

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

CHAPTER 7-8:9

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Welcome back to our study of the Book of Revelation. We recommend that you begin by reading Revelation Chapters 7 and 8. (*Note: All Scriptures are KJV unless otherwise noted.*)

CHAPTER 7 OVERVIEW

Chapter 7 is a pause, a parenthesis between the opening of the 6th and 7th seals. When the 7th seal is loosed (opened), it ushers in judgments so terrible and destruction so complete that no flesh will survive except those days are shortened. Chapter 7 is a brief period where judgment is suspended. This chapter records how God is going to keep and protect His people in the midst of the beginning of the Tribulation.

THE SEALED SERVANTS—144,000 FROM THE 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL

144,000 Jews are sealed to serve as powerful evangelists—not pastors, teachers, or prophets, but evangelists preaching to glean a harvest of souls right in the middle of unbelievable judgments.

2 “And 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 given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 Saying, ‘Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.’ 4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.”

Revelation 7:2-4

After the Church Age is finished, there are no more references to the church until Revelation Chapter 19, when we return with Jesus. The attention is now focused on the Children of Israel. There are Jewish references in the Book of Revelation, such as the Lamb of God, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the scroll and seals, The Tabernacle, The Temple in Heaven, and 12,000 Jews from each Tribe of Israel. The 144,000 are JEWISH.

12,000 from the 12 tribes of Israel, as listed below, were sealed:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Judah | 7. Simeon |
| 2. Reuben | 8. Levi |
| 3. Gad | 9. Issachar |
| 4. Asher | 10. Zebulon |
| 5. Naphtali | 11. Joseph |
| 6. Manasseh | 12. Benjamin |

Characteristics of the 144,000

I want to summarize the 144,000 by giving highlights of who they are. There are six main characteristics of these servants of God.

1. Purchased

3 *“And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one was able to learn the song except the 144,000 who had been purchased from the earth.”*

Revelation 14:3 NASB

Purchase means to pay the price for something or to redeem. The precious Blood of Jesus purchased these servants of God. The 144,000 were bought with a price. They belong to the Lord as His special possession.

2. Prepared

The 144,000 have been prepared for service to Christ by being given His seal.

3 *“Saying, ‘Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.’ **4** And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.”*

Revelation 7:3-4

During the Tribulation, the Antichrist will cause his followers to bear his mark on their right hand or forehead. At the same time, those who belong to the Lord will have His seal of ownership on their forehead. This is an obvious sign of who belongs to whom.

3. Protected

God not only seals the 144,000 but also protects them. God seals them before He allows the seven angels with trumpets to release their judgments. This seal protects them from God’s wrath as well as Satan’s antichrist during the Tribulation. In Revelation Chapter 14, we see them standing triumphantly on Mt. Zion in the city of Jerusalem.

1 *“Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000 who had His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.”*

Revelation 14:1 NASB

There are not 143,999 that are there, but 144,000—all are divinely accounted for and preserved by the Lord.

4. Pure

4 *“These are the ones who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are celibate...”*

Revelation 14:4 NASB

The 144,000 are spiritually undefiled and pure. They are separated unto God from all the corruption and pollution of the age, as well as the false religion of the False Prophet.

They are all male, not defiled with women. This suggests that they are celibate servants of God, pure virgins. They are called by God from a normal married life and are totally devoted to the Lord's service.

5. Persistent

4 "...These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from mankind as first fruits to God and to the Lamb."

Revelation 14:4 NASB

The 144,000 follow the Lord in the most trying of times. They follow Him as their Shepherd.

6. Preachers

They fearlessly preach and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ during the Tribulation. They bring about the salvation of millions that no man could number from all tribes and tongues.

9 "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.'"

Revelation 7:9-10

Jesus, even in the midst of great tribulation, is not willing that any should perish.

THE SAVED SERVANTS—FROM OUT OF THE TRIBULATION

There will be converts to Christianity during the Tribulation period because of the ministry of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists. The 144,000 preach a message of salvation.

These are converts who had never heard the message of grace during the Church Age. They were left behind at the Rapture. They are now brand-new converts, having heard the message of salvation and being warned to escape the judgments to come. A great number of Gentiles will also be saved during the preaching of these Jewish evangelists. Most of these converts will be martyred during the Tribulation.

13 "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, 'What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?' 14 And I said unto him, 'Sir, thou knowest.' And he said to me, 'These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'"

Revelation 7:13-14

These converts are now safe. They heard a message of mercy and will not take the mark of the beast.

15 *“Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”*

Revelation 7:15-17

Let’s take a closer look at these tribulation saints in Heaven. I want to point out the following important details. As soon as the 144,000 are sealed in Revelation 7:4-8, a surprise occurs: a great multitude is seen in Verse 9.

9 *“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;”*

Revelation 7:9

One of the elders asks John, *“What are these in white robes, and where did they come from?”*

13 *“And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, ‘What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?’”*

Revelation 7:13

John says, *“I don’t know, but surely you do.”*

14 *“And I said unto him, ‘Sir, thou knowest.’ And he said to me, ‘These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’”*

Revelation 7:14

Notice that these tribulation saints were saved during the Tribulation. They stand in the presence of the thrones where the 24 elders are. They have no crowns but palm branches. They were not there at the Bema Seat of Christ to receive crowns because they had come after the Rapture and Resurrection of the church saints in Revelation Chapter 4.

John was surprised and astonished at this group. The elder revealed that they *“came out of great tribulation.”* Even in the midst of the Tribulation, God still makes a way for salvation.

White Robes

Their white robes are mentioned three different times. They are arrayed with exclusive robes, a fabric like an exquisite mink stole, except these robes are pure white. These pure white robes are a picture of gorgeous beauty. This implies being dressed in the richest of wedding garments that are pure, dazzling white. They have no blemishes.

Palm Branches

These saints are described as holding palm branches. Palm branches were used during the Feast of Tabernacles.

15 "And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, 'Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written.' 16 So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. 17 And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness."

Nehemiah 8:15-17

Palm branches for Israel called to remembrance when God delivered them from dark servitude in Egypt. They represent victory, triumph, and celebration. These saints are very joyous to be delivered from the Great Tribulation.

THE TRIBULATION SAINTS CONTRASTED WITH THE 24 ELDERS

Tribulation Saints - Saved "out of" of the Tribulation
24 Elders - "Kept out" of the Tribulation

Tribulation Saints - Not Crowned
24 Elders - Crowned

Tribulation Saints - Palms in their hands
24 Elders - Harps in their hands

Tribulation Saints - Stand before thrones
24 Elders - Sit on thrones

Tribulation Saints - Serve God day and night
24 Elders - Reign as kings and priests

REVELATION CHAPTER EIGHT: VERSES 1-9

1 "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended

up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightning, and an earthquake. 6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. 7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. 8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."

THE 7TH SEAL - SILENCE IN HEAVEN

When Jesus opens the 7th seal, thirty minutes of silence erupts in Heaven.

1 "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour."

Revelation 8:1

Heaven is never silent. At the opening of this 7th seal, there is a silence that can be felt. It falls upon everyone, everywhere. It is such a deafening silence. I imagine everyone can hardly breathe. It is a vast calm of silent intensity, a silence of awe, as well as a silence of ominous foreboding. This silence is a pause right before the seven angels of God's presence receive the trumpets they will sound.

Seven Angels with Seven Trumpets

2 "And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets."

Revelation 8:2 NKJV

These seven angels are distinct, highly favored celestial arch-regents of the Almighty. They stand before God, and a trumpet is given to each one. Their trumpet sounds will loose devastating judgment upon Earth.

Why Trumpets?

The use of trumpets is a part of Jewish tradition. The trumpet is one of the most used instruments in Holy Scripture. A trumpet portrays the life of a people in the presence of God. If war was declared in Scripture, there was the blowing of the trumpet.

19 "My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war."

Jeremiah 4:19

Trumpets were sounded at great convocations and feasts in Israel. The sounding of the trumpet marked the Year of Jubilee. It was also a common practice in Israel to blow a trumpet in royal ceremonies, such as at the crowning of a king.

At Mount Sinai, there was a loud trumpet blast.

14 "So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. 15 And he said to the people, 'Be ready for the third day; do not come near your wives.' 16 Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. 19 And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice."

Exodus 19:14-19 NKJV

The Trumpets Release Judgment

These seven angels are about to unleash the beginning of war, culminating with the Battle of Armageddon, the great battle with the Almighty. They are selected to release judgment upon Earth with the blast of their trumpets. These judgments come from the orders of Jesus Christ, not the Antichrist.

ANOTHER ANGEL

Notice something significant and not to be overlooked:

3 "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."

Revelation 8:3-5

This is a picture of the Tabernacle in Heaven. There are two altars: the brazen altar of sacrifice and the golden altar of incense. These two altars are mentioned in the Book of Revelation eight times: six times for the brazen altar and two times for the golden altar of incense.

In the Tabernacle under Moses, the fire was never to die by day or night at the brazen altar of sacrifice. It's where all sacrifices were offered to God.

Inside the Holy Place was the golden altar of incense with four golden horns, one at each corner. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would sprinkle blood on the four horns of the golden altar of incense.

5 “They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: ‘See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.’”

Hebrews 8:5 NIV

The Prayers of All Saints

In Revelation 8, an angel with a censer stands at the brazen altar. He is given a great amount of incense to mix with the prayers of God’s saints. He proceeds to the holy place, putting the incense mixed with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar of incense, and offers it to God.

3 “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of ALL saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.”

Revelation 8:3

The incense is mixed with the prayers of those who have prayed for God’s Kingdom to come, yearning for His government and rule. No prayer of “*Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven*” has been lost; they all have been kept.

The time has now come for those prayers to be answered. It is time for God to cast out Satan, dethroning that squatter and interloper of iniquity. Sin, death, hell, and the grave are about to be destroyed forever.

The angel takes the prayers of all the saints and mixes them with incense, making the coals from the altar of judgment a sweet smell. These prayers rise up into God’s nostrils. But the same angel comes again.

He now takes the censer, fills it with fire from the brazen altar before the Throne, and flings it down upon Earth. This is judgment without the sweet smell of the prayers of the saints. Thunder crashes, lightning flashes, and there is a terrible earthquake. Justice is about to be administered on the earth. Seven angels with seven trumpets will bring great astonishment to the earth.

SEVEN TRUMPETS

When the seven angels begin to sound their trumpets, the battle of the ages begins.

First Trumpet

7 “The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.”

Revelation 8:7

Here, we are seeing judgment coming upon the ecology. Great massive fires! One-third of Earth’s trees are burned up. All the green grass is burned up. Can you imagine the cattle and grazing livestock that will die because they have nothing to eat? Such a great stench from their rotting carcasses. Can you imagine how hard it will be to breathe? Great smoke from fires fills the air. Horrific devastation occurs to plant life, which is crucial in producing oxygen.

Earth itself is being judged. The green grass and one-third of the trees are being burned in Revelation 8:7. This is literal. It was the same when God sent plagues in Moses’ day. They were literal plagues.

22 “And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.’ 23 And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. 24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25 And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. 26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.”

Exodus 9:22-26

The Lord put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. The plagues of judgment did not affect Israel, only Egypt. If God did this for Israel in the Old Testament, how much more, under the New Covenant, will we be kept safe from the wrath of God during the Tribulation by going up in the Rapture!

Second Trumpet

8 “And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.”

Revelation 8:8-9

One-third of the ships were destroyed. One-third of the sea becomes blood. One-third of the creatures in the sea die. Can you imagine the stench from all the dead aquatic life in this bloody sea?

A Look at the Symbolism

8 *“And the second angel sounded, and AS IT WERE a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;”*

Revelation 8:8

John wrote, “as it were.” He didn’t know exactly what he saw, so it is open for exploration as to what it could be. I believe this is most likely an asteroid. It could be an angel summoning an asteroid with the blast of his trumpet. Which asteroid is it? I don’t know. Where does it come from? I don’t know. But God, not NASA, has control of the heavens, and He gives authority to a mighty angel to summon a great mountain burning with fire.