

Lent, Day 13
Wednesday, March 20, 2019

Revelation 7:1–8

Being a parent can be hard. One difficult aspect of it is helping your kids do things they don't necessarily want to do. Think about taking them to the dentist for example. The whole thing from start to finish is terrifying. When you walk in an odour hits you, and not a good one at that. Then you can hear the noise of those little drills. Once you get into that oversized chair and the bright light hits you in the face, you're asked to open your mouth. Then the real fun begins as your teeth are scraped and prodded. Never mind the suction!

Why would any kid want to go to the dentist? But, as a parent, it's your job to ensure they go there. Plus, you can't even promise them they will come to no harm. When cavities are found their teeth need to be drilled and filled. There are times when whole teeth need to be removed with pliers! At other times surgery is required to drain abscesses or remove impacted teeth.

This section of Revelation is like that. Before God allows evil on the earth to come to its head, God has his people marked off. They belong to him. This doesn't mean no harm will come to them. Rather, it indicates that God has them in his care. For the churches going through persecution at the time (and other times in church history) this is comfort that God will bring them through to the resurrection.

For us in lent we have been invited into the wilderness. The wilderness can be a harsh place where we are confronted by our fears and by our own mortality. We can begin to wonder if God cares for us. The truth is we have been marked by him. He does care. We are going through something necessary. He can't promise us we won't be harmed, but he does assure us he will bring us through because we are his and he is ours.

A quick side note that the 144,000 should be read symbolically, as we read the other items symbolically, to mean the complete number of God's people; Jew plus Gentile. Like the lion/lamb-ness of the Messiah, God's people are described as 144,000 (v. 4) and uncountable (v 9).

Prayer

Father God, thank you for marking us and making us yours. Give comfort to our hearts during this lenten season. Amen.