

Revelation 7

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

- ⁵ Of 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.
- ⁶ Of 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Notice that the tribe of Dan is not listed and Joseph's son, Manasseh is listed. It is believed that the tribe of Dan is excluded because they violated God's order in which God specifically promised to blot out idolaters. See Judges 18:29-31, 1 Kings 12:28-33 & Deuteronomy 29:18-21.

The 'Multitude before the Throne (7:9-10)

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

In the second vision of this interlude the scene changes from earth to heaven. John sees a "great multitude," countless of people from every nation, people, and language, standing before God's throne.

Some believe that since Israel's number is listed in the 144,000 that they are not listed with the great multitude. Israel is a people, and since every tribe as well as every nation is included, it is hard to suppose that Israel is left out.

Revelation 14, Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. Re. 14:2 And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. Re. 14:3 And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No-one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.

Everyone in this multitude is already clothed in white robes, indicating that they share the righteousness of Christ and that, like Abraham, their faith has been counted for righteousness.

The Greek word used here is the same as that used for the "white robes" of the martyrs under the altar in Revelation 6:11 and it reminds us also of the white clothing promised to the victors in Revelation 3:5.

The palm branches in the hands of the multitude symbolize victory and show that they share His triumph. As in the Triumphal Entry, the palm branches also acknowledge Jesus as the Lord and messianic King in John 12:13.

This great multitude before the throne cries out in unison and in total harmony, "Salvation to our God and unto the Lamb." That is, salvation belongs to our God as the only Source and to the Lamb as the only One who could pay the price and make salvation available to us.

This multitude understands fully that only from God and the Lamb has come their salvation from sin, guilt, and the wrath and judgments that are about to fall on the earth.

Full of joy, they stand before the throne and keep crying out to God praise.

Angels Join in Praising God (7:11-12)

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, 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.

Then John sees an outer circle of thousands of thousands of angels. This passage here shows they had taken their stand around the throne outside of the twenty-four elders and the four living beings. They all proceed *to* prostrate themselves before the throne as they worship God.

These angels are created beings who have never sinned, who have always served God. Yet they are in an outer circle.

It is the multitude of people of whom has sinned and has come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) who are before the throne, inside the circle.

Though these angels are not able to join in the song of the redeemed, that is, to apply it to themselves, they are full of praise to God and recognize His wisdom, power and grace.

We can be sure that they too are full of joy, for there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents (Luke 15:10).

How much more must it be true that the angels rejoice at the sight of this multitude of redeemed sinners who have repented and have found salvation through the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

So these angels join in worship with all the others around the throne, saying (or singing) in unison that, truly the blessing (the praise), the glory, the wisdom (not only the wisdom shown in creation,

but especially the wisdom shown by God in carrying out His great plan of redemption), the thanksgiving, the honor (the reverence), the power (shown in His miraculous acts), and the might (shown in His great plan of redemption) belong to our God forever and ever (7:12).

The Multitude Identified (7:13-14)

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

John very respectfully suggests that the elder knows. In this way he indicates he does not want to speculate on who they are. He wants the elder to tell him so he would know for sure who they are. Notice the elder say's these came out of "great tribulation". It is believed that these saints are saved during the great tribulation era and that the rapture took place back in chapter 5, around verse 9. When those in chapter 5 vs. 9 sang their song they stated they were redeemed. Angels has never been redeemed.

Serving God Forever (7:15-16)

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

Because everyone in this multitude is clothed in white robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb, they are continually before the throne of God. Their sins have all been forgiven. There is nothing standing between them and the Lord.

Day and night they continually serve or worship Him in the Holy of Holies of His heavenly sanctuary; they never cease to praise and adore Him.

No more will this multitude suffer hunger, thirst, the heat of the sun, or any burning.

The Lamb, Their Shepherd (7:17)

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.

The Lamb in the midst of the throne and therefore sharing the power and authority of the One on the throne will feed (literally, "shepherd") them by living fountains.

The "living fountains" ("springs of living water," NIV) are the, fullness and final fulfillment of what was promised in John 4:14 and 7:38. The waters of life will forever abundantly satisfy.

God will remove the sorrow, wiping tear of sorrow from all eyes.