character that the 144,000 have. Let's take a quick look at them.

Revelation 7:5 - 8

Name	Meaning
1. Juda	"He shall be praised"
2. Reuben	"Behold a son"
3. Gad	"A Troop" or soldier
4. Asher	"Blessed"

5. Nephtalim	“Wrestling”
6. Manasses	“Forgetting”
7. Simeon	“harkening”
8. Levi	“joined”
9. Issachar	“reward”
10. Zabulon	“Habitation”
11. Joseph	“Let him add”
12. Benjamin	“son of the right hand”

When you put all the meanings together you get a beautiful description of the character of 144,000 as a whole.

It reveals that the 144,000 only **praise the God of heaven** as they **behold the Son of God**, Jesus, as His **soldiers**, **blessed** and **wrestling** the strongholds that try to bind them and **forgetting** the past sinful life. They **hearken** to every Word of God, **joined** with his truth. They are **hopeful** for the eternal **reward** with **habitation** with Christ as they **add souls** to the kingdom of God waiting to see Jesus at the **right hand of God** coming to this earth a second time with great power!

Speaking in the context of the 144,000 after John hears the sealing of each tribe what does he see next?

Revelation 7:9, 10

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, **Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.**

Remember, 144,000 are a literal number of people that represent the worldwide discipleship of Christ who stand as a monument to mission of God’s last day servants to give the loud cry of the everlasting gospel. As a result of their work there is a great harvest of others who believe and are saved. These are people who were converted and joined the 144,000 in their mission. They like the 144,000 are also sealed with the seal of the living God. Revelation 7:9 reveals the success of that last day work of the 144,000!

The actual number of those saved in the kingdom of God, nobody knows, but Christ. “No man could number” means that it would take a very very long time for one man to count. For example, how long would it take one man to count 100,000 people? It would take at least a day and a half with no breaks. Now imagine just 1 million people? It would take you 10 times as long approximately 15 to 20 days with no breaks.

As John gazes upon this wonderful heavenly scene of the 144,000 and the harvest of people who were converted and joined them in their mission, what does he see and hear next?

Revelation 7:11-13

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

What was John's response to the elder's question? How does the elder describe the 144,000 and their harvest of converts that no man can number?

Revelation 7:14-17

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

144,000 and their harvest of converts to the truth go through a time of trouble since there was a nation. In Revelation 7:14 – 17 we get a glimpse of the end of a very rough journey, but God took them through it!

“These are they which came out of great tribulation;” they have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob’s trouble; they have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God’s judgments. But they have been delivered, for they have “washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” “In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault” before God. “Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.” They have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat, and they themselves have endured suffering, hunger, and thirst.” The Great Controversy Pg. 648.3

“Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand. And let us do all that we can to help others to gain heaven. We are to have an intense interest in Christ Jesus; for he is our Saviour. He came to this world to be tempted in all points as we are, to prove to the universe that in this world of sin human beings can live lives that God will approve.” Ellen White, Review and Herald, “God’s Purpose For Us,” March 9, 1905

Revelation 7:17 is the end of the interlude on the 144,000. Jesus answered the question “who shall be able to stand?” during the great tribulation and the coming of the Jesus Christ that was revealed in the sixth seal in Revelation 6. Jesus has one more seal to open.

What happened when Jesus opened the seventh seal?

Revelation 8:1

1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

Why is there silence in heaven?

Remember in the sixth seal, Jesus reveals the time of events that take place during His second coming. Heaven is obviously emptied out to witness one of the greatest events ever! All the holy angels, the Father, and the holy spirit will witness Jesus receive his harvest of the faithful to return with Him to Heaven. Even though there is silence in heaven, there is great noise upon the earth at the second coming of Jesus!

How long is the silence?

Revelation 8:1... “about the space of half an hour”

Since the vision of the seven seals are symbolic in context, the time is also symbolic. This is where a day for a year principle is applied. 1 day equals 1 year. To convert half an hour to days we must do some simple math.

How many hours are in one day? 24 hours. Now using the principle of one day for a year, convert the hours into days. There are 360 days in a year (Jewish calendar). Divide 360 days by 24 hours in a day: $360/24 = 15$ days. In a day for a year principle, one literal hour equals 15 days. To know how many days a half an hour equals to just divide 15 in half = $7 \frac{1}{2}$ days!

$$\frac{1 \text{ hr}}{24 \text{ hr}} \times \frac{360 \text{ days}}{1 \text{ yr}} = 15 \text{ days} \qquad 15 \text{ days} / 2 = 7 \frac{1}{2}$$

Heaven will be empty and silent for $7 \frac{1}{2}$ days. It is evident that Jesus will take us through a seven day journey through space back to our heavenly home after His second coming. **How long will it take Jesus to come to this earth? Think about it, how long did it take Jesus to go back to heaven after his resurrection then return?** Quickly, less than a day. So Jesus journey to this planet will be very quick, but He is going to take some time going back on the 7 day journey route back home! He is going to show off his universe that reflects the power of His glory!

“We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns, and with His own right hand placed them on our heads. He gave us harps of gold and palms of victory. Here on the sea of glass the 144,000 stood in a perfect square.” Life Sketches page 66.

Do you want to experience this? Be faithful, pure, and obedient covered by the blood of Jesus.

Appeal... Now is preparation time.....