

## ***Revelation***

### ***Chapter seven: Parentetical explanation of Tribulation Conversions***

#### Introduction

The seals, trumpets, and bowls are unleashed on the world, series after series. But God interrupts this chronological progress to give us a parentetical vision explaining concurrent happenings. These are side glimpses into the other happenings during the seven-year Tribulation:

- Chapter 7 shows us that many will be saved.
- Chapter 11 speaks of God's witnesses of the first 3 ½ years.
- Chapters 12-13 reveal forces of evil during the last 3 ½ years.
- Chapters 17-18 show the destruction of the end-time Babylonians system.

#### ***Sealing of the 144,000 Jews*** (7:1-8)

##### **A. Wrath is restrained.**

1. "After these things" is a favorite expression of John who is keenly aware of chronological order.
2. This answers the question of chapter six, "who can stand?"
3. It refers to the next vision.

##### **B. There are four angels standing at the four corners of the earth** (7:1).

1. They are holding back the four winds of the earth. Angels and winds represent instruments of God's action in the last days.
2. They are holding back the plagues that will be released in the seventh seal.

##### **C. The sealing** (7:2-3).

1. John sees another angel arising from the east (7:2). The direction is appropriate, for in Jewish thought God's gracious manifestations are especially connected with the east.
2. This angel had the "**seal of the living God.**" God is the author of life and the judge over it. Nothing else can give life, seal it, or take it away.
3. The seal then is the guarantee of life and the protection of that life even in the severe trials.

D. "**Until we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads**" (7:3)

1. The Old Testament pattern for this vision is Ezekiel 9:4. The Lord gave an order "**to set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all abominations that had been done.**" This is a visible mark.
2. Jesus was also sealed in John 6:27.
3. All believers in Christ are sealed. This is an invisible mark.
  - A down payment of our eventual redemption (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).
  - This belongs to every believer at conversion (Ephesians 1:13).
  - The sealing of the Holy Spirit is meant to be a comfort and a challenge.
4. In Revelation 14:1 the seal is identified as being the Father's name and the Son's name.
5. The ones who are to be sealed are the "**bondslaves of our God**" (7:3).
  - They are fellow servants with the angels who seal them.
  - They are already servants when they are sealed.
  - God has a special work for these people to do. They will be the most effective missionaries the world has ever known.
  - God never leaves Himself without a witness.

E. **The number 144,000 is taken literally** (7:4-8).

1. The total number is a multiple of twelve.
2. Four things stand out about their numbering.
  - Judah is listed first.
  - Levi is given a place in the inheritance.
  - Dan is not given a place.
  - Two tribes represent Joseph.
3. Who are these and how are they saved?
  - By preaching of two witness of chapter 11.
  - The Holy Spirit is still present to save. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3
  - Jehovah's Witnesses say they are that 144,000.
  - Seventh Day Adventist say that they are the 144,000.
  - The Kingdom Now doctrine says that the New Testament Church is spiritual Israel.
4. Some facts about the 144,000 from Revelation 7 and 14 give us insight into their identity.
  - They are called the children of Israel (7:4).
  - Their tribal affiliation is specific (7:8).
  - They seem to be protected and triumphant through the period of God's wrath, meeting with Jesus at Mount Zion at His return. (14:10)
  - They are celibate. (14:4)
  - They are the beginning of a greater harvest. (14:4)
  - They are marked by integrity and faithfulness. (14:5)

**The Believers of the Tribulation** (7:9-17)

**A. A vast multitude of people from all the nations of the world will be saved during the coming Tribulation.** What a wonderful picture!

1. ***“After these things”*** introduces a new vision, distinct from the one in 7:1-8.
2. The Great Commission (Matthew 14:14) will be fulfilled before the end.
3. The diversity of this group will be individualized.

**B. Significant differences from the 144,000.**

1. They are standing before the throne and before the Lamb.
2. They are clothed in white robes.
3. They carry palm branches.
4. They are not sealed on their forehead.
5. They are before the throne while the 144,000 were on the earth.
6. This number does not exclude the Jews, but the Jews in this group are a part of a remnant raised up by God for the last day’s revival.

**C. What this great multitude does and how it is blessed. (7:15-17)**

1. These saints knew affliction on earth, and they triumphed over it. But it was not their affliction that saved them. They were made white by the blood of the Lamb.
2. They serve God. Heaven is not only a place of rest but a place of privileged service.
3. He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. This is the ultimate fulfillment of David’s great desire in Psalm 17:4.
4. The Lamb will shepherd them.
5. God will wipe their tears away.
6. These are the same condition in Revelation 22:1-5.

**There are Three Groups Who are Saved During the Tribulation.**

- A. **First:** The Martyred remnant which is saved during the first half of the Tribulation week (6:9).
- B. **Second:** The 144,000 Jews are saved during the first half of the Tribulation week.
- C. **Third:** The Gentiles and Jews who are described in 7:9-17 as “***the great multitude***”.

Conclusion:

The church will be raptured, and the world will go into judgment, but in the midst of the tribulation fury, God will call many Jews and Gentiles to Salvation.