

The Sealed & The Saints

Revelation 7:1-17

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8/24/2025



Review: Rev 6, The Seal Judgments

- The seal judgments begin the Tribulation and will result in 25% of the population dying (One in Four)
- The stage is being set for the seal judgments so we are very close to the Tribulation
- The Tribulation will be characterized by a great revival, most will become martyrs.

Chapter 7 is a parenthesis or interlude to help us better understand God's intent and plan. These interlude insertions in Revelation should be remembered because they impact developments later in Revelation...

Revelation 7:1-8; The Sealed of Israel

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. ² 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, ³ saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." 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:

*⁵ 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;
⁶ 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;
⁷ 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;
⁸ 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.*

v1-2 – What is the mission of the four angels?

- The angels are to prevent any outbreak of the fury of the elements upon the earth. (Note that God is restraining evil.)

- These "winds" are striving to be turned loose, but they are held in abeyance by the omnipotent Almighty God until a certain event takes place
- This is describing a spiritual situation using physical terms.

How is this reminiscent of a passage in Daniel?

Daniel 7:2-3 – Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. ³ And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

Daniel saw four winds striving over the mighty sea, and out of the turbulence arose four beasts that represent the four great empires of the world that would follow Babylon... Medio-Persia, Greece, Rome, & the future government of the Antichrist. I take it that the Ottoman Empire would have been considered as a derivative of the Roman Empire because it is combined with Rome to make up the government of the Antichrist (iron & clay).

What is the significance of the wind not being allowed to blow on the earth, sea or tree?

- Earth: symbolic of Israel (eritz, the land)
- Sea: symbolic of the gentile nations
- Tree: probably represents the majesty, the dignity, the culture, the glory and beauty of mankind because of...
Daniel 4:20-22 – The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which could be seen by all the earth, ²¹ whose leaves were lovely and its fruit abundant, in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home— ²² it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth.

What do the winds represent?

- There is a judgment that is restless and ready to fall upon the vile and evil world
- In Chapter 8, when these "winds" are turned loose, they also bring about a literal destruction to elements here on the earth...
First trumpet - Earth is burned (trees and grass)

Second trumpet - Sea turns to blood
Third trumpet - Fresh water turn bitter
Fourth trumpet - Sun, Moon, Stars fall

Why did God hold back His judgment as represented by the calm winds?

The reason judgment does not fall immediately is because Of God's elect on the earth ...God's grace is ever present!

What does it mean that God sealed His servants?

These who are to be sealed have a specific job to accomplish; they have been chosen for a specific purpose of God.

- The Holy Spirit is going to protect them for the duration of their ministry
- The Antichrist and False Prophet will not be able to destroy them

How long will the 144,000 be sealed?

Probably until the Bowl Judgments starting in Revelation 16. They are in heaven during another interlude in Revelation 14 & 15. So, at some point during the Tribulation, their earthly ministry will be over.

What do these passages tell us about being sealed by God?

2 Cor 1:21-22 – *Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee*

We have eternal security; Once Saved, Always Saved
We know our eternity is secure because:

Romans 8:16 – *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*

We have the seal of the Holy Spirit guaranteeing our eventual resurrection...

Ephesians 4:30 - *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

Jesus promised the church that when we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, He would never leave us...

John 14:16-17 – *I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.*

We too have been marked by God for a specific purpose... as God's representatives on earth.

What is the significance of 144,000?

It represents the nation of Israel... all 12 tribes are represented equally.

What prophecy does the conversion of the 144,000 fulfill?

The heart of the nation of Israel will be turned back to God and they will realize that Jesus is their longed-for Messiah:

Romans 11:25-27 - *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so, all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My, covenant with them, When I take away their sins."* [quoted Isaiah 59:20-21]

What is the difference between this list and Genesis 49:3-27? Why isn't the tribe of Dan included here?

- The tribe of Dan was guilty of the first organized idolatry in ancient Israel (1 Kings 12:28-30), and the longest in duration. It continued "until the day of the captivity of the land," nearly 500 years later (Judges 18:30). Jewish tradition says that Dan was the first tribe to follow Jeroboam into his sin of idolatry, and in their literature, the term "Dan" is often used to represent idolatry.
- Jacob had prophesied in Genesis 49:17 that Dan will be a serpent by the roadside, a viper along the oath, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider tumbles backward. This is a hint that Dan would be responsible for Israel's fall back into idolatry.

Why is it that Manasseh is listed as the replacement for Dan instead of Ephraim?

- Jacob blessed Ephraim and put him ahead of his brother Manasseh (Genesis 48:17-20), meaning that Ephraim received Joseph's birthright. For all intents and purposes, then, Ephraim is "hidden" in the list by simply being part of the tribe of Joseph.
- In any case, during the Millennium, Dan will be allotted a territory (Ezekiel 48:1). Furthermore, Joseph will receive a double-portion because both Manasseh and Ephraim will receive their own territories (48:4,5). God is merciful and will not break His everlasting promises; ultimately, land will be given to *all* the tribes of Israel.

Revelation 7:9-17;

The Multitude from the Great Tribulation

⁹ *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,* ¹⁰ *and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and*

to the Lamb!" ¹¹ 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."

¹³ Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ 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."

Who is seen before the throne of God in white robes?

They are a huge number of tribulation saints martyred by the Antichrist and his followers.

Who are the tribulation saints?

They are those who believed the testimony of the 144,000 and accepted Jesus as their Savior.

What is the 'significance of the white robes?

They are clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

v9 – What is the significance of the, palm branches?

Recall the Palm Sunday entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem... they are looking forward to the Messiah ruling on earth.

v10 – What do the tribulation martyrs do?

They are praising God the Father and God the Son... recognizing that He is in control and the only reason they are there is the salvation of God (they are thanking Him for His grace)

v11 – Who else is around the throne of God?

- All the angels
- The elders representing both the Old Testament saints & the Church
- The Four Living Creatures

What do the angels, elders & four living creatures do?

They agree with the tribulation saints and join them in worshipping God

v13-14 – Why did one of the elders ask John this question?

God wants to emphasize His grace that people will be saved even in the midst of the Great Tribulation.

What is the significance of the blood?

The shedding of Christ's blood was necessary for all who are redeemed...

Hebrews 10:22 — *without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin* (see, also Lev 17:11)

v15-17 - What happens to the tribulation saints?

- They have a prominent place before God
- They will have peace from the trials of the tribulation
- Jesus will ensure their continuing salvation and they will not be sad ever again
- The language indicates they have eternal life

What is the encouragement to us in the here and now?

Though people reject our testimony of the gospel, our efforts will bear fruit in the coming tribulation...

Isaiah 55:10-11 – *For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

All we can do is plant & water seeds of truth...

1 Corinthians 3:6 – *I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase*

If the other person is responding to the Holy Spirit, they will ask us questions that will enable us to go deeper with them in sharing the gospel and discussing spiritual matters.

What applications should we take from John's vision of the 144,000 and the Tribulation Saints?

- The 144,000 are sealed as God's representatives; we too are sealed as God's representatives.
- God restrains evil for the sake of His sealed.
- There will be a great revival during the Tribulation; most of the redeemed will be martyrs.
- God will use our testimony during the Church Age to save people during the Tribulation.