

Revelation 7 - The Sealed of Israel

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COURSE  COMMENTARY 

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7:1 - the four winds

- [After these things](#)

This chapter is an interlude between the sixth seal and the seventh seal. A pause in the action so that God's servants may be sealed in preparation for events to follow. Is the sealing of the faithful and the killing of the multitude retrospective (prior to the earlier seals) or strictly chronological (between the seals)? Evidence seems to favor a chronological understanding. This chapter answers the question at the end of the previous chapter: "Who is able to stand?" ([Rev. 6:17](#)).

- [four angels, four corners, four winds](#)

Four is the number of worldwide distribution. *Four corners* is a figure of speech indicating all four cardinal directions ([Eze. 7:2](#)). The *four winds* refer to the effects of God's judgment, often portrayed by wind ([Ex. 10:13](#); [14:21](#); [48:7](#)).

- [earth, sea, trees](#)

The [trees](#) are harmed at the first trumpet judgment ([Rev. 8:7](#)). The [sea](#) is harmed at the second trumpet and second bowl judgments ([Rev. 8:8](#); [16:3](#)). The [earth](#) is harmed at the first trumpet and the sixth bowl judgments ([Rev. 8:7](#), MT and NU texts; [Rev. 16:18-20](#)).

7:2 - the seal of the living God

- [from the east](#)

Literally, *from the rising of the sun*. East is often the direction of God's deliverance and judgment. The east wind separated the Red Sea during the deliverance of Israel ([Ex. 14:21](#)). God's glory departed the Temple eastward ([Eze. 10:18](#); [11:22-23](#) cf. [Mat. 23:38](#); [24:1-3](#)) and will return from that same direction ([Eze. 43:2-4](#); [Eze. 44:1-2](#)).

- [the seal](#)

The angel carries the *means* by which the seal will be applied. The seal may be the name of the Father: [Rev. 14:1](#) (MT and NU texts also include the Son's name).

- [of the living God](#)

In contrast with dead, lifeless idols, God is *living* and responsive. Men continue to trust in dead idols rather than the living God. Satan's ultimate deception will involve an idol (image) to which the false prophet "gives breath" ([Rev. 13:15](#)).

7:3 - do not harm

- [the earth, the sea, or the trees](#)

This is evidence for a chronological relationship between this chapter and the sequence of seal judgments because the judgments which specifically target the earth, sea, and trees have not yet occurred.

- **sealed the servants of God on their foreheads**
Slaves were branded on their foreheads. Jesus promised the overcomer in the church at Philadelphia that He would "write on him My new name" ([Rev. 3:12](#)). In a vision of Ezekiel's he saw the faithful of Jerusalem marked on their foreheads prior to the God's judgment falling on those without the mark ([Eze. 9:5-6](#)). Satan will mimic God with his own mark in the days ahead ([Rev. 13:16](#); [14:9-10](#)).
- **three categories of people during the Tribulation**
 - 1) The sealed Jews protected by God for ministry ([Rev. 7:4](#); [14:1](#)).
 - 2) Those who accept the mark of the beast and are doomed ([Rev. 13:16](#); [14:9-10](#)). They are not written in the *Book of Life* ([Rev. 13:8](#); [17:8](#)).
 - 3) Those who refuse the mark of the beast, many of whom are martyred ([Rev. 20:4](#)).

7:4 - one hundred and forty-four thousand

- **who were sealed**
The sealing is now completed. The seal denotes both *ownership* and *protection*. It may not be visible to men, but is visible to God, the angels, and demons ([Rev. 9:4](#)). Analogous to the sealing of believers today by the Holy Spirit ([2Cor. 1:22](#); [Eph. 1:13](#); [4:30](#)).
- **one hundred and forty-four thousand**
This is a literal number describing the total from among the Jews that will be sealed. This is the continuation of the doctrine of the faithful Jewish remnant. Various groups want to dislodge the Jews from the plain teaching of Scripture and substitute themselves (Replacement Theology, Jehovah's Witnesses, British Israel). These are the "first fruits" from among the Jewish nation -- the believing Jewish remnant at the time of the tribulation.
- **of all the tribes of the children of Israel**
Literally *sons of Israel*. Many interpreters attempt to make this the church! Question: If God wanted to describe literal Jews *what more* could He do to make that clear?! These are the first of "all Israel shall be saved" that Paul predicted in Romans [11:25-29](#).
- **ten tribes lost?**
Many mistakenly claim that ten of the twelve Jewish tribes are "lost." This is an **unbiblical myth**. The tribes existed in New Testament times.
Judah: [Mat. 1:2](#); [Luke 3:26](#); [Heb. 7:14](#).
Levi: [Luke 1:5](#).
Asher: [Luke 2:36](#)
Benjamin: [Rom. 11:1](#); [Php. 3:5](#).
All twelve tribes: [Mat. 19:28](#); [Luke 22:30](#); [Acts 26:7](#); [Jas. 1:1](#); [Rev. 7:4-8](#).
- **omission of Dan and Ephraim**
Dan and Ephraim may be omitted due to their participation in idolatry.
Dan: [Jdg. 18:19-30](#); [1K. 18:28-30](#).
Ephraim: [1K. 12:29](#); [Hos. 4:17](#).

7:9 - a great multitude

- **after these things**
May be an intentional chronological indicator. This great multitude is dependent upon the Jewish servants of the previous verses. The Jews are probably an incredible evangelistic force during the time of the end.

- **of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues**
Believers from every possible diverse background. Many of them probably martyrs ([Rev. 13:15](#); [17:6](#)).
- **palm branches**
Associated with the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkoth*). Symbolizing God's provision for Israel in the wilderness wandering ([Lev. 23:40-43](#)). Waved when Jesus rode into Jerusalem as King ([John 12:13](#)). All nations will keep this feast in the Millennial Kingdom ([Zec. 14:16](#)). Here they are a sign of victory and God's provision.

7:10 - salvation belongs to God

- **salvation belongs to**
The cry of the crowd when Jesus rode into Jerusalem as King "Hosanna to the Son of David! This petition of deliverance became a liturgical phrase denoting praise. "Salvation denotes both *deliverance* and *preservation* .
- **to our God... and to the Lamb**
There is no savior besides God ([Isa. 43:11](#)). Zecharias prophesied about Jesus as "a horn of salvation" ([Luke 1:69-70](#)). This salvation is by means of the death of the Lamb, Jesus Christ ([Rev. 5:9](#)). This is why "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." ([Acts 4:12](#)). The Son is **worshiped equally** with the Father ([John 5:23](#)) !

7:14 - the great tribulation

- **the ones who come out**
Ercho'menoi , present tense - they are *continually* coming out, many undoubtedly as a result of martyrdom.
- **the great tribulation**
Literally, *the tribulation, the great [one]*. This is the **unique period** which was predicted by Jesus ([Mat. 24:21](#)) from which the Church will be spared ([Rev. 3:10](#)). This time will be especially difficult for Jewish believers ([Jer. 30:7](#); [Dan. 12:2, 7](#); [Mat. 24:16-20](#)). See the lesson where we discuss [Related Passages and Themes](#). See the lesson where we discuss [The Rapture](#).

7:15 - He will dwell among them

- **dwell among them**
"Dwell" is *skeno'sei* meaning "to live or camp in a tent". It carries the idea of *overspreading* for protection..

7:16 - neither hunger nor thirst

- **They shall neither hunger nor thirst**
They no doubt suffered great physical deprivation during this time of persecution and judgment. This may include famine, thirst, and heat associated with judgments both before and after the time of the vision shown John in this chapter ([Rev. 6:5-6](#); [Rev. 8:10-11](#); [Rev. 16:8-9](#)).

7:17 - the Lamb will shepherd them

- **the Lamb... will shepherd them**
Many will suffer at the hand of the worthless shepherd ([Zec. 11:15-17](#)), but now they are led by

the True Shepherd.

- **living fountains of waters**

The literal fulfillment of [Psalm 23](#) for many of these who walked "through the valley of the shadow of death." The same Shepherd promised this living water to the Samaritan woman ([John 4:10-11](#)). Believers in the church age experience this living water which is the indwelling Holy Spirit ([John 7:38-39](#)). It is offered freely to all who thirst ([Rev. 21:6](#)). The River of Life will flow from God's throne in the Millennial Kingdom ([Eze. 47:12](#); [Zec. 14:8](#)) and in the eternal state ([Rev. 22:1-2](#)).

- **wipe away every tear**

These saints may collectively cry more tears than any other generation of believers--being the generation of the Great Tribulation. In the Millennial Kingdom they will experience great joy ([Isa. 65:19](#)) and the eternal state will bring the total eradication of pain ([Rev. 21:4](#)).

For additional information on this topic, see the [commentary](#).