

The Apocalypse - Revelation 7

by Steve Gallagher

Steve Gallagher's sermon on Revelation 7 explores the significance of the chapter in connecting judgments and understanding the fate of believers during the end times.

Duration: 43:41

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Revelation 7:1-3, Revelation 7:14, Revelation 8:13, Revelation 9:4, Revelation 16:6

Topics: "Apocalypse Study"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Revelation 7 and discusses the different viewpoints and interpretations of the chapter. The sermon begins by explaining three belief systems and then delves into the verses of Revelation 7. The preacher highlights the significance of the four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the winds, and the angel with the seal of the living God. The sermon also emphasizes the importance of reflecting on different perspectives and allowing the Lord to guide one's thinking and beliefs.

Transcript

I want to open up with a word of prayer. Lord, I do thank you again. I thank you, I thank you, I thank you, a million thank yous for this book.

Thank you, Lord. I love this book and I thank you for it. Thank you for giving John this tremendous sight into the end times and especially from your perspective and seeing what's going on in the spiritual realm and so on.

Thank you for that, Lord. Man, it gives us such a teaching on what goes on in the spiritual realm and what we are heading into. So, Lord, I just thank you for this book, I thank you for chapter 7 and what it means and so on.

And I pray that you'll be with us now in Jesus' name and for His glory, amen. Before we get started on this chapter, I want to just touch on something that I talked a little bit about in the introduction weeks ago. I want to tell you why I am taking the teaching approach rather than expositional preaching.

You know the difference, right? I'm teaching as if this was a college class on the book of Revelation in a Christian university. That's how I'm teaching this. Rather than expositional preaching where you're covering the verses but you're doing it from a preaching standpoint.

I want you guys to have a comprehension about this book. I don't want it to be a subjective atmosphere covering this book. If you remember, right, in the introduction, I talked about the difference between the scholarly approach and the subjective approach.

And most preaching is pretty subjective but some people, and Rex Andrews is one, took a completely subjective approach to the book of Revelation. And some people take the scholarly approach. What I want to do for you is create a platform that you can trust.

In other words, this is what the leadership within the evangelical church, what they teach and believe about the book of Revelation. So think of it as a platform. In fact, think of doctrine as a platform.

Let me use an example of Arminianism versus Calvinism. That is a platform that has been here since the 1700s or before. You know, you have John Wesley on one side.

You have John Calvin and others on the other side. And if you totally are in one camp or the other, shame on you. That's what I say.

Shame on you. Because that whole platform is legitimate, at least to a point. And what we want to do is establish a platform of the beliefs out there regarding the book of Revelation.

Because once you get beyond the platform, the boundaries of acceptable doctrinal understanding of whatever, but especially of an end times book like the Revelation, once you get outside of those boundaries, you're on dangerous ground. Now, that doesn't mean that you never go out there, and I'm not saying that. Because here's the two things that we always have to try to keep balanced.

On the one side, if you're just totally traditional and doctrinal in your understanding of things, then you can't get a fresh word from the Lord. But if you're on the side of being totally subjective, you don't have the background and the foundational understanding of what the scriptures teach and what the church has held over the years. You don't have that background behind you, and you're not trustworthy.

I was just talking to someone not long ago, a minister who shared his beliefs about the book of Revelation, and I could just tell. Talking to him, he's completely subjective. He's very opinionated, very subjective, laid out all the things he believed.

I talked to him about what some of the teachings were out there, and, oh no, I don't want to muddy my mind with other men's thinking or something. To a point, I understand what he's saying. But what I want to do for you in this class, by the time this class is done with, I want you to have a good, solid, evangelical understanding of this book.

And so, I'm presenting to you the different theories and different opinions that are all reflected on this platform of doctrine. I want you to work through things for yourself. You decide what you believe.

And I'm just going to try as best as I can to be objective and to present all the different viewpoints and throw my own in at times as well. So, we're really going to run into that here in this chapter especially. Let's get started on it.

Chapter 7 operates both as a connection between the seal judgments and the trumpet judgments. It operates as a connecting chapter between those two, but it also acts as an interlude. It's both.

Let me read to you something the pulpit commentary said. Even if not looked upon as an integral part of the revelations made under the sixth seal, the connection is so close that the two must be regarded practically as one. The two meaning the sixth seal and all that's reflected in chapter 7. That's what he's talking about.

The incidents of the seventh chapter are evidently the complement of those narrated in the closing verses of the sixth. It seems better, therefore, on the whole to consider the sixth seal to extend to the end of chapter 7. So in other words, what he's saying is the sixth seal as reflected in, you know, verses 12 through 17 in chapter 6, that little segment there. He's saying that actually the sixth seal also encompasses all of chapter 7. And I tend to think he's right about that.

So it operates as a connection between the seals and the trumpets, but also as an interlude. Let me read something to you that Osborne said about that. The interludes have multiple purposes.

First, between the sixth seal and the seventh seal, there's an interlude. That's what we're looking at today. Also, between the sixth trumpet and the seventh trumpet, there's an interlude that goes from chapter 10 and halfway through chapter 11.

That's an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpet, okay? So just so you understand, so you're keeping up with what I'm saying, let me reread that. First, the two that occur between the sixth and seventh seals and the sixth and seventh trumpets are closely linked to the sixth judgments that proceed each. So he's kind of saying the same thing as the pulpit commentary, that chapter 7 is very tied in with the sixth seal.

Also, they provide information about the situation regarding the saints in chapter 7 and the conflict in chapter 10 and 11 and 12 and 13, and the conflict surrounding the seals, trumpets, and bowls. Third, they stress even more the sovereign control of God over the whole process. All right, so I don't know if that's too much to throw at you, but I just want you to get a sense of the place that the seventh chapter takes in this book.

It also answers the question at the very end of chapter 6, which is, who can stand? You know, that's what the unbelievers are saying. The wrath of God is coming. Who can stand? And the answer is given right here in the seventh chapter.

The people who can stand are those who have been sealed by the Lord, those who are spiritually prepared to stand. All right. Now in regards to the seventh chapter, there's two groups of people represented here.

There's the 144,000 out of the 12 tribes of Israel, the first eight verses. The second part is an innumerable multitude gathered around the throne of God from verses 9 to 17, and that creates a natural division in the chapter. There are different viewpoints about who these groups are, and that's why I was telling you all the other stuff earlier about grasping what scholars are saying.

You decide for yourself what you believe, but I'm going to try to present these to you. And most of this difference in understanding revolves around the identity of that first group. All right.

So I'm going to give you three of the main viewpoints. Actually there's only two main viewpoints, but I'm also going to share with you the Rex Andrews Sixth Seal Theory viewpoint as well because I tend to, you know, believe in that. But anyway, the first group would be people like Grant Osborne, George Ladd, and

Johnson.

I don't remember Johnson's first name. They believe that the 144,000 symbolizes the Christian church, that it's symbolic of the church, and they give a few reasons. They would say the number 144,000 is figurative and signifies completeness.

Now I'm going to read the pulpit commentary because this expository explained the numbering, and it is significant. So let me just read this. You'll get it.

The number 12 is always typical in the apocalypse and elsewhere of a complete and perfect number. It is formed of four multiplied by three. Four is generally representative of the created universe.

And as we see in the first verse, the four points of the earth. Okay, I mean, that's what he's talking about. And three is representative of the Godhead.

Four plus three, that is seven. And four multiplied by three, that is 12. They both indicate a perfect number, a number which includes and embraces everything.

And thus 12 multiplied by 12 denotes the most exhaustive and perfect completion. The number 1,000 is generally used to denote a large and complete, but somewhat uncertain number. Thus the square of 12 multiplied by 1,000 has the signification of a large number, not definitely fixed, but nevertheless perfect.

That is to say, not omitting a single one of those who should be included in the number. We are therefore taught that at the judgment day, before the destruction of the world is allowed to take place, a large number consisting of those who have proven themselves to be God's servants will be preserved and set apart. All right, did you get that? Okay, you got the general sense of it.

George Ladd says, as usual in the revelation, the number is symbolic and affirms that the whole number of the people of God will be brought safely through the time of tribulation. Not one of the people of God will be lost. Okay, so the first thing that they would tell us is that this is a figurative number that represents something.

It's not a number that should be taken literally. They would also say that this is a metaphor of the church. Again, I'll refer to Johnson, who says throughout the New Testament, the church is referred to as Abraham's seed in Galatians 3, as the true circumcision, Philippians 3, and as the Israel of God, Galatians 6. Furthermore, John himself earlier in Revelation makes a distinction between the true Jew and the false.

He's talking about the allusions made to the church of Smyrna and the church of Philadelphia, if you remember that. And that could imply that here in chapter 7, he intends also to designate the true Israel or the church. Osborne brings out the fact that this is the only mention of Jews in the book of Revelation.

He says throughout the book, the emphasis is on one group, the faithful overcomers. Okay, and then lastly, how they view the relationship between the first group and the second group is they believe it's the same people being discussed. The first group, the 144,000, represents the body of Christ before the tribulation begins, before the persecution begins and so on.

The second group is after the tribulation period is over and they're gathered around the throne. So it's not two different groups, it's two different time periods that are being represented there. Okay, that's what those people believe.

The other main group of scholars out there, which would include Robert Thomas and Wolvard and the Dispensationalists and so on, they believe the 144,000 describe Jews who are saved during the tribulation. And they think that this number should be taken literally and, you know, not to take away from the fact that numbers have figurative qualities, but that you shouldn't take away the literal aspect either from that. And they also would say that this group is exactly who John says it is.

Robert Thomas says, The term Israel must be referred to the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is the natural understanding and the words normal usage in the New Testament as well as the Old Testament. This accounts for the detailed division of the people of God into 12 families answering individually to the 12 tribes of Israel in verses 5 through 8 and is the explanation favored by the earliest Christian tradition.

Okay, so, you know, they're saying basically it's exactly what's being expressed here. It's 144,000 Jewish people. Also, the specificity of the numbers demands a literal understanding.

Wolvard says, Though men do not know the identification of each tribe today, God certainly does. It would be rather ridiculous to carry the typology of Israel representing the church to the extent of dividing them up into 12 tribes as was done here if it was the intent of the writer to describe the church. So he's basically saying, you know, you can make it fit, but why would God present it that way? You know, it just doesn't make sense is what he's saying.

And this is the biggest thing to me, is that this is the fulfillment of major biblical prophecies. You know, Osborne may be right that the Jews aren't mentioned specifically in the book of Revelation, but you can't take away from all the Old Testament prophecies about the Jewish people and the end times because there are a lot of prophecies regarding that. You know, Ezekiel, all through Ezekiel and Isaiah and Jeremiah and Daniel, they all share different things.

I'll just read this one verse out of Zechariah. This is pretty indicative of the others, Zechariah 12, 10. I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

That couldn't be more specific, right? That is literal. There's no way you could make that a figurative, you know, analogy for the church or whatever. It's not possible.

I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication so that they will look on me whom they have pierced and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son and they will weep bitterly over him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. It's talking about conversion. It's talking about repentance.

It's talking about the reaction the Jews are going to have when they see the Lord. That's what's being described there. And it certainly fits right in line with what we're seeing here in the seventh chapter.

But also, it's not just the Old Testament prophets, also the New Testament. Paul addressed all of this in Romans 9 through 11. What happens to the Jews now that God has shifted the focus onto the church, which is made up mostly of Gentiles now? What happens to the Jewish people? And that's what Paul is addressing in Romans 9 through 11.

And the culmination of all that is seen in chapter 11 especially. Let me just read these three verses, 25 through 27. For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, so that you will not be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles

has come in.

I don't know what that means exactly. The dispensationalists would say that's when the rapture happens. And then after that, everything in the book of Revelation refers only to the Jews.

And I'm not sure about that. But whatever this means, at that point, then God is going to shift His focus on the Jewish people. I'll continue reading.

And so all Israel will be saved. So all Israel will be saved. Now does that mean every single Jew alive? No, I don't think that.

I don't think it needs to be taken to that extent. I think what Paul is meaning by that statement is that every Jew who responds to the Lord will be saved. I think that's all it means.

Anyway, continuing on, just as it is written, the Deliverer will come from Zion. He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.

That is an astounding statement found in the New Testament about the Jewish people. And what God is going to do in the last days. So what the dispensationalists believe is that the rapture will take the church out.

Then the sixth seal breaks, or whatever. And right then, something happens with the Jewish people. And this 144,000 Jews then go out and evangelize the world.

And that great multitude you see gathered around the throne is made up of both Jewish believers and the people who have been converted under their ministry during the tribulation time. That's what they believe. All right, now how would Rex Andrews fit in his theory with the dispensationalists? Well first of all, let me share with you the main identifying feature of dispensationalists.

Their main core belief, I don't know if I shared this before, but their main belief doesn't really revolve around different dispensations of God's dealings with man. Mainly, the thing that separates them from the covenantal teachers is that they believe that God had a dispensation for the Jews and He has a dispensation for the Gentiles. And they see that as huge in the understanding of Scripture and especially the end times.

So during the Old Testament times, that was the dispensation when God dealt with the Jewish people. The New Testament times is the church dispensation. Then the rapture comes, the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled.

And after that, then God is dealing with the Jews again, see. And it's all nice and neat the way, you know, they kind of get it laid out. That's the main belief system of the dispensationalists.

Now where Rex Andrews would depart from them, he definitely believes this 144,000 is regarding the Jewish people. I don't know that he would stick with a literal number or not. I don't remember what he believed on that.

But he definitely believes it's connected with the breaking of the sixth seal. And he would use Paul's experience on the Damascus Road as a harbinger of what's going to happen for the Jewish people. Like Paul saw a great light, knocked him off his horse, and his life was completely changed and he was on fire for God the rest of his life.

That's what Rex Andrews believes. I don't know what he believes now, but this is what he did believe. I guess he's got a better light on it now.

But that's what he believed that, you know, would happen when the sixth seal breaks, basically a light is going to shine from heaven so bright that it will make the sun appear dark. You know, that's how he sees all that. And also that this second group gathered around the throne, and this part's a bit of a stretch for me.

You know, I don't know what to make of that, but again, I told you, you can shoot holes in any of these theories. And this is the one that's a little difficult for me to embrace, is that that represents the church who responded to the Lord and now they live the rest of their lives with an open heaven. So from here on out, they are gathered around the throne spiritually, so to speak, and that's who that group is.

So again, you know, that's the way he sees it. You know, I realize this is real technical today, but the reason for it is this chapter is pivotal in your understanding of the whole book. You know, someone said it was the most important chapter in the book of Revelation, but you wouldn't typically think that.

If you read through the book, you would say, oh no, it's chapter 13, or it's chapter 1. You wouldn't think of chapter 7, but I know what the guy meant. He was saying that because it's pivotal in establishing what you believe about the whole book and how it unfolds. So that's why I'm taking the time to explain these three belief systems.

All right, now let's actually get through this chapter. We need to go through these verses, and I just have a few things I'll bring out. So let's start reading here with verse 1. 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.

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, saying, do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bondservants of our God on their foreheads. All right, there's two words here I want to just touch on in verse 3 real quick.

The word until. Nothing is going to happen until God's people are sealed, whoever this group is. All right.

This is very reminiscent of Genesis chapter 19. You remember in that story, Lot and his family are living down in Sodom, but it's such a wicked place that God is going to destroy the whole area. And Abraham, in the meantime, is up in Canaan praying.

And he's praying also for Lot and his family. So the angels go in there, they're trying to get Lot and his family out of there. And one of the statements that the angel makes to Lot, he says, hurry, escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there.

Okay, so you get that same sense of there's a restraining power in place and judgment won't fall until the believers are cared for and protected and covered. All right, so that's the word until. The word seal is also important.

That's the Greek term sphragis, and it's the same word that's used in Ephesians describing this sealing by the Holy Spirit. Okay, so God does something. He seals those people by His Holy Spirit, and once they are sealed, that is it.

They are His, and they're going to go through. That word is different than the mark of the beast. That word is charagma, and it's used in ancient Greek times as branding or tattooing people in pagan rituals.

You know, now think about the difference there. God's sealing someone versus branding them, and you see right there the difference between God's loving care and the way Satan treats his followers, don't you? I mean, it's just such a picture to me, the difference between the two. All right, verse 4, and I heard the number of those who were sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel.

And I'm not going to read this list, but it's different tribes mentioned there, but I do want to say a couple of things about it. There are 20 occurrences in the Old Testament where the tribes of Israel are listed, and in all of those occurrences, there's 12 tribes listed. But in actuality, there were 13 tribes.

I don't know if you knew that. There's 12 sons, but there's 13 tribes. Why is that? Because Joseph was counted as two.

Ephraim and Manasseh were each given a tribe. So most of the list, Levi is excluded out of the list because why? The Levites were not given a portion of the land. God would be their portion, and they were scattered throughout Israel and Judah.

And so most of those lists excluded Levi. But in this list, it's interesting that Levi is included and Dan and Ephraim are excluded. Now, why is that? If you remember in the book of Judges, a big part of that tribe went way up north into Syrophenicia and conquered a group of people there and took over a certain area.

And Kathy and I have been there, and Jeff and I have been there. And in that area is where the large portion of the tribe of Dan lived, and that was the introduction of idolatry into Israel. That's where it first happened, because they mixed the worship of Jehovah and the worship of Astarte, I think it was, or Baal, I don't remember right now.

But it was a mixture. And actually, I remember seeing there's an altar area there where you could worship Jehovah and worship Baal in the same spot. So Dan is excluded, and it's probably because they were the first ones to bring idolatry into the nation of Israel.

Ephraim is excluded, and Joseph is named instead, probably because Ephraim was the leading tribe of the northern tribes. And they were very instrumental in furthering the cause of idolatry in Israel. So that's conjecture, but everyone pretty much agrees that that's probably why they were excluded.

A couple of other things about it. There was an early church tradition, dating all the way back to the 2nd century. Apparently, a lot of the believers in the early church believed that the Antichrist would come out of the tribe of Dan.

And I don't know if there's anything to that. There's nothing biblically that you can rest on with that tradition, but it is kind of an interesting thought. That's why maybe sometimes you hear that the Antichrist is going to be a Jew.

Maybe that's where that comes from. And I don't know that that's true, and nothing that I would put much stock in, but I'm just mentioning it. And also significant is the whole tie-in with idolatry, which is referred to throughout the book of Revelation.

It was a problem back in the early church time, and it's a problem today, although it's taken a different form. All right, the second group, starting with verse 9. Let's just read through this. After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, and all tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands.

And they cry out with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb. And all the angels were standing around the throne, and around the elders, and the four living creatures. And they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying, Amen, blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be to our God forever and ever, Amen.

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from? I said to him, My Lord, you know. And he said to me, These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation. And they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Alright, now this worship scene takes us right back to chapters 4 and 5, doesn't it? And if you remember right, you remember how the scene began with God, and then His eyes were opened, and then there was the living beast, and then the elders, you know, and then the angels. Remember how these different groups were added into that scene? Now, an innumerable host of saints are added into that scene, worshipping the Lord. It's a wonderful thing.

So who are these people? Well, the only two things we know about them for sure is that they come from all over the world, every different tribe, and nation, and people group, including the Jews, and that they come out of the tribulation. Those are the only two things that we know. This word, tribulation, here, you know, the Greek is *thlipsis*, of course, but it's significant here, the mention of it.

Daniel said, in Daniel chapter 12, Now at that time, Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise, and there will be a time of distress, and the word in the Septuagint version is *thlipsis*. There will be a time of distress or tribulation such as has never occurred since there was a nation until that time. And at that time, your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.

All right, so that's interesting, rescued, and I don't know exactly what that means, but it's worth noting. And then Jesus also, in all of that discourse, mentions this. He said, for then there will be a great tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will, unless those days have been cut short, no life would have been saved, but for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short.

All right, so there is definitely a great tribulation. The reason this is an issue is because some people believe that when tribulation is described, it's not a tribulation period, and I think Rex Andrews taught this, Doug Dieter teaches that I know, and I think George Ladd teaches this, that it's not really a specific period called the tribulation period. Tribulation has always been there for Christians down through the church age, and that's all it's being referred to.

I have a hard time with that, but anyway, let me just read what is said by a couple of these guys. Johnson says, this future tribulation is distinguished from previous persecutions of the church in its intensity, in its immediate connection with Christ's second coming, and in the presence of Antichrist during it. Okay, that makes it different than other times of tribulation.

Robert Thomas said it this way, this cannot be simply general tribulation that began in John's time. This is a worldwide crisis among all nations that could hardly reflect the localized situation of John's time, nor can the reference be to all the tribulations throughout the age of the church, because the definite article, *the*, which is the word *the*, the whole vision and its relation to the rest of the book eliminate the possibility of such a general understanding. It is the superlatively great crisis of trial through which all rebels against God must pass just before Christ's second coming.

You know, and he's got a very good point there, that it does seem distinguished from everything else. And lastly, Osborne, referring to the tribulation that believers will go through, he says, as God exerts His wrath upon the evil world in the form of the seals, trumpets, and bowls, the world retaliates with its own vengeance against Christ's followers. All right, then in verses 15 through 17, it's basically, I'll put it in a nutshell, that the Lord is saying, these people will not suffer anymore, and He gives different ways that that's happening.

And this continues the theme of persecution and martyrdom that we've seen throughout the book. The sun beating on them, the tears, the sorrow, all of that reflects the suffering of God's people in those end times. All right, now just to wrap up, I want to say a couple of things about this first group of people, this 144,000.

First of all, whoever they are, they are promised to be protected from God's wrath. In chapter 3, verse 10, the saints in the church of Philadelphia, Jesus said, because you have kept the word of my perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of Philipis. That hour which is about to come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth.

I said the hour of Philipis, I think it's Philipis, it's the word testing, but I'm not sure. I didn't think to check it out. The sealing of the saints shown here in these first eight verses details how that's going to be carried out, how God is going to protect His people through this time of tribulation.

And then throughout the book, during the trumpets and the bowls, you see different references to God only aiming His wrath against unbelievers. Like chapter 8, verse 13, woe, woe, woe, to who? To those who dwell on the earth, the earth dwellers, the people that have been referred to time and time again as those who have taken the mark of the beast. Chapter 9, verse 4, they were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

So there's a differentiation there between those who are sealed by God and those who have the mark of the beast. Chapter 16, verse 6, for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink, they deserve it, again, referring to earth dwellers. And then in verse 19, Babylon the great was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.

All right, so we see there again that God's wrath is aimed only at unbelievers. All right, the second thing I'll mention is there is a definite connection with Ezekiel 9, and I want to just read a couple of these verses. We're cutting into a story here, so I kind of hate to do that, but basically this is in a long series of things of God withdrawing His Spirit from Jerusalem, and He's allowing Ezekiel to see what's happening.

I'm going to pick it up in verse 3. Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub, on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed in linen, that's an angel, at whose loins was the writing case. The Lord said to him, go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the

abominations which are being committed in its midst.

But to the others, He said in my hearing, go through the city after him and strike. Do not let your eye have pity, and do not spare. Utterly slay old men, young men, maidens, little children, and women, but do not touch any man on whom is the mark, and you shall start from my sanctuary, and so on.

So there is a type of what would come in the last days, seen right there in Ezekiel 9. And the last thing is just simply that there is biblical precedence established for divine protection for God's people through His wrath in the book of Exodus, and the story of the Hebrews in Egypt. If you remember right, there was 10 plagues that God poured out on the Egyptians, and the Israelites were protected throughout all of them. And especially the 10th one is representative of this, because if they didn't have the blood of a lamb over their doorposts, when the angel of death went through the land, the firstborn of that family would be slain.

And there again is a picture of the blood of the lamb protecting, sealing His people while God's death angels stalk the land and begin the systematic destruction of mankind. And just to add to that, and we'll see this next week when we get into chapter 8, the trumpet judgments, and maybe to a lesser degree the bowl judgments, but definitely the trumpet judgments are very tied in with the plagues that happened in Egypt. So this is like another tie-in of those two stories.

All right, so that's Revelation 7. I hope you, through all that, got a sense of what was covered in the chapter and the importance of it. And, you know, I hope that you will take some time and just reflect on these different perspectives and allow the Lord to lead you in your thinking and develop, you know, a sense about what you believe. But, you know, if you don't come to a strong conviction about something, it's okay.

It's all right. Just hold on to it loosely anyways, you know, because as things unfold, we're all going to find out the real story. Okay, God bless you.

That's it for today.

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