

Dec 22/24 – Small Group Questions

Revelation 7 “Entering His Story”

The story of Revelation is the story of a God who is bringing new creation, making all things new. Of necessity that involves the judgement of wrong, the removal of evil, the tearing down of the tyrannical powers that hold humanity in its grasp.

Read Revelation 6: 12 – 7: 3 As the sixth seal is opened releasing powers bent on removing everything that stands against God’s good creation a question is asked – who can stand? What will remain when judgment has run its course?

1. What answer to this question is implied by the lack of response?
2. What is God’s response to this question? How does this form a possible theodicy (the vindication of divine goodness and providence in view of the existence of evil)?

Read Revelation 7:4-8 and skim Genesis 49:1-28

3. Compare the lists of tribes. How are they different? What do you make of these differences?
4. In Hebrew culture numbers were used qualitatively rather than quantitatively, that is they were used to communicate the meaning or significance of something. What meaning do you think is being communicated in this passage?

Read Revelation 7: 9-17

5. We now behold the mystery of a reconstituted Israel. What is being communicated by the details we are given in the vision?
6. “These are those who are coming out of the great tribulation” In Greek the word for tribulation is the word *thlipsis* – the pressure – the crushing pressure that is at the intersection point of clashing kingdoms. This is what happens when the kingdom of Jesus clashes with kingdoms that are inconsistent with it. Can you give some examples both past and present where the Kingdom of Jesus clashes with the kingdoms of this world?
7. What we need at the intersection point of the clashing of kingdoms is a vision, a sure hope of how it will all turn out. What do we learn about the kingdom of Jesus from this vision?
8. Darrell Johnson calls this vision the most comforting of all the visions. Comforting both in the modern sense of giving us a state of well being, and comforting in the traditional sense – from the Latin *com* (with) and *forte* (strength) – comforting – fortifying us with

strength for some courageous action. How does this vision comfort in both the modern and traditional sense?