

Revelation 7

The Structure of Chapters 6 - 18			
THE SEALS			
First Six (Chapter 6)	Supplementary Revelation (Chapter 7)	Seventh Seal (Chapters 8-16)	
THE TRUMPETS			
First Six (Chapters 8 – 9)	Supplementary Revelation (10:1 – 11:14)	Seventh Trumpet (11:15 – 16:21)	
THE BOWLS			
First Six (16:1-16)		Seventh Bowl (16:17-21)	Supplementary Revelation (Chs. 17 – 18)

Verse 1

Four angels – Given authority over the natural phenomena of the earth.
Four corners of the earth – The four compass points. In other words total or complete control.

Four winds of the earth – Wind represents God's judgments coming on the world. Note the parallel in Daniel 7:2.

So that no wind should blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree.

Verse 2

Another angel ascending from the rising of the sun – Literally from the east sun. Divine salvation is often seen in Scripture as coming from the east. Note Ezekiel 43:2.

The seal of the living God – Illustrating the power, authority and ownership of God.

He cried out with a loud voice – The voice of God's authority!

Verse 3

Do not harm... until we have sealed the bondservants of our god on their foreheads – Note Ezekiel 9:4 for a similar mark of protection. The forehead suggests a visible seal of protection. These believers are protected for a divine mission or service for God during the tribulation. The seal protects them from the divine judgments of the tribulation. Note that the antichrist will also mark his followers in a similar way (13:16-18, 14:9, 11, 16:2).

Verses 4 – 8 The 144,000

Those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel – Clearly the nation of Israel is in view, not the church. Twelve thousand were sealed from each of twelve tribes of Israel. There are at least 19 lists of Jacob's sons in the Old Testament. Not one of them is the same as this list. Missing from this list is the tribe of Dan and the tribe of Ephraim.

Ephraim – He was notorious for idol worship in the Old Testament. He was also head of the Northern Kingdom that apostatized.

Dan – The tribe of Dan was the first to establish idolatry in Israel (Judges 18:30, 1 Kings 12:28-30). Some also think the antichrist will come from the tribe of Dan (Genesis 49:16-17, Jeremiah 8:16-17). However, Dan receives a portion of land during the

Millennium (Ezekiel 48:1).

Point – The 144,000 will be Jews who are protected by God and have the mission to preach the gospel during the tribulation. It appears that the great multitude of verses 9 – 17 are believers who come to Christ during the tribulation because of the ministry of the 144,000.

Verses 9-17 The great multitude

A great multitude... from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues – This is a multitude of Gentiles and Jews who have put their faith in Jesus and who have been martyred (they are now before the throne of God). These are probably the same people referred to in 6:9-11.

White robes – Symbolic of their righteousness.

Palm branches – Symbolic of victory and joy.

Verses 10-12

These saints, along with all the angels, the elders, and the four living creatures all fall down before the throne and worship God. Their seven-fold praise to God (very similar to 5:12):

Blessing – Glory – Wisdom – Thanksgiving
Honor – Power - Might

Verses 13-14

Who are they, and from where have they come? My Lord, you know.

They have come out of the great tribulation – It appears that these saints have come "out" before the great tribulation, that is during the first half. It is also possible that this interlude looks at the whole period including the last half or great tribulation.

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb – This robe can be a figure of speech for eternal salvation or reward for their good deeds. Either way, the only provision for sin is the blood of Jesus.

Verse 15

They are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple – These martyrs have the distinct privilege of serving God before His throne in heaven during the period of the tribulation.

He shall spread His tabernacle over them – This speaks of God's provision and protection. Note Psalm 27:5. The day is coming in the new heaven and earth when God will tabernacle among men (Revelation 21:3).

Verses 16-17

No more – Hunger, thirst, discomfort, heat, and pain are now gone forever. The Lamb is their comfort and Shepherd. Note Isaiah 40:11, Ezekiel 34:23-24, Psalm 23.

God shall wipe every tear from their eyes – Isaiah 25:8 says, "He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord God will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken"