

God's Revelation of the Future

Community Baptist Church
Lesson 6

Adult Bible Fellowship
Fall, 2024

The Insets – Overview

This lesson begins a study of the insets contained in Revelation 6:1-19:10. These insets are visions of events, seen by John, that interrupt the chronological flow of the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments. The order of the insets as recorded in Revelation appears to be the order they were seen by John. However, this is not the chronological order of the events themselves.

We will look at these insets under 12 headings. Some of them describe actions related to those who are God's children. Others describe judgments God will mete out during this period. And still others tell of the activities of those who are in opposition to God.

(Note: In this and subsequent handouts, references to "the 70th week" are to the 70th week as described in the prophecy found in Daniel 9:24-27. This prophecy was considered in part 1 of this study. Cf. "Teaching Series" at <https://perhapstoday.site>.)

The 144,000 Sealed – 7:1-8

This vision describes events surrounding the "sealing" of 144,000 Jews living on earth, probably sealed during the early part of the 70th week.

- First, John sees four angels spread around the earth who are preventing the winds of the earth from blowing.
 - These angels have "power to harm the [land] and sea."
- Second, John sees another angel who appears in the east toward the rising sun.
 - This angel, who has "the seal of the living God," commands the four angels not to harm "the [land] or the sea or the trees" until God's servants are sealed.
- Verses 4-8 list the number "sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel."
 - The number sealed from each tribe is 12,000.
 - They are sealed on their foreheads with "the seal of the living God."

- When comparing this list of names with others (e.g., the "birth" order in Genesis 29:21-30; 35:16-18 and the "blessing" order in Genesis 49:3-27), we see that here Dan is omitted and Manasseh is included. It appears that Dan's name is here represented by Manasseh, perhaps because of historical issues with Dan (cf. Judges 18). However, the text is clear. It says, "from every tribe of the sons of Israel."
- Observations
 - This sealing of "the sons of Israel" indicates that God has a future for national Israel.
 - The role of this specially sealed 144,000 is not stated. Some believe that this group will form a worldwide missions force. This could be the case since the next inset considers a great number of saved martyrs.

The Great Multitude – 7:9-17

In this vision John sees a "great multitude" of believers who have been killed on earth and who now appear before God's throne in heaven worshiping.

- The multitude that John sees is comprised of individuals from every nation, tribe, people, and language.
 - This many indicated these are largely Gentiles.
 - They are in heaven, standing before the Father and the Son worshiping them.
- Upon hearing the multitude worship, others fall on their faces before God and join in their worship.
- An elder identifies this multitude to John telling him that "these are the ones coming out of the great tribulation."
 - This could indicate more to come.
 - The reference to "the great tribulation" suggests that this takes place during the 2nd half of the 70th week.
- This group is said to be "before the throne of God" and as such they will "serve him day and night in his temple."
 - It seems this group has the privilege of living "before the throne" and of "serving" God there.
 - That the Father will "shelter them with his presence" may have significance for them since they have come out of great tribulation.
 - Furthermore, the Son, the Lamb, will "will be their shepherd."

- That their tears will be wiped away may also be especially significant for them as tribulation martyrs.

The 144,000 Upon Mount Zion – 14:1-5

This vision describes a group of 144,000 saints, now in heaven during the 70th week, who are singing a song that no one else can learn. Many, if not most, agree that this is the same 144,000 that were sealed earlier (7:1-8).

- John sees a Lamb on Mount Zion and with the Lamb 144,000 saints.
 - While some think Mount Zion refers to the earthly locale, given the context it seems better to see this as a heavenly place.
 - These saints are singing “before the throne” and the living creatures and the elders.
 - These saints “had been redeemed from the earth.”
- This group is marked by having the name of the Father and the Son on their foreheads.
- The group is singing “a new song.”
 - Evidently only the 144,000 could sing this song.
 - That “no one could learn that song except the 144,000” likely indicates that it uniquely applies to them as those who “had been redeemed from the earth.”
- John describes this group of saints.
 - That “these have not defiled themselves with women” may reflect the earthly circumstances from which they had come.
 - MacArthur suggests that during this period, like earlier cult worship, the worship of the Antichrist will likely “be unspeakably vile and perverse” and “sexual sin will apparently run rampant.” (*Revelation 12-22*)
 - That they are “firstfruits for God and the Lamb” may indicate that out of Israel many others will be saved during the 70th week.

Note: All references are to the book of Revelation unless otherwise specified.