

Dr. David Mathewson, Revelation, Session 13, Revelation 7 Multitude, Ch. 8 Final Seal Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

Revelation 7 Multitude, Ch. 8 Final Seal

1. Abstract of Mathewson, Revelation, Session 13, Revelation 7 Multitude, Ch. 8, Final Seal, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Dave Mathewson **explains** Revelation chapters 7 and 8. He **focuses** on the "great multitude" in chapter 7, **arguing** that it represents the same group as the 144,000, viewed from different perspectives (earthly and heavenly). Chapter 8's seven trumpets are **discussed**, **linking** them to the Exodus plagues and **highlighting** their symbolic representation of God's judgment on wickedness. The lecture also **examines** the significance of the silence following the opening of the seventh seal and the interludes within the book's structure. Finally, the lecture **connects** these events to the ultimate redemption and inheritance of God's people in the new creation.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Mathewson, Revelation, Session 13 – Double click icon to
play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (New Testament → Revelation).**



**Mathewson_Revela
tion_Session13.mp3**

3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture excerpts on Revelation chapters 7 and 8 by Dr. Dave Mathewson.

Briefing Document: Revelation Chapters 7 & 8 (Dr. Dave Mathewson)

I. Overview

This lecture focuses on Revelation 7 (The Multitude) and Revelation 8 (The Final Seal). Dr. Mathewson explores the relationship between the 144,000 sealed from the tribes of Israel and the "great multitude" that no one could number in chapter 7. He also examines the seventh seal in chapter 8 and its connection to the trumpet judgments that follow. Throughout, Mathewson emphasizes the symbolic and typological nature of the text, relating it back to Old Testament themes, especially the Exodus and the Abrahamic covenant.

II. Key Themes and Ideas

- **Two Groups in Revelation 7:**
- **The 144,000:** Described as 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. Mathewson suggests this is military imagery from the Old Testament, representing the new people of God, the Church, as a "mighty army" engaged in spiritual battle through their suffering witness.
- **The Great Multitude:** An innumerable group "from every tribe and language and tongue." They stand before God's throne, having attained their final salvation and reward.
- **Relationship:** While many interpret them as distinct groups, Mathewson argues they are the *same group* viewed from different perspectives. He emphasizes the contrast between what John *hears* (the 144,000) and what he *sees* (the great multitude), mirroring a similar pattern from Revelation 5 (the Lion of Judah vs. the Lamb as Slain).
- **Quote:** "What he sees and hears interpret each other... It's clear in the context he's seeing the same thing. It's just that what he sees and hears interpret each other."
- **Earthly vs. Heavenly Perspective:** The 144,000 represent the church on earth, engaged in battle through faithful witness. The multitude represents that same group victorious in heaven, having received their reward.

- **Quote:** "In the first case, they're looked at from an earthly perspective as a mighty army that does battle, ironically, through their faithful witness...And then verse 9 and following, now looking at the same group from a heavenly perspective... now from the perspective of an innumerable multitude who now stands victorious before God."
- **The Innumerable Multitude and Old Testament Promises**
- **Abrahamic Covenant:** The idea of a multitude that cannot be numbered connects to the promises God made to Abraham, that his offspring would be like the stars of the sky or the sand of the seashore (Genesis 13:16, 15:5, 22:17).
- **Quote:** "I think that is the language that John is drawing on here...the imagery of the tribes of Israel and their numbering, as well as the multitude that no one could count, are both Old Testament images that apply to Israel."
- **Fulfillment:** John reinterprets these promises of a numerous physical seed of Abraham as fulfilled in the Church, encompassing both Jews and Gentiles. The church is now the innumerable seed.
- **Victorious Descendants:** The Old Testament theme of Abraham's descendants overcoming their enemies is now applied to the great multitude who have been victorious through their suffering witness, mirroring Jesus' victory.
- **The Great Tribulation:**
- **Not a Future Event Alone:** Mathewson argues the "Great Tribulation" is not just a specific, future period, but represents the *entire period* of the church's existence from the first century until the second coming of Christ. This period is characterized by suffering and persecution at the hands of empires like Rome.
- **Quote:** "In my opinion, however, when you put the rest of the book together, I think the Great Tribulation probably describes the entire period of the existence of God's people leading up until the second coming of Christ."
- **Ongoing Struggle:** He emphasizes that first-century Christians were *already* living in the Great Tribulation, which had begun with Jesus' death and the persecution of believers.
- **Quote:** "So, already, the people in the first century were living in the period of the Great Tribulation...God's people had already begun to suffer tribulation at the hands of the Roman Empire"

- **Heavenly Reward:**
- **Final Destiny:** Chapter 7 offers a glimpse of the final reward of the faithful, a scene of victory and vindication in the heavenly throne room before God and the Lamb.
- **New Creation Anticipation:** The descriptions in Revelation 7 of never being hungry or thirsty, God wiping tears from their eyes, and God's dwelling among them anticipate the new creation described in Revelation 21 and 22. This might not be a vision of what happens immediately after death but rather "a consummated scene of all of God's people."
- **Quote:** "I wonder if this is simply not sort of a glimpse or snapshot of the new creation in chapters 21 and 22 that already, in anticipation of the fuller description that takes place, where heaven actually comes down to earth in chapters 21 and 22."
- **The Seventh Seal (Revelation 8):**
- **Silence in Heaven:** The opening of the seventh seal results in "silence in heaven for about half an hour," which is unusual compared to the other seals and might not be a literal half hour.
- **Interpretations of the Silence:**
 - **Dramatic Pause:** A break in the action before the trumpet judgments begin.
 - **Prayers of the Saints:** A pause for the prayers of the suffering saints to be heard by God, particularly recalling the cry of the martyrs from chapter 6 (how long?).
 - **Anticipation of Judgment:** A moment of awe and silence before the coming judgment.
- **Judgment:** The pouring of fire onto the earth (8:5) is interpreted as the judgment of the seventh seal, characterized by "peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake." The seventh seal contains the final judgment.
- **Interlocking Narrative:** The narrative of chapter 8 includes a literary feature of "interlocking." The seventh seal and the seven trumpets begin to overlap, making it difficult to create a precise outline.
- **Temple Imagery:**
- **Heaven as Temple:** Throughout these chapters, heaven is portrayed as a temple, with altars, incense, and angels acting as priests.

- **Mediation:** The angels mediate the prayers of the saints to God and play a role in the final judgment.
- **Trumpet Plagues (Revelation 8 & 9):**
- **Exodus Echoes:** The trumpet plagues are reminiscent of the plagues poured out on Egypt in the Exodus story. They symbolically represent God's judgment on the wicked. Mathewson references plagues of hail, water turning to blood, darkness, and locusts.
- **Quote:** "John...is carefully modeling...by going back to the Exodus plagues...to portray end-time judgments"
- **Theological Significance:** These judgments are not just specific predictions, but symbolic actions demonstrating that, just as God judged Egypt, He will judge the oppressive, idolatrous nations that oppose his people (Rome).
- **Quote:** "John's main concern is to use the Exodus plagues symbolically to describe God's judgment...theologically to say something about God's judgment."
- **Complete Judgement:** The number seven indicates the complete and perfect judgment of God in this time.
- **Relationship to God's People:** Only those not sealed with God's protection will be subject to the coming trumpet judgments. The seven trumpets are God's response to the prayers of the saints for vindication.

III. Implications

- **Encouragement for Believers:** Chapter 7 provides encouragement for Christians facing persecution. It reminds them they are part of a great multitude who will ultimately stand victorious and receive their heavenly reward.
- **Warning to the Unfaithful:** Churches that stray from God's ways risk being among those who face God's judgment and wrath, along with the oppressive empires of this world.
- **Cyclical Structure of Revelation:** The text is cyclical, with John backing up and re-narrating similar events and situations, but from different perspectives.

IV. Conclusion

Dr. Mathewson's lecture emphasizes the symbolic nature of Revelation, drawing connections with Old Testament themes like the Exodus, the Abrahamic covenant, and the concept of God's judgment. He argues that the 144,000 and the great multitude are the same group from different perspectives. The trumpets are symbolic of God's judgment and God's response to the cries of the faithful, just as God judged Egypt in the Exodus. The lecture also stresses that the Great Tribulation is not solely a future event but the entire period of the church's existence and that the final reward of the faithful awaits in the new creation. He reminds his audience to find encouragement and persevere by witnessing to Christ even in the midst of suffering, knowing their reward will be great.

4. Mathewson, Revelation, Session 13, Revelation 7 Multitude, Ch. 8 Final Seal

Revelation Study Guide: Chapters 7 & 8

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. How are the 144,000 and the innumerable multitude different in Revelation 7?
2. According to Mathewson, what is the significance of John hearing about the 144,000 and then seeing the innumerable multitude?
3. What Old Testament narrative does the description of the innumerable multitude echo, and what does this connection emphasize?
4. How does Mathewson interpret the “Great Tribulation” mentioned in Revelation 7:14?
5. What are the two possibilities Mathewson suggests regarding when the vision of the multitude occurs?
6. What is unique about the opening of the seventh seal in Revelation 8?
7. What are the three possible functions of the silence that occurs when the seventh seal is opened?
8. What Old Testament narrative provides a framework for understanding the trumpet plagues in Revelation 8?
9. What is the theological significance of the parallels between the trumpet plagues and the Exodus plagues?
10. How does Mathewson explain the structure and function of the interludes within Revelation’s narrative, particularly in Chapters 7 and 8?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The 144,000 are described as a specific, numbered group from the tribes of Israel, while the innumerable multitude is too large to count and comes from every nation, tribe, and language. One group is explicitly numbered, while the other is said to be beyond numbering, emphasizing their distinct characteristics.

2. John hearing about the 144,000 and then seeing the innumerable multitude is an example of how John's hearing and seeing mutually interpret each other. The 144,000 represent God's people on earth as a mighty army, while the multitude represents the same people victorious in heaven.
3. The description of the innumerable multitude echoes the promises made to Abraham in Genesis that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars or sand. This connection emphasizes the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, now expanded to include all believers.
4. Mathewson interprets the "Great Tribulation" as the entire period of the church's existence, from the first century until the second coming of Christ. This period is characterized by suffering, persecution, and tribulation for believers under hostile empires.
5. Mathewson suggests the vision could be a depiction of what happens immediately upon the death of faithful believers, where they enter their heavenly inheritance, or it could be a "fast-forward" glimpse of the new creation of Revelation 21-22. These are not mutually exclusive.
6. Unlike the other seals, the opening of the seventh seal in Revelation 8 does not result in any immediate action or judgment, instead, it is followed by a half hour of silence in heaven. This is a marked departure from the pattern of the previous seals.
7. The silence may be a dramatic pause in the action, a silence to allow the prayers of the saints to be heard, and an Old Testament silence in anticipation of imminent divine judgment. These three potential functions provide a layered understanding of the silence.
8. The plagues in the Old Testament during the Exodus are the framework for understanding the trumpet plagues in Revelation 8. John draws on the parallels of these plagues to describe the current judgements upon Rome.
9. The parallels between the trumpet plagues and the Exodus plagues underscore the theological significance of God's judgment. John uses the Exodus plagues to symbolize God's judgment of Rome, similar to how God judged Egypt, as a means of saving His people and bring them into their inheritance.
10. Mathewson describes interludes as both providing a break in the action and also a theologically significant way of interpreting the events. These interludes, along

with the interlocking features of Revelation, make a precise outline of the book very difficult.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Answer each question in a well-organized essay.

1. Compare and contrast the portrayals of the 144,000 and the innumerable multitude in Revelation 7. What are the implications of understanding these groups as distinct versus the same viewed from different perspectives?
2. Analyze how the use of Old Testament imagery, particularly the promises to Abraham and the Exodus plagues, contributes to the meaning and message of Revelation chapters 7 and 8.
3. Discuss the significance of the silence after the opening of the seventh seal. How does Mathewson's interpretation of this silence enhance your understanding of Revelation 8?
4. Evaluate Mathewson's argument that the "Great Tribulation" should not be limited to a specific future period. How does this broader interpretation impact your understanding of the suffering of God's people in Revelation?
5. Discuss the cyclical nature of Revelation, as Mathewson suggests, with particular focus on the conclusion of the sixth seal and the content of the seventh. How do these events demonstrate the overall message of the book?

Glossary of Key Terms

144,000: A specific, numbered group in Revelation 7, described as 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. This group is often interpreted as representing the faithful followers of God.

Innumerable Multitude: A vast group in Revelation 7 that cannot be counted, described as people from every nation, tribe, language, and people. This group is often seen as the redeemed saints in heaven.

Interlude: A break in the narrative of Revelation that serves to both interrupt the flow of events and provide a theological interpretation of what is happening. An example is found in chapter 7.

Great Tribulation: In Revelation, often understood as the period of suffering and persecution of God's people. Mathewson interprets this period as the entire time of the church's existence until Christ's return.

Feast of Tabernacles: A Jewish festival, the celebration of God's provision and protection in the wilderness. There may be allusions to it in Revelation 7 regarding the heavenly multitude.

Seal: A symbol used in Revelation to denote a series of judgments that are brought forth by the opening of seven seals. The seventh seal is the last one.

Trumpets: Seven trumpets used in Revelation to denote a series of judgments on the earth following the opening of the seven seals.

Exodus Plagues: The ten plagues that God brought upon Egypt to deliver the Israelites in the book of Exodus. These plagues are mirrored in the trumpet judgments of Revelation.

Interlocking: The idea that different sections in Revelation overlap and continue, rather than following a simple sequential pattern, resulting in a complex interweaving of narratives.

New Creation: The ultimate future state described in Revelation 21-22, characterized by the restoration of heaven and earth and the full presence of God with his people.

5. FAQs on Mathewson, Revelation, Session 13, Revelation 7 Multitude, Ch. 8 Final Seal, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Revelation 7 and 8

1. **Who are the 144,000 in Revelation 7:1-8 and how do they relate to the great multitude in Revelation 7:9-17?** The 144,000 are described as a numbered group from the twelve tribes of Israel, often understood as a symbolic representation of the Church as a mighty army. In contrast, the great multitude is an unnumbered group from every nation, tribe, people, and language. While they appear as two distinct groups at first glance, they are likely the same group viewed from two different perspectives. The 144,000 represent God's people in their earthly struggle, while the great multitude represents the same people after their victory, standing in God's presence in heaven.
2. **What is the significance of the contrast between what John "hears" and what he "sees" in Revelation 7?** Similar to the contrast in Revelation 5, where John hears of the Lion of Judah but sees the Lamb that was slain, this contrast is an important literary device. In Revelation 7, John hears about a numbered army of 144,000, representing God's people in their earthly struggle. He then looks and sees an unnumbered multitude standing victorious before God's throne, representing the heavenly, triumphant aspect of the same people. These two images interpret each other, showing the earthly battle and the heavenly victory as two sides of the same reality for God's people.
3. **Why is the great multitude described as "innumerable" and from "every nation, tribe, people, and language?"** The description of the great multitude as innumerable echoes the Old Testament promises to Abraham, where God promised his descendants would be as numerous as the stars or the sand. This signifies that God's people are not a small, insignificant group but a vast assembly encompassing all people, not just physical Israel. It reinforces the idea that God's promises to Abraham are ultimately fulfilled in the gathering of all believers from every corner of the world. It counters the idea that the church is a tiny, powerless minority.
4. **What is the "Great Tribulation" mentioned in Revelation 7:14, and when does it occur?** The Great Tribulation, according to the source, is not a specific period at the very end of history but is best understood as the entire period from the first century until Christ's return. This encompasses the suffering and persecution that

God's people endure at the hands of hostile empires and powers. It started with the persecution of Jesus and the early church and continues until the Second Coming. The multitude before the throne has come through this time of tribulation, signifying their perseverance and triumph over earthly challenges.

5. **When does the scene in Revelation 7:9-17 take place – immediately after death, or at the very end?** While some interpret this scene as representing the immediate reward after death, the source leans toward this scene as a glimpse or snapshot of the new creation described in Revelation 21 and 22. It's a forward glimpse into the final inheritance of all God's faithful people, not just a vision of saints entering heaven upon their death.
6. **What is the significance of the silence in heaven in Revelation 8:1 before the trumpets are sounded?** The silence, in contrast to the dramatic activity of the previous seals, serves multiple purposes. First, it's a dramatic pause in the action, creating anticipation for the upcoming judgments. Secondly, it allows for the prayers of the saints to be heard, with the subsequent trumpet judgments seen as a response to these cries for justice. Finally, the silence is reminiscent of Old Testament depictions of silence in anticipation of imminent divine judgment, where the people awe and wait for God to make his move.
7. **How do the trumpet judgments in Revelation 8 and 9 relate to the plagues of the Exodus?** The trumpet judgments in Revelation draw heavily on the imagery of the Exodus plagues. This is not to predict a literal recreation of those events, but is intended to emphasize the theological significance of God's judgment on the wicked. Just as God judged Egypt to liberate Israel, the trumpet plagues represent God's judgment on the oppressive and idolatrous powers of the day and of all time. John's goal is to demonstrate that God acts similarly to rescue his people in the new covenant.
8. **What does Revelation 7 and 8 reveal about the nature of God's people and the nature of his judgment?** These chapters highlight that God's people, the church, are a victorious community that triumphs through their suffering witness and that they are made up of a diverse group of people from every background. The chapters describe God's people as a mighty army who fight not with physical weapons, but their faithful endurance. It also emphasizes that God's judgment is a response to the wickedness of humanity, and it is intended to liberate his people and ultimately lead them into the new creation. The judgment of the trumpets is also portrayed as a response to the prayers of God's people.