

## Revelation Chapter 7

**Chapter 1:3** – “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it, for the time is near.”

**Ch. 1: 11** – “write in a book what you see”

**Ch. 1:13-18** – the risen, glorified Christ

**Ch. 1:19** – “ Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things  
which will take place after these things.

**Chapters 2-3** – Jesus seven letters to seven churches

**Chapters 4-5** – The throne room in heaven, Jesus redeems the title deed to the universe,  
prepares to  
break the seals . . .the worship in heaven prepares for the wrath to be poured out

**Chapter 6** – The 7-year Tribulation begins (Daniel 9:27). Chapters 6-9 constitute the first 3-1/2 years.

**Chapter 7** – A 'parenthesis' in the action. Israel replaces the Church as God's witnesses to the world

**Chapters 8-9** – The Seven Trumpet judgments

**Chapters 10-11** – events at the middle of the tribulation (the 'Angel and the Little Book', Two Witnesses)

**Chapters 12-14** – The Woman (Israel), and the Red Dragon (Satan), The Satanic Trinity

**Chapters 15-16** – The Bowls of Wrath, the final 3-1/2 years of the tribulation

**Chapter 17-18** – False Word Religious and Economic Systems Destroyed

**Chapter 20** – The Millennial Kingdom

**Chapter 21** – The New Jerusalem

**Chapter 22** – On into eternity

## Revelation Chapter 7

6:9 – souls under the alter (martyred saints)

6:10 – THE 'EARTH-DWELLERS' (SEE VSS. 16-17)

A supernatural “pause” after the sixth Seal . . . This is a consistent structural design throughout Revelation.

Chapter 7 of Revelation addresses such questions as . . .

What is the role of Israel in God's program?

What about the teaching of the “ten lost tribes”

“Will people be saved during the Tribulation?”

Chapter 7 details two groups of people (1) the Jews and (2) the Gentiles from all nations.

7:1-8

Jews

Numbered – 144,000

Sealed on the Earth

7:9-17

Gentiles

Not numbered

Standing in Heaven

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Overview: reread Revelation 6:9-10

**Vs. 1** – “four corners”: The Earth doesn't have corners, it is round, not square. It is a poetic expression. Just as the weatherman says the sunrise is at 6 am. The sun doesn't “rise” in the sky. The Earth rotates and revolves around the sun.

Four angels (4:6) – four living creatures; (9:14) four angels bound at the river Euphrates

In fact, the Bible was ahead of it's time. When the ancients thought and taught the Earth was flat, the Bible says

**Isaiah 40:22**–It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

**Isaiah 44:24**–Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, And He who formed you from the womb: “I am the LORD, who makes all things, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself;

## Revelation Chapter 7

**Jeremiah 10:12**-He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, And has *stretched out the heavens* at His discretion.

astrophysicist in our generation have “discovered” the universe is, in fact, expanding, something God said in His word thousands of years ago.

**Zechariah 12:1**-The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him:

**Job 26:7** – God hangs the Earth on nothing ...

“winds” – symbolic of judgment

**Jeremiah 49:36** – And I will bring upon Elam the four winds from the four quarters of heaven. And I will scatter them to all those winds, and there shall be no nation to which those driven out of Elam shall not come.

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2 - “sealed” -

**Joh 6:27** – Jesus Himself has been "sealed" by the Father

**2Co 1:22** -- who also sealed us and gave *us* the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge

**Eph 1:13-14** - In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Holy Spirit – "sealed until the day of redemption"

Mark of the Beast – counterfit seal of Satan

Israel sealed

God seal is a suprenatural protection

**Ezekiel 9:4** And the LORD said to him, “Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark [a cross] on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it.”

**Revelation 9:4** – They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any

tree, but only those people who do not have *the seal of God on their foreheads*.

In the ancient world, such seals were familiar. A king or a property owner could use a seal to show ownership or authenticity.

**Rev. 14:1** -- Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb *was* standing on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000 who had His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

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**vs. 3** – do not harm until you seal

"forehead": Aaron and after him every high priest was to wear on the forehead the golden plaque having the engraved motto, "Holy to Yahweh" (Exo 28:36, Exo 28:38).

The condition of the forehead was an important criterion in the diagnosis of leprosy by the priest (Lev 13:42, Lev 13:43; 2Ch 26:20).

It was in the forehead that brave young David smote Goliath with the stone from his sling (1Sa 17:49).

The godless followers of the beast are marked on the (right) hand and on the forehead (Rev 13:16; Rev 14:9; Rev 20:4), and the apocalyptic woman dressed in scarlet and purple has her name written on her forehead (Rev 17:5).

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**Vs. 4 -** 144,000

of all the tribes **of the children of Israel**

### **Cults all claim to be the 144,000**

Jehovah Witnesses (special saints dwell in heaven – the rest will dwell on Earth)

Mormonism: they claim they are the 144,000

The Jesus Movement (Children of God):

Seven Day Adventist:

Worldwide Church of God: Herbert W. Armstrong

### **They are Not the New Testament Church**

**Galatians 3:25-29** – For as many of you as were baptized into Christ (church saints) have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's

## Revelation Chapter 7

offspring, heirs according to promise.

“144,000 from every tribe of the Sons of Israel”

God always has a “remnant (1 Kings 19:18) and always leaves a witness.  
Israel was intended to be God's “light” to the Gentile nations in the O.T.

**Isaiah 49:6** – he says: “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

Tribe of Ephraim listed as 'Joseph' (Hosea 8:11-12 – idolatry)

Why is the Tribe of Dan omitted here.

**Gen. 49:17** – Jewish Rabbi's have consistently taught that Antichrist will come from the Tribe of Dan based on this cryptic blessing/prophecy.

**Daniel 11:37** – He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all.

**Judges 18:29-31/Deut. 29:21/Jer. 8:16-17** – Dan introduced idolatry nationally into Israel and were cursed because of it.

**Ezekiel 48:1-3** – Dan restored in the Millennial Kingdom

Some False Teachers teach this chapter must speak of the church because ten Northern Tribes of Israel were lost to history.

Myth of the ten lost tribes of Israel . . .

**2 Chronicles 11:13-16** – divided Kingdom of Israel/Northern vs, Southern Kingdom. The faithful priests from all throughout the land came to Judah. ALL THE FAITHFUL FROM ALL THE TRIBES ALSO MIGRATED SOUTH. When the Northern Kingdom was taken into captivity by Assyria in 722 b.c. And later dispersed, those 10 Northern Tribes were not “lost”. Members from all of them had migrated into Judah and maintained their bloodlines.

The following verses specifically indicate the 10 Northern Tribes are still in existence and are very well known to the Lord

## Revelation Chapter 7

**Ezekiel 48:31** – The twelve gates of the city in the Millenium will be named after the 12 tribes (not lost).

**Zec 9:1** – "the Lord has an eye on all the tribes of Israel". Zechariah served the LORD in the years after the remnant returned from the 70-year Babylonian exile. His prophetic career is marked by the reign of **Darius**, the ruler of the Medes and Persians. His career is not marked by the reign of a king over Israel or Judah, because there was no king of Israel or Judah in this period after the exile. The timing of Zechariah's prophecy sets it two months after Haggai's first prophecy (Hag 1:1) and within a month after another prophecy of Haggai (Hag 2:1). This was between October and November of 520 B.C. The point being, this was long after the 10 Northern Tribes were supposedly "lost" or dispersed.

**Mat 19:28** / **Luke 22:30** – Jesus here promises the disciples they will sit on twelve thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel (not 2 tribes because the other ten are now lost).

**Act 26:7** – Paul references the twelve tribes as though they were current in his day (the New Testament age).

**James 1:1** – James addresses the "twelve tribes who are scattered abroad"

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**Vss. 5-8** - 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 (Rev 7:4).
- ii. Their tribal affiliation is specific (Rev 7:4-8).
- iii. They seem to be protected and triumphant through the period of God's wrath, meeting with Jesus at Mount Zion at His return (Rev 14:1).
- iv. They are celibate (Rev 14:4).
- v. They are the beginning of a greater harvest (Rev 14:4).
- vi. They are marked by integrity and faithfulness (Rev 14:5).

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 160 A.D.
- 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

## Revelation Chapter 7

the church as a whole (1Co 7:1-6).

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

It is best to see the 144,000 as specifically chosen Jewish believers in Jesus, protectively sealed throughout the tribulation as a sign.

The 144,000 people from the tribes of Israel:  
Ephraim and Dan aren't included in this list of the tribes, but Levi and Joseph

There are actually thirteen tribes.

When Jacob came to Joseph in Egypt, having thought he was dead for many years, now discovering him to be alive and one of the leaders of Egypt, Jacob, this elderly man came down to Joseph and when Joseph came to his father Jacob he brought his two sons Ephraim and Mannaseh. And Jacob said unto Joseph, "These two sons are mine. Whatever sons you have born after these can be yours, but these two sons are mine." And he claimed the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Mannaseh. So Ephraim and Manneseh both became tribes in Israel.

Therefore, the tribe of Joseph is divided into two, Ephraim and Mannaseh. The Levitical tribe became the thirteenth tribe, but was usually not numbered among the tribes in certain lists. For instance, in the division of the land there was no portion for Levi, because the Lord was their portion. So, the land was apportioned into twelve sections, one for each of the tribes. And Ephraim and Mannaseh both received their allotments.

Generally you don't read of the tribe of Joseph because it was divided into two tribes. Here we find the tribe of Joseph and the tribe of Mannaseh. So when it refers to the tribe of Joseph, no doubt it is the tribe of Ephraim, because Mannaseh is also listed as being sealed, the twelve thousand here in the seventh chapter.

Interesting thing is that the tribe of Levi is also listed here, but the tribe of Dan is thus omitted. Dan was the first of the tribes to go into idolatry.

Judah listed first because Rueben lost his birthright for going into his father's concubine. David came from the tribe of Judah later Jesus (the root of Jesse)

**Vss. 9-10** – We will know people as individuals in heaven  
John recognized different and various people groups  
Everything always revolves around the throne

**2 Timothy 2:19** – Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His;"

## Revelation Chapter 7

**Matthew 24:14** – This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

The diversity here is evidence that the Great Commission will be fulfilled before the end, even as Jesus promised

**Rev. 14:6** – And I saw another angel flying in midheaven with an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation, tribe, language, and people; angel flying in mid-heaven preaching the gospel.”

“**clothed in white**” – **Rev. 3:5** – *he one who conquers (overcomes) will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.*

**1 John 5:4-5** – For whoever has been born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world: our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

**Vss. 11-12** - When the church sings its song of redemption (5:9), they sang the new song saying, "thou art worthy." The angels respond to that song in worship saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive the power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Here are the same things with a couple of differences. *To the churches' song they refer to riches, why?* The Lord considers us as His treasure. Paul prayed for the Ephesians that they might receive a Spirit of wisdom and understanding. That they might know what is His riches in the saints, or you might know how much God values you.

Parable of Jesus concerning the kingdom of heaven was likened to a man going through the field and discovering a treasure and who, for the joy thereof, went out and sold everything so he could buy the field and have the treasure (Matthew 13:44). "Now the field", Jesus said, "is the world", and He was the one that gave everything. He gave His life to purchase the world in order that He might obtain the treasure.

*So when the church declares its song, we are His inheritance, His riches.* When this group sings, thanksgiving is substituted for riches, and so that is the difference in the response to the two groups. As the angels respond to the second group, the response is not of riches, but of thanksgiving. They are different groups.

**Vss. 13-14** – Martyrs of “**The**” great Tribulation (Matt 24:15)

(1) John didn't ask who they were but it was important for him to know



## Revelation Chapter 7

- (2) John didn't recognize them. If this was the Church, John would know them, because he never had trouble recognizing the Church. He would also have recognized this group if they were the Old Testament saints, because he had seen Moses and Elijah with Christ and knew them (Matthew 17:1-8).
- (3) The position of this group in heaven is not that of the bride but that of servants. The Church will be the Bride of Christ and in an exalted position.
- (4) They are martyrs clothed with the righteousness of Christ (not their martyrdom)

7:15 – before the throne (not seated on thrones and thus, distinct and different from the 24 Elders).

Tabernacle: spread his tent over them (dwell with them)

7:16 – “hunger and thirst no more” (they have not taken the Mark of the Beast and therefore are not able to buy and/or sell during the tribulation.

7:17 – “their shepherd – Guide them”

John 10:14, 27-28 – I am the good shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me, My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

“Water of Life”

John 4:10, 13-14 – Jesus replied to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who is saying to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never be thirsty; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up to eternal life.”

“God will wipe away every tear”

How can this be? What about our loved ones who were lost?

Spurgeon: “there will be a perfect acceptance of the divine will”

**A word about exegesis:** Either approach the text literally (while still acknowledging obvious symbolism, types, etc.), or, allegorize the text (like Origen, Augustine). Either this chapter is speaking of the nation of Israel literally or it is speaking allegorically of the church or some other select group (such as the Jehovah's Witnesses believe).

Christianity became “legalized” in the Roman Empire under the Emperor Constantine in 313 A.D. (*The Edict of Milan*). **Problem:** Revelation taught Jesus was going to return and deliver the world from it's evil world government and false religious system meant (Rome & later, the Catholic Church).

Development of Theology over the centuries was most notably accomplished by the men we refer to as the **Early Church Fathers**. They are:

**The first three, Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp, are considered the chief ones.**

- Clement of Rome.
- Ignatius of Antioch.
- Polycarp of Smyrna.
- Papias of Hierapolis.
- Justin Martyr.
- Irenaeus of Lyons.
- Clement of Alexandria.
- Origen of Alexandria.

Leads to Augustine: followed Origen's allegorical approach

The Millennial Kingdom is symbolic of Christ's rule on the Earth through the church.

The reformers focused on the gospel and salvation issues and neglected Eschatology  
This led to Replacement Theology

**Replacement Theology: (aka: Reconstructionism, The Dominionists, Kingdom Now)**

Replacement theology believes because the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah they are no longer God's chosen people, and God does not have specific future plans for the nation of Israel.

**The name “Israel” appears 75 times in the New Testament. In each of those times it refers to national Israel – not the church.**

Replacement theology teaches that the church is the replacement for Israel and that the many

promises made to Israel in the Bible are fulfilled in the Christian church, not in Israel. The prophecies in Scripture concerning the blessing and restoration of Israel to the Promised Land are spiritualized or allegorized into promises of God's blessing for the church. Major problems exist with this view, such as the continuing existence of the Jewish people throughout the centuries and especially with the revival of the modern state of Israel. If Israel has been condemned by God and there is no future for the Jewish nation, how do we explain the supernatural survival of the Jewish people over the past 2,000 years despite the many attempts to destroy them? How do we explain why and how Israel reappeared as a nation in the 20th century after not existing for 1,900 years?

The view that Israel and the church are different is clearly taught in the New Testament. Biblically speaking, the church is distinct from Israel, and the terms *church* and *Israel* are never to be confused or used interchangeably. We are taught from Scripture that the church is an entirely new creation that came into being on the day of Pentecost and will continue until it is taken to heaven at the rapture (Eph. 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:13-17). The church has no relationship to the curses and blessings for Israel. The covenants, promises, and warnings of the Mosaic Covenant were valid only for Israel. Israel has been temporarily set aside in God's program during these past 2,000 years of dispersion (Romans 11).

Contrary to replacement theology, we believe the Bible teaches that after the rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18), God will restore Israel as the primary focus of His plan. The first event at this time is the tribulation (Revelation chapters 6–19). The world will be judged for rejecting Christ, while Israel is prepared through the trials of the great tribulation for the second coming of the Messiah. Then, when Christ does return to the earth at the end of the tribulation, Israel will be ready to receive Him. The remnant of Israel who survive the tribulation will be saved, and the Lord will establish His kingdom on this earth with Jerusalem as its capital. With Christ reigning as King, Israel will be the leading nation, and representatives from all nations will come to Jerusalem to honor and worship the King—Jesus Christ. The church will return with Christ and will reign with Him for a literal thousand years (Rev. 20:1-5).

## Biblical History

The biblical emphasis is on one personal, spiritual, creator-redeemer God (cf. Exod. 8:10; Isa. 44:24; 45:5-7,14,18,21-22; 46:9; Jer. 10:6-7). The OT's uniqueness in its own day was its monotheism (God is 'One'). All of the surrounding nations were polytheists. The oneness of God is the heart of OT revelation (cf. Deut. 6:4). Creation is a stage for the purpose of fellowship between God and mankind, made in His image and likeness (cf. Gen.1:26-27). However, mankind rebelled, sinning against God's love, leadership, and purpose (cf. Genesis 3). God's love and purpose was so strong and sure that He promised to redeem fallen humanity (cf. Gen. 3:15)

## Revelation Chapter 7

The 'plot thickens' when God chooses to use one man, one family, one nation to reach the rest of mankind. God's election of Abraham (cf. Genesis 12; 15; 17; 18) and the Jews as a kingdom of priests (cf. Exod. 19:4-6) caused pride instead of service, exclusion instead of inclusion. God's call of Abraham involved the intentional blessing of all mankind (cf. Gen. 12:3). It must be remembered and emphasized that OT election was for service, not salvation. All Israel was never right with God, never eternally saved based solely on her birthright (cf. John 8:31-59; Matt. 3:9), but by personal faith and obedience (cf. Gen. 15:6, quoted in Rom. 4:3,9,22; Gal. 3:6). Israel forfeited her mission (the church is now a kingdom of priests, cf. Rev. 1:6; 1 Pet. 2:5,9) and turned their commission to serve into a belief they were specially privileged before God!

### Conditional covenants vs. Unconditional covenants

Mosaic Covenant: conditional

Abrahamic Covenant: Unconditional (Gen 12-13) (Christians, Jews and Muslims)

Land Covenant: Unconditional (Gen 15:18-21)

Davidic Covenant: Unconditional (2 Sam. 7:11-16; Luke 1:30-33; Hosea 3:4-5)

There is a theological tension or paradox between conditional and unconditional covenants. It is surely true that God's redemptive purpose/plan is unconditional (cf. Gen. 15:12-21). However, the mandated human response is always conditional!

The "if. . .then" pattern appears in both OT and NT. God is faithful; mankind is unfaithful. This tension has caused much confusion. Interpreters have tended to focus on only one "horn of the dilemma," God's faithfulness or human effort, God's sovereignty or mankind's free will. Both are biblical and necessary.

This relates to eschatology, to God's OT promises to Israel. If God promises it, that settles it! God is bound to His promises; His reputation is involved (cf. Ezek. 36:22-38). The unconditional and conditional covenants meet in Christ (cf. Isaiah 53), not Israel! God's ultimate faithfulness lies in the redemption of all who will repent and believe, not in your physical bloodline. Christ, not Israel, is the key to all of God's covenants and promises. If there is a theological parenthesis in the Bible, it is not the Church, but Israel (cf. Acts 7; Galatians 3; the book of Hebrews).

While the world mission of gospel proclamation has passed to the Church (cf. Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8), this is not to imply that God has rejected the Jews (cf. Romans 9-11). In His ultimate grace, God has provided a place and purpose for Israel in the last days (Rev. 7; Zech. 12:10).

God's Everlasting Covenant with Israel:

Romans 11:1-2, 4-5, 23, 25-26, 29 –

Jeremiah 32:38-40 –

Ezekiel 36:26-27; 37:26 –

Zech 12:10 –