

Who Can Stand? Revelation 7.1-3

November 17, 2024

The opening of the 6th seal reveals the terrible wrath of God and the judgment to come!

- In light of such a frightening scene the question is asked, “Who shall stand?”
- Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. Ps. 1.5-6
- The answer is given in Ch.7.

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.

- Revelation is not a straight-line chronology:
 - It is a series of overlapping visions given from heaven’s perspective
 - Ch.7 takes us back to the first 4 seals
- The four angels are the four riders of the white, red, black and pale horses
- The four winds depict the judgment to come (reference from Zech.6.5)
- Earth, sea and trees depict entirety of the earth

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, 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.”

- Some believe this angel to be the Lord Himself
 - Ascends from the rising of the sun (east)
 - Has the seal of the living God
 - Has authority over the angels bringing judgment
- Some believe this angel to be an angel under the authority of the Lord
 - until we have sealed the servants ***of our God*** on their foreheads.”
 - Speaking under the authority of God and not his own
- Judgment is delayed as in response to the martyrs’ pleas for justice:
- They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” ¹¹ Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been. Rev.6.10-11
- Sealing the servants of God:
- For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. Rm.8.29-30

- The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 2 Pet.3.9
- Sealed on their foreheads:
- The seal is clear and evident, not hidden or obscure
- The seal is in opposition to the mark of the beast:
- 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, 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. Rev.13.16-17
- But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Gal.5.16-24

What is the significance of the sealing of God?

In ancient times seals were made of wax or clay and were used as a sign of authority:

- Authenticated documents: But you may write as you please with regard to the Jews, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king's ring, for an edict written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's ring cannot be revoked." Esther 8.8
- Authenticated ownership: It is important that we can only speak of a seal if it clearly identifies its owner and expresses said owner's acclamation and possession. **Adam Novak: Use of Seals in the Arpad Era – on line**
- Provided protection: The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard. Mt.27.62-66

God sends His Holy Spirit as the believers' seal:

- 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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. Eph.1.13-14
- The Holy Spirit has authority/authenticity

- When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. Jn.16.13
- The Holy Spirit guarantees our salvation in Christ
- And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. 2 Cor. 1.21-22
- The Holy Spirit assures that we belong to the Father
- For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. Rm.8.15-17
- Because we have the Holy Spirit we can be victorious
- No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. 1 Cor.10.13

What this sealing accomplishes is their perseverance in faith, God’s work in them to assure that they will stand firm to the end. - **James Boice**

Evidence that we have the Holy Spirit – Jonathan Edwards

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1 Jn.4.1

1. Elevation in esteem in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour

He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. Jn.16.14

2. Opposition to the reign of Satan causing us to turn from sin

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 1 Jn.1.5-6

3. An increased interest in God’s Word – a desire to know and obey

Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. Ps.119.33

4. A sound grasp of true doctrine and followed by a zeal to defend against error

Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Acts 17.11

And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the

neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.” Acts 15.8-11

5. The mark of love

We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother. 1 Jn.4.19-21

Let us acknowledge and declare with Peter

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1.3-5