

The seven seals (continued)

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[0 : 00] Chapter 7 and up to and including chapter 8 verse 1. We're looking at the structure of these seven seals.

! 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.

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.

[1 : 32] From the tribe of Gad, 12,000. From the tribe of Asher, 12,000. From the tribe of Natalie.

Let's hold that thought and I'll come and try and put that into context in a moment. As we are going through this, I would like us to be conscious of the way he speaks.

You remember my illustration of this is dear Stuart McNary, who for months preached about fiat in his Northern Irish accent.

And nobody, no, that's not true, nobody. Some people didn't understand what he was talking about because they hadn't picked up on the accent. And if you're from Northern Ireland, fiat means faith. And he'd been speaking about being justified by fiat and living by fiat. And anyway, so you've got to pick up the way things are said.

[2 : 36] And I think it's really important as we go on through the book of Revelation that we don't mistake his way of speaking, what I say, his accent. So let's do one or two, just to recap some things that we've noticed about the way he speaks.

So if I were to say, this is revision. He uses symbolic numbers. So could we just remind ourselves seven, which seems to, if you listen to his accent, it seems to mean the whole thing.

Seven, yep. Twelve. Twelve. Which refers to, or makes us think of. Well, hold on, let's do the twelve. The twelve. The apostles. Yeah, the apostles.

And the tribes. Yeah. So the, the old, sorry, the New Testament people of God, the Old Testament people of God.

So twelve refers to both of those. And somebody said a thousand. Do we know what, do we get in the sense of what a thousand refers to, or how he uses the thousand?

[3 : 49] I think it's just a big number. If we go on and we find that there's more to it than that, then we can certainly improve on that. But at the moment a thousand is a big number.

Any other numbers? There were some numbers in the reading. Pardon? One thousand. Yeah, you can do things with the twelve. You can multiply them together.

Twelve. Twelve's 144. And you can multiply them by a thousand. And you get 144,000, which was the number that we got in the reading. You can add them together.

Twelve plus twelve is twenty-four. And there were twenty-four, where does twenty-four come?

Twenty-four elders round the throne. And we had four in this reading, did we not?

Chapter seven, verse one. We have had four horsemen. Yeah, the four horsemen. Four winds. Four angels.

[4 : 47] Four angels. Thank you. One suggestion about the four is that it refers to the four corners of the earth, the totality of the earth.

I'm just going to put that forward as a suggestion. As we go through, you might think that's a good suggestion. But it's certainly a suggestion like the four. Oh, thank you.

Right, okay. We've got the center's approval anyway. So like the four corners of the earth. Four corners of the earth is what we would say as a European metaphor.

Have we got anyone? Is it? Well, let's find out. Roger, do you know, in German conversation, would you say the four corners of the earth?

Probably would, but I can't remember if I'd tell it. No. Ruth? You just have to go for English. Is four corners of the earth just an English expression or do other?

[5 : 56] Wait. I'm going to look. Come on. Four corners of the earth.

Yes. Sanvia? You don't know. Okay, right. We don't want to push onto the text just the way we look at it.

But I think four sounds reasonable, just getting it from the text to do with the earth. Okay. It might have to be the other way around. It might be the use of the phrase because of the four corners.

Well, that's a good point.

Yeah, maybe it's this that's come into our language. Okay. So, numbers, symbolic things.

One of the criticisms of interpreting the book of Revelation this way is to say, oh, well, you're allegorizing it and it can mean anything you want.

[6 : 57] I don't think that's a fair criticism. I think we're trying to listen to exactly what he does mean when he uses symbols. So, could you get any things that are symbolic that a phrase is used, but we know that that's not the real reality.

The symbol points to the reality. Yeah, the lampstands, candlesticks. So, that we're told specifically what the lampstands are, aren't we?

Which verse tells us that specifically? Seven churches. Yeah, it's the seven churches and we're told that. So, we're not making that up. Where does it say that? In the verse of 1.

It's chapter 1. Which verse? 12. 12. Well, that's the seeing the seven golden lampstands.

20. 20. Yeah. That's where it specifically said the mystery of the seven stars. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.

[8 : 05] The seven lampstands are the seven churches. So, he tells us that's the sort of way he's speaking. Symbolic lampstands. Any other symbolism? Slain lamp. Slain lamp. Slain lamp.

Slain lamp. Slain lamp. Slain lamp. Yeah, okay. Yeah. The lamp. So, Jesus isn't actually a woolly creature about this tall, is he?

It's a symbolic way of referring to Jesus. The lamp that was slain. And why is that particular symbolism appropriate? Because?

Because the lamb is a sacrificial creature. Yeah? Yeah. Yeah. I suppose another thing I'm going to say is I can't, I don't know the answer to all the questions.

I don't, I can't do all the details. And I think here's another principle. Let's get the big picture. And if there's some details we can't fit in, let's not be too worried about it.

[9 : 08] Does that make sense? I mean, if we, if we, you're doing each little bit, you can get bogged down. So, see the large picture and try and fit things into it. And if, if we, if we don't know the answer, well, let's not get too worried about it.

So, the seven stars, the seven angels of the churches. It is, um. Seven seals of the chumpets. Yes. They're, they're symbolic sort of things, aren't they?

Is that what you meant? Am I, yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. Let's, let's not get. So, there was this thing, which seems to be a very distinctive way of John, um, speaking.

The hearing and seeing thing. Could anybody remind us what the hearing and seeing thing is? The lion and the lamb.

And you, we get it in, let's have a look. Five, five.

[10 : 15] Five, five. Yeah. One of the elders said to me, do not weep. See the lion. Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of the David has triumphed.

He is able to open the seven seals. So, he hears that. That comes to him through his hearing. Then I saw a lamb looking as if it had been slain. So, he hears one thing and he sees something else.

Now, in some ways those are contradictory, aren't they? A lion is not a lamb and a lamb is not a lion. But as regards the Lord Jesus Christ, both those descriptions are correct.

And actually, both of them are necessary. He is the sacrificial lamb and he is also the triumphant, powerful, kingly lion. So, both of those things are true.

And the way John does it is to say, I heard something and I saw something. And you put them together and they sort of react together to give you some vivid theology.

[11 : 16] And I would like to try and convince you that he's going to do that again in a little while. So, now then, this method.

Anybody know what this means? Tape recorder. Tape recorder. Yes, it's a tape recorder. I always try to throw people off the scent by saying it's an ancient language. But, of course, it's a tape recorder.

Yes, well, that's true. Yes, that dates some of us, doesn't it? Yes, a cassette recorder. I don't know, probably got to explain what a cassette recorder is to people. But, stop.

You still have the symbols on the screen. Yes, that's right, yes. Fast forward and rewind. And one of the methods that John uses is to rewind.

And he does a little rewind between, where are we? Chapter 6, verse 17.

[12:21] The great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it? So, that's the end of the world. But he says, hold on, hold on. There's more to be said. Let's rewind a bit, and let me tell you something else that's important before we finish.

So, he hits the rewind button. Fair's fair. I got that way of putting it from David Sprouse. But he hits the rewind button and tells us what he's telling us in chapter 7, verses, well, all those verses.

And then we go forward again to the seventh seal, and then we finish. So, there's this rewind button process, rewind button feature.

And I think that happens often. If we don't get that point, we shall be hopelessly tangled up.

Because I think what he does is go through history, and then he says, right, I've showed you one thing.

Let's rewind to the beginning. I'm going to go through it again. And then we're going to rewind to the beginning and go through it again. And rewind to the beginning and go through it again. So, that is a very important principle.

[13:32] And if I have failed to convince you of that, or if you don't agree that that's the way John's doing things, we're going to get very tangled up. We had this other, which is almost the same sort of thing.

So, there's Tom Cruise. And then there's Tom Cruise again. And there's Tom Cruise again. Can you remember the little summary word I gave for that?

Storyboard, yeah. Pictureboard, storyboard. So, he expresses his theology rather than giving us a doctrinal statement.

He'll give it in form of a little story of something happening and then something else, and then something else happening. And what was my example of that?

Yeah, my example was Tom Cruise. But the... The... The... The... Yeah, the four horsemen. Yes, okay. And this bit of...

[14:40] Yeah, well, you get this sort of dialogue in Chapter 5. Who is worthy to open the scroll? And then the next thing, he weeps because no one's worthy to open the scroll.

And then somebody else says, don't weep because there is one person who's opened the scroll, and it's the Lion, the Lamb of Judah. So, that uniqueness of Christ and the splendor of his unique achievement is told us by a little sort of conversation, a little bit of storyboard.

And I think we'll see that again. Now then, another thing which is more or less sort of akin to this.

Let me ask you, those of you who were here last time with the six seals... I think I can put this on the screen.

Let's... I'm going to come to the screen now. The Book of Revelation is a book in the Bible for our edification, for our survival, and our progress as Christians. It is an unveiling. So, it tells us the truth behind the appearance.

[15:57] And that truth has the nature of being an abiding, ongoing situation. The spiritual realities, which I think the spiritual realities are the same for us as they were all those years ago, the spiritual realities.

It's in the form of a letter to... How many? There, just checking. The nature of a letter is that it is relevant to the people who receive it.

So, I think it is... The fact that it is a letter makes it very unlikely that the main ideas are something that only now are happening when President Trump's been elected and there isn't a war in the Middle East.

I think it's very unlikely that that is the main content of this, because it's a letter. And what would be the point of writing a letter all those years ago? There's stuff that's completely irrelevant to them.

You just wouldn't call it a letter. Letters are relevant to the hearers. It is in the form of a prophecy, and it does say what's shortly going to happen. But the nature of prophecy is to give us the current

behavioral implications of the big picture.

[17:22] So, all these things that we've been through before... I don't think I need to spend a long time daffling everybody with this. Come on. Conflict.

Throne. That was the... Go back. That was the question. Who can...

Nobody can open the seven seals. First response... Who is worthy? Answer. First answer, nobody. Second answer, the line of Judah has prevailed.

That was the horseman. Da, da, da, da, da, da. And you remember that we did the four horsemen. One, two, three, four. Then there's a bit that is rather different.

So, if you want to just check that over. Chapter six, the four horsemen... Sorry. The seals. We're doing seals. First seal, chapter six, verse one.

[18:26] Second seal, chapter six, verse two. Sorry. Three. Third seal, chapter six, verse five.

Fourth seal, chapter six, verse seven. Those are four horsemen.

And the fifth seal is different. It's the souls under the altar saying, how long, O Lord, till you avenge our suffering?

Our suffering. And then... Let's fill these in. Conquest... Da, da, da, da, da. Fifth seal, unresolved Christian suffering.

Sixth seal, the final end. And then we get the rewind. Stop. I need to tell you about the church being made indestructible. And the seventh seal.

It's too awesome to say anything. So, that's just reminding us. And we'll come and look in a little bit more detail in one moment.

[19:26] Let's sing. So, what was it, Steve, you suggested? 888. 888. Yeah, let's sing 888. Let's take this opportunity, then, to go a little bit into chapter seven.

The sequence of it is... Let's go back. These are the four horsemen, which I think we would say are...

It's a description of the nature and the ingredients of history. History, the scroll being the scroll of world history, which the Lamb is worthy to open.

So, the course of this world flows from the hands of Jesus Christ as he unwraps world history. And it contains those things which we see all around us. Because this one, I guess in a period of time, we're not particularly conscious of persecution and martyrdom.

[20:38] But that's... Other countries are. Other countries are, yeah. And you could say that our period of history is a little unusual. But anyway, that's the...

Then we have the final end, the awesome destruction of everything. When the sky is rolled up like a scroll and the mountains flee away.

And people say, it will be better to have skyscrapers crushed on top of us than to have to look into the face of the wrathful Lamb.

But there is a question. Who can stand? And it's answered by going to chapter seven. So, let's flip forward to this now then. So, what's happening in this rewind in chapter seven, verses one to 17? That's the whole thing, isn't it? There are seals. Verse three is the key verse, isn't it?

[21:44] 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. And then he learns about the sealing.

Through what method of communication does he learn about the sealing? Hearing. That's significant.

At this point, he's only hearing stuff. And he hears this sort of census report and the numbers and the people. So, this is a hearing thing.

And I just point you to this thought here. Let's try and draw the sealing. Does anybody know? Has he made this idea of sealing the foreheads?

Is this a totally new thing or has he got it from somewhere? Has John got this idea from somewhere? He got it from somewhere in the past.

[22:44] Yeah. Anybody know where the somewhere is? Is it in Egypt? Is it in Egypt? I'm not going to go for Egypt. I'm going to go there.

It's my cross-reference, but it's not from my brain. It is a cross-reference. It's Ezekiel 9. So, let's see where he's got this from. Because he does actually love to quote things from the Bible.

And if we don't know our Bibles, we're going to be a little bit blindsided. So, Ezekiel 9. The context of this is the destruction of Jerusalem.

If you read the book of Kings, you think, oh, this is just one long judgment after another. Hundreds of years of kings failing and so on.

You could read it another way and you could say it's hundreds of years of God's patience. It's in 4. Yeah, I'm going to come there in a moment.

[23 : 54] And you could say there's hundreds of years of God's patience. But God's patience is large, but it is not infinite. His patience sometimes runs out.

And this is a chapter where God's patience runs out. And he says, I've given you so much. I've looked after you. I've given you chance after chance, if we can put it that way.

But I'm not going to put up with this forever. And here is, in a sense, a final judgment. Now, we know it isn't a final, final judgment.

But it is the end of a period of history. Jerusalem is going to be destroyed. The Babylonians are going to destroy it. Even though they say the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord is indestructible.

God says, no, that's not what I mean by the indestructibility of my people. I'm not limiting that to a particular city and a particular temple. So, let's read it.

[24 : 58] Ezekiel 9. Then I heard him call out in a loud voice, Bring near those who are appointed to execute judgment on the city, each with a weapon in his hand.

And behold, I saw six men coming from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with a deadly weapon in his hand. With that was a man clothed in linen, who had a writing kit at his side.

They came in and stood beside the bronze altar. Now, the glory of the God of Israel went up from above the cherubim, where it had been, and moved to the threshold of the temple.

God is moving out. Then the Lord said to the man clothed in linen, who had the writing kit at his side, and said to him, Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over the detestable things that are done in it.

And as I listened, he said to the others, Follow him through the city and kill without pity or compassion. Slaughter old men, the young men and women and mothers and children, but do not touch anyone who has the mark.

[26 : 16] Begin at my sanctuary. So they began with the old men who were in front of the temple. And then he said to them, Defile the temple and fill the courts with the slain.

Go! So they went out and began killing throughout the city. And while they were killing and I was left alone, I fell down crying out, Alas, sovereign Lord, are you going to destroy the entire remnant of Israel in this outpouring of your wrath on Jerusalem?

And he answered me, The sin of the people of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great. The land is full of bloodshed. The city is full of injustice.

They say the Lord has forsaken the land. The Lord does not see. So I will not look on them with pity or spare them, but I will bring down on their own heads what they have done.

Then the man in linen with the writing kit at his side brought back words saying, I have done as you command. It's an awesome chapter, isn't it? Let's try and tease out a little bit about it.

[27 : 24] While we're there, would you like just to look over into chapter 10, where the throne, the mobile throne of the God of Israel is described, and the throne attendants, the sort of throne-bearing creatures, these are the cherubim.

Chapter 10, verse 11. As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the cherubim faced. The wheels did not turn about as the cherubim went.

The cherubim went whatever direction their head faced without turning as they went. Their entire bodies, including their backs, their hands, their wings, were completely full of eyes, as were the four wheels.

I heard the wheels being called the whirling wheels. Each of the cherubim had four faces. One face was that of a cherub, a cherub. The second, the face of a human being.

The third, the face of a lion. And the fourth, the face of an eagle. Just noticing, that's another thing that John picks up on, isn't it, with these four living creatures. They have the same sort of appearance as these sort of super cherubs.

[28 : 35] Super cherubim. Anyway, that was just a diversion. So my question, would you like to discuss this with your next-door neighbour for two minutes? Who are the main characters in chapter 9?

And what can we say about them? Because there's a sort of storyboard thing going on here. Who are the main characters and what can we say about them? Two minutes with your next-door neighbour. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[30 : 29] Thank you. Chapter 9 is what I should have said. Okay, I'm going to... Ten more seconds.

I should have said just Chapter 9. That particular bit. Okay, somebody shout out main character in this storyboard of action.

Man with the writing kit. Man with the writing kit, yeah. Does he come first? The swordsman come first.

I got that. The six men with deadly weapons. So it's a little bit like John's way of doing it. First, there's going to be total judgment. Deadly weapons, six of them. Yep. And then...

Man with the writing kit. Difference between the writing kit man and the other six? One comes in peace and the other comes... Yeah.

[31 : 26] One comes in peace, the other comes not in peace. Clothing? Linus. Yeah, the writing kit man doesn't wear any military stuff, does he?

He's not wearing armour. He doesn't have a sword. He's wearing linen. I didn't look it up. Is this possibly a priestly garment? I don't know, but he... His weapon is the writing kit. His weapon is the writing kit.

Yeah, the thing that he has is the writing kit. So the one man in linen with the writing kit. And who else have I put? Yeah, other characters at work here?

Yeah. Those with the mark? Yep. I'm going to say the Lord when I wrote it down. The Lord is actually behind the whole thing, isn't he?

Who did I put next? Oh, the cherubim? We got cherubim? Yeah. Well, it's mentioned, isn't it? Yeah. In 9 verse 3, the glory of the God of Israel went up from above the cherubim.

[32 : 27] And other characters involved in this? Or receiving this? Pardon? Yeah, the people that are slain.

The people. So the people that come under two headings, don't they? The people who are slain. And... Well, you could do it. The people who are marked.

And the people who are slain. I don't know whether I... I don't know if they're safe. The people who have the mark are the safe ones. Oh, yes.

Right? So, and the people who are slain are the ones without the mark. So that's two. Is there a third group of people? No. It's either one or the other.

They're either marked and saved, or they're unmarked and slain. There is no third group of people. It is completely binary in that sense.

[33 : 25] One of the things that really strikes me is in chapter 9 verse 5. And this is an Ezekiel thing. That in this action, God says, show no mercy.

Do not have compassion. That is very unusual, isn't it? Because God describes himself as a God who's full of compassion. And full of mercy. But those qualities in judgment, when God has said, my patience is exhausted.

He says, this judgment is without mercy. You know, don't... That's what it says. I'm just telling you what it says. Without showing pity or compassion.

Just total fairness. Total fairness and total fairness for these sinful people is... It hardly bears saying, does it?

But it is total judgment. And he mentions each group. He mentions each group. He does. He says, slaughter the old men, the young men, the women, the mothers. It's...

[34 : 32] Children. Yeah. It's horrendous, really, isn't it? That is the nature of judgment.

After hundreds of years of patience. After multitudes of words of encouragement to repent. After a whole culture designed to show people that God is a God of mercy.

And having rejected all that, God says, well, that's it. But... Total fairness. No pity. No compassion. No second chances. Because they've had a thousand chances. It's an awesome thing, isn't it?

God's judgment is serious. And awesome. And it's a judgment with fairness.

But it is a judgment which is totally fair. It doesn't let people off anything. Unless they're marked.

And what was the description of the people who were marked?

[35 : 39] Do you see what sort of people... Those who... In my translation, it's those who sigh and grow over the abominations of commitment. Yes. There's something in them that said, oh, God doesn't deserve to be treated the way he's being treated.

These abominations and things, they're awful. I can't do much about it, but I do think it's just awful. And God is sort of looking on the heart, isn't he?

Of people who are penitent. Who are troubled about sin. Who are concerned about God's glory. And that's something that God's done within them, isn't it?

Nowadays, you'd say that's the mark of a regenerate person. And so the writing desk man has somehow sees what's going on in the heart of these penitent, godly people, and says there's a mark on their foreheads.

And they won't come under this awful judgment. Ray, were you going to say something? Yeah. And in the other part of the scripture, they'll say it just begins with the house of God.

[36 : 47] And then there's the land of life where the range of riches. Yeah. So is that the land of the mountain of God? Oh, I hadn't thought of that. I was thinking that writing was on the forehead, but it might be, yeah.

That's your face. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, that's certainly true in the book of Revelation. There's a book or books. Yeah, thank you.

Yeah. The, where it says judgment, begin at the sanctuary. Does anybody know where that's quoted in the New Testament? I didn't know.

I had to look it up. But it is quoted in the New Testament. That wasn't the one I was thinking of. It might be. I was thinking, it's 1 Peter 4, 17, where it says.

Have I got it right? If you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name, for it is time for judgment to begin with God's household. And if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

[38 : 06] So Peter quotes that. I always find this an interesting thing. You're reading in the Old Testament. You think this is very uncomfortable or perhaps irrelevant.

And then, bang, you get something that a New Testament writer says. Actually, this is spot on because I'm going to quote it in the New Testament. And there's an example. Okay. Let's move on. So in Ezekiel is the marking.

In Revelation, so we're going to move back to Revelation now, it doesn't say marking. It says sealing. But I think it is pretty much the same thing.

A seal on the forehead, a mark on the forehead, I think is very much on the same page. I put there for your edification and what it is in Greek, stragis.

So let's look at this sealing a little bit. Can you think in the top of your head about, off the top of your head of examples of sealing? I looked at how this word was used.

[39 : 11] So I've got there. I don't think that uses seal. I think it uses mark. Let's look at seal.

You put it on official documents, didn't you? Yes. Yeah. The authority of the envelope. So there's an authority thing. An approval thing.

I've got there some examples. John 6, 27. Let's just see whether your Bible uses the word seal there because it's in there.

Yes. Yes.

John 6, 27. Do not work for the food that spoils, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal.

[40 : 18] I think the words of approval is just added in. For him God the Father has sealed. What does that say about Jesus then? How does that work? Sealing? What is it saying?

The Father has sealed Jesus. What does that tell us? Can we get the seal of the Holy Spirit? Well, not us. Let's think of Jesus. Has authority. Has authority. Yeah.

His endorsed. Endorsement means that you approve something. You know, if you get to the bottom of a contract and you... Nowadays, we would not so much seal it or sign it, wouldn't we?

We'd say, yeah, I approve of this. I agree with this. Signature here. Say again? Just saying it as well, please. Exactly. Yeah, to say he's well pleased with Jesus.

So, Jesus is sealed in there. And in John 3.33, let's see whether we have sealed there. John 3.33.

[41 : 22] The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard. No one accepts his testimony. Whoever accepted it... Has certified.

Has certified. Has anybody got the word seal in their translation there? What have you got for that? Sorry. Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this.

Yeah. It's a way of describing Christian faith. It's a way of saying, yeah, we agree with that. We approve of that. We're totally behind who Jesus is.

So, there's some examples of seal. I'd better move along, haven't I? To show genuineness, approval, or secure, as with a security tag. Have you ever...

Yes, I've walked out of the shop. You walked out with a... Thank you for that testimony. We'll... A security tag on clothing. You know, and when you go through the...

[42 : 17] Yeah. Beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep. Yeah. Yeah. Mum just pointed out that in Ephesians 4th day, it's just you're not very behind the spirit of God, but you're a seal.

Yeah. Thank you. And I think this is coming on to... I was just looking at some examples of seals, the seven seals. But...

So, let's answer that question. Chapter 7, verse 2. Whose seal is it? This is in Revelation chapter 7, verse 2.

The seal of the living God. That is worth noticing that, isn't it? It's not just a seal. It is the seal of the living God. So, it's his signature, or his approval stamp, or his security tag.

And chapter 9, verse 4. What happens if people are not sealed? What happens if they're not sealed?

[43 : 27] Are they not destroyed? Are they destroyed? Sorry. Revelation 9, 4. Revelation 9, 4.

This is... We've gone on a little bit, but... They're told not to harm the grass of the earth, or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

So, you said... That the ones with the seal are protected. The ones with the seal are protected. The ones without the seal are destroyed. It's the same binary thing as in Ezekiel.

I mean, Ezekiel is a mark, but that was pre-Jesus, post-Jesus, as the sacrifice and the victory and the resurrection becomes a seal.

It's a good thought, isn't it? That in the New Testament, the marking on the people of God, it works in the same way, but there's sort of more intensity to it, because Christ has...

[44 : 33] Yeah, Christ has risen. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, that's worth thinking about, isn't it? In... Just... I don't know if that sort of ties in with what you're saying. In Matthew 27, the tomb is sealed, which is interesting.

Yeah. Because in Jesus' resurrection, that seal is broken. Oh, that's a point, isn't it? Yes, that seal is broken. That was a security seal meant to keep him dead, or keep him down, but it didn't work.

Yeah, that's a good point, isn't it? Yeah. The sealing of the people of God. I mean, we did touch on this last time. Let's look at one sentence, and then we'd better move on very quickly.

So, 2 Corinthians 1.22. 2 Corinthians 1.22. Addressed to Christians.

2 Corinthians 1. Let's take verse 21. Now, it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ.

[45 : 51] He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, put his spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

That whole sort of assurance, that whole sort of assurance, certainty, endorsement, ownership, is put on the forehead of every Christian.

Put on the forehead is one way of putting it. Being given the Holy Spirit as a deposit of what is to come. I think there's a great sort of sense of certainty there because we're conscious of our sin, and we might think because our sin, we're conscious of that wobbling up and down.

Maybe our security wobbles up and down. And this is saying, your sin probably does wobble up and down, but your security doesn't. Yeah? Your security doesn't.

And so I'll put some other references there. John 10 is the one where he says, you're in my hand, no one can pluck you out of my hand.

[47 : 00] I think there's a great blessing to think that, isn't it? To one degree or another, we're conscious day by day of our sin.

It's sort of, our faces are rubbed in it, but we need to hear that the seal of God stands firm. No one can pluck you out of my hand.

We are established, anointed with the Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. So I think that that's worth making a point of.

I want to make another point before we go home. I'm just going to skate over that, have a think about that, because I think that's really powerful and helpful for us. Sealed until the day of our

redemption.

If somebody said to you, those sealed people are literally Jews from those literal ethnic tribes, and that sounds like it's got a lot going for it, but then if you reflect on it, how would you respond to that? [48 : 17] Yeah, go on. I think it's the hearing and the sea. So we might have a number of those, and then it's listed. But then it's the line, the verse I invented, after this I looked, and there was a performing.

The day performing was a great multitude that no one could come from every place. So I think, could we see the way to hear it? Well, I think so. I think this is a seeing versus hearing thing. What he hears is put in a certain particular way, and then what he sees is the same thing, but put in another way.

And let me just ask you again, before we get to the hearing, seeing thing, the sealing, it's binary, isn't it? If that was just Jews, what would it say about us Gentiles?

We're not sealed, and we're not saved. That would be the only way of looking at it, wouldn't it?

Because those who are not sealed get burnt up with a... So it must mean the saved people.

[49 : 22] It's a way of expressing the saved people. And to my mind, it's a very precise way. It's saying God knows exactly who he's going to bring to glory.

Yeah, the fact that it is not just 12,000, but 144.

We've got two lots of 12 in there. And I think he's expressing the Israel of God in this very Jewish way, but he's saying this is the fulfillment of all the promises to Israel when we get not only Jewish people, but Gentile people too.

And I would definitely go for the hearing and seeing because he hears these numbers. And in verse 9, I looked. So I would say this is a hearing, seeing thing.

I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count. Somebody could, yes. The idea of having a great number that no one can count comes from Genesis.

[50 : 40] Anybody like to make that connection? Abraham's promise, yes. If you look at the stars, you can count them, you can count Abraham's descendants.

Now there's an important thing that goes on as we go from the Old Testament to the New Testament, where Paul, I mean, Paul exercises over this in Romans, doesn't he? He says, who are the children of Abraham as regards the promises of God?

It is the people of faith who are the children of Abraham. And it is that, those people that carry on the fulfillment of the promise into the New Testament. And here they are, a multitude that no one can number of every nation, tribe, people, language.

I don't want to take up too much of your time, but... That's the same as Ezekiel, isn't it? Because those in the priesthood were destroyed.

They were Jews, they were set apart, yet they didn't have the mark. Yes. The mark, I'll put it the other way around, say that the mark that saved them wasn't to do with their ethnicity.

[51 : 47] The mark that saved those people was what was going on in their hearts. So the Apostle Paul is going to say, he is not a Jew who was one outwardly, but he is a Jew who was one inwardly, whose circumcision is a circumcision of the heart.

And I think that that's the way it carried on into the New Testament. Let me move on. Click. The description of these people, they've come out of, you get another little dialogue thing here, verse 13, who are these people?

What did they come from? Well, you know the answer already. They are those who have come out of great tribulation. They've washed their robes and made them white in the blood of, made them white in the blood of the Lamb, which is a strange thing to say, isn't it?

Because blood usually makes things contaminated. I'm just going to say, in some schemes of interpretation, the great tribulation would be a specific period of history.

I'm just going to say that the New Testament marks out the whole of the Christian life as one which involves philipsis, that's the word for tribulation, to one degree or another.

[52 : 55] I put a load of references and we won't go through all of them, shall we? That one says, Paul told them, through much tribulation, you must follow the Lord.

We sing it, don't we? Through much tribulation, you must follow the Lord. Da, da, da, da, da. No? Yes, what is it?

With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm. Isn't it that one? I can't remember what it is. Anyway, be that as it may. Let's move on.

There's a lot there. I'm sort of skating over it. Let's look at the future condition of these 144,000 on numberless people. So, moving swiftly to verse 15.

It is said of these people, they are before the throne of God. They serve him day and night in his temple. What a wonderful privilege. Usually they'd be the priests, wouldn't it?

[54 : 02] But they have become a kingdom of priests. They serve him day and night in his temple. He who sits on the throne. What's the next verse in your translation? Thank you.

We'll spread his tent over them. Anybody got a different translation? We'll shelter them with his presence. I don't know why it says that, because it says what you said. I looked it, did look it up. So, tell us again, Ray. Yeah. It's the old NIV. Yeah, tell us what it says. Oh, sorry. Spread his tent. Spread his tent. Tent, yeah. Spread his tent. Spread his tent. Spread his tent over them. Isn't that a lovely expression? That they get there, and he spreads his tent over them.

He will tent upon them. He sort of extends his tabernacle to include them. You know, the tabernacle was the place where God lived, and God sort of spreads his tent to include his people.

[55 : 07] Have you ever been camping? Crawl inside some confined space. They think of the tent of God that he extends over us. It's the idea of sheltering under the shadow of his wings.

He... Yes. Love and protection. Love and protection. And presence. I mean, the presence is not a wrong idea, but it's just not the translation.

Do you know where it talks about somebody tabernacling amongst us? Yeah. In Exodus, the tabernacle is God's sort of mobile dwelling place.

It actually says in John's Gospel that Jesus came to tabernacle amongst us, you know, in the way that God lived with his people, to live among them. I can't resist asking us to look this up.

The bit about never hungering, never thirsting, is actually a quote. Please can we look this up? It's Isaiah 49.

[56 : 26] I got it right? Yeah. Isaiah looks forward to the people of God coming home.

And this is the way prophecy works. It uses an Old Testament configuration, but it's meant to go far beyond that.

And the Old Testament configuration is of the people coming back after exile to Babylon. But the fulfillment of it is coming home, not just back to a particular place in the land.

I mean, what good is that? But coming home to heaven, coming home to be with the Lord. And in Isaiah 49, in that context of coming back to the land, he says, Isaiah 49 verse 8, this is what the Lord says, In the time of my favor, I will answer you.

In the day of salvation, I will help you. I will keep you and make you to be a covenant for the people. New covenant? To restore the land, to reassign its desolate inheritances, to say to the captives, come out, and those in darkness be free.

[57 : 37] They will feed beside the roads and find pasture on every barren hill. They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat down on them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of living water.

I will turn all my mountains into roads and my highways will be raised up. They will come from afar, the north, the south from the region of Aswan. Shout for joy, you heavens.

Rejoice, you earth. Burst into song, you mountains. For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones. And that's what John says is the destiny of the 144,000.

That's the promise of glory, isn't it? He who sits on the throne will cover them with his tabernacle. Never will they hunger.

Never will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them. There are only scorching heat. The lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd and lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

[58 : 44] Somewhere in the Psalms the word says that he will not let the sun hurt you by day. He does. No, the moon. And by night. Yeah, it might be Psalm 121 but it might not.

But there's precious promises, aren't they? We'll never hunger. Never thirst. And not be oppressed by the heat of the environment.

You know, we live in... We all have hungers, don't we? That we... And thirsts. Which are not satisfied in this life.

But never again will they hunger and never again will they thirst. Just... So striking. Just a while that we'll be considering that we're not our own in the form of Christ.

And... One of that is that we're never hungry and never thirst. I think what people... Preachers are really hungry for is meaning and love.

[59 : 53] You know? Having each of us heard the Lord Jesus say to us, you're not your own. You belong to me and you belong to me. I'm not your own.

I'm not your own. I'm not your own. I'm not your own. I'm not your own. I'm not your own. Yeah. Yeah. It means pain. Yes. It is. It is. The lamb at the centre of the throne. It's Christ-centred, isn't it? He's the one who leads us to the springs of living water and God will wipe away every tear from our eyes. I guess time's up. Let's...

We'll sing a song. We did sing yours, didn't we? We did. Thank you.