

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church

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Pastor's Bible Study

A Bible Study Series

Based on the book

"Revelation Four Views" by Steve Gregg

Part II

Restrain the Wind!

- **Restrain The Wind!**

- Revelation 7:1–8 (NLT) — 1. Then I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds so they did not blow on the earth or the sea, or even on any tree. 2. And I saw another angel coming up from the east, carrying the seal of the living God. And he shouted to those four angels, who had been given power to harm land and sea,
- 3. “Wait! Don’t harm the land or the sea or the trees until we have placed the seal of God on the foreheads of his servants.” 4. And I heard how many were marked with the seal of God—144,000 were sealed from all the tribes of Israel: 5. from Judah 12,000 from Reuben 12,000 from Gad 12,000 6. from Asher 12,000 from Naphtali 12,000 from Manasseh 12,000 7. from Simeon 12,000 from Levi 12,000 from Issachar 12,000 8. from Zebulun 12,000 from Joseph 12,000 from Benjamin 12,000

- **Restrain The Wind!**

- Jesus Christ is holding the great book of God in His hands, the Book of Destiny, the book that tells what is to happen at the end of the world. The book is so important and so secretive that God has it bound with seven seals until it is time for it to be opened.
- Remember: the events have not yet happened upon earth. They are things that are to happen in the end time. But God has given us a glimpse into the things. Why? To warn us to turn to His Son. Christ alone can save us from the judgment

to come. Therefore, we must follow Him ever so diligently while we walk upon earth.

- **Restrain The Wind!**

- This glimpse into the great book of God, into the destiny of the world, is given to us in this great book of Revelation. We have just seen Jesus Christ break open six of the seals that bind the book.
- To our horror, when He broke them open, the four horsemen of the Apocalypse were seen storming across the face of the earth with their terror and devastation. We have seen how the four horsemen represent the wars and killing, famine and pestilence, hunger and starvation, death and hell that the antichrist will unleash upon the earth.

- **Restrain The Wind!**

- We have seen how evil will mass together every force of demonic power it can in order to make a final assault upon the earth. And we have seen that the destructive devastation will kill one fourth of the world's population. Shocking! One fourth of the population will be killed by the catastrophic devastation of evil unleashed upon the earth. But to our horror, this is not all. God's great book declares this is just the *beginning of sorrows and woes*.

- **Restrain The Wind!**

- But this terrible devastation, as horrible as it is, is nothing compared to what is yet to come. When all the judgments have fallen, the earth and the world shall be utterly destroyed.
- How it is to happen will be seen when the seventh seal is broken open. When the seventh seal is broken, the seven seal judgments are over; the period of history that will be known as the *beginning of sorrows and woes* will be finished.

- **Restrain The Wind!**

- But the *great tribulation* itself will be launched by the seventh seal..
 - the *great tribulation* that will witness the shattering blast of seven trumpets of judgment.
 - the *great tribulation* that will witness the wrath of seven bowls of judgment poured out upon the earth.

- **Restrain The Wind!**
 - Now, for a critical question: Will anyone be saved through such terrible days? Can anyone survive such terrible happenings? As Scripture itself has just asked:
 - "The great day of [God's] wrath is come...who shall be able to stand?" ([Rev. 6:17](#)).
 - Can anyone stand? Will anyone turn to the Lord and be delivered through this terrible time?
 - Yes! There is to be a remnant of Israel saved: 144,000 Jews shall be saved.

- **Restrain The Wind!**
 - ([7:1-2](#)) End Time— Israel— Jews— Salvation: the winds of judgment are in the hands of God and His angels, not in the hands of evil.
 - This is a most wonderful truth, and it is exactly what is being declared here. Four angels stand at the four corners of the earth holding the four winds of judgment so that they cannot blow upon the earth.
 - "The four corners of the earth are the four main points of the compass: north, south, east, and west" (Lehman Strauss. *The Book of the Revelation*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1964, p.170).

- **Restrain The Wind!**
 - The picture is that God is in control of the whole earth, of every direction upon earth.
 - And He is merciful. He has not unleashed His avenging angels of wrath upon earth, not yet. In mercy He has chosen to wait a little while longer.

- **Restrain The Wind!**
 - Thought 1. This is a most comforting thought: to know that judgment is in the hands of God; to know that it is God Himself who is to execute judgment. It is comforting because of what Jesus Christ has done for us.
 - Just think! Every person has the privilege of escaping judgment. No person has to stand before the face of God at the throne of judgment. Every person can be saved and delivered from condemnation by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.

- **Restrain The Wind!**
 - But note: the winds of judgment are to be unleashed upon the earth. Every person will face these awful times unless he has surrendered his life to Christ.

And then most tragic of all, he will have to face the eternal judgment and condemnation from the presence of God forever.

- **Restrain The Wind!**

- (7:2-3) Seal— Israel, Salvation of: God will give the most wonderful command. The command will be to delay the judgments of the great tribulation until all the servants of God can be sealed.
- The *seal* means the mark of possession, authority, power, protection, and preservation.

- **Restrain The Wind!**

- ⇒ In ancient times a king's ring was his seal. He would stamp the mark of his ring upon all official documents showing their possession, authority, and power.
- This is certainly part of the meaning here. The 144,000 will be sealed—protected and preserved—by God (cp. [Genesis 41:42](#); [Esther 3:10](#); [Esther 8:2](#); [Daniel 6:17](#); [Matthew 27:66](#)).

- **Restrain The Wind!**

- ⇒ In the New Testament the believer is sealed with the Spirit of God; that is, the Holy Spirit seals and guarantees that the believer belongs to God.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit living within the heart and life of the believer is his seal and his guarantee that he will escape the judgment of God and live eternally with God.
- "Which is the earnest [guarantee] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" ([Ephes. 1:14](#)).
- "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" ([2 Cor. 1:22](#)).

- **Restrain The Wind!**

- In contrast to the seal of God upon His servants, the lawless and rebellious followers of the beast (the antichrist) will bear his mark or seal ([Rev. 16:2](#)). God will seal His servants to identify them and to assure their protection from the wrath and destruction coming upon the earth.
- Remember: God does not condemn His followers. His followers escape the judgment of God. The judgment and destruction from God's hands fall only on "those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads." This is clearly stated in Revelation.

- **Restrain The Wind!**
 - This should not seem strange to us, that God will judge the unbelievers who follow the antichrist and not judge believers. As stated, God does not condemn His people; He condemns and judges unbelievers. And the judgments of the great tribulation are to be upon an evil and apostate world.
 - A good example is Moses and the plagues of Israel. Remember the event: the ten plagues, as terrible and devastating as they were, fell upon all the Egyptians; but they did not afflict the believers among Israel. The true believers were *sealed* from the plagues.

- **Restrain The Wind!**
 - However, it should be remembered that believers will be persecuted and slaughtered by the antichrist during the last three and a half years of his reign, that is, during the great tribulation (cp. [Rev. 7:14](#)).
 - The believers of the end time will not suffer the judgments of God upon the apostate world, but they will suffer the persecution of the antichrist.

- **Restrain The Wind!**
 - Thought 1. God gives the most wonderful promises to genuine believers. No believer will ever be judged and condemned to death and hell. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, that can separate a genuine believer from the love of God.
 - "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" ([Romans 5:8-10](#)).

- **Restrain The Wind!**
 - ([7:4-8](#)) Israel— Salvation: God will give the wonderful counsel to seal 144,000 Jewish believers. And note: there will be 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes. This is exactly what this passage says. This is clear indication that Israel will be saved in the end time. This is exactly what Christ revealed to Paul.
 - This passage should be taken at its face value, that is, that 144,000 Jews will be converted during the tribulation.

○ Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Revelation.

- **Restrain The Wind!**
 - Who are the 144,000? The Seventh Day Adventists claim these are the faithful Sabbath Day worshipers. The Jehovah Witnesses say they are the 144,000.
 - The next time you see one, ask him or her what tribe of Israel they belong to and watch the blank look on their face.
- Mattoon's Treasures - Mattoon's Treasures – Treasures from Revelation.
- **Restrain The Wind!**
 - Who are the 144,000? When interpreters come to this passage, it is amazing to see just how wild their imaginations can get. Some argue that these could not be literal Jews, others would say that the numbers are not literal, but are merely symbolical of God's preservation of His people. But the language, if language means anything, must be understood in its normal usage.
 - **Restrain The Wind!**
 - If we do not take it in its literal sense then there is no check on one's imagination nor guide for the real meaning of the passage. As an illustration, some say these are the 144,000 Jehovah's Witnesses, or they are Mormon elders, or they are symbolical for the church.
 - **Restrain The Wind!**
 - The 144,000 are Jews. The passage says they are from the 12 tribes of Israel, repeating the fact that 12,000 come from each of the 12 tribes making a total of 144,000. That these are Jews further fits with the entire scheme of Bible prophecy, with the fact this is the 70th week of Daniel, and with the nature of the Tribulation as the time of Jacob's distress (Dan. 9:27; Jer. 30.7).
 - **Restrain The Wind!**
 - The Tribulation is a time when God is concluding His dealings with Israel to establish and fulfill His promises to the nation (Dan. 9:24f).
 - **Restrain The Wind!**
 - How will they be saved? Since all believers are gone when the Tribulation begins, including the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit or the Restraint from the New Testament standpoint, just how will these be saved?

- **Restrain The Wind!**
 - The work of the Holy Spirit will be more in accord with that of Old Testament times. But being omnipresent, the Holy Spirit will still be in the world working to convict and draw them to Jesus Christ (John 16:8–11; Gen. 6:3), to regenerate the human heart (John 3:3–4), and to select individuals for special service.

 - **Restrain The Wind!**
 - There will still be copies of the Scriptures, books, tracts, and material on the internet containing the gospel message. Undoubtedly, this will be found and used by the Holy Spirit. Some are even hiding copies of the Bible in caves.

 - **Restrain The Wind!**
 - Some Jews will have heard the gospel from friends or on the radio or TV before the rapture. Then when the church suddenly disappears, the Holy Spirit will convince these select 144,000 that the gospel message is indeed true.

 - **Restrain The Wind!**
 - Perhaps others will simply be perplexed over the disappearance of thousands of people through the rapture of the church. Some will seek answers and the Holy Spirit will lead them to Christ.
 - Regardless of the methods God will use, these will come to trust in Jesus Christ as their Messiah-Savior.
- J. Hampton Keathley III, *Studies in Revelation* (Galaxie Software, 2002), Re 7:5.
- **Restrain The Wind!**
 - Those sealed will go unscathed through the Great Tribulation. They will be a perpetual thorn in the side of the Beast and a constant reminder to the devil that, while millions may bow to his will, God still has him on a leash and says to him, "Thus far and no farther." The mobilized armies of the earth will not be able to touch a hair of the heads of these sealed ones. The concentration camps and torture chambers of the Beast's fearful inquisition will leave them unscathed.

 - **Restrain The Wind!**
 - The fire will not kindle upon them, nor will the smell of smoke be on their garments. The floods will not be able to drown them. The secret police will have dossiers as thick as prison walls, but they will be unable to harm them. The seal of God rests upon them, and they are saved and secured, come what may.

- **Restrain The Wind!**
 - They will be a living proof to the devil that not only is his secular power strictly limited by divine decree, but in the end he cannot win. If he cannot conquer these, then he cannot possibly win in the end. No matter how many millions he liquidates in his insane rage, he is obviously under the control of God.

- **Restrain The Wind!**
 - So then, the 144,000 are sealed to defy the totality of Satan's secular dominion. They are a reminder to him that every knee does not bow to him and that God is sovereign and in invincible control.
 - John Phillips Commentary Series, The - The John Phillips Commentary Series – Exploring Revelation: An Expository Commentary.