

Revelation 7: the sealed servants of God

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.

2 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, 3 saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."

After these things: see 6:17

Four angels: the four corners of the earth. Four winds: Four is number of the earth.

Earth, sea, tree: trees mentioned: usually most affected by storms.

Angel from the east: God's glory from the east. Here: God's seal!

Do not harm: God's patience lasts even longer.

Living God: contrast with the dead gods: (Joshua 3:10, 2 Kings 16:4,16, Psalm 42:3, Daniel 4:34, 6:27)

Seal: see Ephesians 1:13: *sealed with the Holy Spirit*. New Life. See ch. 13:16. Contrast!

Those sealed: the servants of God. See 1:1 : the believers.

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:

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;

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;

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;

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.

144,000: 12X12 : twelve tribes X 12 apostles.

1000: very large number. hard to count. Also: army unit

Numbers 1: Israel counted according to their tribes.

Who are they? Not only the Jews! From all over the earth!

Consider:

- 12X12: twelve tribes, enlarged by the work of the twelve apostles.
- Jews: only from the tribe of Judah and Levi. Where are the other 10 tribes?
- Vs. 3: servants of God: they are the ones sealed. Not limited to certain groups in vs. 3.
- See vs. 9: after this things I looked. John first hears the number, then sees them.
- The tribes mentioned: not the same as in Genesis.
- See also 14:4 : These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes...

List of tribes: different from Genesis. Dan not mentioned. Joseph and Manasseh.

See Psalm 87:5-6!

9 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, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

After these things I looked: John now sees what he heard about in previous verses.

A great multitude which no one could number: Gen., 15:5

Response to 6:17 : Who is able to stand? Those who are sealed, and they are many!

From all nations, tribes, peoples, tongues: see 5:9 : four words: from all over the earth.

All nations: Genesis 10:32; Genesis 12:3; Daniel 3 and 4: Nebuchadnezzar 'to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth'.

Standing before the throne and before the Lamb: clothed with white robes. See 3:5,18, 7:14.

Palm branches: festive. Reminder of feast of booths.

Crying out with a loud voice: Languages no longer divides them. Genesis 11: tower of Babel the Spirit (seal) unites

11-12

11 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, 12 saying:

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,
Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."

Seven words: heavenly praise. Heaven and earth unite in the praise of God.

Forever and ever: without end, into all directions: infinity in length and width, height and depth.

13-17

13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" 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. 15 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. 16 They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Elders: those who have knowledge.

Out of the great tribulation: the great enmity of Gen. 3:15

Before the throne of God: God gathers for Himself a people to His praise: a kingdom of priests to praise Him! Temple, throne: See Exodus 19:6 : *a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*.

Neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore, nor sun or heat: see time in the desert. Promised land. Lamb as Shepherd!

Living fountains of waters: See also the palm branches in vs 9, reference to John 7:37-39: during feast of booths: the Lord Jesus spoke about the fountains of living water.

Wipe away every tear from their eyes: no suffering, no sorrow. No pain. Perfect blessedness.

Questions:

1. What is God's seal in our lives? What distinguishes us from those who belong to the beast?
2. What can we expect in this life now that we have the seal of God?
3. Vs. 14: The Great Tribulation, the great enmity (Gen. 3:15): do you experience this life as being part of the great tribulation? If so, how?
4. Vs. 16-17 : hunger, thirst, heat of the sun: are we still in the desert? (See also Hebrews 4:9-10). If so, do we look forward to entering the promised land?