

06b REV

Let's pick up our study in Revelation chapter 7 now. We have come to the place where four angels are holding back the four winds so that they will not blow on the earth or the sea or on any tree. Why are those three things mentioned? We ask ourselves.

The wind does not blow on the earth, on the sea. Well, those first two, that's the entire principle of climate and weather, isn't it? It's the offshore, the onshore, the whole. But it also says, nor on any tree.

Because what is the biggest effect weather has? You might have air conditioning. You might have air conditioning in your car. But you can't air condition the trees.

You can't air condition the citrus crop. You can't air condition the wheat, the cornfields. And so, when you mess with the wind that blows on the land and the wind that blows on the sea, and the whole evaporation cycle is not taking place and there's no water being carried back up to the mountains where it's going to run through the rivers, where it's going to get the irrigation and so on, your crops are going to fail.

And if by some magic you get them irrigated, they are not going to cross-pollinate. Because you have no air currents. And bees can't find their way around.

I mean, the whole thing is fouled up. So, the primary impact here, our attention is directed toward the effect on plant life of this interruption in the normal cycle and circulation of air. Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God.

So, I ask myself these questions. I'm sure you ask yourself these questions. Why doesn't the angel just pipe up and speak his peace? Why does he ascend from the east? What is the east the direction of? What is its symbolic value? The east is the direction of new beginnings.

The sun rises in the east. The sun rises with healing in his wings. This is the dawning of a new day.

This is hope. The west is the direction of it's over. As the sun left the dock in our boat, sinking slowly in the west or some such thing.

That's where things end, is in the west. They begin in the east. So, this angel ascending in the east, this is a signification, an indication of hope.

Something hopeful is about to happen. Something good is going to come from this angel arising up in the east. So, we're given this expectation of something positive after all this sturm und drang and angels and death and destruction.

Something good. The seal of the living God is on this angel. You and I have the seal of the living God because we have claimed Christ as our savior.

You wake up in the eternal future. You're standing before the judgment bar of God and God looks you in the eye and says, why should I not throw you in the lake of fire? Why should I grant you eternal life in my eternal kingdom? What do we say? The Lord Jesus Christ redeemed me. I am sealed.

I belong to him. The Holy Spirit is the seal. People say all kinds of wild things about the Holy Spirit and wave their hands and wait for healing.

The Holy Spirit, the most important thing he does, in my opinion, is seal us unto the day of redemption. Nobody can take your salvation away. You can't take it away from yourself.

You are born again and you can't unbirth yourself. You're stuck with it. You're born again.

You're saved. Get used to it. We're sealed.

This angel arises in the east with the seal of God. Now, he's got the seal of the living God. This is a thing that you seal things with.

You may have seen ancient seals. They've got bulla that are little round cylinder seals. You put a bottle of wax on something and you roll this cylinder.

It looks like nothing until you roll it and then suddenly you see this little panorama unfold. And here's the king sitting on his throne and here's his subjugated minions and all kinds of signs of divine favor and so on. It makes this little scene.

Well, this angel is like the notary public in heaven. He's got the seal. It's the seal of God.

When you get this seal, you have got God's imprimatur upon you. So, he rises up and he says, Hold up. Don't do any further spoiling to the earth, the sea, or the trees until we have sealed the servants of God on their foreheads.

So, he's symbolically speaking now. He's got this... I hope it's not like the ones that I've seen where you clamp the paper in it and it makes that raised deal. Clamp it down on your forehead.

But this is a seal. And you get the idea that there is going to be a mark left. There's going to be an impression left on the foreheads of the servants of our God.

Now, this is where it helps to have been around in the Bible and been around in the New Testament. What is the big distinction we saw in John chapter 13? What is the changeover in vocabulary that Jesus employs before Judas leaves the upper room and after Judas leaves the upper room? You all, listening to the sound of my voice, are

practically the only people on the planet that have even paid attention to this point. And it's one of the biggest points in the New Testament.

Jesus talks about being faithful servants. We are unprofitable servants. We have done more than was required.

That you may be servants of your Father. And this, that, and the other. He talks to the disciples in the upper room.

They have the washing of the feet. They have the Lord's table which includes the bread and the cup. All 12 disciples are there.

Did you know that Judas ate the bread and drank the cup? Lord, who is it that betrays you? The guy that's got his hand in the dish with me? This is the Lord's supper. Judas is there. Is he a believer? Yes, he is.

Are we going to see him in the eternal future? Yes. Is he going to spend most of the eternal future apologizing? Probably. But he partook of the bread and the cup.

Unless you partake, you have no part with me. You cannot be my disciple and so on. John chapter 7. Anyway.

Judas decides to get up and go. Collect his 30 pieces of silver and betray the Lord. Jesus says, What you do, do quickly.

Satan enters into him. He gets up and he leaves. After he is gone, after the Lord's table, after he... Now you've got 11 disciples in the upper room.

What does Jesus say in John chapter 13? I no more call you servants, I call you brethren. You are sons of the Father. And Jesus, the only place in the gospels where you get any church age teaching is from the middle of John chapter 13 forward.

Because now Jesus says, Let not your heart be troubled, I am the vine, you are the branches, etc. And he commissions the apostles and says, You need to wait. Power will come from on high.

Wait in Jerusalem and so on. That little bit in the middle of John 13 forward is church stuff. Vine and branches, that's not Israel.

That's church. Abide in me, you will bear much fruit, my Father is going to prune. Wait a little while, the Holy Spirit will come, the Comforter, and so on.

All of that is church stuff. But he says, I'm not calling you servants anymore. Now I'm going to talk church.

Church is not servants. Church is sons. Israel is not sons.

Israel is not body and bride of Christ. Israel is not first born among many brethren stuff. Israel is servants.

OK? So, What does the angel cry out with a loud voice? Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. Old Testament language. Israel language.

Born out by what follows. I heard the number of those who were sealed. 144,000 of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.

Now this is a problem. All the tribes of the children of Israel. But we read the list.

Let's look at the list. Five and following here. Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin.

Now, there's some strangeness in this list. Interestingly, throughout the Bible, whenever the tribes of Israel are listed, in whatever form, in whatever order, and whichever names are used, they're always 12. Always.

There is no list of the tribes of Israel that ever gives 13 tribes. So, we would expect that some accommodation is going to be made here because obviously Joseph has the double tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh. Double portion.

Little pachinko machine of blessing that Reuben and Simeon and Levi missed. The leadership stops at Judah. The priesthood stops at Levi.

Double portion rattles all the way down to the 11th son, Joseph. So, he gets two. Ephraim and Manasseh.

So, it says all the tribes of Israel here, but Dan is missing. There is no Dan in here. And, of course, great puzzlement has ensued for all these centuries.

What happened to Dan? And why is Joseph mentioned and one of Joseph's sons mentioned? Joseph normally encompasses both Ephraim and Manasseh. We expect here that Ephraim is in view when the tribe of Joseph is mentioned because Manasseh has already been mentioned. And it's not like you get more than 12,000 from that tribe.

So, what's going on with the missing Dan? Well, I looked around. I tried to read a few things and I got discouraged. And so, I basically went back and thought, well, if we've just had a Bible and nothing else, where would we go and try to figure this out? I thought, well, let's go back to Genesis and find out as much as we can about these sons of Jacob.

The first thing that occurred to me was these tribes are not mentioned in their birth order, are they? Because, and I've only memorized about the first four or five. It's Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah. And after that, I kind of get lost in the funhouse.

And then there's Joseph and then Benjamin, the last two. So, I had to go back and fill the others in. But I know there's Gad and Asher and Naphtali and some of these other guys.

I just forget it all. But I got the first four and the last two. That's half of them.

but I know Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher. That is no kind of birth order. So, we go back to the birth order.

And if we number the sons, Reuben, number one. Simeon, number two. Levi, number three.

Judah, number four. Whoever, whoever, whoever, whoever. Joseph, number eleven.

Benjamin, number twelve. Well, I went in and filled in one item of information that I did not know about those missing ones between four and eleven. And guess what number Dan is? Number seven.

The seventh son is Dan. Dan is number seven. And Dan is missing.

Is the number seven significant? Yes, it is. Is the name Dan significant? Yes, it is. So, I ask myself, I'm sort of taking you through my mental process here.

Because that way you can decide for yourself. So, Dan is the seventh son. Dan is missing.

What else do we know about Dan? Dan was the northernmost tribe in Israel. The most degenerate tribe in Israel in the latter days of the northern kingdom. Dan was a center of idolatry and pagan worship and came under the most severe condemnation from God.

But, lots of these other guys didn't do too well either. Everybody eventually got taken out. So, Dan just sort of got there first.

So, what's going on here? Tribe of Judah, 12,000. Reuben, 12,000. Gad, 12,000.

Asher, 12,000. Naphtali, 12,000. Everybody is there but Dan.

Now, what is taking place and what is about to take place in this time in human history? This is the outpouring of the judgment of God, right? And it has been held up long enough to seal these people from the judgment of God to do whatever it is they do. We're in the age of Israel. The tribe of Levi is still the priestly tribe.

The tribe of Judah is still the ruling tribe, the leadership tribe. The other tribes are still supposed to be fulfilling their destinies as outlined by Jacob when he blessed them and by Moses when he blessed them and predicted their futures. What is the function of Dan? What does his name mean? What does it represent? Dan is judge.

Mankind has had the responsibility for judgment ever since God said, when a man sheds

blood, by man shall his blood be shed. It's man's responsibility ever since the flood. God didn't give man a judgment responsibility.

There wasn't really much judgment going on. Isn't it interesting that God appears to have been in charge of justice between Adam and the flood, and yet when Cain kills Abel, there is no capital punishment. What punishment does Cain receive? He's driven out.

You can't stay here. But God makes provision for him. God puts a mark on Cain to preserve him from those who might take vengeance on him, right? Where is the mark of Cain, by the way? So, there is no real judgment that seems to be taking place.

But, after God judges the earth with the flood, God says, never again will I destroy the earth by a flood. Now, you have some responsibilities. You have to ensure that if man sheds blood, his blood is shed.

And this legislation begins, and it gets fleshed out greatly at Sinai, who implements the strictures and the procedures and the penalties of the law? Man does. Cut him off from his people. Drive him out.

Stone him. Burn him. Do whatever you're going to do.

Man does this. This period of history that is in view in Revelation 6 and 7 is not the time when man has anything to do with judgment. Judgment has been removed from man and taken back into God's hands.

God says, vengeance is mine. And I will repay. And so, the tribe that represents and stands for and is named for the principle of man judging man is not even mentioned.

Now, does this mean that the tribe of Dan has disappeared? And that there will be no tribe of Dan? I asked myself this question, and so I went back to the scriptures to look and see. And, interestingly, we find the answer in the book of Ezekiel. If you want to keep your finger in Revelation 7 and turn to Ezekiel, the very last chapter.

In fact, we're going to be looking at the last few verses of the last chapter. We're talking about the distribution of land. We're talking about the millennial temple.

We're talking about the places where the individual tribes are going to live. This is Ezekiel chapter 48. So, these are the names of the tribes.

Chapter 48, verse 1. Northern border along the road to Hethlon at the entrance of Hamath to Hazar Enon, the border of Damascus northward in the direction of Hamath. There shall be one section for Dan. The tribe of Dan exists in the millennium.

They've got the northernmost. If you've seen the distribution of land in the millennial kingdom, it's pretty much like a layer cake. It's horizontal stripes from north to south.

And the northernmost stripe, just as it was in ancient times, is the tribe of Dan. So, the tribe of Dan has not been wiped out. The tribe of Dan exists in the millennial kingdom.

Why? Not because there are any survivors from the tribe of Dan that go from the tribulation into the millennial kingdom. Because there aren't any members of the tribe of Dan sealed and preserved or otherwise evident in the tribulation. So, where do these Danites come from that inhabit the northernmost portion of the land? They will speak, and many in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to a resurrection of life, others to a resurrection of shame and content.

There are lots of believers in the tribe of Dan. They're going to come back, and they're going to live their millennial kingdom life in that northernmost section. But in the seventieth week, Dan returns to its judged state, the state that it was in when Jesus left and stopped the clock on the age of Israel, and that is, God no longer acknowledges the tribe of Dan.

They were the worst of the worst. They were the most pagan of the pagan, and they disappeared. Doesn't mean that God's going to hold it against those Danites that have already died who were faithful and who deserved to live in the land.

But none in the tribulation to be counted. So, why? Because I can think of a couple of reasons. First of all, the symbolic significance of the name.

It is not the time for human judgment. This is the time of divine judgment, and it is no accident that the tribe of Dan is the one that is removed because of their gross disobedience. Why is God judging the earth at the end of the tribulation period? Because of its gross disobedience.

It is the very expression of Dan. And the people of God, this is not the time for the judgment of the people of God, per se. This is the time of the judgment of the earth.

And so God takes that tribe out, and so it has this symbolic sort of message that it carries to us. Now, 12,000 from each tribe, total of 144,000 from 12 tribes, are sealed in their foreheads. And they are listed here.

It doesn't just say all 12 tribes. It lists them. It names them.

All the way down. Now, many people refer to this group as the 144,000 witnesses, or the 144,000 evangelists. They are not called witnesses, and they are not called evangelists in this passage.

What are they called? Servants. And they are sealed in their forehead. They belong to God.

And there is a distinction made, just as there was when the plagues hit Egypt, just as

there was when the flood hit the primordial earth, that the people of God are sealed, and there is grace, and there is preservation for them. This is a timeless principle of the word of God. If you belong to God, you have a privilege.

You have a benefit that comes from being people of God. Now, many people have benefits. Have you seen these websites they've got? Every state, I think, has one.

The treasurer of the state has a website, and it's the unclaimed money website. And you go up there. You can search on your last name.

If you haven't done this, you ought to do it. It's fun. And then search on everybody else's name that you know, especially if they are related to you and older than you.

Search in there, and see if they have unclaimed money. Why? Because it's up there, and it belongs to those people, and yet they have not claimed it for some reason. People can die unexpectedly and leave a bank account that nobody knew about, and the money just sits there and collects interest.

Maybe there is a dividend, and a company went into some kind of legal proceedings, and everything got tied up in the court. The family forgot about it. Time moves on.

It gets resolved in the court. They apportion out the leavings and the remainder, and they split the stock, and they sell it, and this company buys it, and this, that, and the other. The name is still on it.

That person still has a right, but they didn't track it. The state tracked it because they are waiting to get their taxes from it. But there it is, and there it sits, and you can go to... I've checked many states, and I've checked myself to make sure I hadn't left something laying around in some credit union somewhere traveling around when I was young and not able to keep track very well.

But the point is, you can have a thing, and it belongs to you, but it does you no good if you don't claim it. You have to claim it. You have to take possession of it and say, that is mine.

I am grasping it. I'm taking it into my possession. Well, one of the things that you and I have is protection and deliverance from God.

Now, we don't always get to define the shape and the nature of that deliverance. I can't sit down there in the middle of Hurricane Katrina and say, well, God, I'm claiming my deliverance. I expect my house to never be flooded and no shingles to blow off.

I may need to evacuate. My stuff may get destroyed. But there is some kind of deliverance.

God knows the best kind of deliverance. Maybe you need to get out from under that

house. Maybe you need to move out of that state.

Maybe you need to have something shaken up and rearranged. Maybe you need to have the deck reshuffled in some way. Maybe you need a stress or a challenge in order to reveal a weakness so that it can be repaired, to strengthen the things that remain, to lift up the hands that hang down and strengthen the feeble knees.

This is a therapeutic thing. All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. All things work together for good.

You can take that to the bank and say, Lord, I see that this challenge, this disaster, this bad thing has come into my life, but I know, because I belong to You and I am sealed into Your eternal family, I know all things work together for good. The sun may fall from the heaven. The moon may turn to blood.

The stars may be shaken out of their places. But one thing I know is that all things work together for good to those who love God. It is an absolute fact.

It is just as factual as any physical property of matter or the universe that you want to name. It is an absolute fact. It has never failed.

It's never wrong. So, these 144,000 are sealed in their foreheads. What does this tell us? God knows who belongs to Him.

The wrath of God is about to descend on planet earth. 25% of all living people are going to die. But these people are sealed in their foreheads.

God is tracking every single one. Is it heavenly GPS? Is it some kind of IFF, identification friend or foe? We have these technologies where we track things. What's her name? The home baking queen there that just got out of prison? Martha Stewart? Had to wear one of those ankle bracelets.

They could tell where she was. She was under house arrest. And they could track where she was because she had this little ankle bracelet.

Well, the Lord knows them that are His. It says over in Timothy, the foundation of God stands firm having this seal. The Lord knows them that are His.

The foundation of God stands firm having this seal. The Lord knows who belongs to Him. It's just as true for you and me as it is for these people.

And we're not faced with near the disruption. To put it mildly, these people are going to have to go through. God knows who belongs to Him.

God has a policy of preservation. He has a policy of grace. He has a policy of blessing toward those who love Him, toward those who are called according to His purpose.

That's why these people are detailed tribe by tribe. Now, where are these people? Where are they? They're on the earth, aren't they? Because you've got to stop the angels from doing destruction by holding up the wind and damaging the trees and the rest of it until these people are sealed. Destruction is about to hit the earth.

These people are on the earth. They are sealed, which provides some form of protection, preservation, deliverance, or at least acknowledgement during the time that these things are happening. The implication being, once they are all sealed, the four angels do their work and great harm comes to the land, the sea, and the trees.

They're on the earth. Very important. The 144,000 servants of God are on the earth and they are all Israelites.

What does the next verse say? Verse 9, After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number. You can number the multitude on the earth. There are exactly 144,000.

Nobody can number these people. All nations, all tribes, all peoples, and all tongues. Now, what group of people qualified to be in heaven can you think of that is drawn from every nation, every kindred, every tribe, every people? That would be us, would it not? Standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes.

Now, where do the white robes come from? What is a white robe? Universally in Scripture. This is like yeast, and like the sea, and like some other universal symbols in Scripture. It always means the same thing.

White robe is what? Righteousness. Righteous deeds of the saints, righteousness of Christ, clothed in righteousness. White robe.

Guiltless. Dikaios rather than Adikia. The people down on the earth, Adikia is coming.

It is sort of like the consequences of unrighteousness. Up in heaven, you are wearing the white robe. Righteousness.

All nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues standing before the throne and before the Lamb. Now, why are they standing before the Lamb? Christ is the head of all things to the church. They stand before the Lamb because they belong to the Lamb.

This is the Bride of Christ. Now, the important thing is, already got the white robes. How did that happen? Judgment seat of Christ has already taken place.

Otherwise, you don't have your white robe. If you don't have a white robe, you can't stand in the multitude. Palm branches in their hands, crying out with a loud voice.

Why palm branches? Ancient custom. Hail the conquering King. Hail the Prince of Peace.

Hosanna. Waving palm branches. Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

You know what I find fascinating about this? I've talked before about how I disagree with those who insist on making Christ the center of the Christian life and saying it's the Christ-centered life. It's all about Christ. You should really just be thinking about Christ all the time.

When the Lord Jesus did not say that, what did Jesus say? You come to the Father through Me. I am the way to the Father. Your relationship is with the Father.

Who do you pray to? The Father. On the basis of the Son. In the name of the Son.

In the power of the Holy Spirit. But you don't pray to the Holy Spirit and you don't pray to Jesus. And it just is like fingernails on a chalkboard to me when pastors stand up in the front of big churches or on television and say, Oh, Lord Jesus, we thank You for this and the other and we pray it in Your holy name.

How can you talk to a person in their own name? A congressman doesn't come up to the United States Senate and say, let me speak in the name of the United States. I mean, you're in the United States. If you're an ambassador, you talk to a German in the name of the United States.

But you don't talk to the United States on behalf of the United States. I mean, it's nonsensical. Clothed with white robes, palm branches, crying out, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne.

Who is the God that sits on the throne? God the Father. The Father sits on the throne. And this, by the way, puts to rest this whole neo-dispensational goofiness that says that Jesus is already sitting on the throne in heaven.

He's not. He's at the right hand of the Father. The Father is sitting on the throne.

And there are not two thrones. There's the throne and there's the right hand of the throne. The Lamb is at the right hand.

The Father is on the throne. Jesus is not on the throne right now. He's got to wait until his enemies are made his footstool.

Then he will sit on the throne. It's the throne of his father David. The throne of his father David is not in heaven.

It's on earth. David never sat on a throne in heaven. Never will.

Jesus sits on the throne of his father David. It's earthly. Now, if you haven't had any worries over the new dispensationalism, then you have nothing to fear.

But for those that ever run into it, that is a very important statement. Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb. God the Father comes first.

We need to keep in mind that as much as and taking nothing away from the Lord Jesus Christ. He's our Savior. He loved us.

He died for us. He's our example. He is the head of all things to the church.

Taking nothing away from that. His goal is to bring us to the Father. And we need to focus on the Father.

Jesus enables us to please Him. So these people mention God the Father first because they've got this squared away in their minds. All the angels stood around the throne and the angels and the four living creatures and fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God saying... Now, this is deceptive in your New King James because the they that fall on their faces before the throne and worship God does not include the angels.

And I could give you a bunch of Greek and you'd start throwing things at me. But just take my word for it. The angels are not on their faces.

In fact, I don't think you can find a passage anywhere where angels ever fall on their face. That's not what they do. The angels are standing around the throne.

The elders, the four living creatures, fall on their faces before the throne and worship God. Not much point in saying the angels are standing if they're falling on their face. Angels are standing.

The four living creatures and the elders fall on their faces before the throne and worship God saying, Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen. One of the elders answers saying to me, These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they and where have they come from? A question we might be asking ourselves.

I said to him, My Lord, you know. And this is the point that was brought up a couple of weeks ago that I thought was very perspicacious. Here's John the apostle who wrote inspired scripture asking a question of an elder who is also a church age believer.

But the elder knows the answer to a question that John does not. And yet John is the guy that wrote the book of Revelation. So how could John not know the answer? But the point was made, which I think is a good one, that at this point, John doesn't know the answer.

The elder has had 2,000 plus years of studying John and everything else has been written. And so it's one of these time paradox things where John doesn't know yet what he's going to know 2,000 years in the future by people who have studied John and know

from John what it is that John is asking that John doesn't know. So the elder said to me, These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation.

The key thing here is out of. This is verse 14. I need to give you just a wee bit of Greek here.

These are the ones. Erkomoi means to come or to go. Erkomoi.

Ek is the preposition in Greek that means out from. These are the ones. This is the present middle participle of Erkomoi.

This is Erkomonoi. These are the Hoi Poloi, the Erkomonoi. These are the ones who, and it's a present middle imperative.

Each part of that is important. Present tense. These are the ones coming out from.

The Great Philipsis. The Megalathopsios. The big tribulation.

The middle voice. Active voice means I'm going to do something to an object. Passive voice, something is going to do something to me, the subject.

The middle voice means I'm going to do something on my own behalf or in my own interest. These are the ones who have brought themselves out. Out is the idea.

The present middle participle. These are the ones going themselves or causing themselves to go out. The middle voice means the subject participates in the action of the verb in his own interest or for his own benefit.

If they were rescued out, just jerked out passively, it would be the passive voice. These are the ones who have been brought out or have been caused to come out. These are the ones causing themselves to come out from the Great Tribulation is what it says.

Some responsibility or accountability or measure of causality for being out of the Great Tribulation is assigned to them. These are the ones causing themselves to come out from the Great Tribulation. Now we have an aorist active indicative.

They washed their robes. They are coming out from the Great Tribulation. They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Now, who was able to wash their clothes in the blood of the Lamb? Old Testament saints couldn't do that. It's church. Church age believers, we are the ones who can look back at Christ, claim His work on the cross for our cleansing.

Symbolically speaking, this is washing your robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. This is righteousness through the work of Christ. It is imputed righteousness.

Our clothes are white not because we've got a great detergent, but because Jesus Christ

died on the cross and made righteousness available to us. But these people, it doesn't say they were washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. It says they did it themselves.

The righteousness is available. It's one of the benefits we have being believers. We've already talked about the benefit of deliverance, the benefit of preservation, the benefit of God's grace.

Another benefit is cleansing. You can get your clothes clean in the blood of the Lamb. People who are not saved can't do that.

But God doesn't do it for you. You have to go do it. You have to go take the clothes, wash them in the blood of the Lamb, and make them white.

You have to avail yourself of God's grace. That's why you have the middle voice. This is what brings you out from the Great Tribulation.

This is why you do not go through it. Now, the question is, so, when it says the Thlypseus Megalos, the Great Tribulation, is this talking about the sun and the darkness and the 25% dying and all the rest of it? They brought themselves out from that? Sort of. Is it talking about any Great Tribulation that could take place, such as the one that is mentioned when you talk about the church at Smyrna? Sort of.

Is it the Great Tribulation of the 70th week of Daniel? Yes. Is it the Great Tribulation that you and I face every day? Yes. It's both and.

It is one and the other. If you learn to handle the charge of the mosquito, you can learn to handle the charge of the elephant. If you can learn to face the challenges of this day and learn to let God deliver you out from them, you will also find yourself delivered out from the Great Tribulation.

Now, the question is, suppose you don't learn that, suppose you come unglued and unraveled and completely splinter and fall apart in this life and you're a horribly disorganized believer and you don't avail yourself of any of God's grace and you wind up augering yourself into the ground and then Jesus comes back. Is He going to take you and number you amongst this white-robed throng with the palm branches or did you not deliver yourself out from that Great Tribulation? The answer is, all of the church-age believers go. None are left.

Why? Because the corporate aspect is one thing, the individual aspect is another. All Israel will be saved. Look at the analogy to Israel.

Israel as a nation is delivered in total. All Israel is going to be raised at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. It's not like some of them weren't faithful enough and they're going to sleep in the dust of the earth until the end.

They're all raised. Now, there are different kinds and qualities of resurrection. Some are going to have a resurrection of life, some are going to have a resurrection of shame and contempt, but they are all raised at the same time.

Israel is dealt with as a group. Whether they are Old Testament, whether they are Tribulational, they're dealt with as a group. When God speaks, they all come up.

It's not like 95%. All of them come up. They're dealt with as a group.

So we would expect on that analogy that God is going to deal with the church as a group. You're not going to have the bride standing there missing an arm or a foot, or some of it's not there. It's all there.

When you deal with corporate things, it's an all or nothing kind of a deal. Now, individually, is there going to be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth? Are there going to be people in the very back ranks of this group? If you've got this many that no man can number, some are going to be up there in the good seats, in the \$65 seats. Others are going to be in the nosebleed section way in the back with their binoculars.

Is that Jesus down there? Is that the Lamb? I can't really see. They're going to be 276 rows back. But they will all be there.

Why? There's no place else for them to be. If they were on the earth, how come they're not being sealed? Because this vast destruction is coming. If they're on the earth, there's only the earth and there's heaven.

There's two places you can be. If you're on the earth, you get sealed or you get destroyed. If you're in heaven, you're in the white robe throng, you're waving your branch and you're singing the song of redemption.

Wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason, and this is the picture of salvation. This is not the picture of blessing and reward because of faithful service or anything else.

This is, I claim Christ as my Savior. All of us are going to be in this white robe throng, right? We have all claimed Christ. We have all washed our robes in the blood of the Lamb.

They will hunger no longer. They will thirst no more. Nor will the sun be down on them, nor any heat.

For the Lamb in the center of the throng will be their shepherd and will guide them through the springs of the water of life. God will wipe every tear from their eyes. You know what this means? Glorified resurrection.

This is the eternal state. No more hunger, no more thirst, no more sensitivity to

temperature, no more mortality. This mortality must put on immortality, right? That's what you have here.

Every tear is wiped from their eyes. So, Israel on the earth, church in heaven. It's as clear as it gets.

That finishes chapter 7. We have a couple of things to say to conclude that chapter and move into the seventh seal, the seal of trumpets, and that's what we'll pick up next time. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the security we have, the comfort we have for knowing that your plan and purpose are being fulfilled, that we have a legitimate claim to deliverance, to grace, to your compassion and your provision because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will remind us of these truths in the days ahead and enable us to remember and apply the things that we've learned from your word. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.