

## A PAUSE IN GOD'S PLANS Rev 7:1-8 / 8-15-18 / WED

### I. THE REASON FOR THIS PAUSE.

A. The reason for the pause.

1. To allow people to respond to God's grace---7:1a **"After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth...."** & Hab. 3:2
2. It was the "calm before the storm".

B. The requirements for the pause:

1. The winds of God's wrath had to be stilled--7:1b—**"holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree."**
  - a. Winds are symbolic of God's judgment- Hosea 8:7a.
  - b. Four corners of the earth may represent the four points of a compass.
2. The four angels could be the horsemen mentioned in chapter six.

### II. THE REASON FOR THE SEAL.

A. Who is this angel?—7:2 **"Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God..."**

1. Some think its Jesus.
2. However, this could be an angel and not Christ.

B. What will this angel do?

1. First, he stops the angels from delivering God's wrath on the earth for a while--7:2b-3a—**"He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: 3 "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees....."**
2. Second, he seals those who receive God's grace—7:3b **"...until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God."**

- a. The word “seal” refers to an authenticating mark, like a corporate seal for legal documents. This mark signifies those who belong to God. It probably comes from Ezekiel 9:3-4.
  - b. Satan, in imitation of God, has his own mark for those who belong to him-Rev. 13:16-17.
3. God has also given us a mark-Ephesians 1:13-14.
  4. What kind of seal is it?
    - a. It’s a seal of possession-I Corinthians 6:19-20.
    - b. It’s a seal of protection-I Peter 1:5.
    - c. It’s a seal of preservation-Ephesians 4:30.

### III. THE RECIPIENTS OF THE SEAL.

- A. Who are they?--7:4-8.
  1. These could be those Jews who make up God’s remnant.
  2. However, Paul also makes it clear the Church (Christians) is the “new Israel.”—Rom. 2:28-29.
  3. So this group could just as well be a combination of believing Jews and Tribulation Christians.
  4. This number is a square of 12 X 12. Since 12 is the number for completeness it should not be considered a literal number.
  5. Why are some tribes left out of this list?
    - a. Dan and Ephraim aren’t mentioned, perhaps because they became deeply involved in idolatry.
    - b. Joseph took Dan’s place in the list.
    - c. Manasseh was one of Joseph’s sons who replaced Ephraim.
    - d. Levi was not originally given land of their own because as priests they received towns throughout Israel to make them available to the people. Levi, however, is mentioned in this list.

6. How will these Jews hear the gospel? Revelation 11:1-12 mentions two witnesses being sent to Jerusalem to share the gospel. More on this later.
- B. What makes these men (people) so special? According to Revelation 14:1-5, they did not succumb to the wickedness of their culture. More on this later.
- C. Why did God raise these people up? Jesus answers in Matthew 24:14.
- D. Why will God have to raise up his own evangelists?
  1. Depending on when the rapture will occur (pre, mid or post tribulation) there may not be any Christians when the tribulation begins.
  2. Today this story serves as a warning that we Christians and the Churches are, for the most part, failing to win the world for Christ.