

THOSE SAVED IN TRIBULATION (Revelation 7)

Read Revelation 7:1-17 (NIV)

****What Scholars Say****

THE SEALING OF THE 144,000 OF ISRAEL

Rev. 7:1-3. The question was raised in Rev. 6:17 whether any would be saved when the great Day of God's wrath has come. This is answered in Revelation chapter 7. Two classes or groups of the saved are now mentioned: (1) the servants of God numbering 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel (Rev. 7:1-8), and (2) those of all nations who, though saved spiritually, are martyred (Rev. 7:9-17). Chapter 7 is a parenthesis between the sixth and seventh seals (Rev. 8:1), revealing those who are faithful to Christ during this tribulation time.

REV 7:[1] After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.

Four angels stand at four key positions on **the earth**. Their purpose is to turn off the essential engine of our earth's atmosphere.

Rev. 7: [2] Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: [3] "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God."

This judgment (of turning off the engine of our earth's atmosphere) is stopped for a short period of time until a **seal** is put on **the foreheads** of the 144,000 **servants of our God**. This protects the servants of God from the harm that these four angels are bringing to the earth. Much like God protected Noah from the Flood, Israel from the plagues of Egypt, and Rahab and her household in Jericho. These 144,000 servants of God will be protected from the angels harm.

Seals in the ancient world were signs of ownership (Rev. 5:1). These servants of the Lord are sealed just before the scroll is completely unsealed in Rev. 8:1.

[4] Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

***REV 7:[5] From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed,
from the tribe of Reuben 12,000,
from the tribe of Gad 12,000,***

*REV 7:[6] from the tribe of Asher 12,000,
from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000,
from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000,*

*REV 7:[7] from the tribe of Simeon 12,000,
from the tribe of Levi 12,000,
from the tribe of Issachar 12,000,*

*REV 7:[8] from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000,
from the tribe of Joseph 12,000,
from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000.*

THE MULTITUDE OF MARTYRS (Rev. 7:9-17)

REV 7:[9] After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. [10] And they cried out in a loud voice:

*"Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb."*

REV 7:[11] All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, [12] saying:

*"Amen!
Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honor
and power and strength
be to our God forever and ever.
Amen!"*

Rev. 7:9-12. Then John saw a **multitude** of people **from every nation, tribe, people, and language**, who were **standing before the throne** (i.e., before God the Father) **and in front of the Lamb**. This were **wearing white robes** and **holding palm branches**, apparently signifying Christ righteous and triumph. As this multitude ascribed salvation to God and to the Lamb, **all the angels, the 24 elders, and the 4 living creatures** joined them in worship.

REV 7:[13] Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes--who are they, and where did they come from?"

REV 7:[14] I answered, "Sir, you know."

And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. [15] Therefore,

*"they are before the throne of God
and serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.*

*REV 7:[16] Never again will they hunger;
never again will they thirst.
The sun will not beat upon them,
nor any scorching heat.*

*REV 7:[17] For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd;
he will lead them to springs of living water.
And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

Rev. 7:13-17. One of the 24 elders asked about the origin of those who stood **in white robes**. When John indicated that he did not know the answer (v. Revelation 7:14 a) the elder himself answered the question as to who this multitude was and where they came from: **These are they who have come out of the Great Tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

It seems evident that these "who have come out of the Great Tribulation" have been martyred and were then safe in heaven. They were given the special privilege of being before God's **throne** and serving **Him day and night in His temple**. They were protected by God Himself and never again would they experience **hunger...thirst**, or **scorching heat**, with the implication that this was their experience of suffering on earth. They were under the special shepherd-care of **the Lamb** and were drinking from springs of living water. The narration concludes with the comforting truth that all their tears would be wiped away.

The two groups seen by John were the 144,000 Israelites who were sealed, and a great multitude from every nation, who were not thus protected and who were martyred in the Great Tribulation.

Though the chapters of Revelation are not all in chronological order, chapter 7 depicts a scene in heaven which precedes the second coming of Christ to the earth. Those seen in heaven were said to "come out of the Great Tribulation" (Rev. 7:14). The chapter accordingly indicates how they will be marvelously blessed in heaven after their trials on earth. The 144,000 will appear again in Rev.14:1-5, and a multitude of martyrs who were killed for refusing to worship the beast will appear in Rev. 20:4.

****My Thoughts****

What is the point of a passage like this?

1. Christ has called all of us as believers to lay down our lives for Him. For some of us it will end in martyrdom. For others it will involve laying down our lives in more of a practical way - *1JN 3:[16] This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. [17] If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? [18] Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. [19] This then is how we know that we belong to the truth...(NIV)*

The Martyrs: Acts 6:15 - *AC 6:[15] All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel. Acts 7:51-60 - AC 7:[51] "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! [52] Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him-- [53] you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it."*

AC 7:[54] When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. [55] But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. [56] "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

AC 7:[57] At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, [58] dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

AC 7:[59] While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." [60] Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Those God calls to lay down their lives in other ways: Read Acts 12:1-19 (NIV)

Peter's time of death – 2 Peter 1:13-15 *[13] I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, [14] because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. [15] And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things. (NIV)*

What is the application for us? Read Daniel 3 (NIV)

God calls us by His grace to this kind of saving faith - Think about it!

Only an act of grace could sustain us thru this.

See also Luke 14:25-33 LK 14:[25] Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: [26] "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters--yes, even his own life--he cannot be my disciple. [27] And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. (NIV)

****Questions****

1. Who did John see after the breaking of the first six seals? (7:1)
2. Where were the four angels located? (7:1)
3. What were the four angels at the four "corners of the earth" doing? Why? (7:1)
4. What did John see coming from the east? (7:2)
5. What did the angel from the east have in his possession? (7:2)
6. What power or authority did the four angels possess? (7:2)
7. What did the angel from the east say to the other four angels? (7:3)
8. When were the angels given permission to "harm the land and the sea"? (7:3)
9. What people were marked? How? (7:4)
10. How many individuals were sealed in John's vision? (7:4)
11. How many individuals were sealed from each of the 12 tribes of Israel? (7:4-8)
12. What did John see after seeing the revelation of the 144,000 sealed servants of God? (7:9)
13. Where did John see a great throng of people? (7:9)
14. What were the people John saw wearing and holding? (7:9)
15. What was the crowd before the throne saying? (7:10)
16. What group was around the throne worshiping? (7:11)
17. What were the angels, the elders, and the four creatures saying to God and about God? (7:12)
18. Who spoke to John and what did this person say? (7:13)

19. How did John respond to the elder's question? (7:14)
20. How did the elder explain the identity of those wearing the white robes? (7:14)
21. What is the main job of the believers who come out of the great tribulation? (7:15)
22. What blessings await those who are martyred in the great tribulation? (7:16-17)
23. What is the involvement of the Lamb with those in white robes? (7:17)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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