

The Great Escape

Rev. 6:15—7:17

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1. The greatest tribulation of their lives was in front of them. Who would stand? (6:17). Their escape is the theme of Rev.7:1-17.
2. The 6th seal warning (Rev.6:12-17) and Jesus' warning (Luke23:27-31).
3. A brief review of God's wrath poured out on his people for their unfaithfulness:

God's Wrath poured out on the Jews of Samaria using
the Gentile nation of Assyria

722 BC



God's Wrath poured out on the Jews in Jerusalem
using the Gentile nation of Babylon

586 BC



God's Wrath poured out on the Jews in Jerusalem
using the Gentile nation of Rome

70 AD

- For the war on the unrepentant Jews of Samaria in 722 BC see Hos.10:1-8.
- For the destruction of the unrepentant Jews of Jerusalem in 586 BC see Jeremiah and Lamentations (Jer.4:5-9; 25:8,9; 39:1-10, esp. v.1,2).
- For the destruction of the unrepentant Jews of Jerusalem in 70AD see the book of Revelation (see also Matt. 24:15-25; Mark 13:14-23; especially **Luke 21:20-24**).
- "God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ," 1Thess.5:9.

God holds back wrath to provide escape

1. The four winds are winds of destruction aimed at Jerusalem (7:1-3). This same image of a destructive wind from God for the Jews unfaithfulness is found in Hos. 13:15, 16.
2. Remember that the word "earth" (v.1, 2, 3) refers to the land of the Jews, Judea. John is not using "cosmos" or any reference to the whole global world. A promise to destroy those who rejected Christ in Israel (Acts 2:22, 23, 26, 36; 3:12-15; 4:8-10; 5:30; Matt.21:33-45; 23:29-33; Luke 23:27-31; John 19:5-15; 1 Thess.2:14-16; Rev.7:1-8).
3. God seals with a mark on the foreheads of those he is protecting (v.2-4). God did the same thing at the first destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC (see Ezek. 9:4-10).

Nero's Suicide provides the pause for escape

1. Nero's suicide was in 68 AD providing the pause the Jews needed for escape from God's wrath (Rev.7:3).

2. The abomination of desolation had occurred—the Roman Army had gathered (see Luke 21:20-24).
3. Over 1.1 million Jews lost their lives in the siege of Jerusalem but the 144,000 were spared by leaving (Rev. 7:4), represent those who escaped to Pella in accordance with Christ's command. Their identification is certain (Matt.24:16-22).

144,000 Sealed

1. For Christians to escape, they needed a mark to identify them (Rev. 7:14). The mark made clear to the angels those who had been purchased by the blood of Christ (Rev. 5:9). Their number was 144,000 (Rev. 7:4).
2. The number 144,000 is most likely a symbolic reference to the 12 tribes representing the Old Testament saints together with the 12 apostles, as representative of the New Covenant believers, times 1000, a reference to completeness—the full number. An example of this symbolism is in Ps. 50:10). Salvation occurs of the perfect number of God's elect whether this is a symbolical number or not.
3. The saints from every nation celebrate the escape of their own from God's wrath provided by the Lamb of God (7:9-17).
4. Where is the rapture? They were told the persecutions were coming but not that they would be raptured (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Rom. 8:35; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 4:12, 13). Instead of putting their hope in a rapture they were instructed to hope in Christ and to persevere unto the end and they would be saved (Matt. 24:13).

Applications

1. Stay the course (Matt. 24:13).
2. Take comfort in God's care (Ps.103:3,4; 1Thess.5:23).
3. Celebrate that the Lamb in the center of the throne is our shepherd and he has taken to himself a new bride, his international church (v.17).