

OBSERVATION STUDY SERIES

REVELATION

THE 144,000 SEALED

7:1-8

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The 144,000 Sealed

A summary for Revelation 7 could be “Interlude: The 144,000 and the Great Multitude”. Wanna know a secret? I know who the 144,000 are! (We’ll talk about the Great Multitude in the next blog.)

After this... Revelation 7:1

What is the “this”? After seeing those six seals opened up John sees four angels standing at the four corners of the earth. The seventh seal is not broken just yet, but instead, we see the first of three major interludes. Chapter 7 is a parenthetical insert.

Sometimes the interludes in Revelation will be talking about something that is pretty much taking place at the same time where we are chronologically in the seals, trumpets, and bowls. Other times they will be something that will happen far in the future from where we are, and sometimes they kind of dart back and forth. Whichever way, we have to recognize them as interludes and not a chronological event. We can glean much valuable information from them, but they won’t be in chronological alignment with the seals, trumpets, and bowls.

What we can *know* about the seals is that from the first through the sixth, we have what I call a given—something that’s definite. Because of the wording we know that the second seal does not happen until *after* the first seal. The third seal does not happen until *after* the second, and so on, all the way through the sixth seal. That fact that they are in a chronological order is a given. We know that there is an order of events of the seals and we know that those events take place when Jesus opens each seal. We also know that He opens them *after* taking them out of the hand of God. So, we have an understanding of the order of chapters 4, 5, and 6 of Revelation.

Revelation 7 presents us with an interlude. It says...

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 7:1

The four corners of the earth are the directions of north, south, east and west... These four angels are holding the wind back from all directions. There’s no wind on the entire earth.

And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea... Revelation 7:2

John saw another angel, so how many angels did he see? Four plus one equals five. Now, what did we find out? What has been granted to the four angels who are holding back the wind? They are going to harm the earth and the sea with the wind, but they are to hold on, or wait for something. The one who tells them to wait is the other angel who has the seal of the living God.

...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 7:3

Who is going to seal the bondservants of God with a seal on the forehead? It says, "we". Will the four angels who are holding the wind back help him? Or are there other angels who will work together with the angel who has the seal of the Living God? It doesn't say, so we don't know. But we know it will be more than one angel who seals the foreheads of the bond-servants of God.

We also know something else. This angel refers to God as "our" God. They are doing His bidding... they serve Him in His creation... and they are going to harm His creation at His command...

Once the angels put a mark on the forehead of the bondservants of their God, then the four angels are going to be able to let the wind come from the four corners of the earth. What is the purpose of the wind? What will it do? It will harm the earth and the sea, so it must be a strong, powerful wind—something like the force of a tornado or hurricane in order to do damage.

...And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel... Revelation 7:4

Who are these bondservants? It says they are from every tribe of the sons of Israel—that makes them Israelites, or Jews—Jewish bondservants.

Have you heard about the 144,000 before? Have you heard people tell you who they think they might be? There always seems to be a big mystery surrounding the 144,000 (in people's minds, anyway). This is one of those times when I just don't understand people...

Do you want to know who they are? This is who they are. They are one hundred and forty-four thousand bondservants "***...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, 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 Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed.” Revelation 7:5-8

Why is this so confusing? Do you understand what I’m saying? You have probably heard about the “mystery” of the 144,000, but there is no mystery here. All John would have had to say was, “144,000 Jews,” but he goes way further than that and gives us a detailed list. It’s a simple list; it’s a clear list, and it’s a repetitive list. John says the 144,000 bondservants are made up of 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes and he lists the names of the tribes. There are mysteries in Revelation, but this is not one of them...

(Now, I will admit that it is interesting which tribes are listed, and which are not, but that is not exactly a mystery. To maintain our goal of observation we are going to stay up on the mountain tops looking at the main and plain things. The study of which tribes are included or excluded will have to wait for another time.)

What is clear is that there are 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes—so they are Jews. What else is clear is that these are *bondservants* of God—they are Jews who believe in God and obey Him.

When (and where) are the 144,000 from the twelve tribes of Israel sealed? We can know they are still on the earth because the angels are not allowed to harm the earth or the sea until they are sealed. Later on in Revelation we will find these same 144,000 in heaven, but at this time they are still on the earth.

And while they are here they will be witnesses for God in the midst of terrible judgments on the earth... but they will not be harmed by those ferocious global winds...