

Revelation 7:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

Analysis

The final tribes sealed complete the picture of God's comprehensive redemption. The 144,000 symbolizes the church militant—still on earth, protected during tribulation. The seal (Greek 'sphragis') marks ownership and destination, like ancient shipping marks indicating cargo's owner and port. This sealing is the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14), guaranteeing believers' preservation until final redemption. Reformed theology emphasizes that God's decree and the Spirit's sealing work together—those predestined are called, justified, and preserved to glorification (Romans 8:29-30). None sealed are lost.

Historical Context

The sealing imagery would resonate with first-century believers familiar with official seals denoting authority and ownership. Roman legal documents, property deeds, and imperial decrees all bore seals. Christians facing persecution needed assurance that their true identity and destiny were secured by divine seal, not threatened by earthly powers.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does your sealing by the Holy Spirit as God's possession provide confidence when your faith is tested?
2. What does the completeness of the sealed tribes teach about God's plan of redemption—is it comprehensive or partial?

Interlinear Text

ἐκ φυλῆς Ζαβουλὼν ιβ' χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι· ἐκ
Of the tribe of Zabulon twelve thousand were sealed Of
G1537 G5443 G2194 G1427 G5505 G4972 G1537

φυλῆς Ἰωσήφ ιβ' χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι· ἐκ φυλῆς
the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed Of the tribe
G5443 G2501 G1427 G5505 G4972 G1537 G5443

Βενιαμὴν ιβ' χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι·
of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed
G958 G1427 G5505 G4972