

Revelation

Chapter Seven

Revelation 7:1-3

After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God..”

And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”

The Four Winds Of Judgment

- In between each of the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls there is a pause inserted in the action.
- Here in Chapter Seven, and before the opening of the seventh seal, Israel is once again put at the center stage of the Bible as they were the center piece in the Old Testament.
- God needs to seal the 144,000 Israelites for the purpose of the greatest awakening to the gospel that the world has ever before seen.

Holding The Winds

- "After this" refers to the events in chapter six
- The phrase "four corners of the earth" is an ancient equivalent to the idea of "the four points of the compass."
- The idea is that these angels effect the entire earth.
- The four angels are holding back the four judgments mentioned in the first six seals from doing any more damage upon the earth for a time.
- Wind in Scripture often refers to judgment because of its destructive power that it can yield upon the earth
- This is the calm before the storm. "Only the detail of the sealing of the 144,000 remained before the unleashing of these destructive winds." (Thomas)

The Seal Of God

- The Church has the seal of the Holy Spirit for redemption
- "Now he who establishes us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the down payment of the Spirit in our hearts."-2 **Corinthians 1:21-22**
- "Don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."-**Ephesians 4:30**
- Here the sealing of the 144,000 is for their protection.
- They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, **but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.**-**Revelation 9:4**

- Marking the door with blood allowed the angel of death to Passover the house and thus protected the inhabitants of that house.
- In the same way marking the foreheads will protect the 144,000 from the judgments that are coming upon the world and God will recognize those who are His.
- In Ezekiel 9:4, a similar protective seal was given to the righteous before Jerusalem was judged.
- However God's firm foundation stands, **having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are his,"** and, "Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness."-**2 Timothy 2:19**

The Angels Had Power To Harm

- We are informed that these angels "had been granted power to harm".
- **Once again it is God giving the angels power to do harmful things to the earth.**
- But they were not to harm the sealed servants of God.
- The disciples were elevated to the status of "friends" by Jesus.
- **"No longer do I call you servants, for the servant doesn't know what his lord does.** But I have called you **friends**, for everything that I heard from my Father, I have made known to you."-**John 15:15**

Do not Harm Yet

- The angels are commanded not to harm the earth, the sea or the trees until the 144,000 Jews have been sealed.
- In Revelation 8:7, at the sounding of the first trumpet one-third of the earth will be burnt up.
- In Revelation 8:8, at the sounding of the second trumpet the sea will be turned to blood.
- In Revelation 8:7, at the sounding of the first trumpet one-third of the trees will be burnt up along with all the green grass.
- Since man continues to love creation more than the creator God will destroy the creation that man idolizes.

God Judges What Man Idolizes

- When God judged the Egyptians for their bondage of the Israelites He judged them according to the false gods they worshipped in order to demonstrate His superiority over the false system of the Egyptians.
- “For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord.”-Exodus 12:12
- “Now I know that the LORD *is* greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them.”-Exodus 18:11
- While God was judging the gods the Egyptians worshipped He was protecting the Israelites from all the plagues that were executed upon the land of Egypt.
- What happened in the past will be repeated in the future as God executes His wrath upon the false gods of man while protecting those who are sealed against the destruction that is coming.

The Plagues And The Gods Of Egypt		
Plagues	Reference	Egyptian God
Nile Turned To Blood	Exodus 7:14-25	Khnum, guardian of the Nile; Osiris, lifeblood is the Nile
Frogs	Exodus 8:1-15	Heqet, goddess of birth with a frog head
Lice	Exodus 8:16-19	Geb, god of the earth
Flies	Exodus 8:20-32	Uatchit, manifest himself as a fly
Death of livestock	Exodus 9:1-7	Hathor, goddess with a cow head
Boils	Exodus 9:8-12	Sekhmet, goddess with power over disease; Isis goddess of healing
Hail	Exodus 9:13-35	Nut, the sky goddess; Set god of storms
Locusts	Exodus 10:1-20	Nut, the sky goddess; Osiris god of crops
Darkness	Exodus 10:21-29	Re, the sun god; Horus the sun god
Death of first born	Exodus 11:1-12:30	Isis, goddess who protected children; Osiris, the giver of life; the Pharaoh's diety

- “Having at one time been an avid environmentalist and valuing animal life above human life, we are familiar with the pagan religious undercurrents which fuel this movement. Many environmentalists thrill to the sight of a dolphin or whale, yet despise the God of the Bible Who brought them all forth. If environmentalists thrill to a dolphin or hummingbird, how much more marvelous is the One Who spoke and they leapt into existence! He is far more worthy of wonder than the mere work of His hands! To be sure, man has not been a faithful steward of all God has given him, but to deny the Creator while attempting to save the creation is folly as events in this book make plain.” (Garland)

Revelation 7:4

“And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred *and* forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel *were* sealed:”

The 144,000

- Seventh Day Adventist believe the 144,000 are the faithful found observing the Sabbath at the Lord's return. These will be raptured and the rest of the church will be judged.
- Jehovah witnesses believe the 144,000 include only the overcomers of their faith and who will remain faithful until the end.
- However the 144,000 are from “**...all the tribes of the children of Israel....**” which is plain and simply indicated

- “Many are so morbidly prejudiced against everything Jewish, that it is concluded in advance, that anything merciful, referring to the Israelitish race, must needs be understood some other way than as the words are written. Though all the prophets were Jews, and Jesus was a Jew, and the writer of this Apocalypse was a Jew, and all the Apostles were Jews, and salvation itself is of the Jews, and the Jews as a distinct people are everywhere spoken of as destined to continue to the world's end, it is regarded as the next thing to apostasy from the faith, to apply anything hopeful, that God has said, to this particular race. . . . No wonder, therefore, that they cannot find a consistent interpretation of a vision of grace which is predicated of Jacob's literal seed, in contradistinction from all others” (Seiss)

- E.W. Bullinger an authority on figures of speech in the Bible as well as biblical numbers states in his commentary on Revelation: Alford says of this number, “No one I am aware of has taken it literally!” Very likely: but we are thankful to be an exception to the rule, and to believe what God says. There is such a thing as *Figures of Speech*, but, we ask, what Figure is used here? What is its name? The truth is that there is here no Figure whatever; but it is the simple statement of fact: a *definite* number in contrast with the *indefinite* number in this very chapter (Rev.7:9). If the total number is not exact, then all the items which go to make it up are indefinite also. If the number is symbolical, then what number in the Book may we take as literal? . . . We prefer to believe God. And, believing Him, we conclude that He had reserved 7,000 in the days of Ahab , so He will reserve 144,000 in the Great Tribulation.”

The Tribes of Israel

- "Children of Israel" is literally the "sons of Israel".
- These are the same Jewish tribes that will have their names written on the gates of New Jerusalem.
- "...having a great and high wall; having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and **names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.**"- **Revelation 21:12**
- "Few Scriptures have suffered more at the hands of Gentile Christians than this. Notwithstanding the fact that it concerns "all the tribes of the children of Israel," and that the twelve tribes are named separately, popular interpretation insists on taking them as meaning the Church of God. **Any system of interpretation which has this for its foundation may be judged and condemned at the outset as not only useless, but mischievous.**"-(Bullinger)

God's Covenants With Israel

- The Abrahamic covenant given to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3.
- The Land covenant given to Abraham in Genesis 12:7;13:14-17, Israel is promised to have the land forever.
- The Davidic covenant given to David in 2 Sam 7:11-16, David's seed would rule on the throne of Israel forever from Jerusalem.
- This was confirmed to Mary by the angel: "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. There will be no end to his Kingdom."-**Luke 1:32-33**
- The New covenant given by the prophet Jeremiah

New Covenant

- "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, **when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah** — not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. **But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days**, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."-Jeremiah 31:31-33

- God is not finished with Israel . He will fulfill His promises because he cannot lie
- "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor the son of man, that he should repent. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not make it good?"-Numbers 23:19
- Israel could not have forfeited their destiny because the promises were unconditional when given to Abraham and his descendants and here they are in Revelation seven once again coming to the front to establish their place in history.
- Jesus has yet to fulfill the promise given by the angel to Mary in Luke

- The church participates in these covenants through our adoption but the church **does not fulfill them.**
- Paul explains in Romans 9-11 and deals with the questions of “who is Israel”? Why they are presently blinded? And “when will their destiny be fulfilled”?
- “For I don’t desire you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, so that you won’t be wise in your own conceits, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, **and so all Israel will be saved.** Even as it is written, “There will come out of Zion the Deliverer, and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. This is my covenant to them, when I will take away their sins.” Concerning the Good News, they are enemies for your sake. **But concerning the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sake. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.**”-Romans 11:25-29

The Promised Messianic Kingdom



The Reason For The 144,000

- This Good News **of the Kingdom** will be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.- Matthew 24:14
- Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give you as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’”-Isaiah 49:6
- During the tribulation God will seal these 144,000 Jewish sons for the purpose of evangelizing the nations
- The end that Jesus is referring to in Matthew 24, is clearly the tribulation.

Revelation 7:5-8

of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand *were* sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand *were* sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand *were* sealed; of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand *were* sealed;

of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand *were* sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand *were* sealed; of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand *were* sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand *were* sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand *were* sealed; of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand *were* sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand *were* sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand *were* sealed.

The Israelites

- There are a total of fourteen tribes in the Bible but only twelve are mentioned at one time; 30 times mentioned in a different order.
- There are twelve sons of Jacob. Joseph had two sons: Manasseh and Ephraim whom Jacob claimed as his own sons (Gen. 48:5-6)
- Levi since he is a priestly tribe does not receive a land inheritance because the priests do not perform military duties.
- In this passage Dan is omitted and Ephraim is omitted, Dan is replaced with Levi.

Dan Omitted

- Idolaters are to be blotted out as stated by Moses in Deuteronomy 29:18-21.
- Dan's idolatry is confirmed in Judges 18:1,2,30-31.
- Dan is prophesied to be a serpent in Gen. 49:17,18, and it also says that Dan must wait for the salvation of the Lord.
- A leader in apostasy under Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:28-30); and again approximately 100 years later (2 Kings 10:29).
- God's grace prevails and the prophecy fulfilled as Dan will judge his people and he is mentioned first in the land disbursement during the millennium (Gen. 49:16; Ez. 48:1)

Ephraim Omitted

- He is associated with Jeroboam's idolatry and allows him to build his city of idolatry in his land.
- Dan and Ephraim because of their idolatry will not be protected by the seal of God and will have to bear the disasters with the rest of humanity.

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

- The term “after these things” refers to the sealing of the 144,000 Jews and connects them as agents of the great revival taking place during the tribulation.
- This will be the greatest harvest of souls the world has ever seen and was written in Isaiah 49:8-12; 60:1-3
- “Thus says the LORD: “In an acceptable time I have heard You, and in the day of salvation I have helped You; I will preserve You and give You as a covenant to the people, to restore the earth, to cause them to inherit the desolate heritages;

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- Arise, shine; for your light has come!
And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.
For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,
and deep darkness the people; but
the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will
be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to
your light, and kings to the brightness of your
rising.—Isaiah 60:1-3

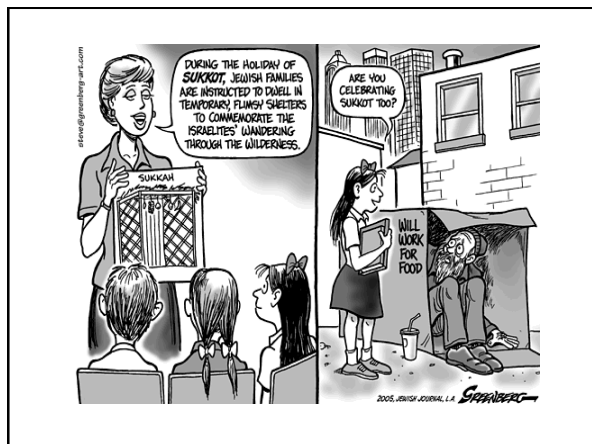
The Converts

- They are converts of the 144,000, Jewish missionaries who have taken the gospel to the ends of the earth (Matt. 24:14; Isa. 49:6) before the end of the age comes.
- They represent every nation, tribe, people, and language group
- They praise God and the Lamb for their salvation v. 10
- They have “come out of” the great tribulation as opposed to being kept from the hour of tribulation Rev. 3:10—v. 14

- They are left in the world as opposed to being taken to heaven; we are told they need the Lord to cover them with his tent and protect them from hunger and heat.
- They serve at the temple night and day; since there is no night in heaven they still must be on the earth.
- These will not be those who have heard the message now and will repent later during the tribulation.
- We are told clearly in 2 Thess. 2:11-12, that God gives up on those people who have heard but did not believe. These are the people who did not have enough information to make a decision about Jesus prior to the rapture.
- Pharaoh is a type of what happens when hearts become cold to God. (Exodus 12:38)

Palm Branches

- During the Feast of Sukkot or Tabernacles the Jewish people were instructed to, “And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, **branches of palm trees**, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. *It shall be* a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths
- The boughs were used to build their booths
- We know that during the Millennium that nations will celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles to celebrate the Lord’s presence in Jerusalem. (Zech. 14:16)
- The waving of palm branches is a symbol of celebration that the Lord has come. (John 12:13)



Revelation 7:11-12

All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *Be* to our God forever and ever. Amen."

Those in Heaven Worship

- Every being in heaven falls on their face before the Lord Who has saved the multitude of people.
- There is rejoicing and celebration when people get saved.
- As the multitude praises the Lord all of heaven joins in the chorus of thanksgiving to God to the Lord for His salvation.

Revelation 7:13-17

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"

And I said to him, "Sir, you know."

So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

White Robes

- White robes represent those who have overcome.
- White robes are promised to the church of Sardis in Revelation 3
- White robes are promised to the Martyrs in Revelation 6
- And now, white robes are given to those who come out of the great tribulation.

Washed In The Blood

- Salvation is the same throughout the ages that those who believe in Jesus are washed clean by the blood of the Lamb.
- The Lamb's Blood cleanses the believer from sin (Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:7)
- We are told in Scripture there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood and there is no perfect forgiveness without the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

God Dwells With The People

- The word for Dwell in this passage is "*skēnōsei*" which is literally translated "to live or camp in a tent."
- Again the Feast of Tabernacles is in view here.
- It is used by John in his gospel where he says, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us". (John 1:14)
- John is the only writer of scripture who uses this word in his Gospel and his Revelation giving evidence he is the author of both books.
- The dwelling of God with them protects them from heat, hunger and thirst.

God Wipes Away Their Tears

- Even though the Book of Revelation speaks of His wrath it also highlights how tender hearted God is.
- If humanity would simply understand the loving kindness of God they would be overcome with emotion and give their hearts to Him.

Isaiah 25:7-8

- "And He will destroy on this mountain The surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken."

- Some wonder, "How can there be no sorrow in heaven if we have relatives or loved ones who perish in hell? Won't we be sorry for them?" Spurgeon answered this question well: "Now, how is this? If you will tell me, I shall be glad, for I cannot tell you. I do not believe that there will be one atom less tenderness, that there will be one fraction less of amiability, and love, and sympathy - I believe there will be more - but that they will be in some way so refined and purified, that while compassion for suffering is there, detestation of sin shall be there to balance it, and a state of complete equilibrium shall be attained. Perfect acquiescence in the divine will is probably the secret of it; but it is not my business to guess; I do not know what handkerchief the Lord will use, but I know that he will wipe all tears away from their faces, and these tears among them." (Quoted in Guzik's Commentary)