

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

**Date** : 16 May 2021

**Sermon Title** : Who Can Stand?

**Speaker** : Rev Peter Koh

**Text** : Revelation 7:1-17

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In a pandemic or any other crisis that has affected our lives, we will all bear the consequences/suffering it brings. The outcome, whether we take it as a challenge and overcome, or succumb and give up, depends on our decision or response. In Revelation 7, we will see that Apostle John gives us a glimpse of the last days to come and the outcome of those who are faithful.

### **The 6 seals in Revelation 6**

When the Lamb begins to loose the seals of this scroll in Chapter 6, the following judgments fall upon the earth:

- 1<sup>st</sup> seal : The Conqueror – will go around conquering, creating chaos in the world
- 2<sup>nd</sup> seal: Conflict on earth – different tension among the people at the end times
- 3<sup>rd</sup> seal : Scarcity on earth – lack of food and resources for earth
- 4<sup>th</sup> seal : Widespread death on earth – many people dying during the end times

We see that in the first four seals, the four horsemen of the apocalypse as they are often called, one quarter of the earth's population is being destroyed.

- 5<sup>th</sup> seal : The Cry of the martyr – where Christians are being killed for their stand for God's word
- 6<sup>th</sup> seal : Cosmic Disturbances – earth will be chaotic with great earthquake, changes in sun and moon etc; a catastrophic kind of judgment upon the earth described in the book of Joel, Isaiah and by Jesus

At the end of Chapter 6, the kings and people ask, “who can stand” in the day of God's wrath? The wrath of God is too much for us. The answer to this question is revealed in the following Chapter 7.

## **Revelation 7**

Revelation 7 is at the point before the 7<sup>th</sup> seal is opened. It provides a glimpse of what is to take place after all the judgements God has placed on this earth through the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> seal. The 7<sup>th</sup> seal is God's wrath that allows harm upon the earth and sea. Yet, it is the message of hope that God has given us in Revelation 7.

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*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

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Through this revelation, John is telling us that God is in control even in times of pandemic, and that gives us hope.

## **Who Can Stand?**

There are 2 groups of people mentioned in this Chapter. One group is on earth and the other in heaven. Despite 6 seals being opened, God comforts John on what is to come and shows the hope at the end of the tunnel.

### **1. Those who are sealed (vv.1-8)**

Based on Numbers 1:1-3, census were taken of the tribes, only of able men, 20 years and above for military purpose. In Revelation 7, we have the Sons of Israel from the 12 tribes. They are the ones that God will set aside on earth to face the tribulations and be the servants of God to reach to the people. Interestingly, these 12 tribes are not the normal 12 tribal set up under the census. The tribes of Dan and Ephraim were excluded in the 12 tribes listed in Revelation. King Jeroboam made 2 golden calves and asked his people to worship these golden calves as the god of Israel. He set one golden calf at Bethel (in Ephraim) and the other in Dan. (1 Kings 12:28-33) This led his people to idolatry as they worshiped these 2 golden calves instead of God. This could possibly be why these 2 tribes were replaced by the tribes of Joseph and Levi in Revelation. It was revealed that 12 thousand each from the 12 tribes, a total of 144 thousands will be sealed. Hence these are not physical tribes as Joseph does not really have a tribe but is symbolic of spiritual tribes which are given a purpose with a promise.

Those who are sealed here will have divine:

- Protection
- Ownership
- Guaranteed eternal inheritance

The good news is that God wants everyone to have eternal inheritance so that none will perish. For those who are to be sealed, God sent the angel to seal these servants of God in their foreheads, before the 7<sup>th</sup> seal is opened when the wrath of God will take place. Here we see God protects each and every servant of God by putting a mark/seal on them as a sign of ownership. God will guarantee eternal inheritance for them.

### **2. Those who are steadfast (vv.9-17)**

The Holy Spirit's mark is upon us too when we accept Jesus Christ. We too are protected and guaranteed our salvation. Although John did not see the 144 thousand in vv.1-8 but only heard from the angels, he saw the huge multitude in verse 9 onwards. Many of us have sinned, but God will send His servants to save the lost ones.

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In this vision, John saw a huge multitude of people of all nations, kindred and languages, clothed in white robes singing, "Salvation belongs to our God!" This is the vision of the people in heaven. These people came out of the great tribulation and have been the steadfast people who are true to God throughout their lives. Their robes have been made clean in the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ.

Those who are sealed here are those who have the following Spiritual Conditions:

- Faithful to the end
- Serving
- Satisfied

## **Application:**

How many of us will serve God or be loyal to Him to the end of our lives? In this crisis, are we inward looking or outward looking? We have to be more outward looking as God is with us because there are many who have not known Him. We really need to reach out and desire for them to know and accept God as the end is coming.

What is our spiritual situation in the current pandemic? Are we filled with faith or fear? We need to be filled with faith, to trust that Jesus Christ has died to redeem us and has demonstrated with His resurrection that He has overcome death.

The end is coming and God has made preparations to send His servants to reach the lost, to give them a second chance to return to Him. Thus the scene shows a multitude of all nations that will be satisfied, because God will provide them with resources, wipe their tears and there will be no more suffering. This is the message of hope, the answer to the question in Revelation 6 "Who Can Stand?"

Can you stand in the time of tribulation? Know that when God is with you, nothing can be against you. Meanwhile on this earth, there will be suffering and many struggles that we face but we need to stand firm in the foundation of God's word so that our faith in Jesus Christ will be steadfast, and be faithful to the living God who is faithful to us. May the fire of revival revive our soul and spirit.

## **CONCLUSION**

Who can stand the wrath of God? Revelation 7 brings hope to us that God protects His servants and is giving all people a second chance to be saved. It reminds us that we belong to Jesus Christ as we are marked by the Holy Spirit when we accepted the Lord. The evil one can inflict suffering on us but cannot take God's love from us. May God help us to be firm in our faith and be faithful so He can do a deep work in us, for us to stand in the hope of eternity in Christ Jesus.

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## **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

### A. Review Sermon Content

**Purpose:** *Reflect on one key takeaway.*

Appoint someone to read Revelation 7:1-17 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, ‘This is the Word of the Lord.’

All to respond, “Thanks be to God.” Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now.”

- a. As God's word was read, which verse speaks to you the most?

- b.
  - (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon “Who Can Stand”?
  - (ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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## **B. Relate Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.***

- 2a. How does Revelation 7 bring hope to you despite knowing that the 7<sup>th</sup> seal which follows is God's wrath that allows harm upon the earth and sea?
- 2b. How has knowing that those who can stand are those who have the spiritual conditions of being faithful and serving to the end and satisfied, impacted you?
- 2c. Since those who are sealed will have:
- Protection
  - Ownership
  - Guaranteed eternal inheritance

What is the hope you have if you can stand steadfast in faith in Christ Jesus?

- 3a. In this pandemic, are you inward looking, struggling with fear or are you outward looking, trusting in God and reaching out with the desire for all to know and accept God as the end is coming.
- 3b. What is one thing you need to do to stand steadfast in faith in this pandemic?
- 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you achieve 3b above, so you may be outward looking and trusting in God through this pandemic?

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## **C. Testimonies and Prayer**

***Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.***

4. Share your testimony on how the Holy Spirit enabled you to be filled with faith instead of fear in this pandemic.

OR

Give thanks to God for the eternal hope we have in Christ Jesus.

5. With a prayer partner, take time to pray for the concerns in 3a, 3b and 3c. Commit to encourage one another to really desire to reach out so all will have a chance to know and accept God through Jesus Christ, as the end is coming.

As a group, pray that every member will persevere in faith so you can together, stand at the end, having been found steadfast in faith, serving and satisfied.

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