



## Revelation 7

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Revelation 7.

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### Topics.

- Four angels standing at the four corners of the earth holding back the wind.
  - An angel calls out do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees.
  - Twelve thousand from the twelve tribes of Israel are sealed.
  - One hundred and forty-four thousand.
  - All the angels, and the four living creatures before the throne of God.
  - Ones coming out of tribulation washed white in the blood of the Lamb.
  - The Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd.
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**A personal note:** though I have always loved reading and studying the Scriptures and have now walked with Christ and in God's grace for around fifty years the following studies should not be taken to be dogmatic, inflexible or the final word on the matter since I am fully aware that my mind is limited by mortality and that greater understanding of God's revelation is continually becoming clearer before our eyes as we move closer to the time of Christ's glorious return in glory.

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**The previous chapter:** began with the first four seals being opened and releasing a white, red, black and pale horse, followed by the fifth seal being opened upon which the faithful are heard in heaven crying, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" After this the sixth seal is opened, and there was a great earthquake. The chapter ended with the inhabitants of the earth fearing the face of Him who is seated on the throne, for the great day of their wrath has come.

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### THE FIRST VISION

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#### REVELATION 7:1

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#### Four Angels Standing at the Four Corners of the Earth.

- **Revelation 7:1:** After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree.

**After this:** (v1) meaning after the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth seal were opened spoken of in the previous chapter, which ended with the words, "the great day of wrath has come, and who can stand?" (Rev. 6:12), which means that the vision in this chapter is an interlude prior to God's seven vial/bowls of wrath being poured out in the following chapters.

**The four winds:** in this context, the north, south, east and west winds are emblems of worldwide days of trouble and judgment. In the same way that strong winds uproot trees and blow their branches bare of leaves and fruit, these winds symbolize great calamities sweeping over the earth bringing vast ruin and destruction. In the previous chapter John had seen a vision of a white horse, a red horse, a black horse and a pale horse being

released and the angel declaring the great day of wrath has come (Rev. 6.12-13). John now sees two visions, the first being the four angels holding back the four winds (v1) and the second vision being 144,000 being sealed (Rev. 7:2-17).

The following two things should be highlighted here:

1. Even though it appears that there is a general order of events, these are visions of future events that John is seeing in the present moment, which means the symbolical representations may not always follow the exact chronological order, it is very likely in some cases that one event may overlap another so that some are mixed together until the final-end.
2. Some of these visions are interludes that give greater detail of events already seen or like this vision (Rev.7) are inserted to give encouragement to the church during troublesome times, especially for those living during the latter day antichristian global world ten-horned beast government.

The vision in this chapter is divided into the following three sections:

1. The destruction being withheld from the earth and the sea until the faithful are sealed. (Rev. 7:1-9).
2. The faithful giving thanks to God for their salvation. (Rev. 7:10-12).
3. The resurrected faithful church made up of Jews and Gentiles standing before the throne of the Lamb and God wiping away every tear. (Rev. 7:13-17).

**The four angels holding back four winds:** (v1) following are some facts concerning the four winds and what they signify.

- Though the earth is round and globular, it is presented as a vast plain with four prominent corners, being north, south, east, and west, so it is natural to speak of four winds coming from the four corners of the world, symbolising the entire globe.
- Since the wind blows from every quarter of the earth it is also common to every language to speak of it as coming from the four principal points of the compass (north south, east and west).
- The wind blows in different directions, but there is only one wind, so the expression, "the four winds," does not mean that there are four winds, but that the one wind sometimes blows from four different directions (i.e., north, south east and west).
- Strong, violent and destructive winds throw down buildings, wreck and sink ships in the sea and pull up trees by the roots, so the statement, "the four winds are held back," carry the idea that great destructive calamities are being delayed.

John does not describe the angels form, but merely mentions their activity, since this is a vision, we are not to suppose that four celestial beings would be standing in the four quarters of the world restraining the winds that blow from the four points of the compass. The meaning is, that the events that will occur can be aptly represented by four angels (servants of God) (Heb. 1:14), standing in the four quarters of the world, and having power over the winds, symbolising the calamities and destruction that are about to sweep over the earth. Strong wind is the natural cause of storms, ruin and massive destruction, which is why they are often used in Scripture as emblems of great calamities, upheavals, widespread desolation, wars and the fall of powerful nations, therefore the statement, "four angels are holding back the four winds of the earth and the sea," signifies that the dreadful destruction about to come is at this present time being delayed, until the servants of God are sealed.

## REVELATION 7:2-4

**An Angel Calls Out Do Not Harm the Earth or the Sea or the Trees.**

- **Revelation 7:2-4:** Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, <sup>3</sup>saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." <sup>4</sup>And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

**Trees can symbolise:** true faith and true religion or pretended religion and hypocritical faith. In the following verse Jude likens blasphemers and the rebellious to fruitless trees.

- These (blasphemers and the rebellious) are blemishes on your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, looking after themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted. (Jude 1:12).

Here Jude pictures the fruitless trees being plucked up by the roots. In Psalms it is written:

- He (who delights in the law of the LORD) is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. <sup>4</sup>The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. <sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. (Psalm 1:3-5).

Here, the Psalmist likens those who delight in the law of the LORD to fruitful trees whose leaves never wither, in contrast to the wicked who are likened to chaff that will be driven away at judgment.

**Another angel ascending from the rising of the sun:** (v2) the sun rises from the East. The East is significant for many reasons: it is from the East that God's glory often manifests itself; the garden of Eden was planted in the east (Gen. 2:8); the blood of the bull was sprinkled on the east side of the mercy seat (Lev 16:14); Judah camped on the east toward the sunrise. (Num. 2:3); the cherubim stood at the entrance of the east gate of the House of the LORD, (Ezek. 10:19); the glory of the LORD stood on the east side of the city (Ezek. 11:23) (Ezek. 43:1-2) and entered the temple by the east gate. (Ezek. 43:4). There are many other reasons that East is significant, but one of the greatest is that the river of (Ezek. 47:1) is seen flowing from the temple of God toward the East. The significance of this is that east of Jerusalem are the nations of Moab, Ammon, Edom, Assyria, Babylon, Syria and Iraq etc., which means that the river flowing east can be, seen as a symbol of the Spirit and the Gospel going out to the Gentile nations and establishing God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace not only in the land of Israel and the Middle East, but out into the entire world. For further information concerning this river, click or tap [Ezekiel](#) and select chapter forty-seven.

**The angel called with a loud voice to the four angels:** (v2) the fact the angel cried with a loud voice shows the great importance of what he uttered and the fact the four winds are blowing together, signifies a dreadful and widespread destruction, but the destruction is being delayed. The sea and the trees are most likely mentioned, because they are the objects that are most disturbed and damaged by the wind of a storm. The faithful are likened to trees planted by fresh water, that continually bears fruit and that will stand against the wind no matter how violent, in contrast the wicked are likened to trees that will be up-rooted and carried away by the wind. The redeemed will stand the test of faith while pretenders will be cast away, the apostle Peter states in his letter, that the faithful are being kept by God's power by their faith for a salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time, he then says:

- Rejoice, that your salvation is being kept even though for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,<sup>7</sup> so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:5-8).

**Until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads:** (v3) being sealed on the forehead carries the same idea as having the Father's name written on or in the forehead (KJV). Both symbolise that a believer is completely forgiven, justified, owned, loved and possessed by God and saved to eternal life, and that they are wholly surrendered to Him in love, mind, spirit, will heart and behaviour. It means they are entirely approved of by God in every way possible and symbolically testifies that they are His treasured possession fully belonging to Him and completely accepted into His Kingdom.

For further information concerning, being sealed and having God's name written on the forehead click or tap [Topics in Revelation](#) and select the title: God's Name Written on the Forehead.

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## REVELATION 7:5-8

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### Twelve Thousand from the Twelve Tribes of Israel are Sealed.

- **Revelation 7:5** : 12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Reuben, 12,000 from the tribe of Gad,<sup>6</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Asher, 12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh,<sup>7</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon, 12,000 from the tribe of Levi, 12,000 from the tribe of Issachar,<sup>8</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun, 12,000 from the tribe of Joseph, 12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed.

**One hundred and forty-four thousand:** (v4) the following list shows that one hundred and forty-four thousand is a unique biblical number:

- The square number of one hundred and forty-four is twelve the original number of the sons of Jacob and the tribes that formed the nation of Israel and the original number of the apostles that formed the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Twelve times twelve make one hundred and forty-four times one thousand makes one hundred and forty-four thousand, signifying a large number grew from a small number and that from a small group a larger multitude sprung up.
- The Old Testament had twelve tribes while the New had twelve apostles and the wall of the new Jerusalem has twelve gates with the twelve sons of Israel inscribed on them and twelve angels (Rev. 21:12).
- The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles (Rev. 21:14).
- The wall of the city measured one hundred and forty-four cubic measures. (Revelation 21:17), and the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with twelve types of jewels and precious stones (Rev. 21:19) and the twelve gates were twelve pearls. (Rev. 21:21).

This list highlights the truth that 144 is one of God's prime numbers. It is a perfect square number arising from 12 x 12 being the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles, while the 144,000 signifies the true, genuine and faithful that spring up from the twelve tribes of Israel, being firstly, the twelve apostles built on the foundation of the nation of Israel and afterward multiplying greatly by the ministers and evangelist who followed them. Amongst commentators there are various thoughts as to who the 144,000 are, however, most commentators agree that they refer to the global body of Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles for the following five reasons:

1. The number one hundred and forty-four thousand, is not to be taken literally as though there is precisely twelve thousand faithful believers from each tribe, to make up the exact total number of one hundred and forty-four thousand, but is to be taken as a symbolic number, as many other literal things mentioned in this book are clearly to be taken. Twelve, multiplied by itself, and then by one thousand, makes one hundred and forty-four thousand signifying what began as something small has multiplied itself a thousand-fold. Since there were twelve patriarchs and twelve apostles, twelve became a sacred number in the synagogue and in the Christian church. Israel may be mentioned here first since the Christian church was formed out of the Jewish nation.
2. Twelve is used as the number of those who in every age have been called out to witness for God's word. The twelve tribes of Israel were called to witnesses to the covenant and laws of the Old Testament, and later, the twelve apostles were called to testify to the Gospel of Grace. The number twelve, then, stands for a world-witness of God's word. Twelve multiplied by the twelve carries the idea of a thousand-fold, meaning by the ministers and evangelist who came after the apostles God's word multiplied a thousand-fold and therefore the number signifies the global faithful church made up of Jews and Gentiles.
3. Since the whole scene is symbolical (i.e., four angels; four corners of the earth; four winds; the sea and trees; the rising of the sun and the seal of God) the number is also symbolical. Supporting this view are the following facts:
  - a) If taken literally, it is necessary to suppose that this refers to the twelve tribes of Israel, but the number is too exact, since it is inconceivable that exactly, the same number would be sealed and saved from each tribe and long before this ten of the tribes had been carried away, at which time the distinction between the tribes was lost and never again recovered which means that since the time of John such a literal distinction could not be made.
  - b) Compared with the full number of the twelve tribes of Israel one hundred and forty-four thousand is comparatively small which means, it may signify that only a part of each tribe was sealed and saved (i.e., not all the tribe) which would be in harmony with the following words of Paul:
    - Not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,<sup>7</sup> and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named."<sup>8</sup> This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. (Rom. 9:6-8).
  - c) The number denotes a smaller number taken out of a greater number; a large number of believers multiplying from a smaller number; a part taken out of the whole (i.e., a portion of a tribe, taken out of the whole tribe) who are only known to God and the Lord Jesus Christ. If this same principal is applied to the church, it would then signify that not all who proclaim Christ belong to his church and that only a part of its members will be sealed and saved, this idea is also in harmony with the following words of Jesus:
    - Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 7:21).

Another reason a certain number is put forward for and uncertain number is the fact God clearly knows the exact number of faithful believers to be sealed and saved to eternal life, but we cannot know as the following verses show.

- He brought him (Abram) outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." (Genesis 15:5).

- I (John) looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands (Revelation 7:9).

Clearly the number of the great multitude is not 144,000, only God knows the final number of those who will ascend into heaven, so it is only natural that the author would put forward a certain number for an uncertain number.

4. **The church is built on the foundation of Israel:** symbolised by the one hundred and forty-four thousand, the twelve apostles who were Israelites and Jesus Christ, who was not only an Israelite, but also the chief corner-stone of the church. The name of Israel's city Jerusalem will be written on Gentile believers in that they shall share in her citizenship and the commonwealth of Israel (Ephes. 2:11-22). For these reasons, the one hundred and forty-four thousand signifies the whole Israel of God, which is the global body of Christ made up of faithful Jews and Gentiles. Supporting this idea is the following words of Paul:

- For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. <sup>29</sup>But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God. (Rom. 2:28-29).

And the following Christian principle:

- There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:28).

And the truth that the new Jerusalem embraces the whole Israel of God, the chosen generation and royal priesthood of every age who remained faithful to God and looked toward the coming promised Messiah, the Christ and Saviour of the world. The apostle Paul wrote:

- The Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. (Gal. 4:26).

Jerusalem has always been a symbol of Israel's mother, and here Paul is saying that she is also the mother of the Gentiles. Those who hold to this view highlight the fact that it does not rob the Jews of God's promises (as some believe) as all the faithful (Jews and Gentiles) will inherit all the promises of God, even those who at this time are living in unbelief, but come to repentance and accept their Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and King.

Following is a brief overview of what I think is the most fitting explanation. The previous chapter ended with the words, "the great day of wrath has come, and who can stand?" which means that this chapter is an interlude of great encouragement for all faithful Jews and Gentiles in Christ, before God's wrath is poured out. The number 144,000 is far too exact, to literally refer to the twelve tribes of Israel, so must be taken symbolically (as the four winds, the four living creatures, the white robes and the Lamb are) to represent all the faithful of Israel. The idea is that some from all tribes will be saved and resurrected to eternal glory. Immediately after seeing the redeemed Jews in heaven John sees a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, signifying all the resurrected Gentiles from every nation. Putting both visions together the picture is of Jews and Gentiles that have come out of great tribulation throughout all generations and of all who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb being resurrected to heaven and standing before the Lamb of God and before God Himself serving him day and night in his heavenly temple, where they will hunger and thirst no longer and the sun will not strike them, for the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. This does not mean that the resurrection takes place here, since that takes place when the seventh trumpet sounds, but that

John is given a vision of it in this interlude. It is as though God gives the church this heavenly vision to encourage those who will be alive during the reign of the Antichrist and the final antichristian world power. Immediately after this vision the interlude ends and the seventh seal is opened and great calamities fall upon the earth.

**The general sense:** though all these scenarios above may differ on certain points they all have one common theme, which is that the number 144,000 denotes the global body of Christ made up of Jews and Gentile in Christ. The general sense of them all, is that even though there is great persecution against the church (made up of Jews and Gentiles) and terrors, suffering and grief in the world during the period signified under the seventh seal soon to be opened, God will seal, preserve and save to Himself a great number of faithful Jews from Israel and a great number of faithful Gentiles from all nations, who would not apostatize.

Despite persecutions, troubles and hardships those saved (i.e., sealed by the Holy Spirit) will hold fast to their salvation, and in this sense, their eternal inheritance will not be hurt, so that Christ's global church would not fail. Despite the fact many enemies come against the faithful church it will triumph in victory, because all these persecutions, troubles and hardships come by God's angels and His permission. Whether Jews or Gentiles, all believers of all generations who are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God are children of Abraham and as such belong to the Kingdom of Israel's Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. For further information concerning the 144,000, click or tap [Topics in Revelation](#) and select the title: One Hundred and Forty-Four Thousand.

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## THE THIRD VISION

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### REVELATION 7:9-10

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#### **A Multitude Before the Throne and Before the Lamb.**

- **Revelation 7:9-10:** After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes (kindreds in KJV), and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup>and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Israel's Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ came from the nation Israel and the Gentile church was birthed out of the Jewish nation and their prophets so it is only natural that they would be mentioned in the previous verses prior to this great Gentile multitude that no one could number, from every nation, crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" Though the first group embraced all the church, it is clearly highlighting the salvation and resurrection of faithful Jews that came out of the tribes of Israel and as such giving the Jewish people great encouragement that God has not forsaken them. But now the spotlight is turned upon the Gentiles redeemed from all nations. One of the reasons the redeemed of Israel may be numbered (i.e., 144,000), could be because they are a separate nation and will be the smaller group since they all come out of one nation, whereas the Gentiles in Christ are not limited to one nation, but come out of all nations.

**Standing before the throne and before the Lamb:** (v9) John sees, a great multitude from every nation standing before the throne and before the Lamb, praising God who sits on the throne and the Lamb for their salvation, he is then told that:

- The vast gathering of people has come out of great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (v14-15).
- They will hunger and thirst no longer and the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat. (v16).

Later we read in Revelation chapter twenty that, John in another vision sees those who had authority to judge seated on thrones and the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands come to life and reign with Christ for a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4). He is then told that:

- God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. (Rev. 21:4),
- No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it (the New Holy City of Jerusalem), and his servants will worship them. (Rev. 22:3).

One of the reasons this vision is placed here as an interlude between the sixth and seventh seal is most likely to show to John and all others, that after the seventh seal is opened and the trumpets are blown and the vials poured out there will be during that space of time a number sealed (i.e., saved) that will confess Christ knowing that at the close of all things, in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, and prior to God's wrath being poured out, they will have a glorious, triumphant and joyful end awaiting them. Christ will descend and gather his people to himself and to everlasting happiness in eternal glory. This vision would not only greatly comfort the mind of John and all the faithful, but would also give them great hope and strengthen their faith during the fearful calamities that are about to come upon the earth by the opening of the seventh seal.

**Clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands:** (v9) white is the heavenly colour, because it is the colour of cleanness and in this context, signifies the following things:

- The freedom of the redeemed from sin by the blood of Christ and their complete justification by his righteousness. (v14).
- God's acceptance of the faithful and their sanctification through His Holy Spirit and their spotless purity, immortality and holiness.
- Justification, victory, dignity, honour, happiness and forgiveness of sins and the princely and priestly characters of the faithful, as a result of being washed from all sin.

The words, they washed their robes implies that this is something they should do, but the blood of the Lamb is the means of cleansing, which means that the cleansing was not the result of their own effort. However, though it is true we cannot remove the stain of sin ourselves we are called to live our lives from the love of Christ that dwells in the heart and do good.

**Palm branches in their hands:** (v9) some say that the palm branches here symbolise victorious conquerors as they used to appear in their triumphs, it is certainly true the faithful church will appear as triumphant victorious conquers before the throne of God, and it is true that among the Greeks and Romans the palm was a token of conquest, victory and triumph, but there is no trace of such a use of the palm in Jewish practice, and all the symbolisms of this Book of Revelation are flavoured with Jewish ideas.

- In Jewish practice the significant use of the palm-branches, was that they were used in the Feast of Tabernacles, when the people were called to take palm-branches and rejoice before the LORD seven days. It is this distinct Jewish use of the palm branch that is brought before our minds here, and not the idea of conquest and victory.

The multitude bearing palms before the Throne signifies the sowing, the reaping and harvest is over, the work is done and that the rejoicing labourers are gathered to eat the fruits of their work in the courts of the LORD. The palm-bearing multitude keeping their Feast of Tabernacles

reminds us of the celebration and rejoicing of all that God had done for the people of Israel as they passed through the wilderness and settled in their land to which the LORD led them. By extension this carries the idea that the great multitude of the resurrected redeemed look back upon their lives as they travelled through the wilderness of this world and rejoice with great joy at the glory they have been granted, because of their faith in Christ's blood and trust in God's grace. The symbolism of the palm branches and the feast of booths carries the following two ideas:

1. firstly, the thought of justice and peacefulness
  2. secondly the abundant supplies of all that is needed for eternal salvation and eternal life.
- The symbolism of, "Palm branches in the hands," immediately takes the mind of the Bible student to the following verses:
    - a) The disciples brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup>Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup>And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:7-9).
    - b) They took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" (John 12:13).

This vision of the great multitude with palm branches that John is seeing will come to pass just prior to Christ coming to take possession of His Kingdom at the sound of the seventh trumpet. The palm branch was used at the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month, when they kept feast to God thanking Him for the fruits they had gathered, foreshadows the ultimate and final gathering of the harvest of the redeemed here described as a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language, that no one could number.

**Crying out with a loud voice:** (v10) those who are redeemed and raised to eternal happiness will openly and loudly shout with great joyful praises to both the Father and the Son for their salvation.

**Cannot be numbered:** (v10) in contrast to the common opinion that only a few will be saved, this prophetic vision presents a picture of a vast host of the human-race being saved after the Gospel has gone out to all the world and God has chosen some out of Israel and some out of the Gentile nations, for the gathering of a people for His name, and when they are all gathered in, they will all meet-together in the New Holy City Jerusalem. Should anyone still believe that only a few will be saved, consider the following verses:

- After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup>and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:9-10).
- After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, <sup>2</sup>for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants." (Rev. 19:1-2).
- Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. (Rev. 19:6).

These verses present a picture of a vast host of the human-race being saved after the Gospel has been sent to all Israel and to all nations, for the gathering of believers out of them to meet-together in the New and Heavenly Holy City Jerusalem.

**All the Angels, and the Four Living Creatures Before God's Throne.**

- **Revelation 7:11-12:** And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup>saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

John is about to reveal the avalanches of misery which are to fall upon the earth at the sound of the seven trumpets, but before they come, he is given this interlude between the sixth and seventh seal. He has two visions: firstly, one of the rapture symbolised by the sealing of the faithful of God, encouraging all the faithful living amongst the looming world-wide calamities, that they will be secure in their salvation, and giving them assurance that beyond the storms of life their waits a calm and peaceful world of eternal life and glory for those who overcome.

**All the angels standing around the throne:** (v11) when the Pharisees and the scribes saw Jesus talking with the Gentiles, they said to him in a self-righteous mocking tone, "This man receives sinners and eats with them," and Jesus replied:

- There will be more joy in heaven and before the angels over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance (Luke 15:7) (Luke 15:10).

And now we get a prophetic glimpse into heaven and see all the angels standing around the throne and around the elders (symbolising the faithful church) falling on their faces before the throne and worshipping God, for the great multitude of sinners who have repented and are now raised and standing around the throne of God. This is a good moment to ponder the enormous joy, not only amongst the angels, but also amongst the multitudes of the redeemed standing before the throne. There is no-doubt that all the pain and suffering we may have endured will vanish like darkness flees from light and only unspeakable joy remain.

**The elders and the four living creatures:** (v11) the elders here are the twenty-four elders spoken of in previous chapters. It appears that the great throng of angels formed an outer circle surrounding the four living creatures and the elders standing before the throne of God.

In the book of Hebrews, we are told:

- The angels are all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? (Heb. 1:14).

With this verse in mind it is very fitting that in Johns vision the angels are pictured forming the outer circle around the living creatures and elders standing before the throne as they are God's ministers and protectors of the redeemed (symbolised by the elders) and it is the redeemed who Christ died for not the angels, so it is only right that the redeemed are nearer to him. The angels sympathized with the church in its conflicts and trials, and they now they unite with the overcoming church rescued from its troubles and brought triumphantly to heaven in joyful praise.

**Ones coming out of Tribulation Washed in the Blood of the Lamb.**

- **Revelation 7:13-14:** Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" <sup>14</sup>I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

**One of the elders:** (v13) this elder is no doubt one of the twenty-four elders spoken of in (Rev. 4:4), who represent the future resurrected Old and New Testament faithful before the throne of God who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb and overcome to the end. He is very likely the same elder who told John to weep no more, because, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals. (Rev. 5:5). In this chapter, the elder acts as interpreter of this vision of the future glorified church the body of Christ being raised to the throne of God. Some point out that this idea has the following problem, if the twenty-four elders symbolise those washed in the blood of the Lamb, and here we have those washed in the blood of the Lamb standing before the twenty-four elders it means that this elder would be one of the redeemed washed in the blood of the Lamb. However, this supposed problem is overcome by the following two facts:

1. This is a future prophetic vision that John is seeing which means that everyone (other than the angels) are going to be washed in the blood of the Lamb, no matter who they symbolise, since it is only by being washed in Christ's blood that anyone has access to heaven.
2. Old Testament Israel offered animal sacrifices to God, but they were not saved by them, they were a type and shadow of Christ the Lamb of God without blemish, they signified the Saviours' sacrifice (i.e., the innocent for the guilty).

It was not the blood of bulls and goats that cleansed them, but Jesus blood. This is because the power of Christ's cleansing blood flows back to the foundation of the earth so that the faithful of the Old and New Testament are saved by the same Saviour and the same Redeemer. In the book of Revelation, it is written:

- All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8).

Here we read that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world and the following verse shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that Jesus was not only the central focus of God's eternal mind and of His eternal plans and purposes for mankind's salvation and for eternity, before time began, but also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world:

- You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot foreordained before the foundation of the world and manifest in these last times for you. (1 Peter 1:18-20).

The cleansing power of Jesus blood shed on the cross of Calvary doesn't just cover and cleanse only those who have come to the Lord after his death and resurrection, but flows all the way back to the foundations of the earth to Adam and Eve like a spiritual river cleansing all the faithful of the Old Testament from the fall of Adam onward who by faith looked to the coming and the appearing of the promised Messiah the Christ. For further information concerning: the twenty-four Elders, click or tap [Topics in Revelation](#) and select the title: Twenty-Four Elders.

**Tribulation (the definition):** (v14) comes from the Greek word (*thlipsis, thlibo and tribos*) and means pressure, affliction, anguish, burdened, persecution and trouble. (literal or spiritual). It carries the idea of suffering affliction, trauma, tribulation and trouble, which means, though there is an allusion to persecution in the expression, "the great tribulation," it is not limited to persecution and dying for one's faith only, but embraces all types of extreme troubles, hardships, suffering, sorrows and grief. It may be better expressed by the expression, "great trials." The aim and intention of the expression is to set before the mind a view of those who though they had greatly suffered, remained faithful to their Redeemer and Saviour.

**Those who came out of great tribulation:** (v14) this vision shows those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb will be delivered safely out of trouble and into the eternal Kingdom of God. It shines a spotlight upon the truth that the servants of God are safe, for they are

sealed by the Holy Spirit and numbered; they are among those sheep of Christ who He calls by name, whose very hairs are numbered; they are those whose reliance for righteousness that leads to eternal life is not on self, but on their shepherd; and the sealing can be seen as an echo of Christ's words:

- I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. (John 10:28).

Those who are sealed are the faithful servants of Christ, known and recognised by him. This countless multitudes are numberless (i.e., countless as the sand on the seashore and the stars in heaven). The fact they are not numbered symbolises wide-spread growth of the church of God and that its growth has no limits. When we are all taken up to heaven all will be welcomed and gathered, men and woman from every nation, people, tongue and language, there will be neither Jew, nor Gentile, its gates will open wide to all who look forward to the return of the Groom for His Bride.

**The entire body of Christ or the martyrs only:** amongst commenters there are various thoughts as to who the ones that came out of great tribulation are, some believe they symbolise the entire body of Christ, while others feel they are the martyrs only. Since most have some good points, following are the most common scenarios:

- a) Some say that these could not be martyrs, for the martyrs could not be such a great multitude as no man could number, but they may well be martyrs standing amongst the great multitude of the redeemed with palm branches that had at first immediately caught the attention of John, being so vast, but now the elder speaking turns John's eyes toward the martyrs standing among the great multitude.
- b) Since this was a time when the churches were suffering extreme persecution and multitudes were being martyred for their faith, it is very likely that after seeing beyond the scenes of sorrow and grief, calamities and terrors coming upon the world John's attention was drawn toward the martyrs as being victorious in heaven to further highlight the words, "they came up out of great tribulation," and to encourage and comfort those in similar circumstances.
- c) It may refer to the martyrs that have come out of great tribulation out of all generations of various kinds, which would also shine a light upon the truth that not all the faithful will escape tribulation, persecution, sorrow and grief. This idea can be supported by the words, "these are they who come," which carries the idea of coming out of great tribulation, but not all at once, but gradually.
- d) Though the emphasis is set upon martyrs dying for their faith, the tribulation should not be limited to the martyrs only, nor should the sufferings of this vision be limited to any particular-generation or space of time as there are trials, tortures, suffering so life-threatening and sorrows so severe that it would be right and proper to call them, great tribulations. Especially since in all ages, the faithful have entered the Kingdom of God through much tribulation. The vision here is not of those who come safely out of some particular-trial, but of the great multitude from every age and every race who despite great troubles, hardships and conflict endured great tribulation which will continue for all who dwell on earth until Christ returns in glory.
- e) The expression, "the great tribulation," specifically refers to the tribulation that Jesus and Daniel spoke of in the following verses:
  - Then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. (Matt. 24:21).
  - Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>30</sup>Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of

Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matt. 24:29-30).

Daniel in his visions of the latter days uses similar prophetic language:

- At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. (Dan. 12:1).

This seventh chapter is an interlude between the sixth and seventh seal which gives a brief overview and recap of the vision of the six seals, (Rev. 6:1-17). In chapter six the number of the saved had not been completed, but now in this chapter the number is not only completed, but they are also seen in vision form taken out of the earth, before God's wrath is poured out upon the antichristian apostasy. This does not mean that the rapture takes place here, since that does not happen until the seventh trumpet sounds. This chapter is an interlude which gives John a future prophetic vision of victory and encouragement for all the faithful of all ages who patiently wait for the Lord's return in glory and their being glorified and reigning together with their King, in the New World where they will not only be free from suffering, hunger, thirst and the troubles of life on earth, but also refreshed by the Lamb of God Himself. The following verse shows that this prophetic vision transcends time and carries John's mind to that future time when the resurrected church will be gathered together in heaven, where they will:

- Hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. <sup>17</sup>For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." (Revelation 7:16).

This verse echoes the following words recorded in the final chapters of this book:

- He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." <sup>5</sup>And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." (Revelation 21:4-6).
- No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup>They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (Rev. 22:3-5).

This vision supports and encourages Christians suffering troubles. All the redeemed owe their happiness wholly to God's sovereign mercy and the suffering sacrifice of Christ their Redeemer and Saviour, only in Christ do sinners and the faithful alike receive the grace that provides all that is needed to secure salvation. Those who receive this grace cannot conceive of any other joy being greater than dwelling with the resurrected Saviour who died for them on the bloodstained cross of Calvary.

**They washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb:** (v14) not by adhering to holy days or ceremonial rites or by their own works and self-righteousness or by strictly adhering to religious traditions, but by Christ's sacrifice on the bloodstained cross of Calvary. The way to heaven is through many tribulations, but tribulation no matter how great will not separate the faithful from the love of God, but rather make heaven more welcome and more glorious and it is only by Christ's blood that sin can be washed away and a sinner may enter heaven.

- If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:7).
- Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood. (Rev. 1:5).

For further information concerning, "robes washed white," see the notes titled: "Clothed in White Robes, with Palm Branches in their Hands," following (v9-10) (above).

**In the days of the seventh trumpet:** (also the third woe) (Rev. 11:14) the mystery of God will be fulfilled (Rev. 10:7). The two witnesses (symbolizing the church made up of Jews and Gentiles in Christ) are taken up to heaven in a cloud. (Rev. 11:12). The kingdom of the world become the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rev. 11:15). For further information concerning the two witnesses' click or tap [Topics in Revelation](#) and select the title: The Two Witnesses.' The nations rage, and God's wrath comes, for its time for the dead to be judged. (Rev. 11:17-18). This chapter (Revelation 7) is an interlude between the sixth and seventh seal that gives us an insight into the mystery of God that is yet to be fulfilled (Rev. 10:7) and the church made up of Jews and Gentiles in Christ being taken up to heaven in a cloud. (Rev. 11:12).

**NOTE:** the words: "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation," (v14) highlights the following two truths:

1. The faithful are not exempt from trials.
2. The faithful are exempt from the destroying judgments of wrath that fall on the world as Israel was from the plagues of Egypt.

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## REVELATION 7:15-17

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### **The Lamb in the Midst of the Throne Will Be their Shepherd.**

- **Revelation 7:15-17:** "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 shelter them with his presence. <sup>16</sup>They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. <sup>17</sup>For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

**They are before the throne:** (v15) there is no other reason they are before the throne than the fact God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16). No other reason can be given why anyone of the human race is in heaven, had God not loved us and Christ not laid his life down for us our final-destination would be the darkness of the grave.

**Serve him day and night in his temple:** (v15) this alludes to the Levites, who served the LORD day and night in God's House, in the context of this chapter it signifies the following two things:

1. The idea of perpetually, at this present time all the work and service of God on earth is interrupted by night and the necessity of rest. In contrast to our life on earth there will be no weariness or night in heaven, and therefore there will be no need of rest or intermission which means that service for God will continue forever.
2. It also carries the idea of obedience in contrast to Adams disobedience in the Garden of Eden, all who dwell in the eternal and heavenly temple of God will never rebel against Him, but wilfully and joyfully serve Him throughout all eternity.

The Scriptures give very little information concerning any form of work and how we will serve God and the Lord Jesus Christ after the resurrection, but we can gain a little insight from the parable of the nobleman (symbolizing Jesus). In this parable a nobleman gives his servants \$10 each and said to them, "Engage in business until I return," After going into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, he returned. The first servant multiplied his \$10 to \$100 and the nobleman said, "Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities." The second servant turned his \$10 to \$50

and the nobleman gave him authority over five cities, a third servant did nothing with his \$10 and he was condemned for doing nothing with the gift that he was freely given. (Luke 19:18-22). This implies when the Lord returns in glory to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth and gather the faithful to himself that the faithful will act as his government in various nations and be given authority over cities to administer his sovereign rule on earth until the whole earth is filled with God's glory. (Psalm 72:19) (Isaiah 6:3).

**It should be mentioned here:** salvation should never be confused with rewards being stored in heaven, since salvation is a matter of faith, but rewards are a totally different matter. Paul tells the Corinthian church that, "Each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, they will receive a reward, but if anyone's work is burned up, they will suffer loss, though they themselves will be saved, but only as through fire (1 Cor. 3:13-15) thus those who have faithfully followed the Lord will be rewarded accordingly whereas those who have remained in faith but lived indifferently to the things of God and of Christ though they are saved by their faith will suffer loss.

**Rewards and loss:** storing up rewards in heaven and suffering loss cannot always be measured by outward appearances since we cannot know the heart or motivation of a person. For example we might be tempted to think that a minister who is gifted with oratory skills and has a very successful church with over ten thousand followers would be exalted above a woman who faithfully serves the Lord by cleaning the church after every meeting, but since we cannot know the heart of another this may not be the case since the minister could be in God's service as the Chief Priests, Pharisees and Scribes of Jesus day were, for their own self-glory, the power, money and esteem they got from those they had the authority over.

When it comes to eternal standing only God knows our hearts and  
our true motives and only, He is able to judge  
righteously and in justice

Knowing God will do the right thing, brothers and sisters in Christ, who are stronger in the faith not only have an obligation to welcome and help their weaker brothers and sisters who for whatever reason may be struggling, but are also called to bear with their failings rather than please themselves (Acts 20:35) (Rom 14:1) (Rom 15:1) and leave the eternal judging to the only judge qualified to judge in love and with justice; our perfect and eternal High Priest the Lord Jesus Christ.

**The New Holy City Jerusalem:** this heavenly scene may also be seen as the resurrected redeemed dwelling in the midst of the New Holy City Jerusalem, when God will be with His people and He will dwell, among them; and all the redeemed will be presented, before the presence and glory of the Lamb who will present himself to his Bride, without spot, or wrinkle and they will behold his glory, and see him as he is. After which they will rule and reign with him as King of kings and Lord of lords, establishing God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth during his millennial reign.

**The great purpose of the vision:** is no doubt intended to carry the thoughts of the faithful beyond all the scenes of conflict, strife, and persecution on earth, to the glorious time when all the redeemed of all nations and generations (not just the 144,000) will be triumphantly resurrected to heavenly glory. It is an interlude of encouragement, before the horrors and terrors, the woes and sorrows of the seven trumpets are released. The simple idea is, that during storms, calamities, griefs and sorrows of life it is good practise and comfort to let the eye of faith rest upon the scene of the final triumph, when the innumerable hosts of the redeemed will stand before the Throne of God and before the Lamb and sorrow shall be known no more.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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