

Revelation Ch7v1-17-Ch8v2 - Secure In Jesus

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[0 : 00] Thanks, Radha.

So all the talks have been recorded.

If you've missed any, you can follow up on our website. You should have received a link recently. Ralph sent that around, which is helpful to us all. So let's hear God's word to us.

We're going to start at Revelation chapter 1 through to the end of the chapter. Revelation. Sorry, did I say chapter 1?

Chapter 7. Thank you. After this, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea, or on any tree.

[1 : 33] Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea.

Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God. Then I heard the number of those who were sealed.

144,000 from all the tribes of Israel. From the tribe of Judah, 12,000 were sealed.

From the tribe of Reuben, 12,000. From the tribe of Gad, 12,000. From the tribe of Asher, 12,000.

From the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000. From the tribe of Manasseh, 12,000. From the tribe of Simeon, 12,000.

[2 : 32] From the tribe of Levi, 12,000. From the tribe of Ishikar, 12,000. From the tribe of Zebulun, 12,000.

From the tribe of Joseph, 12,000. From the tribe of Benjamin, 12,000. After this I looked.

And there before me was a multitude that no one could count. From every nation, tribe, people and language. Standing before the throne and before the Lamb.

They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice. Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

All the angels were standing round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God saying.

[3 : 34] Amen. Praise and glory. And wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength. Be to our God forever and ever.

Amen. Then one of the elders asked me. These in white robes. Who are they? And where did they come from?

I answered. Sir, you know. And he said. These are they who have come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple. And he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

Never again will they hunger. Never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd.

[4 : 42] And he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe every tear from their eyes. Let's pray.

Amen. Right now as we sit, as we listen, as we read your word.

Right now heaven is singing in praise. Salvation to our God.

Father, we want to know your salvation. We want every person here.

And every person in our families. In our community. To know the salvation of God. And so we pray that you would give us a vision afresh.

[5 : 53] Of all that you have done. Amen. So that we may be filled with hope and encouragement. To share that salvation with others.

Please do that work amongst us. We ask for nothing less. And it's for your glory. And your honour. And your praise.

Amen. Well, I had begun with great confidence. Walking up Mangerton in Kerry was easy as far as I was concerned.

I had spotted a few other walkers in the distance. So felt I was rather safe. But once at the top, it started to rain.

And then the winds started blowing. And then the clouds came down. I continued on. But the wind got stronger. The visibility less.

[6 : 57] And then I had one of those terrible thoughts. As the cloud just cleared for just a moment. There to my left hand side was this sheer drop.

Johnny. You're not going to make it. I didn't like to admit it. But I was struggling. I began to doubt that I would actually get down to the bottom.

Now perhaps that's how you feel about the Christian life. You wonder if you're going to make it through. Am I going to get to that eternal glory?

The struggles we face. The trials we go through. Are like a storm. The winds blowing. And we begin to have this terrible thought. I'm not sure I'm going to get through this.

Well that's why we have chapter 7 of Revelation. Because it will show us that if we are Christians. And for anybody who puts their trust in Christ.

[8 : 06] Then not even suffering. Not even sin. And not even Satan. Will be able to destroy. Our salvation.

In fact we're going to discover. That because of God. Our salvation. Is absolutely secure. Because that's the song of heaven isn't it?

Do you see it there in verse 10? Salvation belongs. To our God. God secures. Our salvation.

So as we go through. Chapter 7. We're going to look at three big themes. Secure. In our suffering. Secure. On judgment day.

And secure. For eternity. Secure in suffering. Secure in judgment. And secure. In eternity. So first.

[9 : 10] Secure. Secure. Secure. Secure. In suffering. Look at verse 1. After this. Well.

After what? Well. In chapter 6. We learn that Christians. Go through times. Of terrible suffering. But now.

As we venture into chapter 7. John sees something else in his vision. That Christians will be kept. In. Their suffering. You see.

Chapter 6. And chapter 7. Look at the same event. But from a different perspective. If you wanted to write a heading over chapter 6.

You could say struggles. And over chapter 7. You could write security. So two things are going to help us understand.

[10:03] Our security. First. Oddly. You might think. Suffering is promised. Let's read verse 1. After this I saw four angels.

Standing at the four corners of the earth. So these are angels. God's servants. Who have all authority. Over the whole world.

What are they doing? Well. They're holding back the four winds of the earth. To prevent any wind from blowing on the land. Or on the sea. Or on any tree.

Now these four winds. Are not good. They are devastating. It leads to terrible destruction. And relentless death.

I think these four winds. Are actually a reference back. To the four horsemen. That we saw in chapter 6. Let's remind ourselves of them.

[11:03] Just turn back to chapter 6. Verse 2. Verse 2. Verse 2.

Verse 2. The four horsemen describe the suffering that comes. That's unleashed. Verse 2. I looked and there before me was a white horse.

Its rider held a bow. That's a weapon of war. And was given a crown. And he rode out as a conqueror. Bent on conquest. Then verse 4.

Another horse came out. A fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth. And to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword.

And then verse 5. Middle of verse 5. We see there was a black horse. Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures saying.

[12:05] A kilogram of wheat for a day's wages. And three kilograms of barley for a day's wages. It was extortion. And do not damage the oil and the wine.

And there wasn't much left. And then in verse 8 we read. That there was a pale horse. Its rider was named Death.

And Hades, the place of death. Was following close behind him. And they were given power over a quarter of the earth. To kill by sword, famine and plague.

And by the wild beasts of the earth. You see the message of chapter 6 there is that Christians are to expect times of suffering.

And that's the point of chapter 7 at the beginning. The four winds will bring about the same effect. Look what the other angel says in chapter 7 and verse 2.

[13:07] The middle of verse 2. The angel called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given, what? Power to harm the land and the sea.

Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees. You see this is the experience of life. This side of the return of Jesus.

We will go through times of suffering. Now I know you know one another and you know people's stories. And I know some of your stories.

And some of you here have experienced upheaval in your own countries. War. Some of you amongst your families have experienced violent bloodshed.

Some economic injustice. And for us all sadly the deaths of loved ones. You see when these winds blow.

[14 : 12] They can knock us down. And we begin to ask. Where are you God? Why are you allowing this? Don't you care?

It shakes our salvation to the very core. And we wonder. Am I going to make it through? All this suffering. Has God abandoned me?

Doesn't he love me? Is he giving up on me? And in our moments of grief and pain. We have this terrible thought.

I'm not going to make it. Well thankfully. That's not the only thing we see. Because not only is suffering promised.

But salvation is protected. You see verse 1. We've got this picture of the four winds of destruction coming.

[15 : 13] Which is about to be unleashed on the world. But before it does happen. Let's read verse 2 again. Then something happens. I saw another angel coming up from the east.

Having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the other four angels. Who had been given power to harm the land and the sea. Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees.

Don't harm the world. Until we put a seal on the foreheads. The servants of the servants of our God. This is the command of heaven.

It's saying we need to protect the servants of God. We need to secure the Christians. The suffering is going to come.

It will be experienced. But through it all. Your salvation will be protected. That protection is symbolised.

[16 : 13] Verse 3. With a seal on your forehead. A name will be put on your forehead. To mark you out as belonging to God.

Look what God has already said to his church. Have a look back in chapter 3. Verse 12. As we think about this mark.

This name that is given to his people. Chapter 3. Verse 12. In the middle of verse 12 we read. God says to his people.

I will write on them the name of my God. And the name of the city of my God. The new Jerusalem. Which is coming down out of heaven from my God. And I will also write on them my new name.

Go back to chapter 7. It reads like an addressed envelope. It's like God has tattooed an address on your forehead. Stamped on your head.

[17 : 19] Name. God's son. God's daughter. What's your address? The city of God. The new Jerusalem. You're going to get there.

Of course it's not a real stamp. It's not a real tattoo. It's symbolism to say that God has put his seal of ownership on his servants. He knows who belongs to him.

Each one of his people is identifiable. Each one is secure with their God given identity. You see God has his name on his children.

He knows who belongs to him. And he will keep you. He will not forget you. He will never leave you. In fact, not one of God's servants will ever be forgotten.

That's what we have in verse 4, don't we? Read with me verse 4. Then I heard the number of those who were sealed. We have revealed 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

[18 : 32] Now, we're not to make the same mistake as the Jehovah Witnesses who take this as a literal 144,000 people who are somehow going to reach paradise and it's just them and then everybody else is kind of left to something else.

no it's symbolism for all the people of God this is a picture of the true Israel the true children of Abraham those who have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ you see the important thing to notice is this is a full and complete number verse 5 from the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed from the tribe of Reuben 12,000 and they were sealed and from the tribe of God 12,000 and they were sealed and so on in other words not one of God's people is forgotten they are all accounted for there is a definite amount and they are all named and known by God not one is missing you see if you are trusting in Christ today you are part of that great number you are known and not forgotten you are sealed by God protected forever we get another glimpse of this if you just scoot on a little bit to chapter 14 verse 1 where again there is another vision as we go through Revelation we see that it is the same scene repeated over and over and over again but from different perspectives and new information so chapter 14 in his vision verse 1

I looked and there before me was the Lamb who stands for Jesus Christ standing on Mount Zion that is the new heavens the new Jerusalem and with him 144,000 who are they?

they had his name and his father's name written on their foreheads now let's be clear what we're looking at in this first part of chapter 7 is not a promise of protection from suffering it's a promise of protection for salvation got to underline that mark that one this is not a promise of protection from suffering it's a promise of protection for salvation you see no matter what is thrown at us no matter how bad it gets no matter the depth of our suffering or the length of our suffering no matter how weak you feel or how helpless you feel no matter what storm you may be in right now or what storm may come upon your life you are secure listen to the promise of God to you today nothing and no one not even suffering can destroy your salvation you are secure so we are secure in suffering and we are secure on judgment day chapter 6 ends with a terrifying account of what to expect on judgment day

Christ is going to return and we read chapter 6 verse 15 then the kings of the earth the princes the generals the rich the mighty and everyone else including you and me both slave and free all will be there hidden caves and among the rocks of the mountains they call to the mountains and the rocks fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the land for the great day of their wrath has come and who can withstand it you see when when justice comes no one will be able to stand against God's judgment no one has the power to withhold it and push it back no one is able to escape it now that makes us ask the question how am I going to be on judgment day answer that for yourself right now how will you be on judgment day well the good news is we can be secure when justice falls first we can stand before God as judgment falls we are shown something else look at verse 9 chapter 7 verse 9 after this

[24 : 10] I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count from every nation tribe people and language what are they doing can you see where they are standing standing before the throne and before the lamb they are standing in praise around the throne look at verse 9 they were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands and they cried out in a loud voice salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the lamb it seems they have escaped the wrath of God's judgment rather than fear there is joy instead of panic there is confidence now this isn't just one or two lucky ones who kind of managed to slip through the net no look what verse 9 says

I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count now this great number is not different to the 144,000 that we've just looked at they are the same people servants of God whose salvation is secure in the first picture the people are numbered a sign of completeness in the second picture the people are unnumbered a sign of vastness vastness now John the author of Revelation does this all the time although the image changes it's talking about the same thing we've seen that already when he talked about the four horsemen and then the four winds let me give you another example if you look back just at chapter 5 and verse 5 chapter 5 verse 5

Jesus is described as a victorious lion a triumphant lion but then in the immediate verse after Jesus is described as a slain lamb so which one is he is he a lion or is he a lamb well he's both two pitchers one person so that's what I think is going on here in chapter 7 we have a numbered people and we have an unnumbered people in other words the number of people who escape God's judgment is both full on the one hand and far reaching on the other hand includes people from the four corners of the earth from every nation tribe people and language God has saved many people a multitude that no one can count and they are secure on the day of judgment they are secure in their salvation but how how are they secure why are they singled out as being secure well because they have been washed by Jesus look at verse 13 then one of the elders asked me these in white robes this great number from every nation tribe people in language who are they where did they come from how did they get to be here

I answered sir you know you tell me and he said these are they who have come out of the great tribulation well what's the great tribulation well it's the time of suffering that God's people go through from the resurrection of Jesus to the return of Jesus that time frame between the resurrection and the return is the great tribulation or sometimes referred to as the end times now the church Christians in every age and time go through this time of suffering that's what we've been looking at in chapter six the four horsemen the four winds the military conquest the wars we see going on in the world the violent bloodshed we see all around us the economic injustice as people live without food the relentless death one day after another and on top of all of that Christians face opposition and persecution now as we go through this tribulation as we go through these times of sufferings we can be tempted to give up and to give in we can fail to live for Jesus we can fall into sin we can grumble and complain we can even curse

God and say I've had enough and what happens then what will happen to you then on the day of judgment will I stand confidently before God or will I be like the people that's mentioned there running and hiding will my sin destroy my security well let me reassure you that even in the mess and the brokenness of our life we are secure here's how let's read verse 13 again one of the elders asked me these in white robes who are they where did they come from and I answered sir you know and he said these are they who have come out of the great tribulation well how did they come through that well they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb you see sin stains it spoils and it and it soils it leaves us dirty and filthy and unacceptable to god we are a stench that must be removed from god like a workman who's been clearing the sewage pipes all day and then trying to gain access to a fine dining restaurant oh no way no thank you but if that worker went home and had his shower scrubbed hosed and cleaned went to his wardrobe and put on his brand new clothes then he would be welcome to eat and drink and feast well if we are to be sure of a welcome from god rather than face the wrath of god we need to be clean not a shower kind of clean but a deep spiritual clean and how does that cleaning happen well we're told in verse 14 they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb when we talk about the blood of the lamb we're talking about the lamb who was slain

[32 : 08] Jesus Christ who died on the cross for you and for me as Jesus died he was taking my sin Jesus was stained he was spoiled he was soiled for me and in its place he gives me his sinless purity Jesus was judged for me so that I might be welcomed in Jesus took my filthy robes my sin and gave me his pure white robes his sinless perfection so when God looks at me his child he sees the purity of Christ you see here's the point if I have trusted Jesus for salvation then my sin is dealt with and when the day of judgment comes I will be kept secure you see no matter what your sin is and as you sit there and you think back over your life no matter how great and often your sin no matter how public or private no matter the weight of your guilt or shame it is all dealt with once cleaned by Jesus your past sin will never stain your present sin will never spoil your future sin will never soil on the day of judgment you are secure listen to the promise of

God to you today nothing and no one not even your sin can destroy your salvation you are secure so secure in suffering secure in judgment and secure for eternity you see as we journey our life towards eternity as we go through our times of suffering as we walk through the storms of life as we sin and as we fail in the midst of that and we do God still knows his people and he will ensure that all who trust in him are secure for eternity isn't that what it says in verse 15 therefore because of what God has done in Christ therefore they are before the throne of

God and serve him day and night in his temple because of all that God has done they are before the throne no questions no doubts no ifs or maybes absolute rock solid guaranteed assurance they are before the throne of God two things help us see this God's promise look here at what God will do look what he's promised his people end of verse 15 he will shelter them verse 17 he will be their shepherd he will lead them he will wipe away tears you see salvation is never based on what I promise to do for God

God I promise I'll do this I promise I won't do this again I promise I'm going to be better I promise I'm it's never based on what I promise to do for God salvation is always grounded in what God promises to do for me that's why they burst out in song salvation belongs to me no salvation belongs to our God it's his to give not mine to earn that's why the whole of heaven joins in in praise verse 12 amen praise glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God forever and ever amen only God can achieve our salvation it's something I receive not because of my wisdom or power or because of your worthiness and strength it's all of God his wisdom his strength so we can stand before

God with humble confidence because we are depending not on our power but on his promises to me but not only his promise we also have his presence we will be secure because God will be present with us look at the end of verse 15 and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence his presence means that nothing will ever harm us again verse 16 never again will they hunger never again will they thirst the sun will not beat down on them nor any scorching heat in fact not even Satan can harm us or separate us from God why verse 17 because the lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd you know right now today this week in this age of tribulation in which we live

[38 : 27] Satan is actively against Christ and his church he doesn't like you his aim is to disrupt and destroy it's a real battle but because the lamb Jesus Christ is at the centre of the throne he rules over all things and all people and he will keep us and he will shelter us and he will protect us in our salvation now and for all eternity Satan Satan's days are numbered and one day all suffering will be gone all sin will be gone and Satan will be banished forever and in their place Jesus will shepherd us how look at the end of verse 17 he will lead us to springs of living water and

God will wipe every tear from our eyes so we can stand before God with humble confidence because we are depending not on our power but God's promised presence with us Carigoline Baptist Church listen to God's word to you today if you are a Christian maybe you are not a Christian here today but if you trust in Christ nothing no one not suffering not sin not Satan will be able to destroy your salvation you are secure forever you are secure forever let's pray our father god you know our story you know our life you know the things that we suffer you know the sins that weigh upon us and you know the way in which

Satan gets at us and yet we remind ourselves today that in the midst of all of that storm our name is known by you you have written your name on us you will never forget us we are safe and secure in your salvation now tomorrow and forever and ever so we say thank you thank you father god thank you lord Jesus Christ thank you holy spirit for your work in our life we praise you in Jesus name amen well we're going to sing I think we're just finding that as we go through revelation we we just have to sing we have to join in with all of heaven and we can say confidently blessed assurance Jesus is mine