

In my last message on the final portion of Revelation 6, I felt I rushed through the last verses, so we will review them again and add a few more comments. ¹² *When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, ¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. ¹⁴ The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.* Revelation 6:12-14 Jesus predicted the same future events in Matthew 24:29ⁱ. If we take this literally, we might see this as a great tectonic shift, eruptions that would fill the sky with ash and cause the sun to look darkened and the moon to appear red. Geologically our planet and its orbit appear to be uniquely designed for life. Yet, the earth's crust sits on a molten core. The core provides a magnetic shield that protects us from radiation, but sometimes it penetrates the surface of the crust and causes disasters. If debris was flung high in the upper atmosphere, its descent would look like meteors. Islands could be wiped away by giant tsunamis. Mountains would erode with great landslides. When Krakatoa exploded there was so much debris in the upper atmosphere that it caused volcanic winters in which crops failed for two years resulting in mass starvation.

However, there is a problem in seeing this taking place before the scroll is opened, for in the following chapters we see a portion of the stars falling and the same language in chapter 20 for the final judgment. We could read this seal as a preview of the final judgment. Reading it as apocalyptic literature the powers of heaven shaken with stars falling and the sun and moon affected would mean the climax of the spiritual war in the heavenlies. The believers who are persecuted and killed will have reached the full number allowing God's wrath to be poured out in finality. Every place in Scripture where this language is used it symbolizes the end of all things as we know them.

Mark's Gospel describes this event at the end of the tribulation and immediately before the elect are gathered. ²⁴ *“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.* Mark 13:24-27

The reaction of those on the earth is seen in the next verses. ¹⁵ *Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”* Revelation 6:15-17 In such a disaster, class distinction and wealth become meaningless. If buildings all collapse, man will try to find anything such as a cave or rock overhang for shelter. In this coming day, people will recognize it as the wrath of the One who sits on the throne and of Jesus, the Lamb. Why would they refuse to repent, unless they have so hardened their hearts or accepted strong delusion so as to believe Jesus is their enemy (2 Thessalonians 2:11,12ⁱⁱ). They will hope they are crushed by the rocks so that they do not face that wrath any longer.

Surely such a removal of all that distracts us from the eternal would cause people to consider their eternal fate. This devastation reveals how dead set these people are against Jesus. When disaster strikes, we start to see what is really of value. How many times have we seen people who lost everything in a tsunami or tornado say that they lost everything but what was important? Then we start to focus on what lasts, relationships, especially with God. But these people in the end-times are too self-centered for that.

Perhaps the first readers see an intermediate fulfillment in the earthquake that destroyed Herculaneum and Pompey in 79 A.D. The language of the last verse tells us that that was just a preview of that great day of God's wrath. It may be that this is the beginning of the day of God's wrath that continues for the final three and a half years of the tribulation. These verses may be like a summary of what is to follow, like a table of contents line.

Moving on to chapter 7 we see an interlude between the sixth seal and the seventh. Commentators differ on when this takes place. Some believe it is a look back to before chapter six, while other see it taking place just before those events of the sixth seal take place. The chapter deals with the sealing of the 144,000. This is important as we will see in 9:4ⁱⁱⁱ that they are not harmed by God's wrath and in 14:1-5^{iv} that they will stand redeemed on Mount Zion with Jesus. We will also see that the antichrist copies this sealing of his own people which condemns them rather than redeems. The pattern of sealing the righteous and the judgment of those who are evil is seen in Ezekiel 9.

The last chapter ended with a question, "Who can stand in this great day of wrath" (6:17^v; 7:9^{vi})? It is answered in this chapter. So, we are about to see who could stand in that day. Psalm 1 tells us the wicked will not stand in the day of judgment (Psalm 1:5^{vii}). That implies the righteous will stand.

¹ *After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree.* ² *Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea,* Revelation 7:1,2 We saw in chapter 4 that the expression "after this" divides the various visions that John saw. It does not mean after the four horsemen carried out their judgments as we will see in a moment.

The angels standing at the four corners of the earth shows us this is a worldwide event. It may be that the four winds they hold back are the four horsemen of chapter six. We can see the four horsemen of 6:1-8 are a parallel to the four horsemen of Zechariah 6:1-8^{viii} which are linked to the four chariots that go to the four winds. In Scripture winds often represent God's judgment. We see that in many Old Testament passages (Jeremiah 4:11^{ix}; 18:17^x; 49:36^{xi}; Isaiah 41:16^{xii} etc.). These in Revelation are said to be held back in verse one of today's passage, while those in Zechariah are commanded to go.

³ *saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."* Revelation 7:3 The angel that comes from the east commands those angels in the four directions to hold back the winds of judgment until God's servants are sealed by him and his helpers (see the use of "we") with a mark on the foreheads so they will not be harmed (9:4^{xiii}).^{xiv} In that day servants and tools were marked with the name of their owner. Slaves bore the name of their owner on their foreheads. The mark on God's servants declares them to belong to Him. Because of the seal on their foreheads, the angels of judgment will know not to harm them just as in a

similar way the angel of death passed over the homes in Egypt marked by the blood on the doorposts (Exodus 12:13^{xv}).

We should realize that this has a specific meaning but also a broader application. I believe it spoke to the concerns of the churches in that age, and that it will speak to believers in the end of time, and that it can speak to us today. God can protect us, and He certainly can keep us in His grasp (Hebrews 13:5^{xvi}). That is not to say He will never let harm come our way. Sometimes suffering comes as discipline. Other times it is allowed to teach us and build our character as James indicates (James 1:2^{xvii}) and as our Lord warned (Matthew 5:11,12^{xviii}). We will not always know why God allows painful events in our lives, but we can always trust it is for our ultimate good, though we may not understand that purpose in the present. God works in mysterious ways. We can say that He always guards the souls of those who are His.

Just as they will be marked for protection, so we, too, are sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13,14^{xix}). Those who are sealed in this passage are not protected from all harm, but from the judgments of God (9:4^{xx}). God will help them continue to trust Him through all that evil men do to them. That is what it means to be more than an overcomer (Romans 8:36^{xxi}). **Refusing to deny His name is being victorious!**

The mention of earth, sea, and trees was a way to say the whole earth. It indicates that this sealing takes place before the God's judgments go forth to do their damage to the earth, sea, and trees (Revelation 8:7-11^{xxii}). As the first readers faced the Roman empire's persecution of those who refused to worship the emperor, they would understand this passage to be a promise of God helping them to endure to the end (Mark 13:13^{xxiii}). They would face the wrath of man but not the wrath of God. No matter what difficulties we face or how corrupt the world becomes, we need not fear, for God will always keep His own (John 10:28^{xxiv}). God will keep us in the faith and see us safely home. We can tell who a true believer is because they will endure to the end (Matthew 24:13^{xxv}).

The question in 6:17 asked who can stand in the day of God's wrath. It is answered in 7:9^{xxvi} where we see a great multitude standing. That is because God sealed them, kept them, and brought them through great tribulation. Great tribulation is a term used in 2:22^{xxvii} as judgment on the unrepentant in the church of Thyatira. Paul tells us that it is through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22^{xxviii}). But in Matthew 24 Jesus uses the term "great tribulation" as an expression of the severity of tribulation in the last days (Matthew 24:21^{xxix}). Are these people who are sealed coming out of the intense end-time tribulation or the tribulation that all God's people experience? I would say, Yes! The first readers could have seen it as the persecution by Rome, while at the same time it can be true of our trials and especially true of the last days.

⁴ *And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:* Revelation 7:4 John then describes the breakdown of the 144,000, 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes. Because both the names of the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles are written on New Jerusalem, a number of commentators believe this is the twelve tribes multiplied by the twelve apostles representing the church times 10³, indicating that it represents all the believers of both old and new testaments.^{xxx} This is consistent with the earliest known commentary on Revelation in the early second century. Hermas in *Similitudes* 9:16 describes the twelve tribes as the church, the true Israel.

This is a unique list of the tribes. The tribe of Dan which went into idolatry has been removed. Joseph is never in Old Testament lists of the tribes as his sons, Manasseh

and Ephraim were tribes. Levi was sometimes left off the lists as their inheritance was not land but the Lord. In John's list there are both Joseph and his son Manasseh but not Ephraim. Ephraim became the name by which the northern tribes were named. They fell into idolatry, so his name suffered the same fate as that of Dan. Levi is included because this is not about physical inheritance. We could say that it is all the original sons of Israel except Manasseh replaced Dan. Eliminating the tribes known for idolatry is a way of saying these are the people of faith (Hebrews 11:6^{xxxix}).

Judah is listed first not only because of their prominence but also because Jacob predicted a leader from Judah would bring about the obedience of the nations (Genesis 49:10^{xxxix}). *Paul alludes to Gen. 49:10 in Rom. 1:5^{xxxix} by referring to "the obedience of faith among the nations," which has been accomplished by Christ, "the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3^{xxxix}; cf. Rom. 16:26^{xxxix}). Therefore, the tribe of Judah is mentioned first because through its new king it has become the door of blessing to the nations (so Rev. 5:5^{xxxix}, 9^{xxxix}). A royal descendant from David would be a natural choice to provide entry for the nations into the blessings of Israel because David was not a pure ethnic Israelite but a descendant himself from a Gentile who had converted to the faith of Israel (cf. Ruth 4:13–22).^{xxxix}*

Now for the big question: Who are these people? Some cults have claimed to be the 144,000. Is the number exact or representative of a large contingency? Are they the innumerable multitude of verse 9? That would be typical of Jewish parallelism, stating it one way and repeating the concept in different terms. Twelve twelves seem to be symbolic, but when dealing with apocalyptic literature you cannot be too dogmatic. The list is similar to the listing of the tribes in battle divisions departing Egypt in Numbers 2. This is God's army that fights with spiritual weapons. We conquer the same way Jesus did. By persevering through suffering and clinging to our faith, we overcome evil.

In a similar way, we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit to fight in a spiritual army. We put on the armor of Ephesians 6. Paul tells us we fight a battle that is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12^{xl}; 2 Corinthians 10:4^{xl}). Our weapons are the Word of God and prayer. There is a battle raging over the souls of men. Your godly example, words given by the Holy Spirit, and prayer aid in releasing those who are captive to the enemy. And when they are freed, they join our ranks. Jesus is the captain who leads us into battle each day. No matter what our job or how insignificant it may seem, we are invading a dark world with the light of Christ (Romans 13:12^{xl}). Never underestimate your influence when you walk in the Spirit and say what God leads you say and pray His will into the earth.

The 144,000 in this passage is interpreted in a number of ways. Some people believe it is a group of Messianic Jews and the great number of people in verse 9 are Gentile Christians. Another theory does not divide the groups into Jews and Gentiles. Those proponents would cite Galatians 6:16^{xli} that both groups are "the Israel of God." They have persuasive arguments such as the lack of any Jewish or Gentile distinction in the rest of Revelation. The church is made up of both so why would God divide it in the tribulation? The rest of Revelation takes Jewish concepts and spiritualizes them so should this not be considered the same, such as "a kingdom of priests, a holy nation" said of God's intention for Israel in Exodus 19:6^{xlii} and of the church in 1 Peter 2:9^{xlii} and Revelation 1:6^{xlii}). All believers are "servants of God." The most convincing argument for this interpretation is that in Revelation 22:4^{xliii} all believers are marked in a similar way

with Jesus' name on their foreheads. In addition, chapter 14:1^{xlvi} it seems the 144,000 include the whole number of the redeemed as they have the name of the Lamb and of their God upon their foreheads. The Apostle Paul clearly says there is no more Jew and Greek (Galatians 3:28,29^{xlvi}). If we are in Christ, we are Abraham's children and heirs of the promise. He also tells us circumcision does not make a Jew, but circumcision of the heart is what makes us children of God (Galatians 5:6^{xlvi}).

Another indication that these represent all the redeemed is that in 5:9b we see the redeemed from all of the earth declaring the Lamb to be worthy. They declare, ^{9b} *by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation*, Then in 14:4b these redeemed ones are said to be the 144,000. It declares of the 144,000, ^{4b} *These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb*, Beale quotes Hailey with additional reasons. *Further reasons for identifying the group sealed in 7:3–8 with the entire community of the redeemed are: (1) all redeemed believers are included when δοῦλοι (“servants”) is used elsewhere in the book (so 2:20ⁱ; 19:5^{li}; 22:3^{lii}); (2) the context of Ezekiel 9, which provides much of the background here, knows of no distinction between major groups of the faithful, but distinguishes only true believers from unbelievers; and (3) if Satan puts a seal on all his followers (13:16–17^{liii}; 14:9–11^{liv}), God presumably does likewise for all his followers, not just some of them.^{lv}*

There is also the problem of the northern tribes being integrated with pagan societies once they went into captivity. As many numbers in apocalyptic literature are symbolic, twelve by twelve may be a way of saying every single in Christ is sealed. This would have given those living under persecution and us as well faith that God would help us be strong and endure.

Though I tend toward this interpretation, I wonder why the specific tribes are mentioned and how that relates to Gentile believers. Several of the New Testament letters are written to the twelve tribes when those letters were clearly for the church and not an attempt to reach out to the lost ten tribes (James 1:1^{lvi}; Acts 26:7^{lvii}). But what of Jesus' statement that Jerusalem would be trodden underfoot until "the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled" (Luke 21:24^{lviii})? Did Jesus use the word Gentile to mean pagans or literally non-Jews? I am not willing to say I am absolutely certain of either view. What we can say is that God has a spiritual army now and will have one then. He can protect them like He protected the Jews in Goshen during the plagues on Egypt (Exodus 12:13^{lix}).

There are those who have the view that no one entering the tribulation that heard and rejected the gospel before will be saved during the tribulation. That would be a complete contrast with the foreshadow in the deliverance from Egypt when a multitude of Egyptians left with the Israelites (Exodus 12:37,38^{lx}). Certainly, they were not believers before the plagues but saw the power of God and the lie of what they had believed and became believers in the God of Israel. Will not the same happen in the last days?

Ezekiel 9 begins with the executioners called to come forward. Then the Lord called to a man in linen to mark those who were grieved over the sins of Israel. The executioners were told to execute all who did not have the mark. At that time, the word for mark was *taw*. *Taw* is also the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet. It was written as a cross or an ex. John was probably unaware of that but God is not. We are under the cross, and that is the only reason God's wrath will not touch us in this earth or at the final judgment. What about the x way to write it? That is the first Greek letter in the spelling of the name Christ.

My father was a pastor and professor of Greek and New Testament studies. He wrote shorthand notes in the margin of his Bible. He would use an x to abbreviate Christ. That usage is why some write xmas. It was not crossing out Christ but instead it is abbreviating His name for those who read Greek. Even in Jewish literature *taw* is said to be the seal of the Holy One (Shabbat 55a). The righteous are marked with His name!

We do know from later passages that the name of God and the Lamb and New Jerusalem are on the forehead of the believers (14:1ⁱⁱ). The mark of the anti-Christ is a number that represents his name on the head of the unbelievers (14:11^{xliii}). Which group will you be in when the Lord returns to judge the earth? Even if you do not associate the 144,000 with the multitude coming out of the Great Tribulation, the New Testament declares all believers are sealed. Jesus said that those who labor for the food of eternal life have a seal upon them placed by God the Father (John 6:27^{lxi}; also see 2 Corinthians 1:21,22.^{lxii}). Paul tells us the seal upon us is the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13^{lxiii}).

God puts His seal of ownership on all believers declaring that we are His. That is why you can tell a believer by their fruit (Matthew 7:20^{lxiv}) or as James would say, by their works (James 2:26^{lxv}). Being marked with the cross or sealed with the Holy Spirit is the same thing. It means that God owns us! We are bought with the blood of the Lamb. But here is beautiful addition to this thought. The bride in Song of Songs ask that her Lord put her as a seal upon His heart (Song of Songs 8:6^{lxvi}). Isaiah wrote that we are engraved on His hands (Isaiah 49:16^{lxvii}). That is why the bride can say, “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine” (Song of Songs 2:16^{lxviii}). I hope you can say to the Lord what Aretha Franklin sang, **“Signed, sealed, delivered I’m Yours!”**

You may not agree with some of my conclusions. I am not saying that my interpretation is the right one and all others are wrong. I am saying that to the best of my understanding this is how I interpret it. We can agree that it is better to be sealed into the family of God by the Holy Spirit. We can agree the day will come when God will judge the earth. And we can agree that it is a good thing to study the Word of God that we might rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15^{lxix}). Are you signed, sealed, and delivered? You can be by repenting and placing your faith in Jesus!

Questions:

- 1 What are the four angels holding back?
- 2 What is the mark similar to in Exodus?
- 3 To whom can this apply?
- 4 When does it seem this takes place?
- 5 How did the earliest commentator interpret the twelve tribes?
- 6 What is unusual about the list of tribes? What might that be saying to us?
- 7 Why is Judah first?
- 8 What reasons are given for the 144,000 being believers of old and new testaments?
- 9 What does the old Hebrew for “mark” tell us today?
- 10 What can all biblical interpreters agree on?

ⁱ **Matthew 24:29 (ESV)**

²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

ii **2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 (ESV)**

¹¹ Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false,

¹² in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

iii **Revelation 9:4 (ESV)**

⁴ They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

iv **Revelation 14:1-5 (ESV)**

¹ Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, ³ and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴ It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, ⁵ and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.

v **Revelation 6:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

vi **Revelation 7:9 (ESV)**

⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

vii **Psalms 1:5 (ESV)**

⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

viii **Zechariah 6:1-8 (ESV)**

¹ Again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four chariots came out from between two mountains. And the mountains were mountains of bronze. ² The first chariot had red horses, the second black horses, ³ the third white horses, and the fourth chariot dappled horses—all of them strong. ⁴ Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?" ⁵ And the angel answered and said to me, "These are going out to the four winds of heaven, after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth. ⁶ The chariot with the black horses goes toward the north country, the white ones go after them, and the dappled ones go toward the south country." ⁷ When the strong horses came out, they were impatient to go and patrol the earth. And he said, "Go, patrol the earth." So they patrolled the earth. ⁸ Then he cried to me, "Behold, those who go toward the north country have set my Spirit at rest in the north country."

ix **Jeremiah 4:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, "A hot wind from the bare heights in the desert toward the daughter of my people, not to winnow or cleanse,

x **Jeremiah 18:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ Like the east wind I will scatter them before the enemy. I will show them my back, not my face, in the day of their calamity."

xi **Jeremiah 49:36 (ESV)**

³⁶ And I will bring upon Elam the four winds from the four quarters of heaven. And I will scatter them to all those winds, and there shall be no nation to which those driven out of Elam shall not come.

xii **Isaiah 41:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ you shall winnow them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the tempest shall scatter them. And you shall rejoice in the LORD; in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory.

xiii **Ezekiel 9:4 (ESV)**

⁴ And the LORD said to him, "Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it."

^{xiv} See Ezekiel 9:1ff for a similar sealing of the righteous before judgment of the wicked.

xv **Exodus 12:13 (ESV)**

¹³ The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

xvi **Hebrews 13:5 (ESV)**

⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

^{xvii} **James 1:2 (ESV)**

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,

^{xviii} **Matthew 5:11-12 (ESV)**

¹¹ “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

^{xix} **Ephesians 1:13-14 (ESV)**

¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

^{xx} **Revelation 9:4 (ESV)**

⁴ They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

^{xxi} **Romans 8:36 (ESV)**

³⁶ As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

^{xxii} **Revelation 8:7-11 (ESV)**

⁷ The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. ⁸ The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. ⁹ A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. ¹⁰ The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹ The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.

^{xxiii} **Mark 13:13 (ESV)**

¹³ And you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

^{xxiv} **John 10:28 (ESV)**

²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

^{xxv} **Matthew 24:13 (ESV)**

¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

^{xxvi} **Revelation 7:9 (ESV)**

⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

^{xxvii} **Revelation 2:22 (ESV)**

²² Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works,

^{xxviii} **Acts 14:22 (ESV)**

²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

^{xxix} **Matthew 24:21 (ESV)**

²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.

^{xxx} See Guthrie, *Blessed*, p 116,117

^{xxxi} **Hebrews 11:6 (ESV)**

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

^{xxxii} **Genesis 49:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

^{xxxiii} **Romans 1:5 (ESV)**

⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,

^{xxxiv} **Romans 1:3 (ESV)**

³ concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh

^{xxxv} **Romans 16:26 (ESV)**

²⁶ but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—

^{xxxvi} **Revelation 5:5 (ESV)**

⁵ And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

^{xxxvii} **Revelation 5:9 (ESV)**

⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,

^{xxxviii} G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 418.

^{xxxix} **Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)**

¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

^{xl} **2 Corinthians 10:4 (ESV)**

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

^{xli} **Romans 13:12 (ESV)**

¹² The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

^{xlii} **Galatians 6:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

^{xliiii} **Exodus 19:6 (ESV)**

⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

^{xliv} **1 Peter 2:9 (ESV)**

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

^{xlv} **Revelation 1:6 (ESV)**

⁶ and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

^{xlvi} **Revelation 22:4 (ESV)**

⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

^{xlvii} **Revelation 14:1 (ESV)**

¹ Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads.

^{xlviii} **Galatians 3:28-29 (ESV)**

²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

²⁹ And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.

^{xlix} **Galatians 5:6 (ESV)**

⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

^l **Revelation 2:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

^{li} **Revelation 19:5 (ESV)**

⁵ And from the throne came a voice saying, “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.”

^{lii} **Revelation 22:3 (ESV)**

³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.

^{liii} **Revelation 13:16-17 (ESV)**

¹⁶ Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, ¹⁷ so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.

^{liv} **Revelation 14:9-11 (ESV)**

⁹ And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”

^{lv} G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 413.

^{lvi} **James 1:1 (ESV)**

¹ James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.

^{lvii} **Acts 26:7 (ESV)**

⁷ to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king!

^{lviii} **Luke 21:24 (ESV)**

²⁴ They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

^{lix} **Exodus 12:13 (ESV)**

¹³ The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

^{lx} **Exodus 12:37-38 (ESV)**

³⁷ And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. ³⁸ A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds.

^{lxi} **John 6:27 (ESV)**

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

^{lxii} **2 Corinthians 1:21-22 (ESV)**

²¹ And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²² and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

^{lxiii} **Ephesians 1:13 (ESV)**

¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

^{lxiv} **Matthew 7:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

^{lxv} **James 2:26 (ESV)**

²⁶ For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

^{lxvi} **Song of Songs 8:6 (ESV)**

⁶ Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the LORD.

^{lxvii} **Isaiah 49:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.

^{lxviii} **Song of Songs 2:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ My beloved is mine, and I am his; he grazes among the lilies.

^{lxix} **2 Timothy 2:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.