

Revelation 7 – Who can stand?



Revelation 6, filled with the chaos of the world and impending judgment by God, ended with the question "Who can stand?" Revelation 7, gives us a response, through six short episodes:

1. Four angels holding back winds which will harm the earth
2. A fifth angel calling for God's people to be sealed first
3. 144,000 sealed people
4. An uncountable multitude from every nation
5. An elder explains these have come through suffering, trusting Jesus.
6. A picture of these people gathered round God's throne, secure.

Sam asked what this all meant, and suggested:

1. Suffering will not last for ever
2. There is ultimate protection for those who love Jesus
3. We live in a spiritual battle and need to put on the full armour of God
4. God is fulfilling his promise to gather a people from all nations
5. God is with us in our suffering, there is hope.
6. The end will be security in God's presence, with no condemnation.

Finally, Sam asked is this future or now? Though there is a future fulfilment, he gave three ways we can engage with this vision now:

1. We can share God's love with all people, in word and deeds.
2. Experience being shepherded by Jesus now, in our daily relationship with him.
3. The vision of people before the throne challenges us to confront racism now.

Questions

1. What opportunities do the new relaxations of lockdown give us to 'share God's love in word and deeds'?
2. How can we continue to grow in our relationship with Jesus? What opportunities are there right now in the current situation?
3. Currently the national and international debate about racism is very explosive. How can we respond constructively within our own church context to the issues raised? How may we make progress to being a people from "all tribes and people and languages" who worship the Lamb in unity?

Resources

1. Sam is hosting a regular Monday morning session, 7.30-8.00 am, with the aim to "begin your week by learning to meditate on scripture, pray contemplatively, and rid yourself of hurry, in order to take God's presence into your week." The link can be found on Gateway's Facebook page.

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2. In a recent post on the *Think Theology* blog PJ Smyth suggested a way in which Christians can contribute positively to the current racism challenges. The post, entitled *George Floyd's One-Month Anniversary: How Christians Can Serve This Cultural Moment* can be found at https://thinktheology.co.uk/blog/article/george_floyds_1_month_anniversary_how_christians_can_serve_this_cultural_moment