

# Revelation 7 Commentary

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## Revelation 7:1

After the Lamb has opened six of the seven seals, there is a pause in the action while the servants of God are sealed for protection from the judgments to follow.

After these things

[Μετ τα τα](#) [Meta tauta].<sup>1</sup> This phrase indicates significant transitions in the development of John's vision. The judgments of the first six seals have been communicated and now a transition occurs in preparation for the seventh seal, which will contain the seven trumpets and seven bowls. If the [NU](#) and [MT](#) texts are correct in rendering Revelation 7:1+ as *After this* rather than *After these [things]* (according to the text of the [TR](#)), then perhaps chapter seven describes the next vision John sees which is not necessarily chronologically related to chapter six. If so, then the sealing of Israel (Rev. 7:4-9+) and the killing of numerous faithful from all nations (Rev. 7:9-17+) may have begun during the previous seals.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the distinction of the multitude in this chapter from those under the fifth seal (Rev. 6:9-11+) argues for understanding them as chronologically distinct groups. (See Revelation 7:9+ where John's vision of the multitude coming out of the Great Tribulation is said to follow the sealing of the twelve tribes.)

Because the visions constitute a pause in the chronological progression represented by the opening of the seals, they have been called a parenthesis between the sixth and seventh seals, but there is some objection to this because the visions are an integral part of the book's movement. . . . The natural meaning of the text places the sealing and the vision as a whole just after the sixth seal. Revelation 7+ is an interlude between the sixth and seventh seals. . . . The description is provided to answer the questions of Rev. 6:17+ by way of showing that some will survive and even prosper spiritually under the blessing of God during earth's terrors. . . . The evidence is sufficient for placing this sealing just before the midpoint of the seven-year Tribulation, at the end of the period called "the beginning of birth pains." Though the meta touto indicates a change of vision, this does not mean there is no relationship to the sixth seal.<sup>3</sup>

In any case, what transpires in this chapter is an interlude of sorts which is not tied explicitly to any seal, but inferred as being between the sixth and seventh seals. The scene now shifts from the judgments themselves to the people of God, both Jewish and otherwise, who attend this time of wrath upon the earth:

The great day of God's wrath has come, but the action is interrupted . . . the author introduces an intermezzo between the sixth and seventh members of the series. A change comes over the spirit of his dream. . . . it is a consoling rhapsody or rapture designed to relieve the tension by lifting the eyes of the faithful over the foam and rocks of the rapids on which they were tossing to the calm sunlit pool of bliss which awaited them beyond. They get this glimpse before the seventh seal is opened with its fresh cycle of horrors.<sup>4</sup>

Chapter 7 comes as a parenthesis between the sixth and seventh seals—a stylistic feature repeated in the trumpet sequence (Rev. 10:1+-11:13+) but not with the bowls (cf. Rev. 16:12-21+). It is not intended to take the reader back to a time before the Four Horsemen are released in order to parallel the trumpets with the seals. It contrasts the security and blessedness which await the faithful with the panic of a pagan world fleeing from judgment. . . . Chapter 7+ also serves as a dramatic interlude. It delays for a brief moment the disclosure of that which is to take place with the seventh and final seal is removed from the scroll of destiny.<sup>5</sup>

four angels

Four is the number of worldwide effect. See [Four: the Entire World, the Earth](#). This is the first of several global judgments which involve four angels. There are four angels bound at the river Euphrates which will later be released to kill a third of mankind (Rev.

9:14<sup>±</sup>).

four corners of the earth

This is figurative language indicating the four main compass directions (Eze. 7:2). The angels have a ministry extending over the *entire* earth.

standing . . . holding

*Standing* is [στ τας](#) [estōtas], perfect tense, *having stood*. *Holding* is [κρατο ντας](#) [kratountas], present tense. The angels had taken their positions earlier and were already actively restraining the winds when John saw them. This is the proverbial *calm before the storm*. “Only the detail of the sealing of the 144,000 remained before the unleashing of these destructive winds.”<sup>6</sup>

four winds

The four major directions from which winds blow: from the East, South, West, and North. This is equivalent to saying “from every direction” (Jer. 48:36; Dan. 8:8).<sup>7</sup> *Wind* is also used to describe God’s breath or Spirit (Eze. 37:9; Zec. 6:5) which is often used in judgment. In Pharaoh’s dream, the seven years of Egyptian famine were brought about by an east wind (Gen. 41:6, 27). The plague of locusts brought upon Egypt came on the east wind (Ex. 10:13). The same east wind allowed the children of Israel to cross the Red Sea (Ex. 14:21). The east wind is often associated with God’s judgment and deliverance (Ps. 48:7; 78:26; Isa. 27:8; Jer. 18:17; Eze. 19:12; Hos. 13:15; Jonah 4:8). Since there is no mention of wind in association with any forthcoming judgment here, it seems best to understand the wind as denoting the *judgment and influence of God* which is about to “blow” across the land as it had in the past. In Daniel’s vision, it was the “four winds of heaven” which stirred up the “Great Sea” which brought forth the four rapacious beasts (Dan. 7:2). The sea represented the Gentile nations from which the four successive empires would arise. These same four winds control the upcoming rise of [Antichrist](#) in judgment (Rev. 13:1<sup>±</sup>). The winds speak of the impending global judgments and their initiation and sovereign control by God.<sup>8</sup>

Angels Restraining the Four Winds

[9](#)

not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree

These three parts of the created order will undergo God’s judgment in events to come.

1. With the sounding of the first trumpet, a third of the *trees* are burned up (Rev. 8:7<sup>±</sup>).
2. At the second trumpet, a third of the *sea* becomes blood (Rev. 8:8<sup>±</sup>). At the pouring forth of the second bowl, the entire *sea* becomes blood as of a dead man (Rev. 16:3<sup>±</sup>).
3. At the sounding of the first trumpet, a third of the *earth* is burned up (Rev. 8:7<sup>±</sup>, NU and MT texts). At the pouring forth of the sixth bowl, the *earth* is utterly shaken (Rev. 16:18-20<sup>±</sup>).

The *earth*, the *trees*, and especially the *sea* are all important parts of the system of nature which supports life on the planet. Because man will continue to idolize the creation rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25), God will set about to destroy this idol. But none of this can begin until the servants of God are sealed for protection (Rev. 7:3-4<sup>±</sup>). Even after the judgments have begun, the locusts from the bottomless pit are told not to harm the earth, sea or vegetation, but only men (Rev. 9:4<sup>±</sup>). Having at one time been an avid environmentalist and valuing animal life above human life, we are familiar with the pagan religious undercurrents which fuel this movement. Many environmentalists thrill to the sight of a dolphin or whale, yet despise the God of the Bible Who brought them all forth. If environmentalists thrill to a dolphin or hummingbird, how much more marvelous is the One Who spoke and they leapt into existence! He is far more worthy of wonder than the mere work of His hands! To be sure, man has not been a faithful steward of all God has given him, but to deny the Creator while attempting to save the creation is folly as events in this book make plain. Some commentators take these as symbolic representations:

“That no wind might blow upon the *earth*”—the scene of settled government (Rev. 10:2<sup>±</sup>; Ps. 46:2); “nor upon the *sea*”—nations and peoples in anarchy and confusion (Dan. 7:2-3; Isa. 57:20); “nor upon any *tree*”—the might and pride of the earth (Dan. 4:10, 22; Eze. 31:3-9, 14-18).<sup>10</sup>

These symbols are easy to interpret. The earth is Israel; the sea, the Gentiles; the trees, as we know from the famous parable in the ninth chapter of the book of Judges, refer to those in authority.<sup>11</sup>

While it is true that each of these entities carries a symbolic meaning in other passages (cf. especially Rev. 13:1<sup>+</sup>; 17:15<sup>+</sup>), it is best to understand their use here as literal because of the related passages which follow. The locusts are commanded “not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads” (Rev. 9:4<sup>+</sup>). The passage concerning the locusts differentiates *men* from real *vegetation* (“any green thing”). When *trees* are destroyed, so too is the *green grass* (Rev. 8:7<sup>+</sup>). When the *sea* becomes blood, *living creatures* and *ships* are affected (Rev. 8:9<sup>+</sup>; 16:3<sup>+</sup>). If the sea represents the nations here (as it does in Rev. 13:1<sup>+</sup> and 17:15<sup>+</sup>), then what is meant by the *living creatures* and the *ships* which ply its waters? Also, when men, cities, or authorities are the recipients of judgments which follow, they are specifically denoted as such (Rev. 9:4-5<sup>+</sup>; 18<sup>+</sup>, 20<sup>+</sup>; 11:13<sup>+</sup>; 16:2<sup>+</sup>, 9<sup>+</sup>; 18:14-19<sup>+</sup>; 19:19<sup>+</sup>).

## Revelation 7:2

from the east

Literally, *from the rising of the sun*. Within Scripture, *east* is often the direction of the deliverance or judgment of God (Gen. 41:6, 23, 27; Ex. 10:13; 14:21; Ps. 48:7; 78:26; Isa. 27:8; Jer. 18:17; Eze. 19:12; Hos. 13:15; Jonah 4:8; Rev. 16:12<sup>+</sup>). It is the direction to which the glory of the Lord departed from both Solomon’s and Herod’s [Temple](#) (Eze. 10:18; 11:22-23 cf. Mat. 23:38; 24:1-3) and the direction by which it will eventually return (Eze. 43:2-4; 44:1-2). Here, it is “the direction of God,” the direction from which God’s protective sealing comes prior to the unleashing of the judgments to come.

the seal

*Seal* is [σφραγὶδα](#) [sphragida]. This is not a seal itself, but “the instrument with which one seals or stamps.”<sup>12</sup> This angel carries the means by which the one hundred and forty-four thousand will be sealed (Rev. 7:4-8<sup>+</sup>, which [see](#)). “This text does not explicitly say what this seal is, but Rev. 14:1<sup>+</sup> suggests that it is the name of the Lamb and that of His Father (cf. Isa. 44:5).”<sup>13</sup> Those who are to be sealed are one of three groups who survive this horrific time of judgment. Two of the groups are described in this chapter:

Chapter 7 forms a parenthetical section between the sixth (Rev. 6:12-17<sup>+</sup>) and seventh (Rev. 8:1<sup>+</sup>) seals to answer that question, introducing two groups who will survive the fury of divine judgment. The first, those described in Rev. 7:1-8<sup>+</sup>, are the Jewish evangelists who will be preserved on earth. They will survive the holocaust of divine wrath unleashed by the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments. God will also protect them from the murderous efforts of Antichrist and his henchmen to wipe out believers in the true God. Having survived the wars, famine, unprecedented natural disasters, disease, rampant, unchecked sinfulness, and savage persecution of the Tribulation, they will enter the Millennial Kingdom alive. The second group to escape divine fury (Rev. 7:9-17<sup>+</sup>) are those who will be martyred and thereby ushered into the blissful rest of heaven, where they will be preserved.<sup>14</sup>

The third group which survives, although not mentioned in this chapter, are those who come to faith during the Tribulation and manage to stay alive until the Second Coming. These will enter the [Millennial Kingdom](#) and form its initial populace (Mat. 25:31-40).

of the living God

Throughout Scripture, the One True God is contrasted with dead idols who are dumb and cannot respond.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the pattern of history is that man has more often sought help from dumb idols than from the *living God* (Deu. 5:26; 1S. 17:26; Mat. 16:16; 1Th. 1:9-10; Heb. 12:22). In Satan’s most successful ploy to keep men captive to idolatry, he mimics the *living God* by empowering the false prophet “to give breath to the [image of the beast](#)” (Rev. 13:15<sup>+</sup>). *Life-giving* power is an intrinsic characteristic of God (Luke 24:5).<sup>16</sup> See commentary on [Revelation 1:18](#).

to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea

Every judgment is subject to God’s conditional permission. See commentary on [Revelation 6:2](#). The *earth*, *trees*, and *sea* will be harmed in God’s upcoming judgments. See commentary on [Revelation 7:1](#).

## Revelation 7:3

harm the earth, the sea, or the trees

See commentary on [Revelation 7:1](#).

on their foreheads

*Foreheads* is [μετώπων](#) [metōpōn], which is used to describe the location of the mark “of a branded slave.”<sup>17</sup> The seal identifies them as belonging to God (Rev. 14:1<sup>+</sup>) and may be similar to the promise given to the overcomer in Philadelphia that Jesus would “write

on him My new name” (Rev. 3:12<sup>+</sup>, Rev. 14:1<sup>+18</sup>). The picture of sealing for protection by marking the servants on their *foreheads* recalls a vision shown Ezekiel in which most in Jerusalem were practicing idolatry which God was about to judge. Prior to His judgment going forth, an angel was told to “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it” (Eze. 9:4). In the judgment which followed, those without the mark (seal) of God were killed (Eze. 9:5-6).

As blood was put upon the door of the houses of Israel in Egypt so that the angel of death would pass over these houses and strike only those which were not marked, so the seal of God is put upon the forehead of His own so that the angels of judgment, passing through the world, will know those who are God’s.<sup>19</sup>

As *Master Imitator*, Satan, through the beast, will mark those who are his, who are thereafter unredeemable (Rev. 14:9-10<sup>+</sup>). “Are we told that God, by His angel, will ‘seal’ His servants in their foreheads (Rev. 7:3<sup>+</sup>), so also we read that Satan, by his angels, will set a mark in the foreheads of his devotees (Rev. 13:16<sup>+</sup>).”<sup>20</sup> During the time of the Tribulation, it appears there will be three categories of people:

1. Those who are sealed and protected by God for special ministry (Rev. 7:4-8<sup>+</sup>; 14:1<sup>+</sup>).
2. Those who accept the mark of the beast (Rev. 13:16-18<sup>+</sup>) and are doomed (Rev. 14:9-10<sup>+</sup>). They are not written in the *Book of Life*.
3. Those who refuse the mark of the beast, many of whom are martyred (Rev. 20:4<sup>+</sup>).

In the eternal state, God’s name will be on the foreheads of all the faithful (Rev. 22:4<sup>+</sup> cf. Rev. 3:12<sup>+</sup>). See commentary on [Revelation 13:16](#) and [Revelation 14:1](#).

## Revelation 7:4

who were sealed

[σφραγισμένων](#) [esphragismenōn], perfect passive participle, *ones having been sealed*. The angel recounts the total number of individuals who, by this time, have been sealed. The seal identifies those who are set apart for special protection in the midst of the judgments from God. “The mark which denotes ownership also carries with it the protection of the owner,<sup>21</sup> in this case, God. The seal may not be visible to men, but is evident to God and the angels and demons who carry forth his judgment (Rev. 9:4<sup>+</sup>). It is analogous to the sealing of believers today, who are baptized into the body of Christ and sealed with the Holy Spirit (2Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30).

The best analysis of the seal is that it protects against the disasters that the four winds will bring to the earth (Beckwith; Caird). The context of Rev. 7:1-3<sup>+</sup> is in preparation for the judgments of the seventh seal that includes the seven trumpets. Thus the sealing must refer to these judgments. The command “do not hurt” implies that after the sealing is finished, the judgments that are next in the divine program (i.e., Revelation 8<sup>+</sup>) will come (Smith).<sup>22</sup>

Seiss suggests that in order to stand in the midst of this time of unparalleled judgment and tribulation, those who are sealed will require a special measure of spiritual enablement:

We may, therefore, conceive of this sealing of the 144,000 as a special and extraordinary impartation of the Holy Ghost; which again connects this vision with particular Old Testament promises. By the mouth of Joel, the Lord said to Israel: “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.” This was indeed a general promise, but with it was coupled another, which is not so general, but particular to Israel: “And *your* sons and *your* daughters [O Jews] shall prophesy, *your* old men shall dream dreams, *your* young men shall see visions, and also upon the servants and upon the handmaidens in those days will I pour out my Spirit.” Peter tells us that this began to be fulfilled in the miracle of Pentecost; but the fulfilment did not end there. There are also particulars in this passage which were not fulfilled upon the primitive Church—particulars which refer to the judgment times, and connect directly to the scenes to which this sealing of the 144,000 is related. “Wonders in heaven and earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke,” are spoken of; and the turning of the sun into darkness, and the moon into blood; . . . In this we distinctly recognize the occurrences under the red horseman of the second seal, the physical prodigies of the sixth seal, and the exact manifestations under the first and fifth trumpets.<sup>23</sup>

One hundred *and* forty-four thousand

In our discussion of [Interpreting Symbols](#), we noted the tendency of many interpreters to ignore the literal meaning of numbers whenever a cherished theological viewpoint makes the literal value given in the text unpopular. Perhaps the two most abused numbers in the entire book of Revelation are the 144,000 sealed individuals here and the 1,000 years of the millennial reign (Rev. 20<sup>+</sup>). Although this passage goes to great lengths to make plain the literal nature of what is being conveyed, this hasn’t stopped

many from flights of interpretive fancy which substitute subjective conjecture for the plain facts:

The name “Christ” appears seven times and the name “Jesus” fourteen times. “The Lamb” is used of Christ twenty-eight times, seven bringing the Lamb and God together. The 7 x 4 appearances of this title underscore the universal scope of the Lamb’s complete victory. . . . Twelve is the number of God’s people, which is squared to indicate completeness and multiplied by one thousand to connote vastness.<sup>24</sup>

Twelve is the number of the tribes, and **appropriate to the Church**: three by four: three, the divine number, multiplied by four, the number for world-wide extension. Twelve by twelve implies fixity and completeness, which is taken a thousandfold in 144,000. A thousand implies the world perfectly pervaded by the divine; for it is ten, the world number, raised to the power of three, the number of God. [emphasis added]<sup>25</sup>

No matter how specific God’s Word may be concerning the identification of this group of persons, the interpreters refuse to follow the text where it leads. This is because they have theological biases which go against recognizing the obvious Jewish nature of this passage. (As we saw earlier, the Jewish nature of this book was recognized by many and led to opposition to its [acceptance into the canon](#).)

Many are so morbidly prejudiced against everything Jewish, that it is concluded in advance, that anything merciful, referring to the Israelitish race, must needs be understood some other way than as the words are written. Though all the prophets were Jews, and Jesus was a Jew, and the writer of this Apocalypse was a Jew, and all the Apostles were Jews, and salvation itself is of the Jews, and the Jews as a distinct people are everywhere spoken of as destined to continue to the world’s end, it is regarded as the next thing to apostasy from the faith, to apply anything hopeful, that God has said, to this particular race. . . . No wonder, therefore, that they cannot find a consistent interpretation of a vision of grace which is predicated of Jacob’s literal seed, in contradistinction from all others.<sup>26</sup>

Bullinger, an authority on figures of speech, holds that this number is not symbolic of some other group than the Jews, but intentionally definite:

Alford says of this number, “No one I am aware of has taken it literally!” Very likely: but we are thankful to be an exception to the rule, and to believe what God says. There is such a thing as *Figures of Speech*, but, we ask, what Figure is used here? What is its name? The truth is that there is here no Figure whatever; but it is the simple statement of fact: a *definite* number in contrast with the *indefinite* number in this very chapter (Rev. 7:9+). If the total number is not exact, then all the items which go to make it up are indefinite also. If the number is symbolical, then what number in the Book may we take as literal? . . . We prefer to believe God. And, believing Him, we conclude that He had reserved 7,000 in the days of Ahab (1K. 19:18; Rom. 11:4), so He will reserve 144,000 in the Great Tribulation.<sup>27</sup>

As is often the case within Scripture, when the plain sense of Scripture is rejected, a foothold is provided for aberrant teachings frequented by cults, in this case the Jehovah’s Witnesses:

The Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that the 144,000 is the body of spirit-begotten believers who have a “heavenly hope” (Rom. 8:24. Eph. 4:4. Col. 1:5. Heb. 7:19. 1Pe. 1:3. 1Jn. 3:3). All other believers can have only an “earthly hope” (Job 14:7. Jer. 31:17. Acts 26:6). Once the Watchtower organization had more than 144,000 adherents, the teaching was developed that the “great multitude” mentioned later in the chapter (Rev. 7:9+) referred to those Christians who had only an earthly hope. Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that members of the “great multitude” who have only an earthly hope do not need to be born again. . . . If the claim of Jehovah’s Witnesses that the heavenly hope is limited to 144,000 has any validity, the significance of that hope for anyone today is purely historical, for since this number was reached within five years of Pentecost, no person alive today could possibly lay claim to be one of that fixed number, not even the leaders of the Watchtower in Brooklyn, New York.<sup>28</sup>

However, the verses which follow make it clear that the sealed are *Jews*. This is in accordance with what is said later concerning the 144,000—that they are *firstfruits*,

These sealed Jews are those who come to faith in Jesus as Messiah during the Tribulation period. They are further described as “first fruits unto God and to the Lamb” (Rev. 14:4+), indicating that they compose the first stage of a final harvest of Jewish souls to be gathered later at the Lord’s coming in glory. . . . These comprise the “remnant” of Jews “who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17+b).<sup>29</sup>

See commentary on [Revelation 14:1](#).

of all the tribes of the children of Israel

*Children of Israel*, [υ υ σπαρηλ](#) [huiōn Israēl], literally: *sons of Israel*. These are the same twelve *tribes of the children of Israel* whose

names are written on the gates of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:12<sup>±</sup>). These are a specific group of people who are physical offspring of Israel and differentiated from the rest of men (Zec. 9:1). In the regeneration, Jesus said the apostles will rule over these tribes (Mat. 19:28; Luke 22:30). “Immediately after the Translation of the heavenly saints (1Th. 4:15-17), God will work in grace amongst His ancient people, and among the Gentiles at large outside the apostate part of the world.”<sup>30</sup> At this point in the Revelation, we encounter one of those “Jewish elements” in the book of Revelation which seem to cause much discomfort for many commentators. Bullinger elaborates:

Few Scriptures have suffered more at the hands of Gentile Christians than this. Notwithstanding the fact that it concerns “all the tribes of the children of Israel,” and that the twelve tribes are named separately, popular interpretation insists on taking them as meaning the Church of God. Any system of interpretation which has this for its foundation may be judged and condemned at the outset as not only useless, but mischievous. Such a system has been described by Hooker as one “which changeth the meaning of words as alchemy doth, or would do, the substance of metals, making anything what it listeth; and bringeth, in the end, all truth to nothing.”<sup>31</sup>

The unwillingness to accept the Jewishness of what is described here is evident from many commentators who refuse to take the passage at face value:

The number scarcely refers only to Jewish Christians; rather it stands for all the members of the Church, the true Israel.<sup>32</sup>

If [the number is] literal, it is necessary to suppose that this refers to the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. But on every supposition this is absurd. **Ten of their tribes had been long before carried away**, and the distinction of the tribes was lost, no more to be recovered, and the Hebrew people never have been, since the time of John, in circumstances to which the description here could be applicable. These considerations make it clear that the description here is symbolical. [emphasis added]<sup>33</sup>

Walvoord accepts this passage as proving that the twelve tribes are still in existence. This interpretation seriously complicates the book of Revelation by bringing in racial distinctions which no longer exist in the NT purview. It disregards the **historical fact** that ten of the twelve tribes disappeared in Assyria and the remaining two list their separate identity when Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70. . . . The number is **obviously symbolic**. [emphasis added]<sup>34</sup>

Mounce asserts that taking the passage literally “seriously complicates” the book of Revelation and asserts that *racial distinctions . . . no longer exist in the NT purview*. This would have come as a surprise to the apostle Paul who continued to describe himself as a Jew long after his conversion (Acts 21:39-22:3), said the same of Peter (Gal. 2:14-16), and spent almost three full chapters of Romans explaining to believers that God is not through with the *Jewish nation* (Rom. 9, 10, 11). At the close of this most important section of Scripture, Paul makes a statement which directly contradicts Mounce:

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that **blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in**. And so **all Israel will be saved**, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and **He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob**; for this *is* My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.” Concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable. (Rom. 11:25-29) [emphasis added]

Elements of this short, but very important passage, reveal:

1. Paul was concerned that certain Gentile believers would *be wise in your own opinion*, namely that they would assume, like Mounce, that racial distinctions no longer exist. Not so!
2. Paul differentiates between two different groups of *believers*. Paul is doing the unthinkable, according to those with Mounce’s view. He is making a distinction *among* the redeemed! And what distinction is it? He is contrasting the *fullness of the Gentiles* with *all Israel*. He is saying that God has a different emphasis and timetable for the Gentile elect and the Jewish elect! God Himself recognizes a *racial distinction* which Mounce cannot recognize.
3. The Deliverer *will come* (future tense) and turn away ungodliness from *Jacob*. The *fullness of the Gentiles* and ungodly *Jacob* can not be made one and the same without ignoring the most basic rules of interpretation. One describes Gentiles and the other Jews. Both will eventually come to faith.
4. When a Jew comes to faith in Messiah Jesus, he does not cease to be a Jew. In fact, the *exact opposite* was the concern in NT times—whether a Gentile, upon coming to faith had to become a Jew (Acts 10:45; 11:17; 15:6-29)<sup>36</sup>
5. When the Deliverer turns away ungodliness from Jacob (who is Israel, the father of the Jews), it is said that this *is because* of God’s covenant. What covenant is that? It is the New Covenant which was originally given to Israel (Jer. 31:31). Again, what is surprising in the NT is not that Jews cease to be Jews (they don’t), but that Gentiles participate in this *Jewish covenant*.

Another frequently-encountered error concerning the interpretation of this passage is the assertion that ten of the twelve tribes have

been forever lost. We discuss this unbiblical myth in our section entitled [Ten Tribes Lost?](#)

This passage also teaches that the so-called “ten lost tribes” were, in fact, never lost (cf. Rev. 21:12+; Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; Jas. 1:1). Instead, representatives from the ten northern tribes filtered south and intermingled with the two southern tribes (cf. 2Chr. 30:1-11; 34:1-9) and thus were preserved.<sup>37</sup>

Ladd, in his desire to avoid the plain teaching of the text, believes this list of the twelve tribes is unlike any other in the [OT](#):

These twelve tribes cannot be literal Israel, because they are not the twelve tribes of OT Israel. The list here appears nowhere else in the Bible. It has three irregularities: it names Judah first, thus ignoring the OT order of the tribes; it omits Dan with no explanation (see Eze. 48:1); it mentions Joseph instead of Ephraim. Perhaps John meant by this irregular listing of the twelve tribes to designate the Israel that is not the literal Israel. . . . The twelve tribes were irregularly listed to show that true Israel is not literal Israel, but the Church.<sup>38</sup>

Here we meet again with [Replacement Theology](#)—the unbiblical idea that the Church is “Israel,” something *nowhere stated in Scripture*. To be sure, believers are called the spiritual seed of Abraham (Rom. 4:12-18; Gal. 3:7-8, 29), but if Scripture is any indication, there is an important distinction between the *spiritual* seed of Abraham and the *physical* seed of Jacob. For nowhere in all of Holy Writ—not *once*—is the Church denoted by the word “Israel.”<sup>39</sup> Those who confuse the Church with Israel are just one step behind many of the cults, such as The Worldwide Church of God or [British Israelism](#), who want to oust Israel from her promises and substitute themselves instead. (For more on these movements, see [Ten Tribes Lost?](#)) The Church already has her own promises so why should we try to steal Israel’s too? Besides, the spiritual restoration of the Jews is attended with great blessings: “For if their being cast away *is* the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance *be* but life from the dead?” (Rom. 11:15). The irregularities which Ladd sees as so significant are found in other listings of the tribes. Concerning the omission of tribes, we could cite the omission of Dan from the extensive tribal genealogies of 1 Chronicles 2:10. “In the enumerations of the tribes throughout Scripture, of which there are about eighteen, the full representative number twelve is always given, but as Jacob had thirteen sons [counting the two sons of Joseph instead of the father as Jacob’s] one or other is always omitted.”<sup>40</sup> This rotation and omission of tribal names is not unusual, as Ladd would have us believe, but is typical. “It should be noted that there is no standard way of listing the twelve tribes. There are at least nineteen different ways of listing them in the Old Testament, none of which agree with the list given here.”<sup>41</sup>

**EDITORIAL ADDITION: Here are some other examples of non-literal interpretation of 144,000.**

#### EXAMPLES OF NON-LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF 144,000

“**Twelve** is the number of God’s people, which is squared to indicate **completeness** and multiplied by one thousand to connote **vastness**.” - **Gregory Beale**

“Many reformed & evangelical scholars argue that **Beale** has written the best available contemporary commentary on Revelation!” - **Keith Matheson** (Compiles “Best” Commentaries on Ligonier Ministries)

**ESV Study Bible** “The selection and order of the 12 tribes suggest that the 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel have **symbolic significance, representing the church**.”

**NLT Study Bible** - “Probably represents **all faithful Christians**”

**Robert Mounce** – “The number is **obviously symbolic**.”

**A T Robertson** (Word Pictures in NT) - “**Symbolical, of course**”

**Ladd** – “true Israel is not literal Israel, but **the Church**” (Aka, Replacement Theology)

**EDITORIAL COMMENT:** Note that most of these examples are from well known sources that many believers consult to aid their interpretation of the Revelation. For example, the ESV Study Bible is one of the most popular study Bibles in the world. Here’s the point -- The serious Bible student must be careful to make their own unbiased observations before looking at any commentaries (including the one you are viewing now!). The more time you spend in [observation](#) under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit, the more likely you will be to comment on the “expert” commentaries! How sad it is to see so many otherwise conservative writers jettison literal interpretation in prophetic passages with the result that their comments are not only inaccurate but at times even ludicrous! One good rule of thumb to apply in reading any Scripture is if the plain sense of the text makes good sense in context, then seek to make no other sense out of it, lest you end up with nonsense. To call Israel the church in a passage with absolutely no contextual support is nonsense and gives rise to the nefarious teaching of replacement theology. If you have been taught that Israel is now replaced by the church

in God's plan, you owe it to yourself to watch the following videos which document the rotten fruit of replacement theology over the past 2000 years. It is a sad legacy for the Christian church!

- [Replacement Theology - What we should know - part 1](#) - Gabe Morris (recommended)
- [Replacement Theology - What we should know-part 2](#) - Gabe Morris (recommended)
- [Replacement Theology - The Evils of](#) - Dr David Reagan (recommended)
- [What is replacement theology / supersessionism?](#)

A careful examination of the dozen places in the Bible where all the twelve tribes are mentioned will reveal some very beautiful truths. Jacob had twelve sons who were the fathers of the twelve tribes. Joseph and two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, whose names later were added to the list of the tribes. This gives us fourteen names out of which twelve are selected, but not always the same twelve, in presenting the truths concerning Israel. Levi, the priestly tribe, had no military duties to perform and was not given a portion of the land when the tribes entered Palestine. The portion of Levi was to be the Lord Himself (Deu. 18:1-2; Jos. 13:14). In order to fill His place both in military affairs and in the land, a new tribe had to be found so Joseph was replaced by his two sons. Leaving out the name of Levi and that of Joseph, twelve names remained.<sup>42</sup>

Concerning Judah being listed first, the camp of Judah led the procession of the tribes on the march (Num. 10:14). Rather than seeking to *understand* why this list omits Dan and Ephraim, Ladd merely asserts that their omission means that the phrase "children of Israel" must denote the Church. But this runs roughshod over hermeneutical principles because these 144,000 from the tribes of Israel are *contrasted* with "a great multitude . . . of all . . . tribes" (Rev. 7:9+). These are different groups: one is denoted by *twelve* specific tribal names and is only *144,000* in size. The other comes from *all* tribes (and nations, peoples, and tongues) and is *innumerable*.<sup>43</sup> As to why Dan and Ephraim are omitted from the list, there seems to be a ready explanation. God promises that any person *or tribe* which practices idolatry will be set apart for adversity:

So that there may not be among you man or woman or family **or tribe**, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, **to go and serve the gods of these nations** [e.g., idolatry], and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood; and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart' -as though the drunkard could be included with the sober. The LORD would not spare him; for then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven. And **the LORD would separate him from all the tribes of Israel for adversity**, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Law. (Deu. 29:18-21) [emphasis added]

When the tribe of Dan migrated north from their original location, they persuaded a renegade Levite in Ephraim to join them, along with his graven image. After overthrowing Laish and renaming the town Dan, they set up the carved image and a priesthood attended it (Jdg. 18:19-30). Thereafter, the town of Dan became a center for worship of one of the golden calves which Jeroboam promoted as an alternative to worship at Jerusalem during the divided kingdom (1K. 12:28-30; 2K. 10:29).

The Lord's estimation of Dan and his idolatry can be seen in the decreasing role of the tribe in scriptural history. In the twenty different listings of the tribes, Dan is generally far down and often is the last in the list. Consider, for example, the order of march in the wilderness: "And the standard of the camp of the children of Dan set forward, which was over the rear guard of all the camps throughout their hosts; and over its host was Ahiezer, the son of Ammishaddai" (Num. 10:25). [See [Camp of Israel](#).] Dan was the last tribe to receive its inheritance in the Promised Land (Jos. 19:47-49). Most striking is the total omission of Dan from the extensive tribal genealogies of 1 Chronicles 2:10! These scriptural facts should be remembered when facing the often-asked question of why Dan is omitted in the 144,000 Jews sealed in the Tribulation period (Rev. 7:4-8+). Evidently this is due to the problem of idolatry which plagued this tribe throughout its history.<sup>44</sup>

Also, when Deborah and Barak led Israel to war in the time of the judges, the tribes sent men to fight, but not Dan. Dan's failure to participate is remarked upon in Scripture: "Why did Dan remain on ships?" (Jdg. 5:17). Ephraim also was involved with idolatry:

Interestingly, Jeroboam's idols were placed in the tribes of Dan and Ephraim (i.e., Bethel, 1K. 12:29). Thus, in the Revelation 7+ listing, Dan was replaced by Levi (Rev. 7:7+) and Ephraim was replaced by his father Joseph (Rev. 7:8+), while his brother Manasseh was included to complete the twelve (Rev. 7:6+).<sup>45</sup>

The tribes of Dan and Ephraim are omitted from the list which follows, being replaced by Levi and Joseph. The reason for Ephraim's omission is suggested by Hos. 4:17. For possible reasons for Dan's omission see the related texts . . . (Lev. 24:10-16. Deu. 29:18-21. Jdg. 18:2-31. 1K. 12:26-33). Dan and Ephraim are included in Ezekiel's prophecy of their inheritance in the eternal earthly kingdom of Christ (Eze. 48:1-6, 32), demonstrating God's faithfulness to his covenant and promise (Lev. 26:44. Mal. 3:6. Rom. 11:29. 15:8).<sup>46</sup>



Although Dan is omitted here, this should not be taken as an indication that the tribe of Dan will perish due to lack of protection during the Tribulation. "In the end grace triumphs and Dan is named first in the future distribution of land amongst the tribes (Eze. 48:2), but while being first mentioned, it is the furthest removed from the temple, being situated in the extreme north."<sup>47</sup> Some understand the omission of Dan as an indication that the [Antichrist](#) will arise from Dan.<sup>48</sup>

He who shall come claiming the kingdom for himself, and shall terrify those men of whom we have been speaking, having a name containing the aforesaid number [666], is truly the abomination of desolation. This, too, the apostle affirms: "When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them." And Jeremiah does not merely point out his sudden coming, but he even indicates the tribe from which he shall come, where he says, "We shall hear the voice of his swift horses from Dan; the whole earth shall be moved by the voice of the neighing of his galloping horses: he shall also come and devour the earth, and the fulness thereof, the city also, and they that dwell therein." [Jer. 8:16] This, too, is the reason that this tribe is not reckoned in the Apocalypse along with those which are saved.—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, v.xxx.ii<sup>49</sup>

Yet, in our discussion of [The Beast](#) we identify reasons which indicate a Gentile origin for the Antichrist. See the discussion of whether the [Beast](#) will be [Jewish or Gentile?](#) There is also the possibility that the omission of Dan and Ephraim are not as significant as many think, perhaps mainly motivated to maintain symmetry.<sup>50</sup> The sealed are said to be "servants of God" (Rev. 7:3+) and "follow the Lamb wherever He goes" perhaps indicating a unique dedication and obedience to God in the midst of the Tribulation on earth (Rev. 7:3+; 14:4-5+). Their ministry is probably evangelistic in nature. Isaiah described a worldwide Jewish mission to the Gentiles. The context is immediately before the gathering of the Jews for the millennial age.<sup>51</sup>

I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And **they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles**. Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. (Isa. 66:19-20) [emphasis added]

It seems conclusive that these are to be used in evangelism. *First*, what else could be the purpose of a divinely-protected group in the midst of this time period but to share the truth of the gospel and save even more from doom? *Second*, their appearance is grammatically linked with the innumerable believers which John subsequently sees (Rev. 7:9-17+).

In the future, God will graciously grant Israel a second opportunity to be His witness nation, and at that time they will not fail. Led by the 144,000 evangelists (Rev. 7:1-8+), Israel will be a light to the nations during the darkest hour of earth's history.<sup>52</sup>

There is a decided advantage in using Jews to conduct a worldwider revival in the short timer period of 3 1/2 years. . . . The modern missionary, . . . must spend approximately six years [4 years of Bible, 2 of target language] before he is fully equipped to present the gospel in a language that is not his own. . . . All of this world's major languages, and a great number of the world's minor languages, are spoken by Jews somewhere. . . . with a large segment of American Jewry being the exception, most Jews receive a good and basic understanding of the Old Testament text. . . . These Jews will already speak the languages needed. They will already have a basic knowledge of the Old Testament text. . . they could begin to preach the gospel in a very short period of time.<sup>53</sup>

Our Lord says that the gospel of the kingdom is to be preached in all the world for a witness before the end shall come (Mat. 24:14). In view of all the teaching of the Word of God on this subject, it is undoubtedly the gospel of the kingdom which is the added special message of the 144,000. Of course, they present Jesus as the Saviour. Many look to Him and are saved. But they also preach the gospel of the kingdom presenting Jesus as Messiah. They are the sealed witnesses, the 144,000 like Paul who go out with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, having the prophecies of Joel fulfilled in themselves, as the first faint occurrences at Pentecost cannot possibly be the complete fulfillment which comes to full fruition in the last days.<sup>54</sup>

Along with many Gentiles who will come to faith during this troublesome time, these 144,000 Jewish believers are the initial means by which the Deliverer will begin to turn ungodliness from the Jewish nation (Rom. 11:25-26). The setting apart of a specific group from among the Jews also provides evidence that the Church Age has come to a close:

As long as the church is on the earth there are none saved to a special Jewish relationship. All who are saved are saved to a position in the body of Christ as indicated in Colossians 1:26-29; 3:11; Ephesians 2:14-22; 3:1-7. During the seventieth week the church must be absent, for out of the saved remnant in Israel God seals 144,000 Jews, 12,000 from each tribe, according to Revelation 7:4+. The fact that God is again dealing with Israel on this national relationship, setting them apart to national identities, and sending them as special representatives to the nations in place of the witness of the church, indicates that the church must no longer be on earth.<sup>55</sup>

The Twelve Tribes of Israel

Scott sees significance in the grouping of the tribes which follows:

In our English version there are three tribes named in each verse, but in reality the arrangement of the tribes as of the apostles (Mat. 10:2-4) is in pairs: *first*, Judah and Reuben—the fourth and first sons of Leah—the former the royal tribe, the latter the representative of the nation (Gen. 49:3); *second*, Gad and Asher—the two sons of Zilpah—associated in the prophetic blessings in the last days (Gen. 49:19-20); *third*, Naphtali and Manasseh linked in the enumeration of Eze. 48:4; *fourth*, Simeon and Levi—the second and third sons of Leah—associated in the prophetic enumeration (Gen. 49:5-7), also in the Lord’s revelation of Himself to save Israel (Zec. 12:13); *fifth*, Issachar and Zabulon [*sic*]—the fifth and sixth sons of Leah, both are associated in the prophetic (Gen. 49), and in the territorial (Eze. 48) enumerations of the tribes; *sixth*, Joseph and Benjamin—the two sons of Rachel, the beloved wife of the patriarch.<sup>56</sup>

## Revelation 7:5

the tribe of Judah

The fourth son of Jacob by Leah (Gen. 29:35). Judah means *praise* (Gen. 29:35) and was in the line leading to the Messiah and led the procession of the tribes (Num. 10:14), even into battle (Jdg. 20:18 cf. 2Chr. 20:21; Ps. 149:6). See [Camp of Israel](#). See commentary on [Revelation 5:5](#).

twelve thousand *were* sealed

“The number twelve in the Scripture has a special association with the idea of completion and it is also attached inseparably to the destiny of God’s chosen earthly people, Israel. Immediately, of course, we think of the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles.”<sup>57</sup> See [Twelve: Jewish Tribes, Completeness](#).

the tribe of Reuben

The first son of Jacob by Leah (Gen. 29:32). Reuben means *see ye a son*.

the tribe of Gad

The seventh son of Jacob by Leah’s handmaid, Zilpah (Gen. 30:11). Gad means *a troop*.

## Revelation 7:6

the tribe of Asher

The eighth son of Jacob by Leah’s handmaid, Zilpah (Gen. 30:13). Asher means *happy am I*.

the tribe of Naphtali

The sixth son of Jacob by Rachel’s handmaid, Bilhah (Gen. 30:8). Naphtali means *my wrestling*.

the tribe of Manasseh

One of Joseph’s two sons (Gen. 41:51). Joseph was the eleventh son of Jacob by Rachel (Gen. 30:24). Manasseh means *causing to forget*. Manasseh’s brother, Ephraim, is omitted from the list of those sealed. See commentary on [Revelation 7:4](#).

## Revelation 7:7

tribe of Simeon

The second son of Jacob by Leah (Gen. 29:33). Simeon means *hearing*.

tribe of Levi

The third son of Jacob by Leah (Gen. 29:34). Levi means *attached, or joined*.

tribe of Issachar

The ninth son of Jacob by Leah (Gen. 30:18). *Issachar* means *he will bring a reward*.

## Revelation 7:8

tribe of Zebulun

The tenth son of Jacob by Leah (Gen. 30:20). *Zebulun* means *dwelling or habitation*.

tribe of Joseph

The eleventh son of Jacob by Rachel (Gen. 30:24). *Joseph* means *adding*. One of Joseph's sons, Ephraim, is not mentioned in the list of those sealed although Manasseh is. This may not be significant since the tribe of Joseph would normally denote both Manasseh and Ephraim. See commentary on [Revelation 7:4](#).

tribe of Benjamin

The twelfth and last son of Jacob by Rachel (Gen. 35:18). *Joseph* means *son of my right hand*.

## Revelation 7:9

After these things

"The connecting link, *after these things*, is chronological and also shows a cause and effect relationship between the first and second parts of Revelation seven. Thus, by means of the 144,000 Jews, God will accomplish the second purpose of the Great Tribulation, that of bringing about a worldwide revival."<sup>58</sup> See [A Worldwide Revival](#).

behold

The sight which John saw was remarkable—both in its global scope and quantity. After having written the seven letters to the [Seven Churches of Asia](#), which evidence lack of zeal and the penetration of worldliness into the churches, perhaps John was surprised by the large number who eventually respond to the gospel despite the inadequacies which attend those entrusted with the Great Commission (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47; John 17:18; Acts 1:8; 10:42).

a great multitude which no one could number

Here is a second group who will survive the time of God's wrath—the faithful who come out of the Great Tribulation (Rev. 7:14<sup>+</sup>). Like the saints under the fifth seal (Rev. 6:9-11<sup>+</sup>), the majority of these probably die for their faith. But their death—at the hands of the harlot and later, the beast—will be their ultimate victory as overcomers (Rev. 2:10<sup>+</sup>, 13<sup>+</sup>; 12:11<sup>+</sup>). They have successfully applied the teaching of Jesus: "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mat. 10:28). This innumerable company of believers (cf. Rev. 7:14<sup>+</sup>) indicates an innumerable company of people who come to faith in Christ during the time of the end. See [How are People Saved in the Tribulation?](#)

of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues

A fourfold designation emphasizing the global origin of this group. See [Four: the Entire World, the Earth](#). That the 144,000 of Revelation 7:4<sup>+</sup> cannot be symbolic of believers in general is seen by this verse. The 144,000 were from "all the tribes of the children of Israel" [emphasis added] whereas these are from *all . . . tribes*. Both **OT** and **NT** indicate that multitudes of non-Jews will join with the believing Jewish remnant in seeking the Lamb (Isa. 11:10; Luke 2:32; Rom. 3:29-30; 9:24). Like the multitude in Revelation 5:9<sup>+</sup>, these too are redeemed, but at a later date. These come out of the Great Tribulation. These have come from *all* nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues. Evidently, by this time, the gospel message has indeed been preached "in all the world as a witness to all nations" so that shortly "the end will come" (Mat. 24:14).<sup>59</sup> If the scene shown John includes future saints which have yet to die in the judgments or persecution about to come, then they will have heard the preaching of the divinely commissioned angel "having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6<sup>+</sup>). See commentary on [Revelation 7:14](#). See [Jacob's Trouble and the Great Tribulation](#).

stood before the throne

The same throne introduced in chapter 4 (Rev. 4:2<sup>+</sup>). This multitude is in heaven, not on earth.

and before the Lamb

The Lamb is still in heaven in the midst of opening the seven seals. The rider on the white horse (Rev. 6:2<sup>+</sup>) cannot be the Lamb. See commentary on [Revelation 5:6](#) and [Revelation 6:2](#).

clothed in white robes

Like the martyrs of the fifth seal (Rev. 6:9-11<sup>+</sup>), they will be clothed in white (Rev. 6:11<sup>+</sup>). Like those martyrs, they have not yet been resurrected.

Does the fact that they were clothed in white robes and held palms in their hands require the conclusion that they are resurrected with literal, physical resurrection bodies (cf. Luke 24:36-43)? . . . when Christ broke the fifth seal, John saw under the altar in heaven the souls of saints who had been slain for the Word of God during the 70th week (Rev. 6:9-11<sup>+</sup>). Since they had been slain, they were without physical bodies, and yet they were given white robes to wear (Rev. 6:11<sup>+</sup>). Thus, in Revelation the wearing of a white robe did not require a resurrection body. Even bodiless souls could wear such a robe. . . . when the rich man of Luke 16 died, his body was buried (Luke 16:22), and his soul went to hell (Luke 16:23). Even though his soul was without its body, Jesus ascribed eyes (Luke 16:23) and a tongue (Luke 16:24) to his bodiless soul. . . . In spite of the fact that angels do not have physical bodies by nature, the Bible ascribes wings, faces, feet, and hands to them (Isa. 6:2, 6; Rev. 10:1-2<sup>+</sup>, 5<sup>+</sup>, 8<sup>+</sup>, 10<sup>+</sup>) and portrays them wearing clothing (Mat. 28:2-3; Mark 16:5; Acts 1:10; Rev. 15:6<sup>+</sup>). . . . Although the Bible ascribes such things as hands, feet, faces, tongues, and the wearing of clothing to human, angelic, and divine beings, it does not mean that those beings have literal, physical bodies such as resurrected people have. . . . the fact that the great multitude of Revelation 7<sup>+</sup> were clothed in white robes and held palms in their hands does not require the conclusion that they are resurrected with literal, physical resurrection bodies.<sup>60</sup>

See commentary on [Revelation 1:5](#), [Revelation 3:4](#), and [Revelation 3:18](#).

palm branches

During the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkoth), the children of Israel were to “take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, **branches of palm** trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days” (Lev. 23:40). The boughs were used in the construction of makeshift dwellings (*booths, tabernacles*) reminiscent of the time of wilderness wandering (Lev. 23:43). In the Millennial Kingdom, all the nations will go up to Jerusalem each year to keep this feast (Zec. 14:16) which will commemorate not only the wilderness wandering under Moses, but the wilderness of Israel’s dispersion among the nations after having rejected her Messiah.

Compare Zec. 14:16, whence it appears that the earthly feast of tabernacles will be renewed, in commemoration of Israel’s preservation in her long wilderness-like sojourn among the nations from which she shall now be delivered, just as the original typical feast was to commemorate her dwelling for forty years in booths or tabernacles in the literal wilderness.<sup>61</sup>

The waving of palm branches became a symbol of national liberation and blessing and attended the First Coming of the King to Jerusalem (John 12:13).<sup>62</sup> Here, they wave palm branches in anticipation of his return to Jerusalem in the events ahead.<sup>63</sup>

## Revelation 7:10

Salvation belongs to

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the day He presented Himself as king in fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah (Zec. 9:9 cf. Mat. 21:1-11), the crowd laid palm branches under His path while crying out “Hosanna to the Son of David!” (Mat. 21:9). *Hosanna*, an Aramaic word made up of the words “save” and “I pray,” originally meant “save, I pray.” Although it originally expressed a request—the desire for salvation—it eventually developed a “liturgical usage, a shout of praise and worship *hosanna, we praise you*.”<sup>64</sup> These praise the Lamb much as the people praised the King at His first presentation to Jerusalem—“*salvation belongs to the Son of David!*”<sup>65</sup> [σωτηρία](#) [Sōtēria] includes both *deliverance* and *preservation*.<sup>66</sup> These had been delivered from the persecution of the Great Tribulation and preserved through death. Salvation was completed at the cross, but its full manifestation awaits the future (Rev. 12:10<sup>+</sup>; 19:1<sup>+</sup>). Because salvation *belongs* to the Father and the Son it cannot be obtained anywhere else, especially not by our own works. Salvation is by grace through faith.<sup>67</sup>

to our God . . . and to the Lamb

God is *uniquely* the Savior. The Father spoke through Isaiah, “I, *even I, am* the LORD, and besides Me *there is* no savior. I have declared and saved” (Isa. 43:11). Zacharias prophesied concerning the salvation of the Lamb at His impending incarnation saying, “Blessed *is* the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets who *have been* since the world began” (Luke 1:69-70). Salvation belongs to the Father *and the Son* because the Son provided salvation through redemption (Rev. 5:9<sup>+</sup>). “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). The Son is worshiped on an equal basis with the Father (John 5:23).<sup>68</sup> See commentary on [Revelation 5:13](#).

## Revelation 7:11

the angels . . . and the elders

The elders are differentiated from the angels (cf. Rev. 5:11<sup>+</sup>). They are either a separate class of angelic beings (much like the living creatures), or they are redeemed men. See commentary on [Revelation 4:4](#).

the four living creatures

See commentary on [Revelation 4:6](#).

worshiped

[προσκύνησαν](#) [prosekynēsan]: “Used to designate the custom of prostrating oneself before a person and kissing his feet, the hem of his garment, the ground, etc.; the Persians did this in the presence of their deified king, and the Greeks before a divinity.”<sup>69</sup> The frequent response of the elders and living creatures (Rev. 4:10<sup>+</sup>; 5:14<sup>+</sup>; 11:16<sup>+</sup>; 19:4<sup>+</sup>). An innumerable host worships before the throne (Rev. 5:11<sup>+</sup>).

## Revelation 7:12

blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, might

The blessing is sevenfold indicating completeness. See [Seven: Perfection, Completeness](#). Blessing is [εὐλογία](#) [eulogia], from whence derives *eulogy*. Literally, *a good word*. Thanksgiving is [εὐχαριστία](#) [eucharistia], from whence derives *eucharist*. See commentary on [Revelation 5:13](#). See [Worship of God](#).

## Revelation 7:13

white robes

See commentary on [Revelation 1:5](#), [Revelation 3:4](#), and [Revelation 3:18](#).

where did they come from

They are new arrivals in heaven, they were not among the multitude of the redeemed worshipping the Lamb when He first took the scroll from the Father (Rev. 5:9<sup>+</sup>).

## Revelation 7:14

Sir

*Sir* is [κύριε](#) [kyrie] which is frequently translated *Lord*. Elsewhere, the word is translated *master* (Mat. 6:24); *Sir* (Mat. 13:27; John 5:7), and *lord* (Mat. 10:24; Luke 12:36; 14:21; 16:3; John 15:15). It is the respectful address of an inferior to his superior in age or station.<sup>70</sup>

you know

[σὺ οἶδας](#) [sy oidas], emphatic: *you, you know*.

the ones who come out

[ἐρχόμενοι](#) [erchomenoi], present participle. They are *continually coming out*— probably the result of ongoing persecution resulting in martyrdom, although the text does not explicitly indicate martyrdom. “Present middle participle with the idea of continued repetition. ‘The martyrs are still arriving from the scene of the great tribulation.’”<sup>71</sup> “Therefore the Rapture of the church is not in view in this verse, since it is a single, instantaneous, and sudden event (cf. 1Cor. 15:51-52).”<sup>72</sup>

the great tribulation

Literally, *the tribulation, the great*. “ ‘The tribulation,’ points to a definite prophetic period, and not simply to tribulation in general in which *all* saints shared. ‘The great tribulation’ cannot be the general troubles that affect God’s people in all ages. The insertion of the definite article marks its speciality.”<sup>73</sup> This is the unique time of intense tribulation which Jesus predicted (Mat. 24:21). During this time, multitudes will die; both unbelievers in judgment and believers through martyrdom and harsh conditions (as these, Rev. 14:13<sup>+</sup>). “And unless those days were shorted, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened” (Mat.

24:22). This is the “hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth” (Rev. 3:10<sup>+</sup>). This time of trouble will be especially difficult for the Jewish nation (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1, 7; Mat. 24:16-20). Yet even this Great Tribulation cannot separate the faithful from the love of Christ, for they are *overcomers* (Rom. 8:35-39). See [Who is the Overcomer?](#) As we have discussed elsewhere, the Church is not appointed to God’s wrath and is exempted from this “hour or trial which God brings upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth” (Rev. 3:10<sup>+</sup>). These believers are those who come to faith after the [rapture of the Church](#). It is interesting to note the accuracy which attends predictions made by those who take Scripture at face value. Walter Scott (1796-1861), writing well in advance of the establishment of Israel in 1948, says of this verse: “ ‘The great tribulation’ is yet future. **It pre-supposes the Jewish nation restored to Palestine in unbelief**, to serve Gentile political ends, and brought there by the active intervention of a great maritime power (Isa. 18).” [emphasis added]<sup>74</sup> Since 1948, Scott’s words, which reflect God’s Word, have come to pass. See [Trouble Ahead](#).

washed their robes

See commentary on [Revelation 1:5](#).

made them white

[λευκονον](#) [eleukanon], used to describe making blood-red stains due to sin become white (Isa. 1:18).<sup>75</sup> It may picture not only their salvation (washing away their sins), but also the exchange of garments bloodied by their persecution on earth for clean garments from God.

in the blood of the Lamb

The garments of many were no doubt stained with their own blood. Still, it is the blood of the Lamb which is required for salvation. Their blood, while precious to God (Ps. 116:15) and spilled as a testimony to God, lacks any redemptive power. See commentary on [Revelation 1:5](#) and [Revelation 5:9](#).

## Revelation 7:15

Therefore

“Because they are so washed white; for without it they could never have entered God’s holy heaven.”<sup>76</sup>

before the throne of God

The entire thrust of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation is the restoration of man to full intimacy with God. These occupy a position of great blessing in their proximity to the throne. By the sovereignty of God, these elect did not come to faith prior to the [rapture](#), but endured the most difficult time for people of faith of all history. Even so, they remained steadfast in their testimony and overcome the adversary (Rev. 12:11<sup>+</sup>).

serve Him day and night in His temple

Their ministry is reminiscent of the four living creatures: “they do not rest **day or night**, saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!’ ” [emphasis added] (Rev. 4:8<sup>+</sup>). These who come out of the Great Tribulation may have a different ministry than that of the Church which is caught away prior to this time.

As their calling and service differ from ours, so does their destiny. We, as the bride with the Bridegroom, sit upon the throne to rule and reign with the Lord of Glory. Our destiny is said to be that of rulers and judges. We are to be kings and priests (1Cor. 6:2-3; 1Pe. 2:9; Rev. 1:6<sup>+</sup>). The 144,000 are to be the glorious bodyguard, the retinue of the Lamb, following Him whithersoever He goeth (Rev. 14:4<sup>+</sup>). The destiny of the Gentile multitude, however, is that of temple servants.<sup>77</sup>

dwell among them

*Dwell* is [σκηνώσει](#) [skēnōsei]: “Literally live or camp in a tent.”<sup>78</sup> Used by John of Jesus’ incarnation when “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). This word only appears in the [NT](#) in John’s gospel and this book (John 1:14; Rev. 7:15<sup>+</sup>; 12:12<sup>+</sup>; 13:6<sup>+</sup>; 21:3<sup>+</sup>), providing evidence that the books share the same [authorship](#). Their enduring faith in the midst of the Great Tribulation provides a great testimony to the power of God and results in His dwelling among them. They realize the ultimate goal of the eternal state: “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the [tabernacle](#) of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God’ ” (Rev. 21:3<sup>+</sup>). As the psalmist said, “In Your presence *is* fullness of joy; at Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore” (Ps. 16:11).

“He that sits upon the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them.” The A.V. reads, “shall dwell among them”; a poor and utterly

inadequate rendering of the divine thought herein expressed. God spread His tabernacle over the tent of meeting of old, which thus became the centre and rest of the thousands of Israel. It covered them in the desert. Two millions and a half people—the typically redeemed host of Jehovah—were sheltered from scorching suns and winters' blasts, by the huge canopy which God spread over them; it was the nation's glory and defense.<sup>79</sup>

His dwelling presence is directly tied to the promises which follow that the "sun shall not strike them, nor any heat." "His dwelling among them is to be understood as a secondary truth, besides what is expressed, namely, His being their covert."<sup>80</sup>

When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there *will be* a covering. And **there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat** for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain. (Isa. 4:4-6) [emphasis added]

## Revelation 7:16

They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore

Many of these tribulation saints no doubt suffered physical deprivation during their time of persecution (Mat. 25:31-46; Rev. 13:17<sup>+</sup>), not to mention the harsh conditions upon the earth during this time: "Their hunger talks of the famine of the third seal (Rev. 6:5-6<sup>+</sup>), their deprivation of water of the third trumpet (Rev. 8:10-11<sup>+</sup>), and the heat of the sun of the fourth bowl (Rev. 16:8-9<sup>+</sup>). In other words, these martyrs will come from all phases of the tribulation judgments depicted in Revelation."<sup>81</sup> God also satisfies the *spiritual* hunger of the longing soul (Ps. 107:9; John 4:14; John 6:35). These are among the blessed ones "who hunger and thirst for righteousness" and "shall be filled" (Mat. 5:6).

nor any heat

In their wilderness wanderings, Israel was sheltered from the heat by the cloud which covered the camp during the day (Num. 10:34 cf. Isa. 4:4-6). Isaiah was also given revelation concerning this truth: in the day of salvation, the Father gave the Son as a covenant to the people. He would go forth to the sheep who were in darkness so that they would be fed. They would no longer hunger or thirst, nor would they suffer from the heat or sun. And He would lead them by the springs of water (Isa. 49:8-10). Those who *reject* God will feel intense heat before His judgments are complete (Rev. 16:8<sup>+</sup>).

## Revelation 7:17

the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne

Not only the Father dwells among them (Rev. 7:15<sup>+</sup>), they will also be in intimate association with the Son who Himself is in the midst of the throne. Because of their faithful witness amidst chaos and intense persecution, they now enjoy the benefits which many others will not experience until the eternal state (Rev. 21:3<sup>+</sup>; 22:3<sup>+</sup>).

will shepherd them

In place of the worthless shepherd who feeds himself on the sheep (Zec. 11:15-17), they will be led by the True Shepherd out of Judah who was stricken on their behalf (Mat. 2:6; 26:31; Mark 6:34; 14:27; John 10:2-16). God, who scattered the sheep of Israel, will one day gather them again (Isa. 40:11; Jer. 31:10; Eze. 34:11-31; Mic. 5:4; Mat. 2:6).

living fountains of waters

He leads them to the still waters which restore the soul (Ps. 23:1-2). This is the living water which the same Shepherd promised the Samaritan woman (John 4:10-11) and which believers in the church age experience through the indwelling Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39).<sup>82</sup> This water is available freely to all who thirst (Rev. 21:6<sup>+</sup>). It is the river of life which will ultimately be found flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb, watering the tree of life (Rev. 22:1-2<sup>+</sup>). In the Millennial Kingdom, a fountain of living water will flow from Jerusalem and revive all that it touches (Eze. 47:12; Zec. 14:8).

wipe away every tear

Many of the tears they had shed were due to their experience of death—both of loved ones and themselves. But God has swallowed up death forever and promised to wipe away every tear (Isa. 25:8). In their joy, their sorrow and sighing will flee away (Isa. 35:10; 51:11). Even in the [Millennial Kingdom](#), great joy will be experienced (Isa. 65:19). Ultimately, in the eternal state, there will be no more pain and the former things (e.g., sin and the curse) shall pass away and all cause for tears will be gone (Rev. 21:4<sup>+</sup>).

Converts during the tribulation will have to face fierce and bestial persecution at the hands of their fellow-men, and also have to endure the natural tribulations which God will unleash on all mankind as a consequence of the sins of the human race. Yes, it will be possible to be saved during the tribulation, but **it is infinitely better and imminently sensible to accept Jesus Christ as one's Savior now, before the tribulation.** [emphasis added]<sup>83</sup>

Notes

<sup>1</sup>The NU text has [ΜΕΤ ΤΟ ΤΟ](#) [Meta touto], *After this* (singular).

<sup>2</sup>"This ministry of the 144,000 is something that occurs throughout the entire first half and not merely after the sixth seal judgment. In fact, it is going on during the Seal judgments, and it is the means by which the fifth seal saints come to Messiah. The passage begins with *After this*, which is not chronological, but merely the next vision John sees."—Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), rev ed (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 222.

<sup>3</sup>Robert L. Thomas, [Revelation 1-7](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1992), Rev. 7:1.

<sup>4</sup>James Moffatt, "[Revelation of St. John the Divine](#)," in W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., [The Expositor's Greek Testament](#), vol. 5 (New York, NY: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), Rev. 7:1.

<sup>5</sup>Robert H. Mounce, [The Book of Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), Rev. 7:1.

<sup>6</sup>Thomas, [Revelation 1-7](#), Rev. 7:1.

<sup>7</sup>"We use the same expression today without in any way denying that the earth is a sphere, so must allow Revelation the same latitude and not see its thought as 'primitive'!"—Monty S. Mills, [Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John](#) (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1987), Rev. 7:1.

<sup>8</sup>"Since nowhere in Revelation do we read of the four winds actually blowing, they may be taken as representing the earthly catastrophes that occur under the trumpets and bowls."—Alan F. Johnson, [Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), Rev. 7:1-3.

<sup>9</sup>Albrecht Durer (1471 - 1528). Image courtesy of the [Connecticut College Wetmore Print Collection](#).

<sup>10</sup>Walter Scott, [Exposition of The Revelation](#) (London, England: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), 155.

<sup>11</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, [Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 143.

<sup>12</sup>Frederick William Danker and Walter Bauer, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 796.

<sup>13</sup>Thomas, [Revelation 1-7](#), Rev. 7:2.

<sup>14</sup>John MacArthur, [Revelation 1-11 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), Rev. 7:1.

<sup>15</sup>Concerning lifeless idols: Deu. 4:28; 2K. 19:18; Ps. 115:4; 135:15; Isa. 37:19; 41:25; 44:9; 45:20; 46:7; Jer. 2:28; 10:5, 8, 15; 16:20; Dan. 5:23; Acts 19:26; Rev. 9:20<sub>±</sub>.

<sup>16</sup>Concerning the Living God: Ex. 3:6; Deu. 5:26; Jos. 3:10; 1S. 17:26, 36; 2K. 19:4, 16; Ps. 42:2; 84:2; Isa. 37:4, 17; Jer. 10:10; 23:36; Dan. 6:20, 6:26; Hos. 1:10; Mat. 16:16; 22:32; 26:63; John 6:69; Acts 14:15; Rom. 9:26; 2Cor. 3:3; 6:16; 1Ti. 3:15; 4:10; 6:17; Heb. 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22; Rev. 7:2<sub>±</sub>.

<sup>17</sup>Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) 515.

<sup>18</sup>At Rev. 14:1<sub>±</sub>, in contrast to the TR text, MT and NU texts indicate that the names of *both* the Father *and* the Son are written.

<sup>19</sup>Barnhouse, [Revelation](#), 144.

<sup>20</sup>Arthur Walkington Pink, [The Antichrist](#) (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1999, 1923), s.v. "The Antichrist will be the Son of Satan."

<sup>21</sup>Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) 796.



<sup>22</sup>Thomas, [Revelation 1-7](#), Rev. 7:3.

<sup>23</sup>J. A. Seiss, [The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 166.

<sup>24</sup>Gregory K. Beale, [The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 61.

<sup>25</sup>A. R. Fausset, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine," in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, [A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments](#) (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 7:4.

<sup>26</sup>Seiss, [The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation](#), 161.

<sup>27</sup>E. W. Bullinger, [Commentary On Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984, 1935), 282.

<sup>28</sup>Jerome Smith, [The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), Rev. 7:4.

<sup>29</sup>William Varner, [Jacob's Dozen: A Prophetic Look at the Tribes of Israel](#) (Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1987), 103.

<sup>30</sup>Scott, [Exposition of The Revelation](#), 153.

<sup>31</sup>Bullinger, [Commentary On Revelation](#), 278.

<sup>32</sup>Raymond Edward Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland Edmund Murphy, eds., [The Jerome Biblical Commentary](#) (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1996, c1968), Rev. 7:4.

<sup>33</sup>Albert Barnes, [Notes on the Bible](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1884-85), Rev. 7:4.

<sup>34</sup>Mounce, [The Book of Revelation](#), 168.

<sup>35</sup>Fausset, [The Revelation of St. John the Divine](#), Rev. 7:1.

<sup>36</sup>Scripture speaks of three categories of persons its contents concern: the Jews, the Gentiles, and the church of God (1Cor. 10:32). What is stated in Rev. 7:4<sup>+</sup> pertains to Israel—it cannot pertain to any other group. The names of the tribes of Israel are nowhere in Scripture ever applied to the Gentiles or the church of God. Even among those who (mistakenly) believe the term 'Israel' can denote the Church, some recognize the overwhelming evidence in this passage against taking 'Israel' as the Church: "It is clear that, though 'Israel' may elsewhere designate the spiritual Israel, 'the elect (Church) on earth' [Alford], here, where the names of the tribes one by one are specified, these names cannot have any but the literal meaning."<sup>35</sup>—Smith, [The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge](#), Rev. 7:4.

<sup>37</sup>MacArthur, [Revelation 1-11 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#), Rev. 7:4.

<sup>38</sup>G. E. Ladd, "Revelation, Book of," in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., [The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, 1915), 4:175.

<sup>39</sup>The "Israel of God" of Gal. 6:16 being no exception. "As Peter Richardson observes: 'Strong confirmation of this position [i.e., that "Israel" refers to the Jews in the NT] comes from the total absence of an identification of the church with Israel until A.D. 160; and also from the total absence, even then, of the term "Israel of God" to characterize the church.'"—Johnson, [Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#), Rev. 7:1-3. In every instance, the word "Israel" refers to those who are of the physical seed of Jacob. See [Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, [Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology](#) (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1989), 684-690].

<sup>40</sup>Scott, [Exposition of The Revelation](#), 157.

<sup>41</sup>MacArthur, [Revelation 1-11 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#), Rev. 7:4.

<sup>42</sup>Barnhouse, [Revelation](#), 148.

<sup>43</sup>"The Gentile company (verse 9) is not numbered. The Israelitish company, on the contrary, is carefully reckoned and the result stated, not in round numbers, but in precise terms."—Scott, [Exposition of The Revelation](#), 157.

<sup>44</sup>Varner, [Jacob's Dozen: A Prophetic Look at the Tribes of Israel](#) 60.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 103.

<sup>46</sup>Smith, [The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge](#), Rev. 7:4.

<sup>47</sup>Scott, [Exposition of The Revelation](#), 158.

<sup>48</sup>Mills suggests that Dan will be key in leading Israel toward the Antichrist in the time of the end: “Dan has a traditional history of idolatry (Lev. 24:11; Jdg. 18:30-31; 1K. 12:28-29), and in the end times it will be no different: Dan will not recognize her Messiah, but will lead Israel in its firm covenant with the Pseudo-christ.”—Mills, [Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John](#) Revelation 7:4. As interesting as this theory might be, it requires the tribe of Dan to act in concert as a tribe which seems unlikely given the lack of human ability to determine the boundaries of the tribe within the Jewish population. Of course, the possibility exists that some form of genetic tracking, along with genetic material recovered from a known Danite, could provide the key to unlock human knowledge of the boundaries of the tribe. As we discuss elsewhere, God knows which are the offspring of each son of Jacob. See [Ten Tribes Lost?](#)

<sup>49</sup>Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., [Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I](#) (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), s.v. “ECF 1.1.7.1.5.31.”

<sup>50</sup>“A great deal of speculation and guesswork has developed as a result [of the omission of the tribe of Dan], mainly the idea that the Antichrist will come out of this tribe. . . . Others claim that the False Prophet will arise out of the Tribe of Dan and that is why that tribe is left out. But this too, is pure speculation. There is nothing in the context to suggest either of these suppositions. The text itself does not state the reason why the Tribe of Dan is left out. The actual reason is simply to maintain the symmetry of twelve.”—Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 222-223.

<sup>51</sup>Unger takes this evangelistic work as occurring during the millennial age rather than in preparation for it: “The LORD will dispatch those of the Jews who escape the judgments of the Tribulation to the nations to evangelize the Gentiles of the Kingdom.”—Merrill F. Unger, [Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament](#) (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Isa. 66:19b. It would seem that “those among them who “escape” could refer to the sealed Jews of the Diaspora during the Tribulation period itself.”

<sup>52</sup>MacArthur, [Revelation 1-11 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#), Rev. 7:9.

<sup>53</sup>Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 178-179.

<sup>54</sup>Barnhouse, [Revelation](#), 151.

<sup>55</sup>J. Dwight Pentecost, [Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 214.

<sup>56</sup>Scott, [Exposition of The Revelation](#), 158.

<sup>57</sup>Barnhouse, [Revelation](#), 145.

<sup>58</sup>Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 179-180.

<sup>59</sup>Henry Morris, [The Revelation Record](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 7:9.

<sup>60</sup>Ronald E. Showers, [Maranatha, Our Lord Come](#) (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995), 248.

<sup>61</sup>Fausset, [The Revelation of St. John the Divine](#), Rev. 7:9.

<sup>62</sup>Regarding John 12:13: “From about two centuries earlier, the waving of palm branches had become a national, if not nationalistic, symbol, which signaled the fervent hope that a messianic liberator was arriving on the scene.”—MacArthur, [Revelation 1-11 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#), John 12:13.

<sup>63</sup>Fausset, [The Revelation of St. John the Divine](#), Rev. 7:9.

<sup>64</sup>Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 416.

<sup>65</sup>“The word [salvation] frequently carries the meaning of ‘victory’ in classical Greek and in the LXX (Caird).”—Thomas, [Revelation 1-Z](#), Rev. 7:10.

<sup>66</sup>Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) 801.

<sup>67</sup>Concerning salvation by faith: Hab. 2:4; Luke 7:42, 50; Acts 13:39; Rom. 1:17; 3:20, 28; 4:2-6; 5:1, 16-18; Gal. 2:16, 21; 3:11, 24; 5:4; 6:15; Eph. 2:8-10; 2Ti. 1:9; Tit. 3:5; Heb. 10:38; Rev. 7:10<sup>±</sup>.

<sup>68</sup>Concerning worship of Jesus: Mat. 2:2; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9, 17; Mat. 20:20; Mark 5:6; Luke 24:52; John 5:18, 23; John 9:38; 20:28; Acts 7:59 cf. Ps. 31:5; Php. 2:9; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:13<sup>±</sup>; Rev. 7:10<sup>±</sup>.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 716.

<sup>70</sup>Moffatt, [Revelation of St. John the Divine](#), 399.

<sup>71</sup>A. T. Robertson, [Robertson's Word Pictures in Six Volumes](#) (Escondido, CA: Ephesians Four Group, 2003), Rev. 7:14.

<sup>72</sup>MacArthur, [Revelation 1-11 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#), Rev. 7:14.

<sup>73</sup>Scott, [Exposition of The Revelation](#), 163.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) 472.

<sup>76</sup>Fausset, [The Revelation of St. John the Divine](#), Rev. 7:15.

<sup>77</sup>Barnhouse, [Revelation](#), 153.

<sup>78</sup>Friberg, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), 350.

<sup>79</sup>Scott, [Exposition of The Revelation](#), 165.

<sup>80</sup>Fausset, [The Revelation of St. John the Divine](#), Rev. 7:15.

<sup>81</sup>Mills, [Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John](#) Rev. 7:16.

<sup>82</sup>He Who is the Living Water thirsted in dying (John 19:28): "He who began His ministry by hungering (Mat. 4:3), ended it by thirsting (John 19:28). He who was the Rock whence Israel in the desert was refreshed (1Cor. 10:4), and He who turned the water into wine (John 2:1-25), now thirsts."—Graham W. Scroggie, [A Guide to the Gospels](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1995, 1948), 587.

<sup>83</sup>Mills, [Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John](#) Rev. 7:17.

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