

## I. REVIEW: STRUCTURE OF REVELATION IN 4 PARTS

- A. There are four parts in the structure of the book of Revelation, the fourth part (Rev. 6-22) being the largest and consisting of 5 chronological sections (7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 bowls = 21 events).
1. John's calling to prophesy about the end times (Revelation 1).
  2. Jesus gave seven letters to the churches (Revelation 2-3).
  3. Jesus takes the scroll from the Father's hand (Revelation 4-5).
  4. Jesus' plan to judge evil and transition to next age (Revelation 6-22). This includes the Great Tribulation judgments against the Antichrist and Satan to cleanse the earth of evil and His return to transition creation to the next age.
- B. Within the 21 events of the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls, the text seems to add an explanation or viewpoint that interrupts the chronological story. Many refer to these as "Angelic Explanations" (some call them parenthetical sections). Example: between the sixth and seventh seal, there is an interruption in the flow, and again between the sixth and seventh trumpet.
1. I often think what a letter written to Israel many years before the Exodus out of Egypt would've been like. I ponder how the Israelites would've had lots of questions about the judgments (10 plagues) that were about to come upon the land they were living in. What would happen to them? Why so severe? "Explanations" outside of the chronological storyline would be helpful.
- C. It's important to know what has become known as the "Goshen Principle" when we think of God judging His enemies amongst His people in Egypt (Exodus 8:22-23, 9:4, 26, 10:21-23, 11:7, 12:13; Zephaniah 2:3). Israel was protected in Goshen while great judgments were poured out on Egypt.

## II. GOD'S SEAL OF PROTECTION (REVELATION 7)

*...I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth...<sup>2</sup>I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels...<sup>3</sup>saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."<sup>4</sup>And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed Revelation 7:1-4 NKJV*

*For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 NKJV*

- A. Angelic explanation #1, Revelation chapter 7: God's people sealed for protection—physical and spiritual (7:1-17). This angelic explanation answers the question, "Who can stand?" affirming the security of God's people. God answered this question by revealing that 144,000 Jewish believers will stand in victory, (7:1-8) and Gentile martyrs (7:9-17) shall stand strong without wavering in their faith even in death.

- B. I believe there are many more sealed than only the group of 144,000. I believe this group was specifically identified because of a unique purpose they will have during this time. The seal of God works for us spiritually (seals our faith by Grace) in difficult times, many times physically, and always from God's wrath. However it's undeniable that the Antichrist will kill many of God's people physically. (Revelation 13:9, 12:11, 17:6; Daniel 7:25).

- C. Someone may say, "If they died, how are they protected?" The Antichrist kills a number of saints, but they do not yield to him. They do not give into him. They are actually victorious over him spiritually, and they live forever. They did not yield to compromise. *And they overcame him (Antichrist) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Revelation 12:11 NKJV*

*And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast (Antichrist), over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. Revelation 15:2 NKJV*

*You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. <sup>17</sup>And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. <sup>18</sup>But not a hair of your head shall be lost. <sup>19</sup>By your patience possess your souls (by your endurance you'll gain your life). Luke 21:16-19*

- D. It's noteworthy to see as well that the verb tense in verse 14, "the ones who come out of the great tribulation," indicates a continuing procession. These are coming out by martyrdom compared to the rapture.
- E. The shepherd-heart of God is revealed here as He tenderly ministers to this specific group. Their number is uncountable, and they're from all nations. We are possibly seeing more detail to the same group that is seen from the 5th seal?

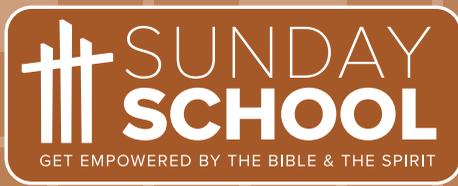
*They shall neither hunger nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; <sup>17</sup>for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Revelation 7:16-17 NKJV*

*If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you...1 Peter 4:14 NKJV*

- F. Just like in Daniel 3, when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego displayed unwavering boldness and confidence as they refused to worship the golden statue and didn't fear the fiery furnace, so too will the Church refuse to bow and worship the Antichrist.

*There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up...let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up. Daniel 3:12,18 NKJV*

*And they (Church) overcame him (Antichrist) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Revelation 12:11 NKJV*



**BIBLE**

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