

THE REVELATION

MAY 19, 2024

Chapter 7

g) The Winds on the Earth (7:1)

Rev 7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree.

But all the preparation for the culmination of the “great day” and the judgment of the LORD on the evil ones has not been completed yet. The REVELATION is about the Second Coming of the LORD, but it is also about changing the minds of all the people of the Nation of Israel to admit they had missed Him as their long-awaited Messiah and they still must finally put their trust in Him. For the key to that door, the winds of the earth need to stop blowing. The LORD wanted John to see His power over nature and even over the lives of the Israelites. The four angels who had controlled the four winds in the four corners of the earth since creation were commanded to stop the natural cycle of the blowing of the winds – to stop them completely. By the command of the LORD, these four angels who still had a great tempest in their arsenal were commanded to stand down. They were restrained by the Almighty. The winds of the earth became deathly still.

h) The Angel and the Seal on the Earth (7:2a)

Rev 7:2a And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God;

John saw an angel coming from the east with a seal. It was the seal of God; therefore, most likely, it was the same symbol seen on the seven seals of the Book of Life that the Lamb was breaking open.

i) The Restriction on the Earth (7:2b-3)

(1) The Cry to the Four Angels (7:2b)

Rev 7:2b and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,

This angel coming from the east had the seal, but he also had a message directed at the “four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea.” What was that message?

(2) The Warning to the Four Angels (7:3)

Rev 7:3 saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads."

The message was a warning. The earth, the sea, the trees cannot be harmed until the voluntary followers of God have been sealed on their foreheads. (For a full definition of “bond-servant,” please see notes on Revelation 1:1b in this series of lessons.) No storms, no gales, no squalls, no tempests, no cyclones, no tornados, no whirlwinds, no twisters! No disasters!

j) The Sealing of Israelites on the Earth (7:4-8)

Rev 7:4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: ⁵from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, ⁶from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, ⁷from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, ⁸from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed.

Here we see the second purpose of the REVELATION in crystal clear language. These twelve tribes were Jews. They were not Gentiles. No Gentiles were sealed for the LORD’s purpose - ever! These twelve tribes were comprised of men of the Nation of Israel. One hundred and forty-four thousand Jews in all, twelve thousand from each of these 12 tribes sealed and protected through the time of Tribulation and the Great Tribulation. Here, the LORD lays His claim on His own family to bring it to a belief in Him as the Messiah.

With that said, we must investigate the list of the twelve. All of the names listed here were sons of Jacob except “Manasseh” who was a grandson, the son of Joseph. “Manasseh” had taken the place of the *tribe of Dan*. Why was *Dan* not included? In the history of the Old Testament, the sin of the tribe of Dan in idolatry was exceedingly grievous as it built temples that contained golden calves modified to represent *Yahweh/Jehovah* (the LORD) as noted in 1st Kings 12:29. To those golden calves, the tribe of Dan worshipped in one ceremony both Baal and Yahweh. This newly developed Baal cult influenced the entire Northern Kingdom of Israel during the reign of King Jehu. Despite the destruction of the Baal priests in the Northern Kingdom, Jehu refused to remove these golden idols and altars (2 Kings 10:32). The tribal area of Dan was taken into exile by Pul-Tiglath-pileser III, the king of Assyria in 743 BC, twenty-two years before the full exile of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC (2 Kings 15:29). The whole nation of the Danites was deported to Assyria, Babylon and Media by in Sargon II (king of Assyria) in 722 BC and he exported people from Babylon and Aram and placed them in Dan’s tribal area. The reason for Dan’s ejection is found in 2 Kings 17:7-20; it was because of the worship of gods other than *Yahweh* which made their land the center of ungodly worship in the Nation of Israel. Jacob had prophesied this tragedy at the end of his life when he said to his son Dan, “Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a horned snake in the path, that bites the horse’s heels, so that his rider falls backward,” (Genesis 49:17). To further carry out Dan’s legacy, after the return of Israel from exile, the tribe of Dan did not return to its land. Rather, the land continued to be a hotbed of idolatrous worship especially during the Greek, Roman and Byzantine Empires as the people worshipped the Greco-Roman and Egyptian gods of Osiris, Bes, and Aphrodite.

We might note that the tribe of Ephraim is not listed; however, originally, it took the place of Joseph; therefore, the descendants are included because Joseph is listed.

D. The Souls in Heaven (7:9-12)

1. Great Multitude Arrive Before the Lamb (7:9)

Rev 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands;

As John looked back to heaven, a great multitude had suddenly appeared. Who was this great multitude? Where did it come from? Why had John not seen them before? Because they were “before the throne and before the Lamb,” they belonged to the LORD. They were most definitely the redeemed from the earth “clothed in white robes,” with “palm branches ~~were~~ in their hands.” More than that, they were not from one location on earth; they were from every nation of the world and spoke every language imaginable. The Church has been raptured from the Earth. To top that, the multitude was so vast that John could not count them. They were holding “palm branches.” Such were used at the triumphal entry of the LORD into Jerusalem on Sunday before His crucifixion. Their chant was *Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the LORD*. We need not be reminded that those who praised the LORD on Sunday, cursed Him on Friday and believed in Him the next Sunday only to become part of the Church on the Day of Pentecost. Why? Because of the grace of salvation gifted to man by God and delivered by the Lamb.

2. Great Multitude Cry Unto the Lamb (7:10)

Rev 7:10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

This throng of people had a chant too! “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” If you are looking for the arrival of the Church as a whole in heaven, this is it. This multitude has made it to the throne of God at the invitation of the Lamb. John does not tell us where they came from yet, but he soon will. It is obvious here that they were members of the Church. How else did they get into God’s heaven? Because the saints of the Old Testament were led from the *place of peaceful rest in Abraham’s bosom* at the time of the resurrection of the LORD from the grave, this multitude can contain only the saved of the Church age. No one else is welcome in heaven in the LORD’s plan. Paul actually describes the transition of this multitude when He is expressing God’s will for the Church members. He says the following.

1Th 4:13-18 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them

in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Paul's words were built on what Daniel had said in his book about the people of God.

Da 12:1-3 "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

a) The Worship (7:11)

Rev 7:11 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,

With John's discovery of this "great multitude" heaven erupted. The angels, elders and creatures began to do what they were created to do – worship.

b) The Words (7:12)

Rev 7:12 saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen."

John and the "great multitude" heard the chorus in unison. They began with an "Amen" and they ended with an "Amen." What joy filled heaven when this multitude arrived in the rehearsal of this REVELATION. What a glorious day it will be when it actually occurs!

3. The Elders' Conversation with John (7:13-17)

a) The Question about the Souls (7:13)

Rev 7:13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?"

An elder stopped John and asked him if he knew the origin of the "great multitude." What an interesting question! Who were they, and where did they come from? We want to know that answer as well.

b) The Answer about the Souls (7:14)

Rev 7:14 I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

John did not know how to answer the elder. He did not know who the people were. And so the elder told him, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." We are still in the extended summary of the sixth seal that sketches out and sheds light on the major events that lead to the day of wrath

previously mentioned at the Second Coming of the LORD. In this sixth seal, we have seen the darkness come with the great earthquake that affected the normal view of the sun and moon. We have seen stars fall from heaven, but we do not know who they are yet. That answer will come in Chapter 9. During the earthquake, the islands and the mountains moved greatly, and as that was happening, all the high and lowly people of the earth took shelter and prayed for death. Then, in order, the 144,000 Jews were sealed to keep them from being harmed by the time of tribulation. Therefore, the tribulation has not occurred in the story as yet. And then John turned to see the appearance of this “great multitude” of souls that had just arrived in heaven that no one can number. And then, an elder told John that this great multitude” had “come out of the great tribulation” which had not occurred yet. There seems to be a problem here!

In English, it would seem that this “great multitude” was, in fact, participants in the “great tribulation.” In reality, the intent of the passage is that they were spared *from* the *Tribulation*.

Once again, if you are looking for the arrival of the Church as a whole in heaven snatched away from this earth by the LORD, here it is. This multitude had made it to the throne of God at the invitation of the Lamb, thus being saved *from the great tribulation*, or as our English translation says, “come out of the great tribulation” or away from it, not to be harmed by it.

Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Are you walking daily by the Savior's side? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Do you rest each moment in the Crucified? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

When the Bridegroom cometh, will your robes be white? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Will your soul be ready for the mansions bright? And be washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Lay aside the garments that are stained with sin, And be washed in the blood of the Lamb?

There's a fountain flowing for the soul unclean, O be washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Are you washed in the blood, in the soul-cleansing blood of the Lamb?

Are your garments spotless are they white as snow? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

c) The Reason for the Souls (7:15a)

Rev 7:15a "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple;

The “great multitude” is with the LORD. It is complete. It consists of the people who have belonged to the LORD from the opening of the Church on the day of Pentecost until the LORD snatched them away from this war-torn earth filled with *wars and rumors of wars*. Once we are there, we will do what we feebly attempted to do each week in our worship of the LORD. But, then, in

heaven, it will not be feeble, it will be glorious as we join all of heaven's creatures in service to God and our Savior, the Lamb of God.

d) The Protection for the Souls (7:15b – 17)

Rev 7:15b and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. ¹⁶"They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; ¹⁷for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

Like the mother hen who protects her chicks from the elements by spreading her wings over them as they gather next to her, so, too, will be our relationship to the LORD. There, we will be in the dwelling place of the LORD, His Tabernacle, His chamber, never to hunger, thirst, or cry again, and the Lamb will be our shepherd, and we will be His sheep.