

Seeing Peoples, not just People

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. What is the **shortest chapter** of the bible, it is also the **middle chapter**? *Read* Ps.117 (seeing peoples, not just people)
1. Slide2 Spurgeon, **Praise is the honey of life which a devout heart extracts from every bloom of providence and grace.**
 2. Pray:

II. Slide3 Intro: Seeing Peoples, not just People

- A. Slide4a When the **storm** starts to get worse John sees 2 groups of people & *takes courage*
1. Because he realizes that God is at work **even in the midst** of tribulation.
- B. Slide4b Hab.3:2 sums up our transition from **Great Wrath** (Ch.6) to **Great Mercy** (Ch.7)
1. **In your Wrath remember Mercy.** The scene of judgment is interrupted by this scene of *Mercy*.
- C. In Ch.6 it seemed like no one would be **protected** or **saved** in the midst of *all this wrath*.
1. **But God IS** at work even in the midst of His *fury & rage* on earth.
- D. Here is a **Parenthesis** an *interlude* in between the 6th & 7th Seal Judgment.
- E. This chapter answers the question, *Can Jews/Gentiles get saved during the Tribulation?*
- F. It also answers the question asked at the end of ch.6, *Who is able to stand?*
1. Slide4c **2 Groups will stand:** the **Sealed Saints** on earth & the **Sealed Souls** before His throne.
- G. So after the 6 **Terrible seals**...we now have 144,000 **Good seals**.

III. Slide5 SEALED SAINTS (1-8) seeing protection, not just problems

- A. Slide6 **4 corners** - North-South-East-West. The whole world is represented by 4 points of the compass.
- B. **Holding the 4 winds** - God controls all nature.
1. Many places in Scripture shows **angels** in control of the forces of nature.

2. No wind blowing would bring **a halt** to our intricate watering system (water cycle/ Hydrologic cycle) (wind carries water inland, from the ocean). **Evaporation, condensation, precipitation, infiltration back into earth/or run-off.**
 3. **Imagine the smog in Riverside then?**
 4. **Global circulation, temperature & pressure** differences drives the **wind**. **Wind** drives the **weather**. The only way to stop the wind is to turn off the Sun & stop the Earth's rotation.
 5. **The wind blows warm air to cool areas and cool air to warm areas** [If you stop that flow of air, **then** if you're in a cool area, you will **freeze**. If you are in a **warm** area, you will **burn**] *How long did this last?*
- C. **Slide7 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**.
- D. (3) **Is this mark visible or invisible?** A seal doesn't have to be **visible** to be **real**.
1. Our seal *during the church age* is **invisible**.
 2. It's quite possible that **the mark of the beast** is also?
 3. **The 144,000** were sealed with **the Fathers Name on their foreheads** (14:1).
 4. A Seal indicates **Ownership** (saved) & **Protection** (safe).
- E. **This spoke of His ownership on them.** *Possibly the same concept Satan steals using the 666*
1. They don't get *their own #*, **but** rather **his #** (i.e. they are under his ownership)
- F. **Today we are sealed w/the H.S.**
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. **God's Seals** are **tamper proof**.
 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.**
- G. This is another example of God **protecting** those that are His...**from His wrath**.

1. **Believers** are **not always** protected from *problems & persecutions* but from *the pouring out of His wrath*.
 - a) *i.e.* **Noah & family** during earth's flood judgment. **Lot & daughters** during judgment on the 5 cities (Sod & Gom).
 - b) **Here**, 144,000 sealed from the judgment on earth.
2. Why would God work differently with the Rapture of the church?
3. 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 vs. the pouring out of His wrath on them)

H. Slide8 144,000 (4-8)

- I. This group *seems to be* **ethnic Jews** who become *believers* and are *kept from martyrdom* during the 7 yr. tribulation period.
- J. 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...
 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.*

K. Slide9a Interesting facts about the 12 Tribes:

1. Jacob 12 sons are the 12 Tribes. **Joseph** (*2nd to youngest*) had 2 sons named **Ephraim & Manasseh** which sometimes represent Joseph.
2. **Problem #1 - Joseph instead of Ephraim?**
 - a) Usually Ephraim & Manasseh are mentioned together, since they received an equal portion of territory w/the rest of the tribes.
 - b) *So why is Ephraim is M.I.A.? Idolatry!*
 - c) Hos.4:17 *Ephraim is joined to idols, Let him alone.*
3. **Slide9b Problem #2 - Why Levi?** Levi wasn't supposed to have a separate inheritance.
 - a) 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.*

b) **Yet**, this is **not** for their **Portion** **but** for their **Protection**.

4. **Slide9c Problem #3 - So why is Dan is M.I.A.? Idolatry! Set up the golden calf in region of Dan** (are is excavated, Tel Dan).

L. **But today** they have lost records on which tribe people are of?

1. **God knows...and** He is the One having them marked.

M. **Going Up** – Ready for another heavenly vision?

IV. **Slide10 SEALED SOULS (9-17) seeing peoples, not just people**

A. **Slide11** St. Ignatius of Antioch (Martyred on way to Rome) said, *I am God's wheat, & I am ground by the teeth of wild beats that I may be found pure bread of Christ.*

B. *Go into all the earth....well they did...of all nations.*

1. **Will you** participate in seeing this come to fruition?

C. **Slide12 Contrasts** in this 2nd group.

Group #1 (7:1–8)	Group #2 (7:9–17)
1. Jews	1. Gentiles
2. A group of 144,000	2. Multitude no man could number
3. Sealed and protected	3. Not sealed; many will die
4. Seen witnessing on earth	4. Seen worshiping in heaven
5. Enter into the kingdom	5. Share in the kingdom

D. **Slide13 Nations** (ethnic groupings, people groups). **Tribes** (social division of people). **Peoples** (people grouped by culture, physical, geographical ties). **Tongues** (language).

E. **Nations** - peoples with distinct languages and cultures that make it hard for the Gospel to spread naturally from one people group to another.

1. Don't think of *geo-political countries* or *nation-states* like China, Syria, Iraq, Myanmar. [**Hani** people group live in *China, Tibet, VN, Myanmar*]

F. **Slide14** Of the world's **11,751** people groups, **7,044** of them are still **Unreached**.

1. An *Unreached People Group* (UPG), is an ethno-linguistic grouping of people where **less than 2%** of the population are Christ Followers.

a) In these groups there is often **no witness of Christ at all**. There is often **no witnessing church**. **Or** the church is simply not strong enough to evangelize their own group.

2. **Collectively** these unreached groups number nearly **3 billion souls**.

3. **And among these people groups, Jesus remains unknown, unacknowledged and unadored :(**

G. **Slide15** 55yrs ago next Tues **Martin Luther King** stood before the Lincoln Memorial & said¹ ***I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. . . . I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.***

1. **Martin Luther King articulated & symbolized a great dream That is not yet realized**

a) Let's ratchet that dream up to **a full-blown biblical vision** of God's purpose for the **world** (The **biblical vision** is much bigger than how black & white people relate to each other).

b) Let's hear both the **invitation & mandate** for us as **individuals** & as a **church** to consciously be a part of this vision.

H. **What if we knew Jesus' full purpose & plan for mankind? What if we knew how it all ends?** Oh, we do. **We know**. We have *the goal of God* in Revelation. **We have His end game**. It's how history is unfolding & where history is fast driving towards.

1. I came up with this...it's as if **Jesus** said in Eternity past, ***I have a Dream.***

That one day My Father will receive worship from people from every ethno-linguistic people group. Where there is no longer ethnocentric pride but the ability to glory in God given diversity. Where there is racial diversity & ethnic harmony, gender equality and social equity. Where there is a fervor for unity, a passion for justice, and the supremacy of God in all things. [BB 8-22-2018]

2. **We don't believe these words/concepts as Christians because they are politically correct, or trendy, or in vogue. We believe them because this is God's heart for humans.**

¹ August 28, 1963

3. See Rev.5:9 also.

- I. Slide16 God Is Up to Something Unprecedented: To quote historian Mark Noll, *“The Christian church has experienced a larger geographical redistribution in the last 50 years than in any comparable period in its history, with the exception of the very earliest years of church history.”*
1. In **1900**, Africa had *10 million* Christians, which was about 10% of the population. **By 2000**, the number of Christians was *360 million*, about 1/4 the population of the continent. *This is probably the largest shift in religious affiliation that has ever occurred, anywhere.*
 2. There are *17 million* baptized members of the Anglican church in **Nigeria**, compared with only *2.8 million* in the **United States**.
 3. Last Sunday...more Christian believers attended church in **China** than in all of so-called **Christian Europe**.
 4. **Kenya** has more people in Christian churches on Sunday than **Canada**.
 5. **Brazil** might not have done very well in the World Cup this year, but more Christian workers from **Brazil** are active in *cross cultural ministry outside their homeland* than from **Britain** or from **Canada**.
 - a) The point is that *God is up to something in our day* that is unprecedented in world history. That should make you **excited** to be running *anchor leg* in our world.
- J. Palm branches represent **Rejoicing & Victory**.
1. **Where is the only other place in N.T. you hear of Palm Branches?**
 - a) *Hosanna, Hosanna* (Triumphal Entry). **And** now, *their triumphal entry* into heaven.
- K. Slide17 **THEIR SALVATION** (13,14)
- L. The 24 elders give **John** a pop-quiz.
- M. **Where did they come from?** (14) **Out of Great tribulation**, on the ground of a common redemption.
- N. **What they've done?** (14) - **Washed their robes**.
1. Take your **sins** to the **cleaners**. This cleaner used a *blood-dipping* solution.

a) All dirty garment goes in **red** & comes out **white**. (paradox)

O. **THEIR SERVICE** (15a)

P. **Where are they?** - Before the throne of God.

Q. **What are they doing up there?** - Serve Him day & night in His Temple.

R. **THEIR SAVIOR** (15b-17)

S. **He will dwell among them** - Oh, the real presence of God.

T. (16) **What do they miss?** - Hunger, thirst, sun hitting them, scorching heat (think M.E. desert)

1. Probably the way some had died.

U. (17) **The Lamb will Shepherd them?** (paradox lamb is a shepherd)

1. Lead them to **Living waters** (quenches thirst probably).

V. **Living fountains of water** – the order in this phrase emphasizes, **life**.

1. **i.e.** *To life's water springs.*

W. **And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.**

1. Perhaps the tenderest little sentence of the bible.

2. **Tears of:** Death, Dying, Suffering, Pain, Loneliness...**gone**.

3. **So**, God doesn't only meet their **physical** needs, **but** their **emotional** needs as well.

a) *Free at last. Free at last. Thank God Almighty, they are **free** at last.*