

Dr. David L. Mathewson, Revelation, Session 13,

Revelation 7: Multitude, Ch. 8 Final Seal

6-Min. Video Overview

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Alright, let's dive into one of those parts of the Bible that can really make your head spin: chapters 7 and 8 of Revelation. It's a vision that's just packed with these super specific numbers, enormous crowds, and then this really mysterious long silence. So what's it all about? Let's figure it out together.

So right out of the gate in chapter 7, the author, John, hits us with a puzzle. First, he tells us about this very specific group: exactly 144,000 people. They are sealed from the 12 tribes of Israel, and the language used makes them sound like a kind of army on earth.

But then, bam, the scene totally flips. He describes a second group, this huge, uncountable crowd from every single nation, and they're standing victorious up in heaven. And that right there leads us to our first big question.

Are we looking at two completely separate groups here, with totally different futures? Or is John trying to show us something much deeper by describing the same group of people in two completely different ways? To crack this puzzle, we need to get a handle on this brilliant little literary trick that John uses all throughout the book. You see, the key to unlocking so much of Revelation's symbolism is this contrast between what John hears and what he then turns around and sees. It almost always starts with something he hears.

You know, an angel makes an announcement, or a voice declares something, usually using really familiar symbolic language from the Old Testament. But then, and this is the cool part, John looks, and what he actually sees is a different and often pretty surprising image that totally reinterprets or gives deeper meaning to what he just heard. They're not two different things; they're like two sides of the same coin.

The most famous example of this, for sure, is back in chapter 5. An angel announces this triumphant, victorious lion of the tribe of Judah. That's what John hears. But when he turns to look, he doesn't see a ferocious, conquering lion.

He sees a lamb. And not just any lamb, but one that looks like it's been slain. The point is just genius.

The lion's true power isn't in its roar, but in the sacrifice of the lamb. Okay, so this here versus see pattern, that's our key. So now, let's take that key and use it to unlock the mystery of our two crowds back in chapter 7. And when we do that, it all just clicks into place.

John literally says, I heard the number of those who were sealed, 144,000. That's the picture of God's people as this organized army in the middle of their fight on earth. Then he says, after this, I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count.

He's seeing the exact same group, but now he's seeing them from the perspective of their final heavenly victory. So you see, it's not two different groups. It's two perspectives on the one people of God.

The earthly view, what he hears, shows them in the thick of a spiritual battle, a finite, organized, disciplined force. But the heavenly view, what he sees, well, that reveals the glorious end of the story. This unimaginably huge, diverse family from all over the world, completely triumphant and rewarded.

And you know, this whole idea of an innumerable multitude isn't coming out of nowhere. It's this epic callback, fulfilling the promise God made all the way back to Abraham in the book of Genesis. The author of Revelation is basically saying, Hey, remember that promise? It's happening.

And it's even bigger than you imagined, including people from every nation, every tribe, every language. Okay. So mystery number one solved.

But just when we think we have our footing, chapter eight comes along and throws us a massive curveball. After a series of six really dramatic, world-shaking seals are opened, we finally get to the seventh one. And what happens next is the last thing you'd expect.

I mean, think about it. The first six seals were conquest, war, famine, death, cosmic disasters- just total chaos. So you're bracing yourself for the seventh seal, right? The grand finale.

And what happens when it's broken? An anti-climax. Silence. For about half an hour.

What in the world is that about? Why does all of heaven just suddenly go quiet? While scholars have a few really powerful ideas. First, it could just be a dramatic pause, you know, the calm before the storm, a moment to build the tension before the next, even more intense wave of judgments kicks off. Second, the silence could be there to create a kind of sacred space.

So the prayers of suffering believers on earth can rise up and be heard clearly by God. And third, it could be a moment of just profound, silent awe that falls over the entire cosmos as everyone holds their breath, waiting for the final, decisive judgment of God. Now, to really grasp the big picture of what comes after this silence, which is a series of seven trumpet judgments, we have to hit the rewind button again and look back to the Old Testament, to one of its most epic stories.

The parallels here are just striking. The judgments that are unleashed by these trumpets in Revelation- I'm talking hail and fire, water turning to blood, darkness, even demonic locusts. They're not random at all.

They are direct, intentional echoes of the plagues God sent on Egypt way back in the story of the Exodus. And that is the whole point. The author isn't just trying to give us a weather forecast for the future.

He's using the Exodus story as a powerful symbol. He's saying, look, just like God judged the oppressive empire of Egypt to rescue his people back then, he is now confronting the oppressive powers of our day, like the Roman Empire, to bring about the final rescue of his people. And this reveals something absolutely essential about how the book of Revelation is built.

It isn't a single straight A-to-B timeline. Think of it more like a movie that replays the same huge climactic event, but from different camera angles. Revelation tells the same core story of conflict, judgment, and rescue over and over again, first with seven seals, then with seven trumpets, and later with seven bowls.

And each cycle just zooms in a little closer and ramps up the intensity, building toward the grand finale. And that kind of brings us to our final thought. What if the main point of all these confusing, sometimes scary visions isn't to give us a detailed roadmap of the future? What if instead it was written to give profound hope to the people reading it back then and to us today by showing that no matter how chaotic the world looks, the struggles of the faithful here on earth are already seen as a victorious multitude in heaven and that in the end, God's justice will win.

It reframes the whole book from a scary puzzle to be solved into a powerful promise to be trusted.