***Reviewing Revelation—Chapter 7—The pause, the 144,000, and the Great Multitude***

**Let’s Review...**  **When the elders explain something to John, they are explaining things going on in heaven. When the living creatures explain something to him, it pertains to the earth. Revelation 6-19, details the Seventieth Week of Daniel. After the Lamb begins to open the seals, the tribulation begins, Chapter 6. In Luke 21:36, Jesus says, “Pray always that you will be able to escape.” “Escape” what? John never asks a question in the entire book of Revelation.**

1. **Review the “Pause Sections” in Revelation: Rev. 7:1-17, Rev. 10:1-11, Rev. 11:1-14, Rev. 12, Rev. 13, and Rev. 14.**
	1. **Why do you think John chooses to pause in strategic locations? The first pause answers the question in Rev.6:7, “Who can stand?”**
2. **There are two divisions in the Chapter 7: Sealed Servants (1-8) Saved Servants (9-17)**
3. **Why is Chapter 7 called the “parenthesis?”**
4. **Who are the angels mentioned in verse 1-2? All action stops momentarily, waiting for the other events.**
5. **What are the four corners of the earth? What are the four winds? Is this implying that the earth is flat? N., S., E., W.**
6. **In Verse 2, describe the angel? Is there a difference between this angel and the first four mentioned in verse 1?**
7. **This angel that “seals the 144,000” comes from the east; the 144,000 are gazing toward the “sun rising.” Read Malachi 4:2 and compare the similarity.**
8. **Discuss the “until” clause in verse 3-4? Until the 144,000 Jews are sealed**
9. **God’s sovereignty is obvious throughout this section of Revelation. Compare with Psalm 135:6-7.**
10. **Discuss “sealed” in verse 3-4.**  Jewish, virgin, young men, from the 12 tribes. Children of Israel.
11. **Did John actually “see” the 144,000?**
12. **Read I Kings 19:18 and examine the 7,000 Jews in the days of Ahab who did not bow the knee to Baal. Also refer to Romans 11:4-6. Are these similar to the “remnant” of the tribes of Israel in Rev. 7.**
13. **Name the tribes mentioned in verse 5-**8. **Which tribes are missing from the original 12 tribes?** This is literal. 12,000 from 12 tribes. **Read. Genesis 35:23-26 and Exodus 1:1-4. And detail the 12 tribes of Israel. Zilpah—Gad and Asher, Leah—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Rachel—Joseph (Manasseh and Ephraim), Benjamin, Bilhah—Dan, Naphtali---the Twelve Tribes…29 times in the Bible the 12 tribes are listed. Often the list is different. Joseph’s sons are often listed as two, and sometimes as one. There is a difference between the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve sons of Israel. “Israel” is the name that God gave Jacob (**[**Genesis 32:28**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Genesis%2032.28)**). His twelve sons are Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin (**[**Genesis 35:23-26**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Genesis%2035.23-26)**;[Exodus 1:1-4](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exodus%201.1-4%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank);**[**1 Chronicles 2:1-2**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Chronicles%202.1-2)**). When the tribes inherited the Promised Land, Levi's descendants did not receive a territory for themselves. Instead, they became priests and had several cities scattered throughout all of Israel. Joseph did not receive a tribe, either—Jacob had adopted Joseph’s two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, essentially giving Joseph a double portion for his faithfulness in saving the family from famine (**[**Genesis 47:11-12**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Genesis%2047.11-12)**). This makes the tribes as listed in Joshua: Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh. Adding to the confusion, the tribe of Ephraim is sometimes referred to as the tribe of Joseph (**[**Numbers 1:32-33**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Numbers%201.32-33)**). Ephraim and Dan are often referred to as regions; these are not fixed regions. Paul was the tribe of Benjamin.**
14. **In Genesis 49:1-28, the Bible gives us some prophecies about the tribes of Israel. Notice what was said about the tribe of Dan. Dan and Ephraim are missing; both went into idolatry, Dan first. "DAN SHALL BE A SERPENT BY THE WAY, AN ADDER IN THE PATH THAT BITETH THE HORSE HEELS, SO THAT HIS RIDER SHALL FALL BACKWARD." We know it was the serpent that deceived Eve, and threw all of mankind backward into sin. Notice the similar language in Genesis 3:1-15, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Some people think that the false prophet will come from the tribe of Dan.**

**NOTE: The tribes of Dan and Ephraim are missing because they introduced idolatry into Israel. Deut. 29:18-21, says that the man, or woman, or family, or TRIBE that should introduce idolatry into Israel, should have their or its name “blotted out” from under heaven, and be separated out of the tribes of Israel. They both allowed Jeroboam to set up golden calves in their territories to be worshipped, one at Dan, in the tribe of Dan, and the other at Bethel, in the tribe of Ephraim. Joseph and Levi are substituted.**

****

***Meanings of the names of the tribes: read as a sentence...***

**Judah—Praise of God**

**Reuben—Viewing the Son**

**Gad—A Troop is coming**

**Asher—Blessed**

**Naphtali—Wrestling or Striving**

**Manasseh—Forgetfulness**

**Simeon—Hearing or obeying**

**Levi—Joining or ‘cleaving to’**

**Issachar—Reward**

**Zebulun—To Dwell**

**Joseph—Added**

**Benjamin—Son of My Right Hand**



1. **Where is the tribe of Dan? Read Genesis 49:17.Jacob speaks of Dan as a serpent…. ….Moses’ prophecy; Moses will leap from Bashan….Dan of his own accord, moves north into Golan Heights. The tribe would not help with the battle where Deborah and Sisera are involved; he becomes a sea-faring tribe. I Chronicles 1-8, the tribe of Dan is missing. He is not mentioned in the sealed 144,000 in Revelation. He’s the tribe through which idolatry entered the land, also apostasy. He sponsors a golden calf by Jeroboam. Read Deut. 29:18-23, Lev. 24: 10-16, Judges 18:1, 2, 30-31.and Jeremiah 8:16. idolaters have their name blotted out. Where is the tribe of Ephraim? Hosea 4:17 and Ezekiel 48:1-2 refer to Jeroboam’s idolatry; why does this affect Ephraim? It is often mentioned with Joseph or Manasseh. Ephraim is included in the Joseph name. Because Ephraim was associated with Jeroboam’s idolatry at Bethel. In the book of Ezekiel 48:1-2, Dan is given land in the Millennium, although his tribe is not spared through the great tribulation, also Ephraim.**
2. **How are the “sealed 144,000 Jews” a type of Noah? Enoch a type of “the raptured church?” Compare this to the passage in Ezekiel 9:1-22.**
3. **Verse 9 starts the second half of this chapter. Who is this multitude? How large is this? Are they Jews only? Describe the attributes of this multitude. These have palms in their hands; they cry with a loud voice, these are the redeemed from the tribulation. They are saved out of the tribulation.**
4. **Compare the “palms” in this scene to the “palm branches” in John 12:12-16. Could this be a “second chance” for those “Jewish folks” that didn’t accept Jesus on that Palm Sunday so very long ago. Reflect.**
5. **Name the two groups we see in Chapter 7. 144,000 evangelist-Jews in 7:4 and the vast multitude in 7:9. Link the “multitude” to the sixth seal in Rev. 6:12-17.**
6. **What is the song/ prayer the multitude sings? All of the worship is directed to God and Jesus Christ.**
7. **List the 7-fold “worship words” in verse 12.**
8. **Read Ephesians 2:8. Comment on their salvation, the “gift of God.”**
9. **Verse 16 points back to the “seal judgments.” Elaborate.**
10. **What does “wash their robes?” How are they different from the elders? These are redeemed out of the tribulation by the 144,000 sealed Jews. They are not crowned; they stand before Him and serve Him day and night. They are not “John’s” bunch; John did not recognize them. They are different than the 24 elders. These are two different groups.**
11. **Distinguish what the job is for these redeemed?**
12. **Re-read Rev. 6:9-11, the Fifth Seal. Compare this to the multitude you are now viewing. Are these the martyrs mentioned in the Fifth Seal? Yes; this is not the church, because John did not know them. These are the tribulation martyrs.**
13. **Read Isaiah 53: 4-6, Matthew 26:28, Ephesians 1:7, Ephesians 2:13, and Hebrews 9:11, 13—discuss how these verses about redemption apply to the multitude seen in Rev. 7.**
14. **Who asked John about the multitude? An elder. Rev. 7:16**
15. **Who will lead these redeemed? The lamb**
16. **What are the tears? Why are they crying? Read Rev. 21:4.**
17. **In Verse 15, what does “serve” mean? Is this a different task than the “church?” Read Rev. 3:21.**
18. **Discuss thirst. Compare Isaiah 12:2-3, Jeremiah 2:13, I Cor, 10:2-4, and John 6:35.**
19. **In chapter 14, there is an illusion back to the 144,000. Read Rev. 14:1-5. And discuss.**
20. **Contrast the Tribulation Saints with the 24 Elders (The Church):**

**Not Crowned Crowned**

**Palms in hands Harps in hands, no palms**

**Saved “out of “tribulation “Kept out of” tribulation-- Rev. 3:10**

**Stand before thrones Sit on thrones—I Cor. 6:2-3**

**Serve Him day and night Reign as kings and priests**

**Not recognized by John (I Cor. 6:2-3, I Pet. 2:9, Rev. 1:6)**

***And, here are the promises:***

**2 Peter 1:19, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.”**

A. The 144,000.

1. (1-3) Holding back judgment until the servants of God are sealed.

**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. 2And 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, 3Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.**

a. **Four angels standing at the four corners of the earth**: The phrase **four corners of the earth** is an ancient (and sometimes modern) equivalent to the idea of "the four points of the compass." The idea is that these angels effect the entire earth.

b. **Holding the four winds of the earth**: These **winds** were a destructive force of God's judgment, as they often are in the Old Testament.

i. [Hosea 13:15](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Hosea+13:15&t1=en_nas) gives an example: *Though he is fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come; the wind of the Lord shall come from the wilderness. Then his spring will become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up.*

ii. The **four winds of the earth** may refer back to the four horsemen of [Revelation 6:1-8](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+6:1-8&t1=en_nas), after the pattern of [Zechariah 6:1-8](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Zechariah+6:1-8&t1=en_nas). In that passage, four chariots with horses of the same colors of [Revelation 6:1-8](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+6:1-8&t1=en_nas) go out to all the earth, and are called *the four spirits of heaven*. *Spirits* in that passage translates the Hebrew word *ruach*, which can also be translated *winds*.

c. **Another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God**: Another angel had a **seal**, and he sealed the people of God. In the ancient world, such seals were familiar. A king or a property owner could use a seal to show ownership or authenticity.

d. **Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads**: These servants of God will receive a protective seal on their forehead, containing God's name in some manner ([Revelation 14:1](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+14:1&t1=en_nas)).

i. In [Ezekiel 9:4](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Ezekiel+9:4&t1=en_nas), a similar protective seal was given to the righteous before Jerusalem was judged.

e. **The servants of our God**: We are not told what exactly their service is, but the 144,000 are sealed for a specific and unique purpose. However, the general idea of being sealed is not limited to them.

i. Jesus was sealed; *God the Father has set His seal on Him.* ([John 6:27](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=John+6:27&t1=en_nas))

ii. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit as a down payment of our eventual total redemption. Paul wrote: *God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.* ([2 Corinthians 1:21-22](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=2%20Corinthians+1:21-22&t1=en_nas))

iii. This sealing of the Holy Spirit belongs to every believer when they are saved: *having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.* ([Ephesians 1:13](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Ephesians+1:13&t1=en_nas))

iv. The sealing of the Holy Spirit is meant to be both a *comfort* and a *challenge* to us. We are comforted in that it assures us that we belong to Him. We are *challenged* by it to depart from all evil and identify ourselves with the One we belong to: *Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."* ([2 Timothy 2:19](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=2%20Timothy+2:19&t1=en_nas)) *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.* ([Ephesians 4:30](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Ephesians+4:30&t1=en_nas))

2. (4-8) The number of those sealed.

**4And 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.5Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.6Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.7Of 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.8Of 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.**

a. **One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed**: This is their *general* identification. They are of **all the tribes of the children of Israel**. Ethnically, they are Jewish, and there are 144,000 of these chosen ones.

b. **Of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed**: This is their *specific* identification. The 144,000 are divided among the 12 tribes of Israel. Though only God may know their tribal ancestry, there are 12,000 from each tribe.

c. **Of the tribe of**: In this listing of the tribes, the tribe of Dan is left out. Some think this is because Dan is the tribe of the Antichrist, based on [Daniel 11:37](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Daniel+11:37&t1=en_nas) and [Jeremiah 8:16](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Jeremiah+8:16&t1=en_nas). This may or may not be the case, but without doubt, Dan was the tribe that introduced idolatry into the nation of Israel ([Genesis 49:17](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Genesis+49:17&t1=en_nas); [Judges 18:30](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Judges+18:30&t1=en_nas)).

i. There is a wonderful redemption for the tribe of Dan. Dan is the *first* tribe listed in Ezekiel's millennial role call of the tribes (Ezekiel 48).

d. **Of the tribe of**: This list is also interesting in the way that the tribe of Ephraim is referred to, but only indirectly. The **tribe of Joseph** is mentioned, but Joseph was represented by two tribes: Ephraim and Manasseh. Since the **tribe of Manasseh** is mentioned, by elimination, the **tribe of Joseph** must mean the tribe of Ephraim - who is listed, but not by name.

i. Perhaps Ephraim was slighted because the tribe of Ephraim was also associated with great idolatry ([Hosea 4:17](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Hosea+4:17&t1=en_nas)).

e. **Of the tribe of**: It is sometimes claimed that this list must be purely symbolic because it is "irregular," but what is a *regular* listing of the tribes?

i. There are not less than 20 different ways of listing the tribes of Israel in the Old Testament, including one that omits the tribe of Dan (1 Chronicles 4-7).

ii. Just because a list is *different* doesn't mean it is fanciful symbolism. It is proper to regard each of these lists as legitimate, and to consider that each specific variation serves a purpose, meaning to emphasize something.

3. Who are these 144,000?

a. Many different groups have claimed to be the 144,000. For example, the Jehovah's Witnesses once said their entire group was, until they surpassed 144,000 in number. Now they say that the 144,000 are only a select group of Witnesses who go to heaven.

i. Most Bible scholars either regard the 144,000 as the *church* or as *converted Jews*, who are still identified as Israelites in some manner.

ii. It is an important issue. If they are a symbol of the church, then the church is definitely *in* the Great Tribulation, but sealed for survival *through* the Great Tribulation.

b. Some facts about the 144,000 from Revelation 7 and Revelation 14 give us insight regarding their identity.

i. They are called *the children of Israel* ([Revelation 7:4](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+7:4&t1=en_nas)).

ii. Their tribal affiliation is specific ([Revelation 7:4-8](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+7:4-8&t1=en_nas)).

iii. They seem to be protected and triumphant through the period of God's wrath, meeting with Jesus at Mount Zion at His return ([Revelation 14:1](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+14:1&t1=en_nas)).

iv. They are celibate ([Revelation 14:4](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+14:4&t1=en_nas)).

v. They are the beginning of a greater harvest ([Revelation 14:4](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+14:4&t1=en_nas)).

vi. They are marked by integrity and faithfulness ([Revelation 14:5](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+14:5&t1=en_nas)).

c. Taken together, these facts make it difficult to say that the 144,000 are a symbolic picture of the church.

i. *Israel* is a term never specifically applied to the church in the New Testament, and never by any Christian until a.d. 160

ii. Their tribal affiliation is emphatic and known to God. Even if God only knows it, there is absolutely no reason to regard their tribal affiliation as symbolic, not literal.

iii. It is difficult to imagine the entire church surviving through the tribulation without martyrdom and remaining celibate through the period, something that was never required for the church as a whole ([1 Corinthians 7:1-6](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=1%20Corinthians+7:1-6&t1=en_nas)).

iv. If the 144,000 are a symbol of the entire church, what *greater harvest* are they the beginning of?

d. It is best to see the 144,000 as specifically chosen Jewish people who come to faith in Jesus, protectively sealed throughout the tribulation as a sign.

i. They are the beginning harvest of the salvation of Israel ([Romans 11:1](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Romans+11:1&t1=en_nas), [Romans 11:26](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Romans+11:26&t1=en_nas), [Matthew 23:37-39](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Matthew+23:37-39&t1=en_nas)).

ii. "They are not a part of the Church proper; for their repentance comes too late for that. They are a superaddition to the Church - a supplementary body - near and precious to Christ, but made up after the proper Church has finished its course." (Seiss)

B. The Great Multitude.

1. (9-10) More worship at the throne of God.

**9After 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;10And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.**

a. **A great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues**: The diversity here is evidence that the Great Commission will be fulfilled before the end, even as Jesus promised ([Matthew 24:14](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Matthew+24:14&t1=en_nas)).

i. Because John knew they came from different **nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues**, we know that there will be *differences* among people in heaven, just as there is on earth. We will not all be the same. We will be individuals.

ii. "I suppose as he looked at them he could tell where they come from. There is individuality in heaven, depend upon it. Every seed will have its own body. There will sit down in heaven not three unknown patriarchs, but Abraham - you will know him; Isaac, you will know him; and Jacob, you will know him. There will be in heaven not a company of persons, all struck off alike so that you cannot tell who is who; but they will be out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue." (Spurgeon)

b. **Standing before the throne and before the Lamb**: Again, John saw everything in heaven in reference to the *throne* of God. "This is a peculiar subject of their joy: that God has a throne, that he sits upon it, and that he ruleth over all things, and all things do his bidding. The central thought of heaven, then, is divine sovereignty." (Spurgeon)

c. **Clothed with white robes**: These **robes** remind us not only of the covering righteousness of Jesus, but also of *priestly service*. "They are *arrayed for holy servic*e, and arrayed at once, for they wear white robes fitted for their priestly service." (Spurgeon)

d. **Palm branches**: These remind us of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem ([John 12:12-16](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=John+12:12-16&t1=en_nas)), where Jesus was also praised as Savior and King. The word *Hosanna* means "save now!"

i. **Palm branches** were emblems of victory. It shows this **great multitude** celebrates a great victory. "The palm, the ensign of triumph, indicates most certainly a conflict and conquest. As on earth palm would not be given if not won, we may conclude that the Lord would not have distributed the prize unless there had been a preceding warfare and victory . . . From the very fact that the glorified carry palms, we may infer that they did not come from beds of sloth, or gardens of pleasure, or palaces of peace, but that they endured hardness, and were men trained for war." (Spurgeon)

e. **Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!** Having an emblem of righteousness (**white robes**), they worship God for **salvation**. They recognize that *God* is the source of salvation, and no one else. Salvation isn't something we earn, it is something God gives.

i. Sometimes believers on earth take their salvation almost for granted. This isn't true of this great multitude in heaven.

2. (11-12) All heavenly creatures join in worship.

**11And 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, 12Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.**

a. **All the angels . . . the elders and the four living creatures . . . worshiped God**: As the great multitude worships God, the others in heaven are compelled to join their voices in praise. All created beings around the throne join in.

b. **Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might**: As these other created beings hear the worship the great multitude brings to God, *they* see more clearly the power and wisdom and majesty of God. They can worship God all the more by seeing the salvation He brought to the great multitude.

3. (13-14) The identity of the great multitude.

**13And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14And 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.**

a. **Then one of the elders answered**: It was important that John knew the identity of this great multitude. But he didn't know that he should ask, so **one of the elders** prompted him to ask.

b. **These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation**: This vast multitude, from every tribe and tongue and nation, are those rescued for God's kingdom in the period of **the great tribulation**.

i. They had trouble on the earth during **the great tribulation**. In the ancient Greek grammar of this passage, "**the**" is emphatic. This was a time of **great tribulation** *for this multitude*. This leads many to believe that most, if not all, of these are *martyrs* from **the great tribulation**.

ii. The presence of so many tribulation saints is a powerful statement of God's grace and mercy. Even in this time of judgment and wrath on the earth, many are saved.

iii. Because the great multitude are mentioned right after the 144,000, many think they are - at least in part - due to the work of those 144,000 servants of God. Perhaps the 144,000 are evangelists who help reap this huge harvest for the kingdom during **the great tribulation**.

c. **Washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb**: Those saved in the great tribulation are saved just like everybody else, by **the blood of the Lamb**. Even if they are martyred, their martyrdom does not save them. Only the work of Jesus can cleanse and save.

i. "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Not one of them became white through his tears of repentance, not one through the shedding of the blood of bulls or of goats. They all wanted a vicarious sacrifice, and for none of them was any sacrifice effectual, except the death of Jesus Christ the Lord. They washed their robes nowhere but in the blood of the Lamb." (Spurgeon)

ii. **White by blood** is an interesting phrase; we don't think of things being made white by the application of blood. But the blood of Jesus cleanses us: *Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* ([Isaiah 1:18](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Isaiah+1:18&t1=en_nas))

4. (15-17) What this great multitude does, and how it is blessed.

**15Therefore 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.**

**16They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17For 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.**

a. **They are before the throne of God**: In heaven, the redeemed enjoy the immediate presence of God. They can come right into the throne room and be with God. There are no barriers, no waiting lists.

i. These saints knew affliction on earth, and they triumphed over it. But it wasn't their affliction that saved them. It was Jesus and their relationship of faith with Him. "Affliction of itself does not sanctify anybody, but the reverse. I believe in sanctified afflictions, but not in sanctifying afflictions." (Spurgeon)

b. **And serve Him day and night**: In heaven, the redeemed **serve** God. We don't know exactly how, but they do. "Heaven is not only a place of rest from earthly toil but also a place of privileged service." (Walvoord)

c. **He who sits on the throne will dwell among them**: In heaven, God **will dwell** with His people. This is the ultimate fulfillment of King David's great desire in [Psalm 27:4](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Psalm+27:4&t1=en_nas): *One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.*

d. **The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them**: In heaven, the redeemed will know the loving care and nurture of their Savior. He will protect them from every affliction (**they shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat**). He will also provide for their every need (**lead them to living fountains of waters**).

i. Jesus does **shepherd** us now, and He is close to us and cares for us now. Yes, but in heaven it will be so much more. "The true Christian life, when we live near to God, is the rough draft of the life of full communion above. We have seen the artist make with his pencil, or with his charcoal, a bare outline of his picture. It is nothing more, but still one could guess what the finished picture will be from the sketch before you." (Spurgeon)

e. **God will wipe away every tear from their eyes**: In heaven, the redeemed will know no more sorrow or pain. The hurt and the struggle of this earthly life are gone, and tears are a thing of the past, because **God will wipe away every tear**.

i. What tender love! We think of a mother's loving hand, brushing away the tears from her child's face. God loves us with that kind of nurturing care.

ii. We also understand from this that **every tear** will only be wiped away in *heaven*. On this earth, we have our share of pain and tears to endure and bring to God. He shows His love *now* with sweet consolation and strength for our tears; but *one day* - in heaven, not now - He will wipe them away forever.

iii. This passage *does not* have the idea that in heaven, we will weep over our wasted life or unconfessed sin, but God will still wipe those tears away. That idea may be a powerful, guilt-inducing motivator, but it has nothing to do with the meaning of this verse. "The point is that the grief and tears of the past, speaking of their trials in the tribulation, will be over when they get to heaven . . . God will wipe away all tears resulting from their suffering on earth." (Walvoord)

iv. Some wonder, "How can there be no sorrow in heaven if we have relatives or loved ones who perish in hell? Won't we be sorry for them?" Spurgeon answered this question well: "Now, how is this? If you will tell me, I shall be glad, for I cannot tell you. I do not believe that there will be one atom less tenderness, that there will be one fraction less of amiability, and love, and sympathy - I believe there will be more - but that they will be in some way so refined and purified, that while compassion for suffering is there, detestation of sin shall be there to balance it, and a state of complete equilibrium shall be attained. Perfect acquiescence in the divine will is probably the secret of it; but it is not my business to guess; I do not know what handkerchief the Lord will use, but I know that he will wipe all tears away from their faces, and these tears among them."

***And, here are the promises:***