

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Calm in the Midst of the Storm

Revelation 7

1. The Ministry of the Angels (vs.1-3)
As the fury of the sixth seal subsides (Rev. 6:17) we are introduced to five angels whose time has come for them to fulfill their duties in the judgment of God. The first four angels together are in charge of temporarily restraining the wind from blowing before they unleash a terrible destruction upon the earth (Rev. 7:3; cf. Rev. 8:7-9).
2. The Special Sealing of the Jews (vs.3-8)
The fifth angel forestalls the impending terrible judgments until 144,000 specific servants of God receive a special seal of God's protection written on their foreheads (cf. Rev. 9:4; 14:1). The 144,000 mentioned here are Jews, most likely all men (cf. Rev. 14:4a), who are from every tribe of the nation of Israel (Rev. 7:4). This specific seal which is given to these individuals is not primarily connected with eternal salvation but rather with temporal preservation (v.3). God protected His people from death in Egypt if they put a sign of their connection to Him on their homes (Ex. 12:22-23). God also spared any upon whom He put His mark in the vision given to Ezekiel (Ezek. 9:1-11).
3. The Appearance of the Multitude (vs.9-17)
In a new vision (v.9a), John now sees a vast ocean of believers from the rest of the world. God had always intended the Jewish nation to be His evangelistic arm to the nations (Deut 4:6-8; cf. Luke 2:32), and in the time of Jacob's trouble (cf. Jer. 30:7) they will finally fulfill that mission. The designation of every tribe, nation, people, and tongue is the way in which John regularly speaks about the entirety of the world's population (cf. Rev. 5:9; 7:9; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6). These are believers who have come out of the great tribulation having been saved by the blood of the lamb (v.14). The end of this vision (vs.9-17) is a comfort and encouragement to John and to faithful brethren throughout the ages. The present state of the church in Asia was sketchy (cf. Rev. 2-3), but John could be encouraged that the fruit born by those who hold to the gospel will be incalculable (cf. Mark 4:20). And all who trust in Christ, even if they live and die in the worst of times, will have rest and care provided for them by the Lord who will shelter them from all troubles (v.15) and provide for them (v.16; cf. Matt 6:25ff), so that their sorrows will be gone (cf. Rev. 21:22-27).