

“Signed, Sealed, Delivered!”**1. Intro:**

- 1.1. When the storm starts to get worse, John sees 2 groups of people & takes courage.
 - 1.1.1. Because he realizes that God is at work even in the midst of tribulation!
- 1.2. **Hab.3:2** sums up our transition from **Great Wrath(Ch.6)** to **Great Mercy (Ch.7)!**
 - 1.2.1. **“In your Wrath remember Mercy!”**
 - 1.2.2. The scene of **judgment** is interrupted by this scene of **Mercy!**
- 1.3. In Ch.6 it seemed like **no one** would be protected or saved in the midst of all this wrath!
 - 1.3.1. But **God IS at work** even in the midst of His fury & Rage on earth.
- 1.4. Here is a **Parenthesis** in between the 6th & 7th Seal Judgment.
- 1.5. This chapter answers the question, **“Can Jews and Gentiles get saved during the Tribulation?”**
- 1.6. It also answers the question asked at the end of ch.6 **Who can stand?**
 - 1.6.1. **2 Groups will stand: the Sealed Saints on earth, & the Sealed Souls before His throne!**
- 1.7. After **6 Terrible Seals...we have 144,000 Good ones!**

2. SEALED SAINTS! (1-8)

- 2.1. **4 corners** - North-South-East-West.
- 2.2. **Holding the 4 winds** - God controls all nature!
 - 2.2.1. Many places in Scripture shows angels in control of the forces of nature. (Rev.14:18, 16:5; Heb.1:7)
- 2.3. No wind would bring a halt to our intricate watering system(wind carries water inland, from the ocean).
 - 2.3.1. Imagine the smog in Riverside then? (just sitting there)
- 2.4. (2) **What kind of Seal?** – See 14:1 (the name of the Lamb & His Father)
- 2.5. Marking started way back in **Gen.4:15** when the Lord put a mark on **Cain** so that no one who found him would kill him.
- 2.6. (3) **Is this mark visible or invisible?** “A seal doesn’t have to be visible to be real!”
 - 2.6.1. **Our seal is invisible!**
 - 2.6.2. Quite poss. that **the mark of the beast** is also?
 - 2.6.3. **They were sealed with the Fathers Name** on their foreheads (14:1).

- 2.6.4. In Ezek. 9 - Writers inkhorn was **before** Gods judgment fell.
- 2.6.5. **A Seal indicates Ownership(saved) & Protection(safe)!**
- 2.7. This spoke of His ownership on them! - "I believe this same concept Satan steals using the 666.
- 2.7.1. They don't get their **own #**, but rather **his #** (i.e. they are under his ownership)
- 2.8. **Today we are sealed w/the H.S.!**
- 2.8.1. Eph.1:13,14 "In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were **sealed** with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory."
- 2.8.2. **God's Seals are tamper proof!**
- 2.8.3. Song of Sol. 8:6 the bride tells her lover, "Place me like a seal over your heart, as a seal on your arm."
- 2.9. This is another example of God protecting **those that are His**, from **His wrath!**
- 2.9.1. **Believers are not always protected from problems & persecutions but from the pouring out of His wrath!**
- 2.9.2. **Noah & family** during earth's flood judgment!
- 2.9.3. **Lot & daughters** during judgment on 5 cities.
- 2.9.4. Here, **144,000** sealed from the judgment on earth.
- 2.9.5. **Q: Why would God work differently with the Rapture of the church?**
- 2.9.6. **Q: Would you plan to exterminate your house, and then leave your pets in there?** (Again, there's a difference from God allowing one of His own to die for Him & the pouring out of His wrath!)
- 2.10. **See Ezek 8 & 9** – Hear more of God's heart & aggravation with sin.
- 2.11. **144,000!** (4-8)
- 2.12. This group comes to faith in the beg of the Tribulation.
- 2.13. As a new believer I had a J.W. lady at my door tell me she was part of the 144,000!
...so I asked her...what Tribe? 😊
- 2.13.1. If they say, "*no, the tribes are spiritual*" then the # 144,000 must be spiritual also?
- 2.13.2. **Ps: When the J.W. membership exceeded 144,000, they simply revised their theology.**
- 2.14. We are **not** told exactly what these 144,000 are to do. The logical deduction would be to witness? - In **Mt.24:14** someone is preaching it during this time!
- 2.14.1. "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."

2.15. Interesting facts about the “12 Tribes!”

- 2.15.1. **Jacob 12 sons are the 12 Tribes!** - **Joseph**(2nd to youngest) had 2 sons named Ephraim & Manasseh which sometimes represent Joseph.
 - 2.15.2. **Problem #1 - Why Levi?** - Levi wasn't supposed to have a separate inheritance
 - 2.15.2.1. Num.18:20 “Then the LORD said to Aaron: "You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; **I am your portion** and your **inheritance** among the children of Israel.”
 - 2.15.2.2. **Yet, this is not for their Portion but for their Protection!**
 - 2.15.3. **Problem #2 - Joseph instead of Ephraim?**
 - 2.15.3.1. Usually Ephraim & Manasseh are mentioned together, since they received an equal portion of territory w/the rest of the tribes.
 - 2.15.4. **Ephraim is M.I.A.? - Idolatry?**
 - 2.15.4.1. Hos.4:17 “**Ephraim is joined to idols, Let him alone.**”
 - 2.15.5. **Problem #3 - Dan is M.I.A.? - Idolatry!** “**set up the golden calf in region of Dan**” (excavated).
- 2.16. But they have lost records on which tribe people are of?
- 2.16.1. **God knows...& He is the one having them marked!** 😊
 - 2.16.1.1. **Maybe He'll get CSI Miami to do a DNA search?**
- 2.17. **Going Up!** – Ready for another heavenly vision?

3. SEALED SOULS! (9-17)

- 3.1. **Contrasts in this 2nd group!**
- 3.2. The **Jews** numbered 144,000; they were sealed on the earth; & passes unscathed.
- 3.3. The **Gentiles** couldn't be numbered; were standing in heaven; this group martyred to the very last man.
- 3.4. St. Ignatius of Antioch said, “I am God's **wheat**, & I am **ground** by the teeth of wild beats that I may be found **pure bread** of Christ.”
- 3.5. **Go into all the earth....well they did!** “of all nations”.
 - 3.5.1. **Q: Will you participate is the question?**
- 3.6. “**Palm branches**” represent **Rejoicing & Victory!**
 - 3.6.1. **Q: Where is the only other place in N.T. you hear of Palm Branches?**
 - 3.6.1.1. “**Hosanna, Hosanna**” (Triumphal Entry)
 - 3.6.1.2. And now, their **triumphal entry** into heaven!

- 3.7. **THEIR SALVATION!** (13,14)
- 3.8. The 24 elders give John a pop-quiz!
- 3.9. **How did they get there?** (14) - Out of Great tribulation, on the ground of a common redemption!
- 3.10. **What they've done?** (14) - Washed their robes.
- 3.10.1. Take your sins to the cleaners!
- 3.10.2. This cleaner used a *blood-dipping* solution!
- 3.10.2.1. All dirty garment goes into the red, & comes out **white!**
- 3.11. Dr. A.T. Pierson once wrote, "In a **paper mill** what a contrast between the heap of filthy rags at one end and the pure and spotless white paper at the other! What a trial the rags go through before they emerge in this new form! Torn to pieces and ground to pulp, bleached with chloride of lime 'til all stains are removed, washed over and over; submitted to another bleaching by the action of chlorine and alum; washed again, 'til the pulp or stuff is white as cream or snowflakes! Caught upon a wire cylinder, after the severe shaking by the Fourdrinier process which crosses the fibers and gives compactness and firmness to the fabric; and then passed between and around the hot surfaces which makes the paper smooth and even -- how like the Divine discipline by which our filthiness is cleansed away; how like the tribulation out of which all come up who have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb!"
- 3.11.1. **Q:** Have you taken **your sins** to the cleaners?
- 3.12. **THEIR SERVICE!** (15a)
- 3.13. **Where they are?** - Before the throne of God!
- 3.14. **How are they occupied?** - Serve Him day & night in His Temple
- 3.14.1. My favorite conception of heaven, said 1, "is **Rest**". Mine says another "is **Work**". Mine says a 3rd "is **Love**". Mine says a 4th "is **Praise**" - I think they all will be **realized...& infinitely surpassed!!!**
- 3.15. **THEIR SAVIOR!** (15b-17)
- 3.16. **He will dwell among them!** (Oh, the real presence of God)
- 3.17. (16) **What do they miss?** - Hunger, Thirst, Sun hitting them, Scorching Heat.
- 3.17.1. Probably the way some had died.
- 3.18. (17) **The Lamb will Shepherd them?** (He that has Mercy on them will lead them!)
- 3.18.1. Lead them to Living waters(quenches thirst probably)
- 3.19. **Living fountains of water** – order in phrase emphasizes “life”.
- 3.19.1. I.e. “**To life's water springs**”
- 3.20. **And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes!**
- 3.20.1. Perhaps the tenderest little sentence of the bible.
- 3.20.2. Tears of: Death, Dying, Suffering, Pain, Loneliness...gone!
- 3.20.3. So, God doesn't only meet their phys needs, but their emotional needs as well.