

## Revelation Pastor Lou DeVizia

Revelation 7:1-17 Fellowship Bible Church; Woodbridge, NJ

[www.yourfamilychurch.com](http://www.yourfamilychurch.com)

Introduction: Chapter 7 is an interlude in the description of the judgments of the great tribulation brought about by the opening of the seals of the great scroll. The entire chapter is, essentially, an answer to one question - which happens to come in the final statements of Chapter 6: "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (6:16b-17).

This interlude describes something that will be going on while all of the judgment is happening. Even while a quarter of the population of the earth is dying by divine wrath, God will simultaneously be preserving his elect - they are the ones who are "able to stand". This is not the church - the church has already departed for heaven. These are so-called "tribulation saints" - those who get saved during the tribulation.

This literary pattern will be repeated in Revelation for the seven trumpets and for the seven bowls later in the book (i.e., the first six, then an explanatory interlude, then the seventh). For all of the perceived confusing nature of this book, it is actually quite plainly and logically laid out.

Six seals have been opened at this point of the prophecy. Before the seventh (Chapter 8), we get this glimpse of the evangelistic activity that takes place on earth. It's a "divine pause" of sorts. How gracious is God?! Even while all of this judgment is happening, there will be a pause for Him to make sure a group of evangelists (144,000 to be precise) will be able to reach a great multitude of people with the gospel. People will be saved during the tribulation, a great multitude. The evangelists are all Israelites - the beginnings of the future redeemed Israel which will receive Jesus as their Messiah. There will be some, from every nation of the earth, who will be humbled by the judgments and turn to God through the light of the testimony of 144,000 Israelites.

1. Verses 1-8 - The 144,000 Israelite sealed servants.

- v.1 - ***After these things...*** that is, after seeing the first six seals opened. ***four angels... holding the four winds...*** The winds represent judgment that has been sweeping across the earth. God holds it back so this interlude of redemption can be accomplished.

- vv.2-4 - A very high-ranking ***angel*** cries out for the judgment of the tribulation to be held back so 144,000 Israelites can be sealed. They are called ***servants***. They will apparently serve God by being the light to the world ***Israel*** was always intended to be but fell so short of because of disloyalty to God and rejection of the Messiah. Those days are over at this point. They are going to reach what the next section describes as an innumerable multitude for the Messiah, Jesus.

- vv.5-8 - The exact number - 12,000 - from each ***tribe*** is given. Note the first place in the list given to ***Judah***, the tribe of the Davidic line leading to Jesus Christ Himself. Also notice the

absence of Dan and Ephraim - some speculate this is due to their part in former idolatries in days of old.

2. Verses 9-17 - The innumerable multitude which comes out of the great tribulation.

- v.9a - ***After these things...*** The sealing of the Israelites comes first, then the product of their service: ***a great multitude which no one could number*** from every nation on the earth. The sealed Israelites are, essentially, evangelists. Through their light, an innumerable ***multitude*** of Gentiles will turn to Christ and be saved. *Some of the most glorious evangelism in history will take place in the future, during the tribulation.*

- vv.9b-10 - Notice that the mixed Gentile multitude is seen in heaven at this time, worshipping. Why? Likely, they will give their lives - be martyred - for their faith.

NOTE: Remember, this is not necessarily strictly chronological - this chapter is to answer the question of the end of Chapter 6. The 144,000 will be able to stand through it all, and this multitude of believers will be their fruit; they will be martyred. This chapter, then, is an elaboration on the martyrs of Chapter 6 - this is the same group.

- vv.11-12 - The great scene of worship now - happening right before the return of Christ - includes everyone it did before *plus* the martyred tribulation saints.

- vv.13-17 - John is informed by one of the ***elders*** what this great multitude is: the ones who came out of the ***great tribulation***. They had been saved and died martyrs'™ deaths. Now here is described their share in the comfort of ***God***.