

Discussion Questions February 4, 2018

What's so Great About the Great Tribulation? (Revelation 7)

(What were your early beliefs about end times, the unfolding of the book of Revelation etc.?)

In Genesis 12:2 God says to Abraham, *"I will make of you a great nation... I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

- What do you think this scripture means?

Some say that this means, you'll be cursed if you criticize the State of Israel. And blessing the State of Israel will get you blessed. So, the nation-state of Israel is your judgment. In Galatians, Saint Paul argues that the blessing and cursing refer to Abraham's Seed, who is Jesus—The King of the Jews; Jesus is your Judgment.

- Which idea makes the most sense to you? Maybe you have a different understanding all together. Explain why?

All of the symbolism in the Revelation can be a bit overwhelming to understand. In this sermon, Peter talked about the importance of looking at other parts of Scripture to help us better understand the symbolism of the Revelation. He said, "The seal is faith that God is your daddy, and you are His beloved child. It's knowing that He loves you and nothing can change that." Paul wrote: *"When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God."* (*Abba* means "daddy.")

- Can you remember a time when you experienced what Paul describes above? If so, share about it

The seal doesn't protect you from tribulation; it guards your heart *in the midst* of tribulation.

- If you can, share about a time when you experienced the Holy Spirit protecting your heart in the midst of tribulation.

Throughout the sermon, we asked the question: "What's so great about the Great Tribulation?" One of the answers we discovered is that it destroys the lie that, *"Salvation belongs to you."* And it reveals the Truth: *"Salvation belongs to God."*

- Are there any areas or ways you might have been thinking salvation belongs to you—that you are responsible for your own salvation?
- When you hear that God is responsible for your salvation—"salvation belongs to God, what emotions or sensations arise in you?

Do you remember the chief sin of Israel, and then Judah, and then Judas? Wasn't it the rejection of their calling, that in them, through their seed, all the nations of the earth would be blessed? Don't you suppose, Israel of God, that we are still tempted with the very same sin? Maybe, even in the very same place with the very same walls? Or even bigger walls, for we don't simply exclude the last and least of these, some of us even say that God will torture the last and least of these forever without end... We say, *"God is salvation, but He belongs to us, not them..."* We say, *"Salvation belongs to us..."*—Peter Hiatt

- Is there any group or person that you struggle to share the blessing and promises of the Lord with?
- Are there any walls you might need to surrender to God and invite Him to tear down?
- Is there any part of you that believes Salvation only belongs to you or a certain group of people?
- Take a moment to confess those to Jesus and invite Him to clothe you in Himself filling you with the fullness of His heart that He might make His desires yours: *"For this is the plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Him."*

During the sermon, Peter expressed that he believes the 144,000 mentioned in the Revelation are the Church militant.

...not militant like folks in the *Left Behind* movies or the US Armed Forces. They are militant like those in Ephesians chapter six, who *battle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, the world rulers of this present darkness*. They are soldiers who take *the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, gird their loins with truth, shod their feet with the Gospel of Peace, take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and the shield of faith to quench the flaming darts of the evil one*. They are people sealed with the Spirit and clothed in Jesus (Eph. 6:10-20). They are people called to declare the Good News that God in Christ Jesus has *broken down the dividing wall of hostility* (Eph. 2:14). For *this is the plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Him* (Eph. 1:10). Rev. 14:4: The 144,000 follow the Lamb wherever He goes. —Peter Hiatt

- How might God be calling you to fight?
- Where is the Lamb going that He might be calling you to follow?

~These questions were created by Kimberly Weynen