**Revelation 7**

I. Introduction

 A. There is a pattern in the judgments of seals and trumpets

 1. Seals

 a. Seals 1-6 (ch. 6)

 b. Long Interlude (ch. 7)

 c. Seal 7 (ch. 8:1-5)

 2. Trumpets

 a. Trumpets 1-6 (ch. 8:6- ch. 9)

 b. Long Interlude (ch. 10-11:14)

 c. Trumpet 7 (11:16-19)

 B. The interludes reveal what is happening with God’s people during these trying times

 C. Today’s passage: during these times they are being sealed by God

I. What is the relationship between these two groups?

A. 1st group (v. 1-8)

 1. They are very countable: 144,000

 2. They are very Jewish

3. They are on the earth

4. Some scholars think they may be presented as an army

B. 2nd group (9-17)

 1. They are an uncountable multitude

2. They are from every nation, tribe, people and language

3. They are in heaven before the throne

4. They have come out of the great tribulation and have washed their robes in the blood of the lamb (v. 14)

C. These two pictures represent the same group of people seen from two different perspectives

1. What John hears (v. 4-8) and what John sees (v. 9-17) are the same group of people

2. This is similar to chapter 5

a. John hears about the lion from the Tribe of Judah (5:5), and then he sees a lamb slain (5:6). The lamb is the lion

b. John’s surprise in seeing a lamb instead of a lion is at the heart of the gospel: The Messiah is the lion who came not as a conquering lion but came as a lamb who sacrificed his life for his people (5:9)

 3. The same dynamic is happening in chapter 7

a. John hears about 144,000 Jews, and then he sees a countless multitude from every nation

b. John’s surprise in seeing a countless multitude is at the heart of the gospel: That salvation is not just for the Jewish nation but for every nation in the world. This was a radical concept in the first century.

1) God chose Abraham from among all the nations

2) God’s promise to Abraham was always to bless all the nations of the earth through him

 4. The 144000 pictures God’s people still on earth in the thick of the battle of this life

5. The countless multitude pictures God’s people finally in heaven, having gone through the battle having remained faithful to the lamb and receiving their heavenly reward

II. What is the significance of the seal of the living God?

A. God’s people are marked with a seal (v. 2-3)

B. More detail on the seal

1. In Chapter 14, the seal is now identified with having the name of God and the Lamb written on their foreheads (14:1)

2. There are other people who have the mark of the beast on their forehead, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name, 666 (13:16-17)

3. So everyone has a mark and the question is, which one do you have

B. The seal is there to indicate belonging/ownership

1. In the 1st century slaves were often given a mark on their forehead to indicate who owned them

 2. To have God’s name on the forehead is a powerful reminder: I belong to God

 3. Analogy: “Property of” apparel

a. What if everywhere you went you wore a shirt that said to you and everyone else “I belong to the Lamb?”

 b. This seal carries with it a call to remain loyal to Jesus at all costs

C. The seal is there to offer protection

1. Before the 4 winds can blow, the seal is given to protect the saints in the midst of the trials that are coming on the earth (seals, trumpets, bowls, beasts, etc)

 2. It answers the question: How can believers withstand/persevere through that?

Answer = God has sealed them to protect them

a. The seal probably doesn’t offer physical protection (see 13:7)

b. But it does offer ultimate spiritual protection

= God’s judgments aren’t directed towards them, and God’s enemies cannot ultimately harm them (they can intimidate, hurt, and evil kill them, but cannot harm their eternal destiny)

3. Those first century Christians needed to be reminded that, through all the persecution, God was protecting them and would never leave them and would keep their souls safe

4. Through the challenges of our lives, we need to be reminded that we are sealed, that God is with us, protecting us from ultimate harm

 5. See Isaiah 43:1-3 and Romans 8:35-39

**Discussion Questions**

1. On Sunday a particular view was offered regarding the relationship between the two groups of people pictured in Revelation 7. What has been your view on those two groups, if you’ve had one? And how convincing to you was the argument made on Sunday?

2. The seal (v. 3-4) marks out those who belong to God. Consider the seal of God vs. the mark of the beast (see 13:16-14:1). A modern analogy was made on Sunday: what if everyone wore a “Property of” shirt every day identifying who they belong to? How did that idea strike you? That is, where in your life would wearing that shirt change/affect how you think, feel, and act?

3. It was argued that the seal given in v. 3-4 offers spiritual protection to believers as they go through the trials and tribulations of life. Practically speaking, what does that protection look like in daily life? That is, how does that protection impact the way believers experience trials vs. the way nonbelievers experience trials? Can you give any examples from your own life?

4. Sunday’s message began with the idea that the point of this passage is to encourage us (= instill courage). In what ways does this passage encourage you this week?