



# World Christian Fellowship

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## Revelation 30

### Mercy within the Wrath!

#### Revelation 7:1-8

**Revelation 7:1-8**, *After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. <sup>2</sup> Then 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 granted to harm the earth and the sea, <sup>3</sup> saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." <sup>4</sup> And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed: <sup>5</sup> of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed; <sup>6</sup> of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed; <sup>7</sup> of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve*

*thousand were sealed; <sup>8</sup> of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed.*

Chapter 7 is a significant milestone in this book.

Six seals are behind us which lay out really the judgment of God over the period of the tribulation.

Chapter 7 is right in between the sixth and the seventh seal.

Revelation 8:1, when he broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half-an-hour.

After all of the furious, devastating judgment of chapter and the first six seals, this chapter offers a moment of calm, promise, and hope.

It offers insight into escape.

In the midst of wrath, God remembers mercy.

The future of our world will bring a time of unbelievable terror, will come from the hand of the very one who made the world. The One who entered the world as a baby, who was crucified and rose again the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is the one who is unrolling the seven-sealed scroll.

He is the one who is taking charge of His universe and this prophetic picture.

Christ along with the one who sits on the throne, His Father, God Almighty, are affecting these powerful judgments on the earth.

As we went through the six seals, we saw how the period of wrath to come is described in six different phases.

First there is a

- False peace,
- War,
- Famine,
- Pestilence and death,
- Vengeance, and
- Fear.

The final day of the Lord comes crashing in in the sixth seal.

The sixth seal, described in **Revelation 6:12-17**, is what triggers the day of the Lord.

The sixth seal and the day of the Lord are really synonymous. Although what has come before is the work of God and the wrath of God, it is preliminary to the final great day of wrath, as it's called in verse 17, which we could call the day of the Lord.

There are preliminary judgments that act as a warning, and then the final day of the Lord comes. We see that historically.

The world up to the sixth seal has not been willing to acknowledge God. Believers are in the world and believers in the world have been giving testimony to the Word of God and telling people that this that is happening to them is the judgment of God.

But they are not believed. Ultimately, they are persecuted and killed, if possible, in an attempt to silence them.

Finally, when the sixth seal hits, however, the world cannot escape that this is God. They know it.

**Revelation 6:16**, they say, “Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

When the culminating fury comes, they know it's God.

It is then that most likely they will acknowledge that all that they have been experiencing has come from the hand of God as a manifestation of His judgment.

They are scared to death. Some of them, during this time of the sixth seal, will be scared to death. The ones that don't die out of fear are going to want to be dead. They are going to cry for the rocks to crush their life out rather than must face God and Christ alive.

**Revelation 6:17** they ask a question.

Because they ask the question, “Who is able to stand?”

That question is, in part, answered in chapter 7.

Chapter 7 is the answer to that question.

**Who will survive the divine fury?**

**Who will survive the anger and wrath of God?**

**Who will survive the collapsing universe?**

The worst is yet to come.

Trumpet judgments in **chapters 8 and 9.**

Bowl judgments in **chapter 16.**

All of them seem to be embraced within the horrors of the sixth seal.

**Who can survive it?**

When you look at the sixth seal, and the seven trumpets, and the seven bowl judgments, and you add the cumulative effect together, the question is a very good question.

Who can survive?

The ungodly can't survive.

**1 Thessalonians 5:3**, *For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labour pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.*

**2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**, *and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, <sup>8</sup> in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,*

There is nothing in that passage, either that gives a glimmer of hope to any unbeliever that he or she might survive the wrath of God.

**2 Thessalonians 2:12**, *that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

The day of the Lord, in terms of its effect on the ungodly, seems to be about comprehensive.

So, the ungodly will not survive, but there are some people who will survive the holocaust of God's wrath.

They will live through the sixth seal.

They will live through the trumpet judgments.

They will live through the bowl judgments.

They will actually go into the millennial kingdom alive.

All the judgment fury of God will miss them. All the holocausts that are going on in the natural world around them will not touch them.

They will also be protected from the murderous efforts of Antichrist and the rest of the world that aligns with him to wipe out the Jews and the Christians.

They will survive it all.

The wars, the famines, the earthquakes, the plagues. They will survive it all, every bit of it. They will survive rampant sinfulness running amok on the earth as the Restrainer – the Holy Spirit – let's go and sin runs its course.

They will survive the terror of Antichrist who rules the world and sets himself up as the only God to be worshiped.

They will survive his blaspheming, his murderous intent.

They will survive all his enterprise, this man who has desecrated the temple, set himself up as God, committed an abomination there.

They will survive it all and go right on into the kingdom.

### **Who are these people that will survive?**

**V 1-8**, In the midst of judgment, there is to be mercy.

**Malachi 3:16**, *Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, And the Lord listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the Lord And who meditate on His name.*

They were speaking to each other because they were hearing the prophecy about the day of Lord, and they were saying to each other, "I wonder what will happen to us?"

The prophet says the Lord knows about them, and the Lord has a book, and in that book are written the names of those who fear the Lord.

**Malachi 3:17-4:2**, *"They shall be Mine," says the Lord of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him." <sup>18</sup> Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him.*

*"For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," Says the Lord of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch. <sup>2</sup> But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.*

We will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.

Looking at the end time of the day of the Lord, is that God will protect the righteous, and they will enter into His kingdom, whereas He will destroy all of the wicked.

- God knows who belongs to Him.
- God knows how if He chooses to protect them.

In the destruction that He brought in the flood, He knew how to protect the eight people that He wanted to protect.

In the destruction that came in the city of Jericho, He knew how to protect the one woman He wanted to protect - Rahab.

In the destruction that came to Sodom and Gomorrah, which was massive and wholesale, He knew how to protect the family of Lot.

When God set about to devastate, destroy, and slaughter in the land of Egypt, He knew how to protect those He wanted to protect there as well.

God knows who He wants to protect.

The wrath will come, and the wrath belongs to those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. When the full fury of that wrath hits, it's going to consume the ungodly, but some of the godly will survive.

One of the groups that will survive is here identified as these 144,000 – 12,000 out of each of the tribes of Israel.

We look at the period of the seven-year tribulation as a time of judgment. As it unfolds in the seven seals, it is a time of judgment as the trumpets and bowls will affirm.

But it is also a time of redemption!

We need to remember that. That same seven-year period is a time of salvation, a time of redemption.

Yes, God will judge Satan, and God will judge demons, and God will judge sinners, but God will also redeem.

We meet the redeemed out of this time period back in chapter 6, where we see under the altar the souls of those who were slain because of the Word of God and because of the testimony which they had maintained.

We meet those who were redeemed out of this period, in **Revelation 7:9-13**. *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,<sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"<sup>11</sup> All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,<sup>12</sup> saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honour and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."*

*13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"*

A great multitude, nobody could even count them. They come out of every nation and tribe and people and tongue.

They stand before the throne and before the Lamb.

They are clothed in white robes.

They have palm branches in their hands.

They are singing about salvation.

**Revelation 7:14**, *And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

Notice a distinction there.

The first group, in **chapter 6**, is in heaven. They are under the altar in heaven.

The second group appears to be standing on the earth.

There will be people redeemed during that time period. Some will die and go to heaven. Some will live to enter the kingdom.

Many of the Gentile believers will die from the persecution. Some of them surely will die from the physical factors of earthquakes, famines, and pestilences, and the breakup of the universe, and asteroid showers, and meteorite showers, and the chaos in the universe.

But some of them will survive and go into the kingdom. Even those who die will be immediately ushered into the presence of the Lord.

True Christians may die in the persecution, but that's not God's wrath but God's grace, because when they die, they leave all the persecution to enter into the glory of the presence of the Lord.

Certainly, the suffering of this world isn't worthy to be compared with the glory which belongs to those who know Him.

True Christians may die in the earthquakes and die in the famines, and the plagues, and destructions that come in the seals and trumpets and bowls. That probably will happen. There is no reason to assume that it won't, but that's not God's wrath on them.

The persecution isn't God's wrath on them, and neither is the judgment that falls in the world that may cause their death. That's simply another way for them to be ushered into God's presence also.

So, those believers among the Jews, and the Gentiles who die in the persecution will enter into the presence of the Lord.

Those who die in the terrible judgments of the world will really escape them. But there will be many Gentiles and many Jews who will not die. They will survive to populate the kingdom. We

know that the Jews will be living on the earth in the kingdom, which is clearly promised in the Scripture.

All the nations of the world, during the kingdom, are going to be coming to Jerusalem, and will be looking at the Christ. They are going to be hanging on the coattails of a Jew.

**Zechariah 8:23**, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.” ’ ’ ”*

There are going to be nations of the world in the kingdom, as well as the nation of Israel, which means that some of them must survive into the kingdom.

The only ones that will survive will be believers.

Jesus made this very clear in **Matthew chapter 25**, when He said, “In the separation process, I separate between the sheep and the goats.”

- The goats represent the ungodly who are cast into outer darkness.
- The sheep represent the Christians who go into the kingdom.

When the 1000 years kingdom is initiated is populated only by believers of the nation Israel, and of the nations of the world that God allows to survive the persecution.

They begin to reproduce and populate the world during that thousand-year reign of Christ.

**Zechariah 12:10-14**, *“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. <sup>11</sup> In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of [\[C\]](#) Megiddo. <sup>12</sup> And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; <sup>13</sup> the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; <sup>14</sup> all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.*

They are going to see Christ for who He was.

**Zechariah 13:1**, *“In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.*

There is going to be salvation.

**Zechariah 13:9**, *I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The Lord is my God.'*”

The conversion of Israel. Two out of three of them will be purged out.

Ezekiel talks about the purging out of the rebels.

**Ezekiel 20:38**, *I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord.*

**Zechariah 14:1-4**, *Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst. <sup>2</sup> For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. <sup>3</sup> Then the Lord will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle. <sup>4</sup> And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the*

*mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south.*

The Lord's going to make a valley right through the very heart of the land of Israel, right from the Mediterranean Sea moving right through the city of Jerusalem. He will cut a huge valley and, into that valley, will gather the nations and separate them, the sheep from the goats.

**Zechariah 14:5-4**, *Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come, And all the saints with You.*

Looking at the coming of Christ in the eyes of Zechariah, he sees it as a time of Israel's conversion and a time when all the nations are called together, to be devastated by the coming Christ, to be judged as to whether or not they enter His kingdom.

So, there will be, then, at the end of this time period, a protection of certain people from the nations and certain from Israel who have come to faith in Christ. They will go into the kingdom. Many of the believing people will be killed, but not all of them.

This is the time of which Paul spoke when he said, "All Israel will be saved. God purges out the rebels. The rest see their Messiah,

believe, are redeemed. We don't know, of that number, how many, but obviously a large number will survive all of this and enter into the kingdom.

Now, among these people who survive is this group in **Revelation chapter 7**.

They are not the only survivors, but a unique group, and their survival is crucial to the rest of the survivors.

These people have been saved earlier.

It isn't telling us that at the time the sixth seal hits, 144,000 people become converted.

Long before this they have become converted.

They have been preserved up till now, and now as the final fury hits, they will be singled out for special service and special protection. They don't experience temporal wrath or eternal wrath.

Other believers will experience the temporal jut and not the eternal one as they may die in the persecution or in the holocaust that takes place.

The vision unfolds in three perspectives.

## 1. Wrath restrained.

**V 1, “After this”**

A very important phrase.

Numerous times in the book of Revelation wherever we see it, it introduces a new vision.

**Revelation 4:1**, where we came to that vision of heaven.

**Revelation 7:9**, “After these things,” and it usually is followed I looked. It signals John’s new vision.

The sixth-seal vision is set aside now, and he sees a new vision.

It is also safe to say that there could be a chronological perspective here as well. There seems to be a chronological perspective in the “after this” of chapter 4, verse 1.

This is a new vision, but also there can be a chronological sequence as well.

This scene seems to fit right in after the sixth seal is opened. Before the trumpets and the bowls are poured out, in the real fury contained within that sixth seal.

The scene then shifts from judgment to another vision.

It is a vision not of the judgment on the ungodly, but a vision of a special protection on the godly.

**V 1**, *After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.*

Even in the parables of Jesus, we see Him talking about the angels being a part of the final fury and the final judgment. These powerful, active agents of judgment are carrying out God's will in this great time of the wrath of God.

The angels are very powerful beings.

Here we have four angels who can hold back wind.

They work with the elements of nature

**Revelation 16:5**, an angel involved with controlling the waters.

**Revelation 14:18**, an angel who has power over fire.

An angel with power over fire, an angel with power over water and here are four angels with power to control the wind.

**Psalm 103:20**, *Bless the Lord, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word.*

Angels are standing at the four corners of the earth.

People may say that the world doesn't have four corners.

There are four points on a compass.

North, south, east, and west. Those four places on the compass are the four points from which wind originates. We always say comes from the north, or the south, or the east, or the west, or some variant of that – south by southwest, or north by northwest, or whatever. But everything configures around those four compass points. So, it is accurate to describe it in that way.

The wind is not blowing. Quite an interesting phenomenon. For whatever period of time this little interlude takes place, wind doesn't blow.

When John first saw these four angels, they were already engaged in the remarkable labor of restraining the great wind systems of the earth, keeping the wind from blowing on either land or sea.

No wind, no breeze, no rustling of leaves, no waves breaking on the shore. Everything is deathly still. No clouds moving. They are holding it back.

The verb “holding back” gives us the idea that the wind would like to go. It wants to move, and they restrain it.

It wants to be released.

It wants to blow its fury.

When those angels let go, the wind will do its judgment damage. That introduces us also to another component in the day of the Lord.

Wind is often associated with God's judgment.

**Jeremiah 49:36, 2 Samuel 22:11, Daniel 7:2, Hosea 13:15.**

God is associated with the wind.

God moves in the fury of the wind.

**Revelation 8:5-12**, *Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. <sup>6</sup> So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. <sup>7</sup> The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. <sup>8</sup> Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. <sup>9</sup> And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. <sup>10</sup> Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. <sup>11</sup> The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter. <sup>12</sup> Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a*

*third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.*

**V 1,** *After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.*

In chapter 8, was the fury of judgment that devastated the sea, the land, and burned up a third of the trees. The very judgments described in the trumpet judgments are precisely what is being held back until this act can be carried out in chapter 7.

The wind is roaring but restrained.

When it breaks loose, it becomes the agency which catapults this stuff into the earth, terrorizes the earth so that a third of the earth, and a third of the sea, and a third of the living plants, and ultimately a third of humanity are massacred – but not yet. Wrath restrained.

## **2. Saints sealed.**

**Why is this wrath being restrained for a moment?**

**Why is there a moment of calm in the midst of the storm?**

We don't know how long this will last, but in all the fury that's been going on, when suddenly it comes to a stop, the world will wonder what has happened.

**V 2-3,** *Then 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 granted to harm the earth and the sea, <sup>3</sup>saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."*

### **Could it be Christ?**

An angel identifies himself with the other four angels. At this point, although Christ can be identified in the Old Testament as the angel of the Lord, He is not coming back as an angel now, but He is coming back as the glorified Christ.

So, this is another of these powerful angels who speaks to his four fellow angels.

Notice where he comes from. It says the angel ascends from the rising of the sun. That is simply a prosaic way of saying the east. The sun always rises in the east. The angel ascends from the east.

John, when he was experiencing all of this and writing it, was on the isle of Patmos in the Mediterranean toward the west. To the

east would be the land of Israel, the land of Messiah, God's Promised Land, and the land of the 144,000, the 12 tribes.

So, John sees this coming from the Holy Land.

There is this angel, and he ascends. He has the seal of the living God.

### **What is this?**

A signet ring some king or official used to stamp documents. Do you remember how they would melt wax and then stamp into the wax the seal, marking ownership authenticity and security?

We find this used in the Old Testament.

#### **Esther 3:8, Daniel chapter 6.**

It was used to put the official, authenticating seal of ownership and protection, "This is mine. This is authoritative. This can't be opened because it's my possession. Only by those who are authorized."

So, here comes this angel, and he has got the seal. Not the seal of some earthly monarch, but the seal of the living God.

People in ancient times knew about this, because commonly there were logos, like a signet ring like this, that identified the deities of old.

Sometimes, when worshipers went to the temple to worship, they would have the signet of that deity tattooed on their body. That was not uncommon.

There is one dominating false deity, in the time of tribulation, who makes everybody do that.

### **Who is it?**

Antichrist.

He makes everybody take the mark in the forehead or on the back of the hand. If they don't, they are going to die.

That is to say if they will not publicly identify with him as their God and take his mark, they will die.

**Revelation 13, 14,16,19, and 20**, it talks about the “mark of the beast,” which means the seal of the Antichrist that people take that links them with him as belonging to him, following him.

So, here comes the eternal God, and He has got His own mark and His own seal.

This angel, carrying the seal of the living God, cries out with a loud voice, to the other angels who are holding back the wind, so it doesn't harm the earth and the sea, and says, “Don't harm the earth, the sea, the trees until we have sealed the bondservants of our God on their foreheads.,

It's not new for God to put His mark on people.

He put a mark on Lot when He wanted to save Him. His mark was an angelic escort.

He put a mark on the children of Israel who were to be spared in the slaughter of the firstborn.

The mark was the sign of the cross on the doorposts and the lintel of the house.

He put a mark on Rahab, a scarlet cord hanging from her window that marked her out as one whom the judgment would miss.

**Ezekiel 9:3**, *Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer's inkhorn at his side;*

Ezekiel sees this vision. Someone appears, clothed in linen, who's got a writing case.

It would be a little case that he carried, and in it would be ink, or in it would be a seal that could be put on parchment or put on papyrus, whatever it was, which is animal skin. This person's responsibility was to mark things, to write things.

**Ezekiel 9:4**, *and the Lord said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the*

*foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.”*

You go through the city, and you find the holy people.

You find the people who can't tolerate the fact that the sun is being worshiped in My temple.

You find the people that can't tolerate the abominations of other gods in the temple.

You find those principal who are loyal to the true God, and you put a mark on their heads.

**Ezekiel 9:5-6**, *To the others He said in my hearing, “Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. <sup>6</sup>Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were before the temple.*

Precisely the idea.

**Chapter 7 Revelation**, precisely the idea here.

**Revelation 9:4**, *They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.*

The seal of God, then, was a protection.

It made these people invincible against the judgments.

Anyone could die in the judgment except those people marked out.

So, the angel says in chapter 7, “Don’t let the wind go. Don’t let the devastation carry on. Don’t blow the trumpets yet until we seal the bondservants of our God on their foreheads.”

The word “do not harm the earth,” in verse 3, indicates this is a judgment wind. The result would be devastating ruin. But it’s got to wait. We need to seal them. These are the redeemed people that are to be protected.

They already belong to the Lord.

They aren’t saved here but they were saved before this.

They are redeemed people.

They are people who have lived faithfully, powerfully, effectively preaching the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. They have not died as martyrs. They are still alive. They are to be protected.

**Revelation 14:1**, *Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads.*

He is on the Mount Zion with Him are the 144,000.

They made it through.

They were sealed.  
They were preserved.  
They had the mark.

### **What was the mark?**

They had His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

They had the name of the Lamb and the name of the Father on their foreheads.

**Revelation 14:2-5**, *And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. <sup>3</sup>They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. <sup>4</sup>These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. <sup>5</sup>And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.*

Tribulation elders.

Qualified at that level, blameless, pure, undefiled with women, chaste, redeemed, following the Lamb obediently.

They are a new kind of first fruits to God.

First fruits always mean the initial ones.

When the full crop comes in, you have it all. But the first fruit is the first crop to come in.

As men plant fields, they plant one field during this week and maybe another field the next week and so forth. So, they come in as staggered as they are planted.

When the first fruits come in, that's the indication that the full crop is coming. The 144,000 as the first fruits of a redeemed Israel. The first fruits of a redeemed Israel. But they have already been converted.

These are Jews who have come to Christ.

Jews who have been redeemed, kept themselves pure and chaste, been obedient to the Lamb, no lie found in their mouth.

- They were honest.
- They had integrity.
- They were without any blame.

The most faithful, loyal, diligent, holy servants of the Lord during this time, they are the cream of the crop. They stood for Christ against everything while the world sinned and the world blasphemed, and the world mocked, and the world cursed.

They were pure, and they were devout, and they were godly believers who served the Lord.

These 144,000 have been instrumental in the salvation of other people in their own nation as well as other nations of the world.

**Matthew 24:14**, where we are reminded the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole for a witness to all the nations, then the end will come.

They have been a part of that great missionary force.

Right now probably there may be 50,000 missionaries in the world today.

But in this day, 144,000 totally committed Jews who understand their Messiah is, devoted to Him, holy, godly, pure, and who have been instrumental in the salvation of many.

They have preached judgment. They have warned about the impending day of the Lord. They have called people to repentance right through the tribulation time, and now they are going to be delivered. They are going to go right on into kingdom time.

They are going to keep on preaching in the kingdom.

To the people that are being born in the kingdom, who will be born, of course, still in sin because they will be born by human parents. Even though their parents are Christians, many of them will rebel.

They will preach to them and call for repentance. They will go into the kingdom and preach as they did during the time of the tribulation.

By their service all Israel will be saved.

When the kingdom starts, each tribe will have its own land, and each tribe will have one of the apostles as its spiritual judge and leader. They will evangelize the rest of the world.

There will be 12,000, in each of those tribes, who are the leading evangelists and the leading missionaries even during the kingdom period.

When they get in the kingdom, they must be living a long time, because it will take a while for babies to be born, to grow up to reject Christ.

They will live a long time.

The prophet said that a person who dies at the age of a hundred will die as a baby. Life will be elongated. They will be spared because of their faithfulness and allowed to preach right through the judgment, be instrumental in the conversion of Israel.

The innumerable host of Gentiles in verse 9, are part of the fruit of what's going on in **Revelation 7:1-8**.

### **3. Israel identified.**

#### **Who are they?**

It should be clear, since it tells us.

*V 4, And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed:*

Some people say it's the Seventh Day Adventists.

Others say it's the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Some say it's the Mormons.

Some say it's the British Israelites.

Many people today, even in American Evangelicalism say it's the Church.

144,000 people of Israel.

God must be involved. This is one of the great and hidden proofs of elective purpose and redemption. God knows the number he wants, and he knows the number he wants from every tribe. Here will come these powerful, godly Jews.

The Lord's going to convict their hearts. They must be wondering and asking these questions.

Where did the Church go?

Did they go up to be with the Lord?

Did John 14 happen?

Paul says, “They will be provoked to jealousy.” Out of that jealousy they will turn to the Messiah.

They will be converted and redeemed.

They will start witnessing.

The Lord will take the best of them, 12,000 out of every tribe, and He will seal them so that they can’t be touched.

They will go right on through the judgment, and right on into the kingdom to be His special evangelists.

We see the 12 tribes there.

Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin.

In the Old Testament, there are several different listings of these tribes, and they are different.

- Sometimes the order of birth is followed, such as in **Genesis 29-35**.
- Sometimes the order of Jacob’s blessing is followed, such as in **Genesis 49**.
- Sometimes the order of encampment is followed, such as in **Numbers chapter 2**.
- Sometimes the order of the census before the invasion of Canaan is followed, such as **Numbers 26**.

- Sometimes the order of blessing and cursing as in **Deuteronomy 27**.
- Sometimes the order of Moses' blessing, **Deuteronomy 33**.
- Sometimes the order of the princes in **Numbers 1**.
- Sometimes the order of inheritance, **Joshua 13- 22**.
- Sometimes the order by the wives and the concubines, **1 Chronicles 2- 8**.
- Sometimes the order of the gates of the city, such as **Ezekiel 48**.

So, the order changes a lot.

There are sometimes variations even in the names.

There are several interesting things here.

The first tribe was named Judah. Judah wasn't the firstborn, but Reuben was.

#### **Why institution Reuben first?**

The answer is Judah is named first, though he is not the firstborn of Jacob or Israel, because according to **1 Chronicles 5:1**, Reuben lost his birthright because he sexually defiled his own father's bed, and who has slipped down from the primogenitor role.

Then you have another interesting note. Down in verse 7, it includes **Levi**.

Levi was the priestly tribe from which the Levites come, and they never were given a territory.

**So, why are they included here?**

They are usually kind of on the outside. They were the priests to the whole nation and never had a territory.

Because Dan is left out.

The tribe of Dan is left out because of gross idolatry. Dan was the only tribe that failed to conquer its territory,

Judges chapter 1. Dan wholly turned into idols, **Judges 18** - and because of Dan's gross sin.

**Deuteronomy 29:18-21**, it says that anyone who brings idolatry into Israel will have his name blotted out. The tribe of Dan is removed, and Levi slips into his place to keep the 12.

In the millennial listing of the tribes, **Ezekiel 48**, Dan is included. God's grace triumphs on Dan's behalf, and Dan is brought into millennial glory, but Dan is not protected through this because of idolatry.

Instead of having **Ephraim and Manasseh**, we have Manasseh only.

Joseph. Usually, to get the listing of 12, Levi not having a territory, the two sons of Joseph – Manasseh and Ephraim – are listed, but Ephraim is left out.

### **Why?**

Because Ephraim was addicted to idols.

Ephraim was a defector from the house of David, and Ephraim was an ally of Judah's enemies.

So, Ephraim's place is taken by his father Joseph.

### **Do the Jews know what tribe they are a part of?**

Nope. No Jew knows.

The records have all been lost and destroyed in the destruction of Jerusalem in **70 A.D.** But God does. God knows.

They still have a tribal heritage. They just don't know what it is, but God does.

There are still going to be 12,000 out of every tribe. It is possible that this could emblematic, 12 being somewhat of a number of comprehensiveness or completeness, such as 12 apostles; 12 tribes; 24 elders representing the Church, being a multiple of 12.

Some people think this could be representative of a wider range of Jews who are protected to enter into the kingdom.

But for certain, there will be 144,000 of them.

The numbers in the other parts of the book of Revelation, such as 42 months, 1,260 days, 3-1/2 years, 1,000 years, 4 angels, 7 trumpets, 7 seals, bowls, 3 unclean spirits we take literally.

**So, why not 144,000?**

This passage shows God has a great elective purpose for the Jew, that God has not finished with Israel. History has been unable to blot out the Jew.

Genocide has failed to remove him.

Why?

Because God wants them around.

### **What about the northern kingdom?**

Didn't the northern kingdom, ten tribes, all get carried away into captivity and all that was left was the southern kingdom of Judah and Benjamin?

### **How are you going to get the 12 tribes out of those 2 remaining ones?**

When the kingdom divided, ten tribes went to the north, they were taken away captive in 722. But before they were ever taken captive, remnants from those ten tribes had filtered back down into the southern kingdom so that all 12 tribes were reconstituted even within Judah and Benjamin.

The tribes aren't lost. God knows where they are, and God is going to redeem Israel, and He is going to choose 12,000 from every tribe to be His witness nation.

They were given the same opportunity once, and they blew it. Next time they won't.

They will see their Messiah.

They will become the witness nation God has always intended them to be.

God didn't call them to be an end, but He called them to be a means to an end.

He called them to be a witness nation, and they failed. But the time will come when, in His wonderful grace, and His everlasting covenant, He will come back to Israel.

God will redeem Israel.

God will purify them.

God will put them in the place of being His witness nation.

The result of their effort, a redeemed Israel, and a redeemed humanity that is innumerable according to **Revelation 7:9**.

God is faithful no matter how complex and difficult it is. With all the grief that Israel has caused Him, it will not violate His ultimate purpose with that nation. We have a faithful God!