



### Revelation 7: Introductory notes

- Chapter 6: **“Who can stand?”** NONE, among the lost. But this chapter shows who can.
- Each judgment group has an **“interlude”** between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of each group. Chapter 7 is interlude before 7<sup>th</sup> seal opened, which releases the 7 trumpet judgments.
- After Church age, God’s focus returns to Israel. Evident in Revelation.
- **2 errors resolved here:** Replacement Theology, and the myth of Ten Missing Tribes.

### Revelation 7: Introductory notes

- Features 2 main groups of saints:
  - ✓ 1) Jewish believers (v. 1-8), and
  - ✓ 2) martyred believers (*includes both Jews and Gentiles*), (v. 9-17)
- While Gentiles are saved, Jews are taking center stage

### 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.”



- **“After these things...”** note the *meta tauta* again, chronology. After what things? This follows the opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal in chapter 6.
- If chapter 6 is an “overview” of the conditions on earth during the “time of Jacob’s Trouble” then this sealing activity may in fact be one of the first things that happen.
- **“the four corners of the earth...”** common phrase in scripture, denotes the four ordinal directions (N, E, W, S), or the entire earth:

**“the four corners of the earth...”**

- **...And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.** (Is. 11:12)
- **“...I will bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, ...”** (Jer. 49:36) **“...Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.”** (Ezekiel 37:9)
- **...I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea.** (Daniel 7:2)
- **... four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.** (Daniel 8:8)
- **...his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven,...** (Dan.11:4)

**“the four corners of the earth...”**

- **...for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven,” says the Lord.** (Zech. 2:6)
- **And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.** (Matthew 24:31)
- **Four angels holding four winds...**something is coming here. Winds are often a symbol for judgment, but before judgment, something else must happen first.

- God is restraining His wrath for a purpose.
- Apocrypha, angels controlling forces of nature
- **“another angel...having the seal of the living God...”** seal implies ownership, protection, and authority.
- Seals play large role in this book. Contrasted to “mark of the Beast” in Ch 13. Both permanent. 1<sup>st</sup> mention of seals (on forehead, marks)
- Greek for “sealed” is *sphragizo*, which means *to stamp with a private mark for security and preservation, also to keep secret, to seal up.*
- God places His personal mark on these Jewish believers for their protection.

- Important to remember the Church has already been sealed: **“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”** (Ephesians 1:13-14).
- Those sealed here are NOT the Church.
- **“...the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea.”** Delivering judgment. Trumpet judgments will greatly harm the earth and the sea!



## Revelation 7:4-8

<sup>4</sup> 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: <sup>5</sup> 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; <sup>6</sup> of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed; ...



## Revelation 7:4-8

...of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed; <sup>7</sup> 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; <sup>8</sup> 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.

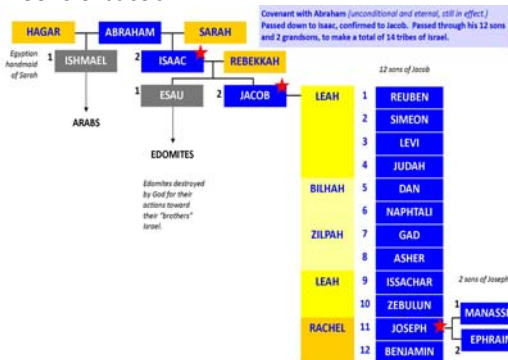
- 144,000 – literal number, *not beyond counting*
- “ALL the tribes of Israel” - “Ten lost tribes of Israel” = **MYTH**
- Israel split under Solomon’s son Rehoboam. Northern Kingdom of ISRAEL = 10 tribes; Southern Kingdom of JUDAH = 2 tribes (Judah and Benjamin)



- God apportioned land. (*Levi none, except Cities of Refuge within areas of other tribes*)
- Migration between; scripture indicates all tribes preserved
- Israel conquered by Assyria 722 BC, scattered to Gentile nations, no return
- Judah conquered by Babylon 606 BC, exiled 70 yrs, returned to land



### • Sons of Jacob



### • Sons of Jacob



### Tribes Listed Here

1. Judah
  2. Asher
  3. Simeon
  4. Zebulun
  5. Reuben
  6. Naphtali
  7. Levi
  8. Joseph
  9. Gad
  10. Manasseh
  11. Issachar
  12. Benjamin
- Anything missing??**

- NOTICE – Two tribes are missing from list: “whole” tribe of **Dan**, and “half” tribe **Ephraim**. WHY??
- Ephraim may be explained a few ways. Ephraim is a “half” tribe as one of two sons of Joseph, so in a sense Ephraim is included here with the mention of Joseph (common).
- Ephraim was also involved in idolatry, possibly reason for non-mention. Hosea 4:16-18 says, *“For Israel is stubborn Like a stubborn calf; Now the LORD will let them forage Like a lamb in open country. “Ephraim is joined to idols, Let him alone. Their drink is rebellion, They commit harlotry continually.”*

“Ephraim,” though the name of one of Joseph’s sons and an adopted tribe in itself, is also the name God gave to the northern kingdom of Israel as a whole. This may make another explanation quite possible, but one we will take up a bit later. It will be a most amazing and eye-opening adventure into our true identity!

- Dan is a “whole” tribe and his lack of mention is troubling. *(in every listing of tribes, 20+, only 12, sometimes Levi missing because that tribe did not go to war, etc.)*
- Lots of **speculation and controversy** about why DAN missing.
- One potential, reasonable explanation. Blessing of Jacob on his sons *(not really blessings, but prophecy...)* Genesis 49:16-17 *Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse’s heels so that its rider shall fall backward.*

- Tribe of Dan heavily involved in idolatry, like Ephraim. Recorded in Leviticus 24:10-16, Judges 18:1-2 and 30-31. They were leaders in apostasy in 1 Kings 12:28-30, and 100 years later in 2 Kings 10:29.
- Dan also mentioned as “voice of calamity” in Jeremiah 4:14-15, and in Amos 8:14 - *Those who swear by the sin of Samaria, Who say, ‘As your god lives, O Dan!’ And, ‘As the way of Beersheba lives!’ They shall fall and never rise again.*
- Tribes of Dan and Ephraim were first to fall into idolatry after occupying the land. *Could be why neither are listed.*

- Idolatry may be responsible for lack of mention. However, we should note they ARE mentioned in the tribal land allotments in the Millennial Kingdom (Ezekiel 48:2)
- Some scholars advance view that antichrist may be Jewish *(there is reason to believe this)*, and even come from tribe of Dan, thereby explaining why this tribe not mentioned here among the 144,000 witnesses. (MORE ON THIS IN CHAPTER 13)
- **We do NOT know WHY they are not listed, at least not yet. Speculation abounds, and it is important, but we can’t be sure at this point.**

Judah	Asher	Simeon	Zebulun
12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Reuben	Naphtali	Levi	Joseph
12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Gad	Manassah	Issachar	Benjamin
12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
<b>144,000</b> Witnesses			
Revelation 7:5-8			

- **IMPORTANT!** These 144,000 are JEWISH. They are not symbolic for others.
- Quite clear, God is intentional about listing this way. 12,000 from 12 tribes, all Israel. Not symbolic for other people. Many have tried to claim identity with them, including Jehovah's Witnesses.
- Literal Jews, Messianic Jews (*believers in Messiah Yeshua, more in ch 14*)

- We have given them title "**witnesses**" though that word is not used anywhere in this passage. Actual word is "servants" or Greek *duolos*, bondservants, slaves to the Messiah.
- Many believe the 144,000 will be witnesses for Yeshua during "time of Jacob's Trouble" (Tribulation). Like 144,000 "Billy Graham's."
- Others speculate these sealed Jews are a literal number of the Jews saved through the Tribulation (the 1/3 in Zechariah). If that is true, this is a very small number compared to the number of Jewish people in the world today.

144,000  
Witnesses



*And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire,*  
(Zechariah 13:8-9a)

There are a lot more Jews in the world today than 3 times 144,000. This number probably represents something OTHER than the total number saved through the Tribulation.



- In O.T. Jews were to be a "**light to the Gentiles**" to bring God's message to entire world. They failed, became arrogant, self contained. This may be their "**second chance**" if they are witnesses.
- Significant group that is seen next – tribulation saints from all nations, **perhaps result of Jewish witnesses?**
- **HUGE SOUL HARVEST**
- Most likely see this same group again in chapter 14 ("*those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes...*")

- Interesting verse:

*"...and the LORD (YHWH) said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it." To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary."*

(Ezekiel 9:4-6)

CONTEXT:

- Ezekiel given a vision...
- Glory of God departing from the Temple
- Judgment of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar
- Second/Third siege of Jerusalem (Temple destroyed on 3<sup>rd</sup> siege)
- Judgment begins with Israel, place of God's sanctuary
- Always a remnant of true believers, those faithful to God

*Once again, we see how scripture is woven together....the same thing is happening here.*

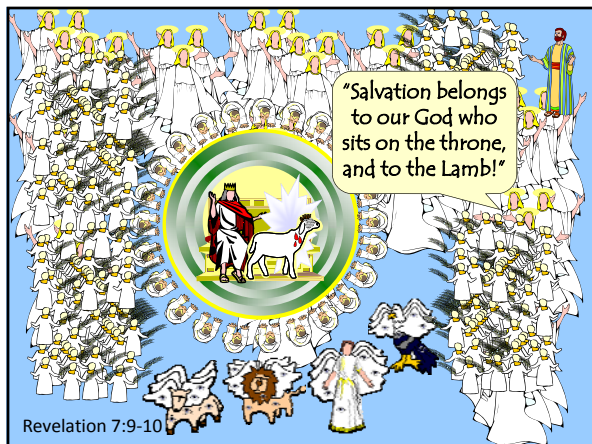
- Notice where judgment begins...at God's house! God judges those who claim to be His, but are not.
- **ALL believers sealed?** "Left Behind" Series. NO scriptural evidence. Only 144,000 sealed here.
- "Till" or "until" – small word with BIG implications. Romans 11:25 *"For I do not desire, brethren, 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."* After "fullness" attention turns back to Israel, as it does in this chapter 7.

- This chapter 7 concretely refutes the lie of **REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY**. There is no such thing. It is dangerous.
- With the sealing of the 144,000 JEWISH believers, it is clear Israel is front and center again. She has not forfeited her covenant relationship with God.
- *All covenants are still in place, eternal and unconditional, except the Adamic and Mosaic. Those were both conditional and temporary. They were broken, and God did exactly as He said He would do. When He returns, both of these covenants end and the destruction and penalties of both will be destroyed.*

- A reminder...from the book of **Zechariah (13:1)**
- *In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.* God will bring salvation to the Jews...
- However...this chapter continues to indicate these will be terrible times for Israel: *"And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested."* (Zechariah 13:8-9a)

## Revelation 7:9-10

*<sup>9</sup> 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, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*



- Back in the throne room! Here we get a look at the 2nd group in this chapter = people, **believers, from ALL nations, tribes and tongues.**
- First group ONLY Jews, but second group **may also contain Jews** if from EVERY nation. The first group may not be the only Jews saved during this time, but elite group, for specific purpose.
- So many they can't be counted.
- Again, **huge soul harvest** during this time!
- Note these are standing, in contrast to *those who cannot stand* in the presence of the Lamb (and His wrath) in previous chapter.



- “**White robes**” are the purity given to redeemed, righteousness of Messiah.
- **Palm branches** symbol for victory (traditional at Feast of Tabernacles). These souls in heaven are victorious.
- Identification made shortly.
- Their cry is the truth: “**Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.**”
- **There is no other way of salvation.** (John 14:6)



## Revelation 7:11-12

***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.”***



Revelation 7:11-12

## PERFECT PRAISE! List of 7 things offered to God...

1. **Blessing** – *eulogia*, elegant language, commendation, reverential adoration
2. **Glory** – *doxa*, dignity, honor, praise, worship, revealing nature
3. **Wisdom** – *sophia*, natural or spiritual wisdom
4. **Thanksgiving** – *eucharistia*, gratitude, grateful language (as act of worship)
5. **Honor** – *time*, value, valuable, esteem of highest degree, preciousness
6. **Power** – *dunamis*, force, miraculous power, abundance, ability, might, strength
7. **Might** – *ischus*, forcefulness, power, strength

## PERFECT PRAISE!

- This praise is bracketed by two “amens.”
- It is a list of 7, perfectly complete.
- All praise, all everything *belongs to God*.
- All of these things also **come** from God.
- We owe everything to Him. There is no blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power or might that does not belong to Him or come from Him.  
*FUNDAMENTAL understanding of God!*
- Nothing else worthy compared to Him.


## Revelation 7:13-14

***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.***



- An elder (one of the redeemed) asks John who these people are. **Was he supposed to know?**
- Some suggest this is another indication that John did not recognize this group, but deferred to the elder to answer his question – THEREFORE, they must not be part of the Church.
- They are referenced apart from the Church. They are also the redeemed, but not prior to the Tribulation. They have been martyred, or died during the “time of Jacob’s Trouble.”

- Washing “our robes” in the **blood of the Lamb** is a **critical concept** in our faith. These are definitely part of the redeemed, but most likely not part of the Church



- Notice the words “**great tribulation**” – may be during the last 3 ½ years

**Revelation 7:15-17**

***<sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; <sup>17</sup> 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.”***

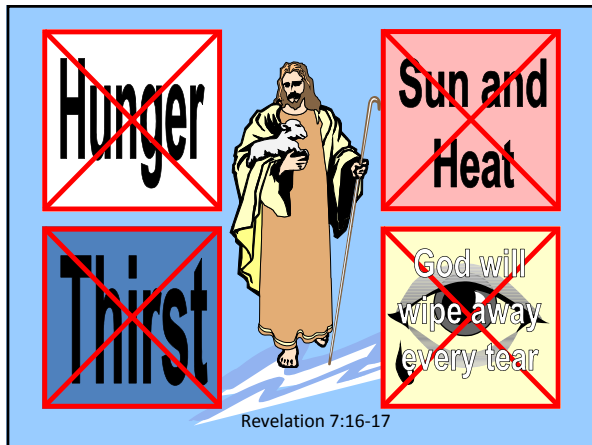


- These “Tribulation Saints” are before the throne of God. He dwells with them. What better place to be?? They are in His presence, completely protected.
- These saints serve God non-stop. (“Day and night” may not be literal, but a reference to never ceasing praise and service)
- Reference to serving God “in His Temple” is interesting. No Temple in final eternal place of dwelling with God. ***<sup>22</sup> But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. <sup>23</sup> The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. (21:22-23)***



- Some speculate this is reference to Millennial Temple, during 1,000 reign. (Ezekiel 40-48 references another temple to be built, most think Millennial)
- Although there is chronology to this book, we must not be bound by it. God inhabits eternity! John is seeing a vision, which may not inhabit our normal time frame. This may be future service during Millennial Kingdom.
- Heaven and earth recreated AFTER Millennium.

- Burning sun, heat, thirst and hunger may be how these people died. If they did not take the mark of the beast, they would not be able to buy or sell. Starvation, thirst, exposure to elements may result.
- Same thoughts in ch 21: <sup>3</sup> *And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."* (21:3-4)  
Here we are beyond the Tribulation, and the Millennium, and are into eternity. An eternity of His care and love.



- This is a beautiful description of the **rewards for believers**. Here in ch 7, it is a description of the immediate protection and relief upon being martyred in the Tribulation.
- It is also interesting to note the strange sort of conditions only God can create: The **Lamb** is also the **Shepherd**! The innocent sacrificial **Lamb** is also our **High Priest**. This gentle, caring **Lamb** is also full of fierce **wrath** at the end of the last chapter. God's plan is truly amazing. These things speak of His many titles and roles: Protector, Provider, Intercessor, Payment, and Judge.

**Contrast this group and the Church...**

Church	Tribulation Saints
"Caught <u>up</u> " before Trib?	Come <u>OUT</u> of Tribulation
Does not experience wrath of God	Come <u>OUT</u> of wrath, martyred then welcomed into His presence
<u>Sit</u> on thrones (like elders)	<u>Stand</u> before the throne
Crowned	Not crowned (at least not yet)
<u>Reign</u> as kingdom of priests	<u>Serve</u> Him day and night

