

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

“Sealed for Security”

Revelation 7:1-3

Background

1. The Church, the Body of Christ, has been Raptured (4:1). This leaves earthdwellers upon whom the horrific judgments described as seals are opened (6:1-8, 12-17). It is the Lamb of God, in all His grace and glory, Who is found worthy to bring these judgments upon the earth (5:6, 7; 6:1).
2. There is a striking parallel between Revelation 6 and Matthew 24. It is more than coincidental. It is a logical one. Mark this carefully:

First Seal: Antichrist Rev. 6:1, 2	Matt. 24:4, 5	False Christs
Second Seal: No Peace Rev. 6:3, 4	Matt. 24:6, 7	Wars
Third Seal: Starvation Rev. 6:5, 6	Matt. 24:7	Famines
Forth Seal: Death/Hades Rev. 7, 8	Matt. 24:7, 8	Pestilence/Death
Fifth Seal: Martyrs Rev. 6:9-11	Matt. 24:9-13	Hatred/Killings
Sixth Seal: Wrath of God Rev. 6:12-17	Matt. 24:29, 30	Seismographic changes world-wide

3. Now, before the opening of the seventh seal (8:1), there is a gracious interlude or divine parenthesis. This concerns a “seal” of a different order. It is identified by the words “after these things” (, 7:13, cf. v. 9). While the matter is not chronological, it is a statement of fact. Chapter 7 comes prior to the seal judgments, not between seal 6 and 7. Here is an answer to the rhetorical question raised earlier (6:17). God has those whom He will allow to withstand the day of His wrath. This is an intervention of His infinite grace. Consider one way by which His grace is displayed:

THROUGH THE INTERVENTION OF ANGELS vv. 1-3

1. FOR JUDGMENT v. 1

a. Their Numeration John saw four angels and that is all declared by the text. It is idle speculation to enquire beyond this. The three-fold mention of “four” marks the completeness and universality of the matter.

b. Their Action Two statements are made about the angels: a) They are “standing.” This is a perfect participle (). These angels are positioned “on” () the four corners of the earth. b) They are “holding,” a present tense

participle () the four winds of the earth. This indicates delegated authority.

c. Their Mission Note the purpose clause with the negative present tense () showing that “no wind could keep on blowing.” Three directions are indicated. a) “upon the earth.” b) “upon the sea waters” c) “upon every tree” (all vegetation). These three prepositional phrases have no climax, but surely do relate to the four cardinal points from which the winds blow. Since there is no inherent right with the angels, the restrictions on their mission point to the sovereignty of God.

NOTE: Angels are very active in the Book of Revelation (5:2-11; 8:3-11; 10:7; 14:18; 16:5, 8; 19:17). Apparently, God delights to carry out His sovereign rule over the universe through His servants! Read how He controls the universe (Psa. 148:8; Amos 4:7, 8, 13; 5:8; Matt. 5:45). But He gives this, according to His will, to secondary agents. Here it is the angels who play a primary role. What an amazing God He is!

2. FOR DEFERMENT v. 2

a. Who Involved? Here is a special angelic agent. He is referred as “another” () meaning “another of the same kind” as already mentioned (v. 1). It must not be fancied to be our Lord or the Holy Spirit, but simply a specific agent of God sent forth to accomplish an incredible activity. He is viewed as going up (, present active participle) from the sun rising (cf. Mal. 4:2).

b. How Designated? This special angelic envoy has (pres. part.) the seal (anathrous) but defined as belonging to the living God, hence it has solemnity and vital import. He cries with a loud voice to the other four angels (v. 1) to whom was given the charge to hurt (injure) the earth and sea (trees not mentioned)

c. What Determined The prohibition is an ingressive aorist negative meaning “not to begin to hurt.” This means to hold back any injurious judgment on the three areas previously mentioned (cf. v. 1) “until.” So God gives instructions to hold back judgment “until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” Among the many “untils” in the Bible, look up these: Jer. 32:5; Dan. 9:27; Mt. 24:34; Lk 21:24; Ro. 11:25, 26. God has his timing for everything. Whatever relates to you is “until” His purposed time comes.

Here the “until” concerns the sealing of “the servants of God.” What an amazing delineation of the Jewish people. “Servants” is actual “bondslaves” who belong to God. Think of it, angels who are His “servants” (literally, render public service at one’s own expense, , Heb. 1:14) are here charged to seal “bondslaves” (). The seal is “on their foreheads”, a noun meaning “after the eye” () and only used in Revelation in the N.T. (here, 9:4; 13:6; 14:1, 9; 17:5; 20:4; 22:4).

Conclusion Among the many significant meanings of a seal as here described are these: 1) ownership, 2) secrecy, 3) finished transaction, 4) inviolability, 5) destination. Let’s face it -- are you sealed? Are the above five concepts true of your relationship to Christ? If not, settle the issue now. Amen.