

Revelation 7:1-8 **“Who Can Stand?”**

Introduction

1. God’s purpose is revealed for the redeemed in Rev. 7.
2. Look for major theological themes.
3. It’s an interlude between the 6th and 7th seals revealing God’s wrath and judgment.
4. It’s answering the question posed at the end of Chapter 6.
 1. John has a vision of the sealing of the saints on earth. 1-8
 2. John then has a vision of the blessed state of the saints in heaven. 9-17

The Redeemed are Marked as God’s Possession Beforehand.

1. This great doctrinal truth is taught in the NT (Eph. 1:4; Rom. 8:29-30).
2. God withholds His judgment of the wicked on earth until all of His people are identified (2 Pet. 3:7-11)
3. The four winds are probably a reference to the first four seals (Zech. 6:5;).
4. The terms earth, sea, and tree sometimes are references to people in the OT and in Jesus’ parables and best fit the message being communicated.
 1. Is. 57:20 The wicked = the sea.
 2. Is. 60:5 The nations = the sea.
 3. Is. 23:11 The kingdoms of the world = the sea.
 4. Is. 24:15 The people from afar = the islands of the sea
 5. Ps. 65:5 The ends of the earth and the sea = people of the world
 6. Ps. 89:25 The sea and rivers = people far away
 7. Ps. 96:11 The earth and sea = the world and everyone in it.
 8. Ps. 98:7 The sea = the world and those who dwell in it.
 9. Is. 11:11 The islands of the sea = the nations far away.
 10. Is. 61:3 The righteous are called trees.
 11. Ez. 17:24 Trees = different classes of people
 12. Is. 55:12 Tree = people of the world.
 13. Matt. 7:17 Trees = two kinds of people.
 14. Luke 13:19 Tree = Those in the kingdom.

The Redeemed are sealed - identified as belonging to God.

1. When did this take place? From the rising of the sun and before wrath was revealed on the wicked. We were
 1. The sealing of the saints began at the coming of Jesus - the rising of the Sun.
 2. The sealing of the saints takes place prior to the wrath of the Lamb revealed on earth. We were sealed into Jesus Christ at the cross! It is the cross that protects us from the wrath of the Lamb.
2. They were marked out on the forehead. “Holy to the Lord.”
 1. Rev. 14:1
 2. Rev. 22:2-3
 3. Ex. 28:36, 38
 4. Eph. 1:4 He chose us before the foundation of the world.
 5. Rom. 8:29-30 Whom he foreknew, he predestined...
3. The Holy Spirit is the agent of sealing.
 1. 2 Cor. 1:22
 2. Eph. 1:13; 4:30

3. Rom. 8:9
4. John 14:17

Who are the 144, 000?

1. The dispensational, pre-millennial view is that they are a literal 144,000 Jews who are converted during the tribulation who become super-witnesses for Christ and are martyred. However here are some problems with this view.
 1. It introduces a racial distinction not made in the entire NT.
 2. It disregards the historical fact that the tribes have disappeared.
 3. The order of the tribes in 5-8 is unique.
 4. All believers may be killed in 13:15.
 5. It ignores the NT teaching of “all Israel” and the Gentile and Jewish believers as the “12 tribes.”
2. However, a very strong case can be made for the symbolic interpretation of this number to mean all of the elect of God.
 1. It is a two-fold way of emphasizing completeness and power. 12 squared = complete, times 1000 = power.
 2. The 144,000 are described in the same terms as all the redeemed. Why distinguish them?
 1. The Father’s name is written on their foreheads. (14:1-3; 22:4 are references to all believers).
 2. They are in God’s presence in heaven (14:3; 22:3-5).
 3. They sing a new song before the throne (7:10-12).
 4. They have been purchased from the earth (5:9)
 5. They are described as the virgin bride of Christ (Rev. 14:4; 2 Cor. 11:2)
 6. They follow the Lamb’s leading (John 10:27).
 7. They are contrasted with the wicked under judgment in Rev. 6-7 and 13-14).
 3. The NT writers redefined Israel with no distinctions.
 1. Paul in Rom. 2:29; 11:25-26; Gal. 6:16
 2. James 1:1
 3. 1 Pet. 2:9
 4. But what about God’s promises to the nation of Israel?
 1. Paul says God’s word hasn’t failed. Rom. 9:6-8
 2. Paul says God has not rejected His people - he is a Jew! Rom. 11:1-5
 3. Paul says we shouldn’t be uninformed about God’s mystery - Jews and Gentiles = all Israel. Rom. 11:25-27.
 4. God’s promise is revealed as fulfilled in Rev. 7:1-8. (Gen. 17:4; 13:16)
3. If the 144,000 represent all of the saints on earth why didn’t the Holy Spirit maintain the same symbolism in vs. 9-17?
 1. There is a change of vision from earth to heaven.
 2. Israel is God’s identification of His people on earth (7:1-8).
 3. But Israel is not God’s identification of His people in heaven. They are simply known as His whom He purchased, and their identity is with Jesus, the Lamb, not an earthly nation.

What did this mean to the first readers?

What does it mean to you?