

# Revelation 07 - The Coming Spiritual Awakening; The 144,000 Jewish Evangelists; Vision of the Tribulation Saints

## IV. After These Things (Rev 4:1—22:21)

### (2) During the Tribulation (Rev 6:1—19:21)

#### (B) The Coming Spiritual Awakening (7:1-17)

##### (a) The Instruments (7:1-8)

(i) Their sealing (7:1-3)

(ii) Their number (7:4)

(iii) Their lineage (7:5-8)

##### (b) The Awakening (7:9-17)

(i) Salvation's quantity (7:9)

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(a) By Gentiles (7:10)

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(a) Their service (7:15)

(b) Their satisfaction (7:16)

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## **"Who shall be able to stand?"**

Rev 6 concludes with the statement, "For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev 7 answers that question...

## **Who Are the 144,000?**

All forms of Replacement Theology, such as Covenant Theology, even the segment of Covenant Theology closest to Dispensationalism (Covenant Premillennialism) tries to make the 144,000 Jews in v1-8 the same as the innumerable multitudes of v9-17. However, if the text is read as written, the text distinguishes the first group to be Jews and the second

group to be Gentiles. A common attack against taking the passage literally to mean Jews is the claim that these could not be the Twelve Tribes of Israel (that it is somehow impossible for God?), and the fact that the Tribe of Dan is missing. Using such flimsy grounds, non-dispensationalists try very hard to make these 144,000 symbolize "the true Israel, the true people of God," which for them means the Church. Again, not having a single clear statement that Israel is the Church, they are forced to use this back door approach: the 144,000 are the Church, the 144,000 are in the Tribulation, therefore the Church is in the Tribulation.

## 5 Non-Chronological Parenthetical Insertions

1. **144,000 Jewish evangelists (Rev 7:1-17)**
2. Announcement of no more delay; Two Witnesses (Rev 10:1—11:14)
3. Israel's flight; two beasts, six scenes of hope (Rev 12-14)
4. Gathering of the nations to Armageddon (Rev 16:13-16)
5. Babylon's fall (Rev 17:1—19:6)

## Revelation 7

(2) During the Tribulation (Rev 6:1—19:21)

(B) The Coming Spiritual Awakening (7:1-17)

(a) The Instruments (v1-8)

(i) Their sealing (v1-3)

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

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

**1** After this, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth. They were holding back the four winds of the earth so that no wind could blow on the land, on the sea, or on any tree.

**1** And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

- "After this" - *metatauta*, whenever *metatauta* is followed by a verb of perception (I saw, I heard, etc.), it is not saying that the information in Rev 7 comes chronologically after the information in Rev 6

— It doesn't mean that the 144,000 Jewish evangelists are sealed after the 6th Seal judgment. It is simply stating that this is the next thing that John saw or heard; the next

thing that God saw fit to disclose to John.

- "...four angels" - appear to be different than the four living creatures
- These four angels are apparently the four who will blow the first four trumpets in Rev 8...
- "...four corners of the earth" - figurative language to indicate the worldwide nature of these angels' responsibility
- God stationed them there to keep the winds from blowing (Cf. 20:8; Is 11:12; Jer 49:36; Matt 24:31)
- "...wind" - represents God's judgments on the world (v3; Cf. Jer 49:36-38; Dan 7:2; Hosea 13:15), specifically those that are about to follow during the remainder of the Tribulation
- In Daniel, wind is always used to represent the sovereign power of God in judgment [OT reference: Is 11:2; Jer 49:36; Ezek 7:2; 37:9; Dan 7:2; Zech 6:5]

### **The Timing of the Sealing of the 144,000**

There are two primary views of the timing of the sealing of the 144,000: Early in the Tribulation, at the time of or slightly before the 1st Seal judgment, OR after the 6th Seal judgment, after the chronology of Rev 6 but before the 7th Seal of Rev 8.

The text seems to indicate that the sealing and subsequent ministry of the 144,000 run concurrently with the six Seal judgments for the following reasons:

- "After this I saw" (v1); "After this I looked" (v9) - non-chronological, just the next vision John saw (the next thing God showed him)
  - When we read "After this" (*meta tauta*) followed by a verb of perception ("I saw," "I heard," "I looked"), it indicates a parenthesis or narration of events immediately preceding or following.
  - The events described are not chronological, but merely the next vision that John sees.
  - The "after this" (again, followed by a verb of perception ["I looked"]) in 7:9-10 also indicates the next vision John saw, but its placement after the sealing of the 144,000 is to show that the multitude of Gentile martyrs identified here are those who are saved directly or indirectly through the ministry of the 144,000.
- John's style is to first give an overview of the judgments, listing them one through six, and then to recapitulate by focusing on some of the specific details in the subsequent chapter(s). This pattern indicates that the events of Rev 7 would take place during the time of the six Seal judgments.
- The 144,000 are called "first fruits" in 14:4. If they are the first fruits of Jewish believers in the Tribulation, it's likely they were sealed at the beginning of the Tribulation, not after 6th Seal.

- If the sealing of the 144,000 and the beginning of their ministry began after the 6th Seal, who evangelized the souls under the altar (5th Seal)?
  - Since every believer will be taken in the Rapture at the end of the Church Age, no believers are alive on the earth at that time. To have a vast number of martyrs as indicated by the 5th Seal indicates that much evangelism would have taken place. This can only be attributed to the ministry of the 144,000.
- The final statement of Rev 6, spoken by the kings of the earth, is the question, "Who is able to stand?" The description of the 6th Seal ends by asking the question who is able to survive. Rev 7 appears to answer this. It pulls back for a moment and visualizes a group of saints on earth who are on God's side and consequently have God's seal of protection from the wrath yet to come.
- Innumerable multitude, who "come" (present tense, v14) to heaven, "out of" the Tribulation, do so over a period of time, continually, rather than all at once
- God's character, and the pattern He has demonstrated throughout biblical history, is that He displays His abundant grace prior to, or in the midst of, His judgment. See examples in note below: **God's Grace Is Always Coupled With His Judgment.**

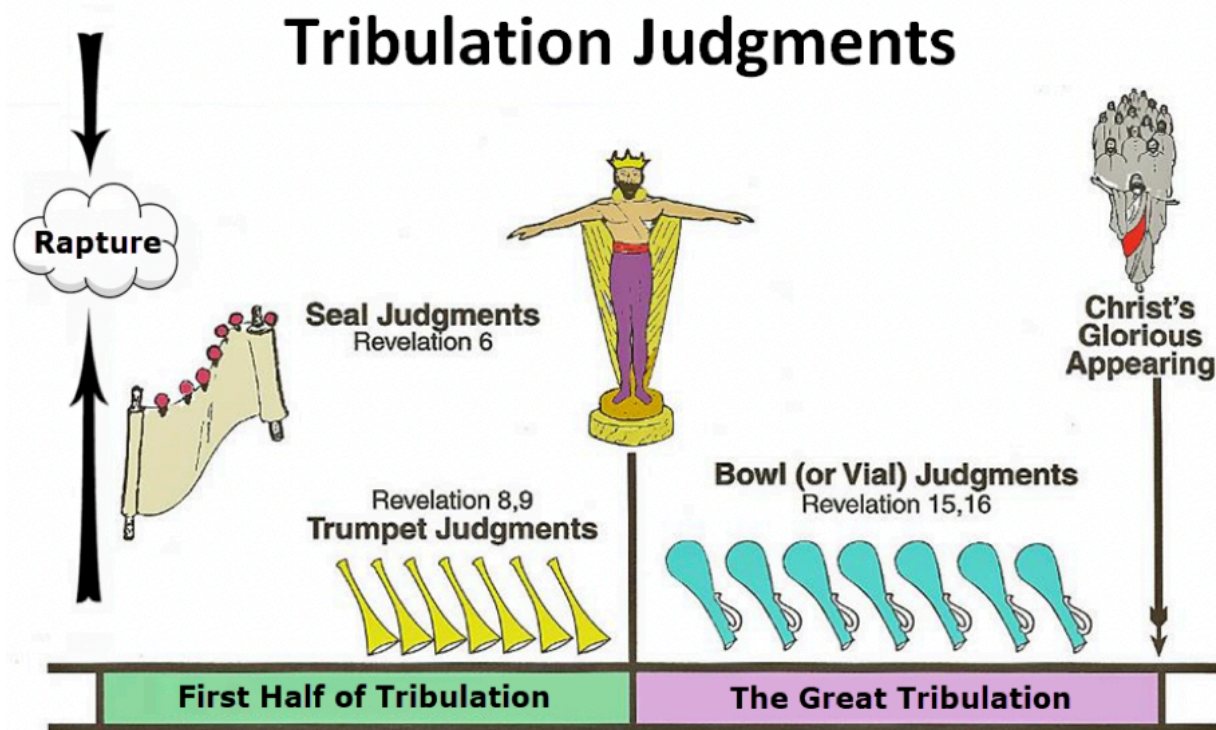
Rev 7 describes the third of five events (6 Seals, sealing the 144,000, 6 Trumpets, Measuring the Temple, Two Witnesses) during the first half of the Tribulation. This ministry of the 144,000 occurs throughout the entire first half, not merely after the 6th Seal judgment. In fact, it is going on *during* the Seal Judgments, and it is the means by which the 5th Seal saints come to the Messiah.

### **God's Grace Is Always Coupled With His Judgment**

God's pattern throughout biblical history is to always offer His grace prior to or in the midst of judgment. Here are just 11 of many examples:

- Adam & Eve - sinned by eating fruit/disobedience, but God showed mercy by clothing them with garments of animal skin, symbolizing His care for them despite their disobedience. He also banished them from the Garden to prevent eternal separation from Him if they would have eaten of the Tree of Life in their fallen state.
- Cain/Abel - even after Cain murdered Abel, God showed grace by marking him to protect him from being killed by others. Although Cain was still judged and sent away, God's protective mark demonstrated His mercy in the midst of judgment.
- Noah - before God brought the Flood to judge the world, He demonstrated grace by providing a way of salvation through Noah/Ark (120 years)
- Sodom & Gomorrah - God revealed His plan to Abraham, and in an act of grace allowed Abraham to intercede on behalf of the people of those cities if only 10 found righteous. Although the cities were judged by God, He removed Lot and his family, the only "righteous" people there, before judgment.

- 10 Plagues in Egypt - before each plague, God demonstrated His grace by sending Moses and Aaron to warn Pharaoh and give him an opportunity to change his mind and release the Israelites. Pharaoh continually hardened his heart, but God continued to give him opportunities for repentance before each escalating judgment.
- Golden Calf (Ex 32) - after golden calf incident, God delayed His judgment and continued to lead them toward the Promised Land. He continued to provide manna and water for them, even when the people grumbled.
- Israelites in the Wilderness (Num 14) - Israelites doubted God's promise and refused to enter the Promised Land, God considered destroying them. However, after Moses interceded, God showed His grace by sparing their lives, although the elder generation was judged and denied entry into Promised Land.
- David - after committing adultery with Bathsheba and orchestrating the death of Uriah, God sent the prophet Nathan to confront him. Though God's judgment on David was severe, God showed David grace by sparing David's life and preserving his kingdom after David repented.
- Jonah/Nineveh - God planned to exterminate Nineveh, but in His grace He first sent Jonah to warn them of impending destruction. He gave them time to repent, and when they responded with humility in repentance, God relented from sending judgment.
- Jesus & 1st Century Israel (Luke 19:41-44) - Israel rejected Him and eventually murdered Him. While He lamented that they did not recognize the "day of God's visitation, He offered them a chance to repent (37 years) before judgment came (70 AD).
- The World Today (2 Peter 3:9) - God demonstrates His ongoing mercy and grace by delaying final judgment, giving people time to repent and turn to Him. "...He is patient, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."



2 And I saw **another** angel **ascending from the rising of the sun**, holding the **seal of the living God**; and he **called out with a loud voice** to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,

2 I saw another angel coming from the east having the seal of the living God. He cried out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been permitted to harm the land and sea,

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

- "...another" - *allos*, another of the same kind; this angel is of the same character of the first four angels (v1)

- "...ascending from the rising of the sun" - in Scripture, divine salvation often comes from the east (Cf. Gen 2:8; Ezek 43:2; Matt 2:1); from Patmos, where John is located, Israel lies to the east

- "...seal of the living God" - a symbol of ownership; a permanent spiritual mark

— Sealing is always a guarantee of safety. Believers today are sealed with the Spirit as a guarantee of spiritual safety (Eph 1:13). In the Tribulation, those who have the seal of the

Holy Spirit will not only be guaranteed eternal spiritual security, but also physical security from the judgments and persecutions of the Tribulation (9:4). As a result of this sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit, they will survive the Tribulation.

— This sealing marks these believers as God's redeemed people, and guarantees their protection *from divine judgment* while they carry out their service for God on the earth during the Tribulation (9:4; 14:1,3-4; Cf. 13:16-18; 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30)

— The seal, however, does not mean they receive physical protection from the persecution of the beast or the earth dwellers. The sealing they received protects them only from the wrath of God, not from the wrath of the dragon and the beast (Cf. 12:12).

— The seal could be visible (Ezek 9:4) or invisible (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:14; 4:30), but the mention of putting it on their foreheads (v3) suggests it is visible

— The seal was the name of the Lamb and the name of His Father (14:1)

— Because Satan is an imitator and a counterfeit, he will come up with his own mark or seal during the Tribulation, which will allow those who have it to participate in the economy (Cf. 13:16-18; 14:9-11; 20:4)

- "...called out with a loud voice" - the loud cry reflects the urgency of his mission and his concern is protection of God's servants on earth before the four angels begin to wreak havoc. These saints must first receive their mark of exemption from the judgments that God will begin to pour out on the earth.

[Ezek 9:4]

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

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

3 "Don't harm the land, the sea, or the trees until we have marked the servants of our God with a seal on their foreheads."

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

- An interesting request from the angel holding the seal...to do no harm to the earth, the sea or the trees until all 144,000 Jewish evangelists have been sealed

— This implies that the sealing of the 144,000 occurs either before the Tribulation begins, or very early in the Tribulation period, because the 2nd Seal brings war to the earth

— Another reason this likely happens either before the Tribulation (after the Rapture) or very early in the Tribulation is that God never leaves the earth without a witness of Himself

- "...bond-servants of our God" - called "firstfruits" to God and to the Lamb in Rev 14:4; they are the first servants God will use to bring in the worldwide harvest of believers during the Tribulation (Cf. Matt 24:14)

- These 144,000 Jews suddenly come to an awareness that Jesus Christ, whom their nation has rejected for the past 2,000 years, is actually their Messiah
- Their eyes are opened and they suddenly see that the OT points directly to Jesus Christ as their Messiah
- The gospel they will preach is the "gospel of the kingdom" (Cf. Matt 24:14)
- When the events of the Tribulation begin, the subsequent events will happen in rapid order. There will not be time for these 144,000 to enroll in seminary and learn Hebrew, so God in His wisdom miraculously brings to saving faith these 144,000 Jews in order to become immediate evangelists.
- These Jews will likely already know Hebrew Bible (the OT) and understand Hebrew; it won't be like a Gentile conversion where they will have to be taught the foundations of the faith.
- They will be similar to Apostle Paul...already knowledgeable in the OT Law, Jesus just connected the dots for him and the blinders were lifted from his eyes to see Jesus in the OT and recognize Him as the Messiah
- This will be equivalent to 144,000 Apostle Pauls...

**[OT reference: Ezek 9:4-6]**

(ii) Their number (v4)

**4** And I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the **sons of Israel**:

**4** And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

**4** I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000. Those who were sealed were from every tribe of Israel:

**4** And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were* sealed an hundred *and forty and* four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

- John hears the number of those sealed from an undisclosed source

- Just as God reserved 7,000 in the days of Elijah/Ahab (1 Kings 19:18; Rom 11:4), He will reserve 144,000 for Himself during the Tribulation. This 144,000 preserved (sealed) *through* the Tribulation, not "kept out" of it, as in Rev 3:10.

- "...sons of Israel" - persons of Jewish blood, believers or unbelievers, who are direct descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

— God will deal with Israel as a nation in the future (Cf. Rom 11)

— Although an Israelite may not know from which tribe they come, God does, and He (or His angelic agent) will select each person for sealing

[OT reference: Gen 49:1-28]



## The Holy Spirit in the Tribulation

Will the Spirit permanently indwell Tribulation saints as He does Christians?

**No:** After the Rapture and during the Tribulation, the ministry of the Holy Spirit will revert to what it was before the Church Age, when He “convicted and regenerated sinners.” Note that Rev 4-19 does not mention the Holy Spirit working during the Tribulation. The Church Age is a parenthesis between Daniel’s 69th and 70th Weeks, therefore conditions in the 70th Week will be as they were before the Church Age.

In the Church Age, Spirit indwelling takes place at the same instant as Spirit baptism, namely, at the moment of salvation (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 12:13). The Spirit’s indwelling is probably unique to the Church Age, as is His baptizing ministry. Probably the Holy Spirit will *come upon* and *influence* Tribulation saints as He did in the OT. The “sealing” of these 144,000 witnesses, therefore, probably indicates God’s special *selection* and *protection* of them during this time of unprecedented global catastrophes.

**Yes:** The global preaching and universal receptivity to the gospel in the end times further indicates that the Spirit will indwell Tribulation preachers (Matt 24:14; Acts 1:8; Rev 7:9 ). At the end of the Tribulation the Spirit will bring conviction and understanding to the nation Israel (Zech 12:10). Since conviction and regeneration come only through the Spirit (John 3:3-7; 16:7-11; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 2:12-15; Titus 3:15), no doubt He will carry out these ministries in the Tribulation as well. Many Jews will turn to God when Christ returns, immediately after the Great Tribulation (Zech 12:10; 14:1-5; Matt 24:29-30; Rom 11:26). Thus believing Jews will receive the Spirit before the millennium (Joel 2:26-27). Since the Spirit will indwell saints immediately after the Tribulation and in the millennium, and since there is no clear Scripture stating that His present indwelling ministry will cease, it is arguable that He will indwell believers in the Tribulation as well.

While no verse specifically states that the Holy Spirit will indwell all Tribulation saints, neither is there any verse that says that He will not. Also any regeneration of these saints would likely be done by the Spirit. The universal acceptance of the gospel and the ability of every Tribulation Saint to be a testifying overcomer further suggest that the Holy Spirit will indwell them all. God’s progressive revelation, since the Fall, has been to reveal progressively more information and give further blessings to humans in each successive time period (Phil 3:20; Col 2:17; Heb 8:6; Rev 22:3-6). The principle of progressive revelation suggests that God will provide for future saints in a way greater than He has for present-day saints. The Spirit’s ministry in the Tribulation is not detailed in Revelation, but the Gospels note the work of the Spirit in the Tribulation through His saints (Matt 10:20; Mark 13:11).

The view that God would limit the Spirit’s indwelling to Church Age Christians but not provide that ministry for saints of a later time period is questionable. The OT repeatedly states that God will put His Spirit into His people when they return to Him in the last days

(Is 32:15-16; Ezek 11:16-20; 36:26-27; 39:29; Zech 12:10; Cf. Joel 2:29). No passage prohibits the Spirit from indwelling believers beyond the Church Age. While some Jews will be involved in temple ritual (Dan 9:27; Rev 11:1), there is no indication that Gentile Tribulation Saints will function under the OT economy. Their keeping the commandments of God is part of the NT dispensation (John 14:15; 15:10; 1 John 2:3; 3:22,24; 5:3). The Tribulation will be a transitional stage between the Church Age and the messianic kingdom.

(iii) Their lineage (v5-8)

5 from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand *were* sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand,

5 from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand *were* sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand,

5 12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Reuben, 12,000 from the tribe of Gad,

5 Of the tribe of Judah *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad *were* sealed twelve thousand.

6 from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand,

6 from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand,

6 12,000 from the tribe of Asher, 12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh,

6 Of the tribe of Aser *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasseh *were* sealed twelve thousand.

7 from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Levi** twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand,

7 from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand,

7 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon, 12,000 from the tribe of Levi, 12,000 from the tribe of Issachar,

7 Of the tribe of Simeon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar *were* sealed twelve thousand.

- "...Levi" - the tribe of Levi is often listed separately in the censuses of the OT; here it is listed with the other tribes, perhaps since the Levitical ceremonies have been abandoned

8 from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, *and* from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand *were* sealed.

8 from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand *were* sealed.

8 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun, 12,000 from the tribe of Joseph, and 12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand.

- The nation of Israel is said by the Lord to be used "as a light to the nations" (Is 42:6). This statement is in a passage that speaks of Israel in a time future to today, and has never been fulfilled through Israel. It appears that the Lord will use the 144,000 Jewish, male witnesses to fulfill Is 42:7 for the Gentiles during the Tribulation.

- The list of 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel: it is impossible that God is referring to Gentiles, in any sense or degree, anywhere in this group of 144,000

— There are at least 19 lists of Jacob's sons in the OT (Gen 29:32—35:18; 35:22-26; 46:8-25; 49:3-27; Ex 1:2-5; Num 1:5-15; 2:3-31; 13:4-15; 26:4-51; 34:19-28; Deut 27:12-13; 33:6-25; Joshua 13:7—22:34; Judges 5:12-18; 1 Chr 2:1—8:40; 12:24-37; 27:16-22; Ezek 48:1-7,23-28,31-34). Not one of them is the same as the list here. Therefore, the fact that this list is unique, though consisting of 12 tribes, should not lead us to conclude that it does not describe the Israelites.

— In these OT lists, sometimes birth is followed (Gen 29:32—35:18). At other times, it is the order of Jacob's blessing them (Gen 49:3-27), the order of encampment (Num 2:3-31), the order of the census before the invasion of Canaan (Num 26:4-51), the order of blessing and cursing (Deut 27:12-13), the order of Moses' blessing (Deut 33:6-25), the order of "the princes" (Num 1:5-15), the order of inheritance (Joshua 13:7—22:34), the order by the wives and concubines (1 Chr 2:1—8:40), or the order of the gates of the city (Ezek 48:31-34).

- Judah is listed first (1 Chr 5:1-2). There are 14 names to choose from:

— Joseph provides a "baker's dozen" with Manasseh and Ephraim

— Levi: Deut 18:1-2; Joshua 13:14

- Two Tribes Missing: Dan and Ephraim. Ephraim is technically included in Joseph, but why was Dan excluded?

— Many think it was because of the idolatry that Dan practiced in the OT (Lev 24:11; Judges 8:30-31; 1 Kings 11:26; 12:28-30), Jacob's prophecy about Dan (Gen 49:17) relating him to a diabolical serpent, or that the tribe simply became extinct

— However, if Dan's sin in the OT was enough to eliminate them from being part of the 144,000, why do they show up again in the millennial kingdom (Ezek 48:1,32)?

— According to Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Joseph begat both Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen 41:50-52; 46:20), so there are actually 13 tribes instead of 12 (Joseph = Manasseh + Ephraim; Joseph - Manasseh = Ephraim). Because there are a total of 13 tribes, two tribes from Joseph (Joseph and Manasseh are both included and Dan is excluded).

— Since there are 13 tribes, when the 12 tribes are spoken of, one tribe is always left out. In Deut 33 when Moses lists the 12 tribes, Simeon and Issachar are missing; in Judges 5, Simeon and Judah are missing; in 1 Chr 27, Gad and Asher are missing. In Ezek 47-48, Levi is left out (doesn't inherit land). So we shouldn't lose too much sleep over the fact that Dan is missing...it's just that there is always one tribe left out when 12 tribes are mentioned.

— See [12 Tribes of Israel](#) for an account of how the 12 Tribes are listed throughout Scripture.

This is the time, in the first part of the Tribulation, when God will begin to make Israel the people that He purposed them to become:

Ex 19:5-6: In the OT, God's purpose for Israel was to be a "kingdom of priests" (priest stands between man and God) and a "holy nation" (set apart, different, separate from sin)

Is 42:6: "I am the LORD, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations,

But Israel failed in this cause miserably. They never became the righteous, sanctified nation that God called them to be. They were disobedient over and over again, with only occasional returns to the Lord. Thus, they were consistently being judged.

When their Messiah arrived, with 300+ OT prophecies which He fulfilled perfectly and completely, they rejected Him and then killed Him.

The Church was later commissioned to take the Gospel to all nations (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

What Israel and the Church left undone, God will take care of Himself through the sealing and ministry of these 144,000.

Rev 7:1-8 is a pledge that God still has a distinct plan for Israel. His present preservation of the nation affirms this. Recognizing that Jews and Gentiles are treated diversely in the Tribulation suggests that John's vision refers to the last days—when such distinctions will exist. During the present Church Age, God has broken down the dividing wall, but in the Great Tribulation, Jewish and predominately Gentile believers are distinguished from each other. The fact that believing Jews and Gentiles are united in the Church as the unique body of Christ (Eph 2:14; 1 Cor 12:13) indicates that the Church Age will differ from the Great Tribulation when those distinctions will again be evident.

## **Names & Meanings of 12 Tribes**

Judah	(Praise)...I will praise the Lord
Reuben	He has look on my affliction
Gad	Granted good fortune
Asher	Happy am I
Naphtali	my wrestling
Manasseh	making me to forget
Simeon	(Heard)...the Lord has heard, God hears me
Levi	(Attached)...my husband...will be attached, joined
Issachar	purchased me
Zebulun	dwelling
Joseph	will add to me
Benjamin	Son of His right hand

Order of tribes presented in Rev 7: I will praise the Lord, (for) He has looked on my affliction (and) granted good fortune. Happy am I (because) my wrestling (is) making me forget. God hears me; He has purchased me a dwelling (and) He will add to me the Son of His right hand.

## **Why Are Dan & Ephraim Missing?**

- Not uncommon: there are 19 lists of the tribes of Israel in the OT, every one of the lists is different with various tribes excluded for one reason or another
- Ephraim is actually included in this list; it is hidden in Joseph
  - Joseph = Manasseh + Ephraim; since Joseph is included, Ephraim is included by default (just hidden)
  - Manasseh is listed specifically, so is essential included twice since Joseph is also listed
- Both Dan and Ephraim were involved in idolatry in the OT
  - Dan actually introduced idolatry in Israel
  - In Deut 28:18-21, when Moses outlines the blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience to the Law, he states that if any person or tribe leads Israel into idolatry, it will cause them to be cut off from the nations.
  - Likely Dan and Ephraim are left off the list of tribes that will be sealed/protected as a punishment for their idolatry, leaving them to endure the full force of the Tribulation judgments and resulting persecution from the earth dwellers and Antichrist.

- Dan can't be extinct because that tribe shows up in the millennial kingdom (Ezek 48:1)

## Two Groups in Rev 7

- 1st Group (v1-8)
  - Jews
  - Numbered/counted
  - Sealed
  - Sealed before tribulation (four winds stopped)
- 2nd Group (v9-17)
  - all nations, tribes, peoples, and languages (Gentiles)
  - innumerable
  - Not sealed...killed/martyred
  - Converted/saved "out of" Tribulation

If the Church is present on the earth during the Tribulation period, what is the purpose of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists and the Two Witnesses (Rev 11)? Wouldn't the Church just keep evangelizing as it does now?

### (b) The Awakening (v9-17)

The scene in v9-14 presents the event that was anticipated in 5:9-10. There "four living creatures and the 24 Elders" (v7) are seen praising the Lamb for paying the purchase price to save individuals from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. They anticipate people from each nation ruling as priests on the earth. Then in Rev 7 the fulfillment of that anticipation is revealed as John was shown redeemed people from every nation (v9). This great salvation of individuals from every nation has not yet been realized. It will come in the future when the gospel will have been preached in the whole world (Matt 24:14).

### (i) Salvation's quantity (v9)

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

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

**9** After these things, I looked, and there was a crowd so large that no one was able to count it! They were from every nation, tribe, people, and language. They were standing in

front of the throne and the lamb and were wearing white robes, with palm branches in their hands.

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

- The scene now shifts from earth to heaven...where we see a second group of people who are protected from God's wrath, but for a different reason: they have been removed from the earth through death (martyrdom) and now have no need of protective sealing.

- "After these things I looked" - *meta tauta* followed by a verb of perception (Cf. v1), indicating that this passage is the next thing that God showed John, the next thing John saw. It is a new and distinct vision from the previous one (v1-8).

- John used *meta* with the accusative to show what he saw after his vision of the 144,000. This is distinct from the use of *meta* with the genitive, which stresses a close association of two things. Thus, the grammar indicates that the second vision is distinct from the first.

- God first showed John the servants He would use to bring about this great spiritual awakening (v1-8). Now God says I'll show you the results of the work of these servants (v9-17).

- Why doesn't John see God using the Church here? The Church has been God's hands and feet on this earth to promote and preach the gospel for the past 2000 years, but here there is no mention of the Church...because the Church is not on the earth.

- What the Church has left undone as far as evangelism, the 144,000 will pick up and carry on

- These redeemed Jews (the 144,000) are in a separate category from many redeemed Gentiles (Tribulation Saints). Since this is not the case during the Church Age (Eph 2:11-16); this supports a pre-Tribulational Rapture.

- "...a great multitude which no one could count" - this multitude are Tribulation Saints, God's redeemed saints on the earth during the Tribulation. They died (or were martyred) during the Tribulation (v14), whose souls are now in heaven.

- These martyrs in heaven are those who are saved directly or indirectly through the ministry of the 144,000, and likely are the same as described in the 5th Seal (6:9-11)

- Several times in Revelation the term *hagios* ("holy ones" or "saints") is used to identify the people of God in the Tribulation (8:3-4; 11:18; 13:7,10; 14:12; 16:6; 17:6). It is a regular apocalyptic term derived from the LXX of Dan 7:18,21-22,25,27) referring to faithful Jews.

- John gives us a general, non-specific figure, in contrast to the very specific numbers (12,000, 144,000) in v1-8

- If John (or the Holy Spirit) wanted to communicate a non-specific number of Jews from each tribe, he could have easily used a phrase such as this

- "...from every nation and *all the* tribes, peoples, and languages" - Jews and Gentiles together (Cf. 5:9; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15; Gen 17:4-6; 35:11; 48:19)

— This is the fulfillment of God's plan for reconciling all nations to Himself. This plan was unfolded in the OT:

- Israel was to be a kingdom of priests to attract the world to God (Gen 12:3; Ex 19:5-6; Deut 4:6; Ps 67:3-4; 86:9; 96:3; 117:1)
- The NT later recorded how the Church was commissioned to take the gospel to all nations (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8), predicting a time when the fullness of Gentile salvation will be completed (Rom 11:25-26).

— Four classes of people to describe the universal nature of the multitude; same term used in 5:9, where it is widely interpreted as universal

— This verse is a preview of a yet-future event, and is the fulfillment of Matt 24:14; Mark 13:10 says that the gospel "must" be preached to all nations before the end of the age

— In view of the very large number described, they cannot represent Christians who died during the first century, as preterists believe

— Amillennialists view this group as including the entire Church, including the last generation of Christians, in heaven

— These believers are the result of Abrahamic Covenant blessings...all nations of the earth will be blessed

- "...clothed in white robes" - symbolic of the imputed righteousness received through faith in Christ (Cf. 3:4-5; 6:11; 7:13; Cf. Dan 11:35; 12:10); see note on v14

— We are unable to stand before the Lamb in our own righteousness; the only way to stand before Him is to be clothed in His righteousness (Phil 3:9)

- "...palm branches were in their hands" - symbolic of their victory (over the Antichrist) and joy; palms anticipate the Messiah saving Israel (John 12:13)

— A Greek and Roman custom involved holding palm branches to proclaim triumphs; ancient Jews also held palm branches as a symbol of victory. Tribulation Saints will be honored for their victory over sin and the Antichrist (2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21; 12:11; 15:2; 21:7).

— Their specific victory will be overcoming Satan (12:11) and the Antichrist and his system (13:8,10; 14:11-12; 15:2; 20:4). Instead of worshiping the beast, Tribulation Saints will be victorious because they kept God's commandments and maintained their testimony for Christ (6:9; 12:11,17; 14:12; 15:2; 20:4).

[OT reference: Lev 23:40]

(ii) Salvation's praises (v10-12)

(a) By Gentiles (v10)



10 and they **\*cried out with a loud voice**, saying, "**Salvation** belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

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

10 They cried out in a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the lamb!"

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

- Their song points to the One responsible for their victory...

- "...cried out" - *krazō*, screaming out; same word to describe the demons screaming out at Jesus (Matt 8:29); yelling out at the top of their lungs demonstrating their depth of gratitude

- "...with a loud voice" - *megas phōnē*, where we get the word "megaphone"

- This wasn't people speaking in a loud voice, it was an innumerable crowd screaming at the tops of their lungs, as if each one had a megaphone

- These Tribulation Saints praise God and the Lamb for their salvation, specifically their physical deliverance from the Tribulation scene and their consequent victory in heaven (Cf. 12:10; 19:1)

- "...Salvation" - *sōtēria*, not salvation from sin (justification), but deliverance or preservation from danger; victory over their persecutors (Cf. 12:10; 19:1)

- Used 3x in Rev (here; 12:10; 19:1); the usage in 12:10; 19:1 refer to the victory of Tribulation Saints overcoming and avenging Satan and his dominion

- Here, the greatest harvest of souls the world has ever seen will take place!

- Written in Is 49:10-12; 60:1-3; Joel 2:28-32 (quoted in Acts 2:16-21) linked with these prophecies of the Great Tribulation

- The Feast of Tabernacles is related to what John saw here: the multitude of believers had entered into their rest, something that the Feast of Tabernacles anticipated (Cf. Deut 16:13-15; Neh 8:15)

- The Jews also used palm branches in the celebration of the feast, which was a time of great joy

[OT reference: Ps 3:8]

(b) By angels, elders, four living creatures (v11-12)

11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and *around* the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,

11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and *around* the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,

11 All the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell on their faces in front of the throne and worshipped God,

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

- The vibrant song of the multitude of Tribulation martyrs prompts the other groups already in heaven (angels, 24 Elders, four living creatures) to renew their worship (5:11-12)

- Although angels do not experience victory and salvation in the same sense as humans, they still rejoice over a repentant sinner (Luke 15:10) and have an intense desire to learn more about the salvation available to mankind (1 Peter 1:12)

- Note that the "angels" and the "elders" are distinct groups, demonstrating that the elders are not angels

12 saying, "**Amen, blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and might***belong* to our God **forever and ever. Amen.**"

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

12 saying, "Amen! Praise, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, power, and strength be to our God forever and ever! Amen!"

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

- "Amen" - an endorsement of the worship/tribute of the multitude; the angels, 24 Elders, and four living creatures then offer worship/tribute of their own (Cf. 5:12)

- "...blessing" - *eulogia*, praise; what God deserves because of what He will do for these people (Cf. 5:12-13)

- It is that spontaneous act of thanks which men utter when they realize their happiness more vividly than ever before

- "...glory" - *doxa*, the honor due Him because of His good reputation, specifically for delivering them (Cf. 1:6; 4:11; 5:12-13; 19:1)

- "...wisdom" - *sophia*, God's infinite knowledge as displayed in His plan of deliverance (Cf. 5:12)

- "...thanksgiving" - *eucharistia*, literally means "well" and "to give freely"; denotes an expression of gratitude for a favor rendered

- "...honor" - *timē*, honor or esteem in recognition of God's provision of salvation

- "...power" - *dynamis*, reflects God's omnipotence that enables Him to overcome all opposition; God has delivered this multitude from the most formidable forces the earth has to offer

- "...might" - *ischys*, strength; God's inherent power that enabled Him to deliver this multitude from their enemies

- "...forever and ever" - this exaltation of God is not temporary; it continues on forever. God is worthy of this worship throughout eternity.
- "...Amen" - the final Amen validates the truthfulness of these characterizations of God

### (iii) Salvation's timing (v13-14)

Verses 13-17 interpret the vision of v9-12 (not v1-8), another indication that the vision of v1-8 and the vision of v9-12 are two separate visions. None of the elements in v1-8 are referred to in the interpretation of v13-17.

#### (a) Question (v13)

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

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

**13** "Who are these people wearing white robes," one of the elders asked me, "and where did they come from?"

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

- One of the 24 Elders intervenes (Cf. 5:5) to interpret the vision John is seeing, by anticipating a question that John is getting ready to ask

- "...responded" - *apekrithē*, answered; however, note that no question has been asked. The Elder is anticipating a question in John's mind, in order to interpret and clarify the vision.

— Occasionally in prophetic visions, a dialogue takes place involving one of the characters in the vision and the person seeing it (Cf. Jer 1:11,13; Amos 7:8; 8:2; Zech 4:2,5) in order to help us understand or interpret the vision

— The fact that John could not identify these saints without an interpreter supports the view that they were not from John's time, but from a time yet future

- "...who are they" - their identity

- "...where have they come from?" - their origin

#### (b) Answer (v14)

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

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

14 I told him, "Sir, you know." Then he told me, "These are the people who are coming out of the terrible suffering. "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb.

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

- "My lord, you know" - means "I don't know"; it's a confession of ignorance and a request for more information

- Reminds of Ezekiel's answer to God when he saw the vision of dry bones when God asked Ezekiel if the dry bones could live (Ezek 37:3)

- "...come" - *erchomai*, present tense, meaning the arrival of this multitude was a continuous action over time, not a one-time event

- This multitude didn't arrive in heaven at the same time; they arrived gradually, through a process over time during the Tribulation period

- They don't arrive in heaven together "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," thus these cannot be Church Age saints and a reference to the Rapture. They arrive in heaven as they are martyred one-by-one for their belief in Christ.

- "...out of" - *ek*, a primary preposition denoting origin; means "from, out of...the place, time or cause" of a specified event

- This group is distinguished from believers prior to the Tribulation because they are already in heaven (Rapture)

- Later John wrote that these victorious saints come out of the Great Tribulation as martyrs for their faith in Christ (12:11)

- "...great tribulation" - beginning (Dan 9:27; Rev 6:1); the seven-year time period covered in Rev 4-19

- Jesus coined the term "the Great Tribulation" (Matt 24:15,21), and identified it as the second half of Daniel's 70th Week (Matt 24:15-22; Mark 13:14-20; Cf. Dan 9:27)

- Many people (incorrectly) think that the first half of the Tribulation is not so bad...the Antichrist comes, but mostly everything is peaceful. It's the second half, after the abomination of desolation, where things get really bad. Jesus gave this time period the name "great tribulation" (Matt 24:21).

- However, this view is not backed up by Scripture. The Seal judgments and the Trumpet judgments all happen during the first half of the Tribulation

- So why then does the Elder label the first half of the Tribulation as the "great tribulation" (v14) and Jesus label the second half of the Tribulation the "great tribulation"? In v14, the elder is showing John the *Gentile* martyrs who die for their faith in the first half of the Tribulation (when Israel is in relative peace); Jesus is addressing *Jews* in Matt 24:21, telling them to get out of town and flee after the abomination of desolation.

- "...they have washed" - *eplynan*, aorist indicative, looks back to a time when the cleansing occurred in the life of each member of the multitude, while they were still on earth
    - Through faith, they have appropriated the cleansing provision of the Lamb's sacrifice (Acts 15:9)
  - "...their robes" - note that their "robes" were washed in the past, while on earth, indicating their justification and imputation of Christ's righteousness
    - Since these believers exist as souls at this point, and their resurrection will occur after the Second Coming (20:4), these robes are symbolic
  - "...made them white" - *eleukanan*, as with *eplynan*, looks back in time, not to their justification, but to their (positional) sanctification. However, they are one act (not two separate acts).
  - "...blood of the Lamb" - making something white by washing it in blood is a paradox; the washing denotes spiritual purity
    - Not just any blood would accomplish the cleansing, particularly not the blood of the martyrs shed for the Lamb's sake. It had to be the blood of the Lamb's great sacrifice to produce the whiteness (Rev 1:5; 5:9; Cf. Rom 3:25; 5:9; Eph 1:7; Col 1:20; Heb 9:14; 1 Peter 1:2,19; 1 John 1:7).
- [OT reference: Gen 49:11; Ex 19:11,14; Is 61:10]

(iv) Salvation's provision (v15-17)

(a) Their service (v15)

- 15 **For** this reason they are before the throne of God, and they serve Him day and night in His temple; **and** He who sits on the throne will **spread His tabernacle over them**.
- 15 For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them.
- 15 That is why: "They are in front of the throne of God and worship him night and day in his Temple. The one who sits on the throne will shelter them.
- 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.
- These Tribulation Saints are in God's presence because they believed in Jesus Christ and died during the Tribulation
  - "For...and" - the causal use of *Dia* (For, or "therefore") with *touto...kai* indicates that both their priestlike function and their seven-fold destiny are based on the deliverance that God has given them
  - "they serve" - *latreuō*, present tense, meaning the innumerable multitude of martyrs were serving God day and night *at that time*

— The Elder described the saints' temple service in the present tense ("serve"), and their seven-fold rewards (v15b-17) are indicated by the future tense. This indicates that John previewed the saints' current priest-like service, then used the progressive future tense to reveal what would be provided for them after that service period (in the Eternal State, 21:1-4).

- "...will spread His tabernacle over them" - to "tabernacle" means "to dwell continuously"; to take up residence with someone. The first of seven rewards the Elder promised the Tribulation Saints (v15b-17).

— This is much more than mere protection or shelter; He will set up His place of residence, revealing His Shekinah glory, among these Tribulation Saints (John 1:14; Rev 12:12; 13:6; 21:3)

— This sacred fellowship is not unique to Tribulation Saints; it is a promised reward for all believers (Matt 5:8; 1 Cor 13:12; 1 John 3:2)

— The Elder's description recalls the OT instances of God dwelling among and protecting His people (Cf. Ex 13:21-22; 40:34-38; 2 Chr 7:1-3)

[OT reference: Lev 26:11]

(b) Their satisfaction (v16)

16 They will **no longer hunger nor thirst, nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any scorching heat;**

16 They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat;

16 They will never be hungry or thirsty again. Neither the sun nor its heat will ever beat down on them,

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

- "...no longer hunger nor thirst" - the second of three provisions for these Tribulation Saints: they will no longer experience the discomforts of their earthly lives (hunger, thirst, heat exhaustion)

— In promising the prospect of never hungering or thirsting again, the Elder quoted Is 49:10 [LXX], but added *eti* 2x ("no more," "any more"), strengthening the idea of "never again"

— These Saints likely suffered hunger and thirst during the Tribulation. Refusing to worship the Antichrist will limit them from buying and selling, resulting in lack of food and drink. The promise of never hungering or thirsting again is an appropriate reward for such sacrifice.

- "...nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any scorching heat" - the third reward is a promise of physical protection from the elements

— The emphatic construction emphasizes the utter impossibility of the sun falling upon this group. This promise adapts the literal terms of Is 49:10 to the situation of the Tribulation Saints.

— Freedom from any heat would be a blessed contrast to the scorching pain saints might face in the later stages of the Great Tribulation. The 4th Bowl judgment will bring great heat from the sun (16:8-9).

[OT reference: Ps 121:5-6; Is 49:10]

(c) Their shepherd (v17)

17 **for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."**

17 for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

17 because the lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs filled with the water of life, and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

- "for" - *hoti*, because; the causal use of *hoti* suggests the reason for three previous provisions: the Lamb's position in the center of the throne, and His shepherding, will assure these saints of His provision and protection

- "...in the center of the throne " - the Lamb is now seen standing before the middle (in the center) of the throne. This identifies Him with the Lamb in 5:6, who was "in the midst" of God's throne.

— He will provide for them as a good shepherd takes care of his sheep (Cf. Ps 23:1-4; Is 40:11; Ezek 34:23; John 10:11,14; Heb 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:2-4)

— He will refresh them as well as protect them (Cf. Ex 15:13; Deut 1:33; Ps 5:11-12; 85:11; John 16:13)

- "...shepherd" - *poimanei*, the idea of Christ as a "shepherd" of His sheep is pervasive throughout the OT and NT (Ps 23:1-4; Is 40:11; Ezek 34:23; John 10:11,14; Heb 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:2-4)

- "...guide them to springs of the water of life" - besides protection, the shepherd is also responsible to provide for their refreshment

— "[He will] guide" - *hodēgēsei*, shepherding care by showing the eternal blessedness awaiting those who belong to God

— The same verb is used (LXX) to describe God's guidance of Israel (Ex 15:13; Deut 1:33), of individual lives (Ps 5:9; 85:11), and in the NT to describe the work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13)

- "...wipe every tear from their eyes" - the other means of providing for the needs of God's people is by counteracting sorrow
- Tears in the eyes denote the sorrow of God's people because of the pressures of life on earth
- God will not remove tears from believers' cheeks; He will remove tears "out of" their eyes, that is, He will remove the source of pain that causes tears, namely the present order, which involves death (Cf. Is 25:8)
- The contrast between the recent struggles of this multitude and the exuberance for which they are destined is pictured as a sudden change from sorrow to delight. It enhances the magnitude of their eternal bliss.
- This promise is restated in practically identical wording in Rev 21:3  
[OT reference: Ps 23:1-2; Is 25:8; Ezek 34:23]

### **The Rewarding of Tribulation Saints** [Tribulation Saints \(4\)](#)

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| - Rev 7:15b-17  | - Rev 21:3b-4,6b                      |
| - Prediction of Rewards   | - Reception of Rewards                |
| - "...He who sits on the throne will spread His men, and He will                    | - "...the tabernacle of God is among  |
| tabernacle over them" (Rev 7:15b)   | dwell among them..." (Rev 21:3b)      |
| - "They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; from their eyes;                 | - "And he will wipe away every tear   |
| nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; death; there will no              | and there will no longer be any       |
| for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be longer be any mourning, or crying, |                                       |
| their shepherd, and will guide them to springs to the one who                       | things have passed away...I will give |
| of the water of life; and God will wipe every thirsts from the spring of the water  |                                       |
| of life without   |                                       |
| tear from their eyes (Rev 7:16-17)  | cost" (Rev 21:4,6b)                   |

Being familiar with the OT, John's readers could understand that, like a shepherd, God will guide their ventures (Gen 48:15), strengthen their labors (49:24), meet all their physical and spiritual needs (Ps 23), direct their outcome (Ps 80:1), and nurture them (Is 40:11). In the future He will deliver them from being prey to their enemies, and He will bring them back to Himself (Ezek 34:22). These shepherding ministries picture what God the Son will do in rewarding His Tribulation saints throughout eternity.



Since John envisioned end time events, it is reasonable that he would single out Jews for unique blessings. Distinctions in kingdom blessings are predicted for Jewish and Gentile believers in the end times (Ezek 39:7; Zech 14:14,16; Rom 11:11,25–27). Although John used words that referred to the fulfillment of OT prophecies concerning Israel (7:15–17; Cf. Is 49:10; Ezek 37:27), the statements in 7:15–17 describe similar blessings that Gentiles will receive, as noted in 21:3–4.

The ultimate fulfillment of these seven promises (v15b–17) will come in the Eternal State (Rev 21–22). While each of the seven rewards contains some aspect of literal fulfillment, each one also figuratively pictures God's pledge to be present with Tribulation Saints to protect, shepherd and comfort them. These rewards are also promised for today's believers in order to encourage them to be faithful (21:1–5).