A TALE OF TWO KINGDOMS

WEEK 9

REVELATION 7

REV. JOE VALENTI

PRAYER PROMPTS:

- Pray that every person at CVC would know whether they truly belong to God, and that those who attend church but have never trusted Jesus would come to the Lamb.
- Pray for anyone trusting in family heritage, church attendance, or good deeds, that they would trust the blood of the Lamb alone.
- Pray for those walking through tribulation right now (a diagnosis, a broken marriage, a prodigal child, a grief that won't lift), that the Shepherd would hold them and lead them home.
- Pray that CVC would engage this November ready to pray, give, and go, so that our neighbors, our city, and the nations hear about the Lamb.
- Pray for the Banjar people of Indonesia, that God would send workers, open hearts, and raise up churches among them.

THE SEALING GOD (VV. 1-8)

Before the winds of judgment blow, God marks His own. The seal on the forehead isn't a literal brand; it shows who a person belongs to. And the judgments of God will expose the reality of every heart.

- **Four corners, four winds:** The whole earth, and God's judgments held back until His servants are sealed.
- **The seal of the living God:** God's mark of ownership. It doesn't spare believers from suffering; it protects them eternally from His final wrath.
- **Two options:** You belong either to God or to the Beast. Many people attend church but do not belong to God.

Who are the 144,000?

There are two common views. The dispensational view sees Jewish people who come to faith during a future seven-year tribulation. Our teaching team sees the 144,000 and the great multitude as the same people, the whole church, seen from two angles.

Notice why: the tribal list is unique and organized around Jesus. John hears a number and sees a multitude, just as he heard of a Lion and saw a Lamb. And the only reason anyone is sealed is the blood of the Lamb (7:14; 14:4). We disagree about timing, not about Jesus.

Who can stand?
In Revelation 6, the world hides from the wrath of the Lamb and asks, "Who can stand?" Revelation 7 answers: a multitude from every nation, standing before the throne, washed in the blood of the Lamb.

THE SAVING GOD (VV. 9-14)

Chapter 5 says Jesus ransomed people from every nation. In chapter 7, we meet them.

- **Not good behavior:** no one earns a passing grade with God.
- **Not religious heritage:** no family, tribe, or ancestry seals anyone.
- **Not good deeds:** no one can do enough good to outweigh the bad.
- **Only the Lamb:** salvation belongs to our God and to the Lamb (v. 10).

Why are the robes white?

The robe is your life before God, and even our best deeds are like a polluted garment (Isaiah 64:6). Jesus, the Lamb of God, died in our place.

In chapter 6, people hide from the wrath of the Lamb. In chapter 7, they stand, because the Lamb took that wrath for them.

QUESTION TO CONSIDER:

AM I TRUSTING THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB - OR MY FAMILY'S FAITH, MY CHURCH ATTENDANCE, OR MY GOOD DEEDS?

THE SHEPHERDING GOD (VV. 15-17)

Verse 15 begins with "Therefore." Because they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, here is what waits for them. In chapter 6, four horsemen rode out, and each one took something from the world. In verses 15-17, every one of them gets answered.

The Shepherd gives back what the horsemen took

- The white horse rode out conquering. Here, God shelters them with His presence (v. 15).
- The red horse took peace. Here, every nation serves God together day and night (v. 15).
- The black horse brought famine. Here, they hunger and thirst no more (v. 16).
- The pale horse was Death. Here, the Lamb leads them to springs of living water (v. 17).
- The martyrs cried, "How long?" Here, God wipes away every tear (v. 17).
- The sixth seal sent people hiding from the throne. Here, they stand before it (v. 15).

The Lamb who was slain for you
is the Shepherd who will lead you all the way home.

THE SENDING GOD

Pray: Ask God for the nations, and for the one person in your life who doesn't know Him yet.

Give: Send others to the nations with your resources.

Go: Across the street or across the world. God's judgment is held back "until" His people are gathered (v. 3). Sealed and saved people are sent people.

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WEEK 9 - SYMBOLISM & TERMS

Four corners / four winds: The whole earth. The winds picture God's coming judgment, held back until His servants are sealed (vv. 1-3).

Seal on the forehead: Not a literal mark. A symbol of ownership and protection that shows who belongs to God. The judgments of God expose our allegiance.

144,000: 12 x 12 x 1,000. God's people, complete and fully known to Him. Like the other numbers in Revelation, we read it as symbolic.

Twelve tribes (vv. 5-8): This list matches no Old Testament list. Judah, the tribe of the Messiah, comes first. Dan and Ephraim are missing. The list is organized around Jesus.

Hear / see: In chapter 5, John hears of a Lion and sees a Lamb. In chapter 7, he hears 144,000 and sees a multitude no one can count. Same reality, two pictures.

Great multitude: Every nation, tribe, people, and language, ransomed by the Lamb (5:9).

Great tribulation (v. 14): Dispensational view: the most intense part of a future seven-year period. Our view: the whole age from Jesus' ascension to His return, intensifying before the end.

Rapture: Being caught up to meet the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Dispensationalists place it before the tribulation. We believe it happens when Jesus returns.

White robes: Your life before God, stained by sin (Isaiah 64:6), made white by the Lamb (Isaiah 1:18).

Washed in the blood of the Lamb: Forgiveness through Jesus' death as our substitute, foreshadowed by the Passover lamb (Exodus 12).

Shelter with His presence: God spreads His tent over His people, like His presence in the tabernacle.

The Lamb as Shepherd: The Lamb slain for His sheep now leads them home (see Isaiah 49:10; 25:8).