

### Handout: Revelation Lesson 10

Notice the parallels between Ezekiel visions seven years before the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem in 587/6 BC and John's in the Book of Revelation. Comparing Ezekiel visions with John's in the chart below, you will notice that six of John's visions parallel Ezekiel's and appear in the same order:

Vision	Book of Ezekiel	Book of Revelation
1. The Throne Room of God	Ezekiel Chapter 1	Revelation Chapter 4
2. The book written on both sides	Ezekiel Chapters 2-3	Revelation Chapter 5
3. The Four Horsemen	Ezekiel Chapter 5	Revelation Chapter 6
4. Those slain under the altar	Ezekiel Chapter 6	Revelation Chapter 6:9-11
5. The wrath of God	Ezekiel Chapter 7	Revelation Chapter 6:12-17
6. The seal on the saint's foreheads	Ezekiel Chapter 9	Revelation Chapter 7

*1 Next I saw four angels, standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the world to keep them from blowing over the land or the sea or any tree."*

The symbolism in verse 2:

1. four is the number of the earth (land and sea)
2. the "wind" symbolizes the coming of God with blessings or judgment
3. the "trees" are images of human beings

In verse 2, another angel comes from the East where God's actions in history traditionally came (Is 41:1-4, 25, 46:11, Ez 43:1-3), and the direction in which the Tabernacle (and later the Temple of God) faced, as well as all early church buildings. He has God's seal:

1. A seal was the symbol of a person in which someone of importance had a personal seal or insignia either carved into a ring or worn on a chain around their necks that served as their signature when impressed on a document to show ownership or authority.
2. Roman soldiers were marked (tattooed) with their unit's seal or the seal of the Emperor.
3. Slaves were marked (tattooed or branded) with their owner's seals.
4. Trade guild members were sometimes sealed (tattooed) with a mark indicating their membership.
5. A seal also authenticated a juridical act or document (like a will) and occasionally made it secret (1 Kng 21:8; Jer 32:10; Is 29:11)
6. God's holy prophets were marked or sealed by God (1 Kng 20:41; Zec 13:6; Is 44:5).
7. Circumcision, under the Old Covenant, was a seal "for the day of redemption."

Jewish tradition divided angels into two groups; verses 1-3 represents both groups:

1. Angels who were God's agents for controlling the forces of nature (verse 1)
2. Angels of the Presence and Sanctification (verses 2-3)

The angel who carries the seal of God tells the other angels to "wait" before they devastate the land. The seal of the Holy Spirit covers the righteous before applying the seals of wrath to the wicked. Revelation 7:1-3 has the same imagery and message as Ezekiel Chapters 7-9, in which Ezekiel receives a vision of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587/6 BC but not before the righteous are *marked with a tau* (the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet in the form of a cruciform). The early Church Father, Tertullian, (writing between 197-220) believed that God gave Ezekiel "the very form of the cross, which He predicted would be the sign on our foreheads in the true Catholic Jerusalem." (Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, iii.22, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol III, pp. 340ff.)

The messenger in verse 2:

1. possesses the Spirit without measure,
2. marks out the righteous as His own possession, and
3. by his order, the judgments on the Land are not poured out until His messengers *have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads!* Many commentators see this messenger as Christ.

In verses 4-8, John hears that the 144,000 marked with God's seal are 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. It is a symbolic number: 12 x 12 x 1000. 12 is the number of governmental perfection while 10, and its multiples, symbolize perfection of order.

Interpretations concerning those who receive God's divine seal:

1. The New Israel of Gentiles and Jews baptized into the New Covenant, which Paul writes about in Galatians 6:15-16 ~ *It is not being circumcised or uncircumcised that matters; but what matters is a new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this as their rule and to the Israel of God* (also see Gal 3:6-9, 29; 4:21-31; Romans 9:6-8).
2. Other commentators interpret them as being Christians of Jewish background or those Jews who will become Christians: the holy remnant of Israel who, as the descendants of Jacob, accepted the Messiah, inaugurated the New Israel and received the required Sacrament of Baptism (Is 4:2-4; Ez Chapter 9).

The seal of God *on their foreheads* also has special Biblical significance:

1. A mark on the forehead is a symbol of humankind restored to fellowship with God by a symbol of God's protection. One example of this was the High Priest in the Old Covenant, who wore a gold plaque on his forehead marked with letters proclaiming that he was "Holy (or consecrated) to Yahweh" (Exodus 28:36).
2. In Deuteronomy 6:6-8, all God's people are sealed on the forehead and the hand with the law of God. They wore the first profession of faith, called the Shema, in little boxes attached to their foreheads and warped with leather straps on their right hands. The act of wearing these devices symbolized a life characterized by faithful obedience in thought and action to every word of God.
3. A third example would be the mark that God place on the forehead of Cain in Genesis 4:15 *So Yahweh put a mark on Cain, so that no one coming across him would kill him.*

In verses 11-12, the saints and angels pronounce seven themes of God's perfection like the chant of the multitude in 5:12 = 1. praise, 2. glory, 3. wisdom, 4. thanksgiving, 5. honor, 6 power, and 7 strength.

"Praise" in 7:12 is the same word as "blessing" in 5:12 (*eulogia*), but "thanksgiving" (*eucharistia*) replaces "riches" (*ploutos*) in 5:12.

*14b they have washed their robes white again in the blood of the Lamb.* From the beginning of humanity's fall into sin, blood was the means of atonement and restoration, beginning with the animal God sacrificed to clothe Adam and Eve's (Gen 3:21) naked condition that was a sign of their spiritual nakedness caused by their sin (no longer "clothed" in divine grace) as well as a symbol of providing atonement with the animal's life. Leviticus 17:11 ~ *For the life of the creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you for performing the rite of expiation on the altar for your lives, for blood is what expiates for a life.* The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the altar of the Cross is the fulfillment of God's plan of expiation and atonement for humanity's sins.

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# THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

Genesis 29:34 Birth Order	Genesis 35:23-36 Mother Order	Genesis 49:3-27 Inheritance	Exodus 1:1-4 Living in Egypt	Num 1:20-43 Census of Tribes	Num 2:3-33 Camp Order	Num 2:3-33 Men 20 & Older	Deuteronomy 27:13 Curses & Blessings	Ezekiel 48:1-29 Distribution of Land	Ezekiel 48:30-35 12 Gates of the Temple	Revelation 7:5-8 Remnant of Israel
Reuben	Reuben	Reuben	Reuben	Reuben	Judah	74,600	Simeon	Dan	Reuben	Judah
Simeon	Simeon	Simeon	Simeon	Simeon	Issachar	54,400	Levi	Asher	Judah	Reuben
Levi	Levi	Levi	Levi	Judah	Zebulun	57,400	Judah	Naphtali	Levi	Gad
Judah	Judah	Judah	Judah	Issachar	Reuben	46,500	Issachar	Manasseh	Joseph	Asher
Dan	Issachar	Zebulun	Issachar	Zebulun	Simeon	59,300	Joseph	Ephraim	Benjamin	Naphtali
Naphtali	Zebulun	Issachar	Zebulun	Ephraim	Gad	45,650	Benjamin	Reuben	Dan	Manasseh
Gad	Joseph	Dan	Benjamin	Manasseh	Ephraim	45,500	Reuben	Judah	Simeon	Simeon
Asher	Benjamin	Gad	Dan	Benjamin	Manasseh	32,200	Gad	Benjamin	Issachar	Levi
Issachar	Dan	Asher	Naphtali	Dan	Benjamin	35,400	Asher	Simeon	Zebulun	Issachar
Zebulun	Naphtali	Naphtali	Gad	Asher	Dan	62,700	Zebulun	Issachar	Gad	Zebulun
Joseph	Gad	Joseph	Asher	Gad	Asher	41,500	Dan	Zebulun	Asher	Joseph
Benjamin	Asher	Benjamin		Naphtali	Naphtali	53,400	Naphtali	Gad	Naphtali	Benjamin
	Leah				East				North	
	Rachel				South	Total	Mt. Gerizim		East	
	Bilhah				West	603,550	Mt. Ebal		South	
	Zilpah				North				West	

Colors in the "Mother Order" column indicate the birth mother

Colors in the "Camp Order" column indicate the direction with the first in each color being on the outside

Population numbers are paired with the "Camp Order" column

Colors in the "Curses & Blessings" column indicate the mountain

Colors in the "Gates of the Temple" column indicate the wall on which the gate existed

Other lists include:

- List of tribes in Egypt (Gen 46:9-25): Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Joseph, Benjamin, (sons of Joseph Manasseh and Ephraim), Dan, and Naphtali (all listed by mother).
- The tribes of the chiefs of the census (Num 1:5-16): Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, sons of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh), Benjamin, Dan, Asher, Gad, and Naphtali.
- The list of the tribes of the spies (Num 13:4-15): Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Issachar, Ephraim, Benjamin, Zebulun, Manasseh, Dan, Asher, Naphtali, and Gad.