

Revelation Chapter 7 Bible Study Notes

“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.”

Ezekiel 9:4

In our studies on the Book of Revelation up until now, we have been shown by the Apostle John the general history of the Christian Church after the ascension of Jesus up until the Church in the last days and the 2nd Coming of Jesus in the clouds, with glory and power. However, in chapter 7, we take a break from Church history to address a set of people, 144,000 in number, who seem to play a special role in end-time Bible prophecy.

Over the years and throughout many Christian denominations, there has always been some speculation as to who these individuals are and what purpose do they serve. It is a common misconception, which found its way into the Church during the time of the *Church of Thyatira*, **the pale horse**, that the 144,000 refer to literal Israelites who will be upon the earth after a *‘secret rapture’*, that is supposedly going to take place. However, as diligent Bible students we know this to be a lie, which came into the Church primarily by the devil using his human agents, *the papacy*, to cause confusion and to detract the minds of believers from the truth. You see, when one believes that the Church will be *‘raptured’* away in some secret event before the great time of trouble that Jesus says is to come upon all mankind, then individuals in the Church, need not pay attention to this time of tribulation as they apparently will not be here upon the earth; they are therefore uninterested with preparing their lives to be found spotless and blameless before God. This false doctrine, along with the additional doctrine that after this secret rapture, there will somehow be a second chance for all those other individuals who were not raptured the first time, to have a second *‘chance’* at making it to heaven, could not be further from the truth. This is a lie from the enemy himself. Friends, if you do not make it the first time, there is no other chance for you.

The primary issue is this, the Christian Church today has become so affiliated with the world that they believe that they can live as they please and do as they please without adhering to the Word of God, and still they will be saved. They reject the Bible, the Living word of God, choosing rather to live by the *‘spirit’* and as a result are ignorant of the events which the Bible says are to transpire before the Glorious Day of the Lord’s Coming. Satan has infiltrated the Church as he did during the Dark Ages and the believers of this present day are blinded because they **do not know the truth**; some genuinely do not know any better, however, others blatantly reject Bible truth.

Remember, Jesus is the living Word of God, **John 1:1,14**, how can a Christian reject God’s Word and the truths that are set within it, to teach & prepare us, and then expect to be saved? Rejecting God’s Word and the study of God’s Word is to reject Jesus, and he who rejects Jesus, rejects the Father. The Word of God gives us life and gives it more abundantly.

Therefore, we must study the Word of God diligently and allow the Holy Spirit to teach us and guide us into all truth. See: **John 6:63, John 16:13**.

v.1-3

*“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. 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, saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have **sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads**.”*

Here John sees another vision after the completion of the first six seals. His mind is drawn to four Heavenly angels standing at the four corners of the earth, namely North, South, East & West. The four angels are standing upon the four cardinal points holding back the four **winds of strife**. The wind here is symbolic of ‘war, bloodshed, death and disaster’ that is to come upon the people of the earth, also referred to as the ‘great tribulation’ **Matthew 24:21, Daniel 12:1**. These four winds are going to blow upon the earth and affect every person who is alive at that time, hence why John is seeing four winds as they will cover the entire earth and bring destruction.

*“Against Elam I will bring the **four winds** from the **four quarters of heaven** and scatter them toward all those winds; There shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go.” **Jeremiah 49:36***

*Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the **four winds** of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea.” **Daniel 7:2***

However, before this time of trouble shall come upon the earth, the servants of God must be sealed in their foreheads. Says the angel, *“Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have **sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads**.”*

This refers to a spiritual sealing in the forehead, i.e., **in the mind of the believers**. They must be settled into the truth of God’s Word in a time when there will be widespread deception in these last days; they must be cemented in their faith in God that they cannot be moved, spiritually. Deception will be around at every level, false prophets and teachers will be rife in the world and the only thing that we will be able to trust is the Word of God.

We will not be able to trust our own eyes even, for the devil will seek to deceive even the elect of God, the chosen people. The trickery in these last days will be so widespread that Jesus mentions it **three times** in **Matthew 24**, as He was telling His disciples of the signs to look for in the times of the end. **See: Matthew 24:4,11,24**

*“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” **Matthew 24:24***

In these last days, there will be two sealings, God’s people will be sealed, to show His ownership of them, and those who reject the Gospel will also be sealed or marked with the mark of satan, as they are owned by him. Those who receive the mark of the beast shall suffer the wrath of God and shall be destroyed by ‘fire & brimstone.’

Says Jesus, *“He who is not with me is against me...” **Matthew 12:30***. Whether people want to accept it or believe it, if they reject the everlasting Gospel of Jesus and are not sealed by the seal of God, they automatically put themselves on the side of the devil and as a result shall be destroyed by the splendour of Jesus’ Coming.

*“If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation.” **Revelation 14:9-10***

Compare the sealing of **God's people in the last days**, with the sealing of **God's people in the Old Testament, the Israelites**, in **Ezekiel Chapters 8 & 9**.

What we notice is that in the days of the Jews, because of their stubbornness, they rejected God and many apostasies and false teachings came into God's Old Testament Church of the time. Apostasies such as, idol worship in the temple, corruption, sacrificing to false gods and so on, however the greatest abomination that Ezekiel saw, was the professed people of God, specifically the leaders in the Temple of God, **worshipping the sun, Ezekiel 8:16**.

It was because of this great apostasy that God decided to hand over the nation of Israel to destruction but before doing this, He commanded His angels to go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a **seal** upon all those in the city who remained faithful to Him and cried out to Him for all the idolatry and false worship in His Holy Temple, **Ezekiel 9:4**. These people who were sealed were thus protected when the destruction of Jerusalem came by the Babylonian Empire.

This portrayal in the book of Ezekiel, gives us a better understanding of the events which are to transpire in the days preceding Jesus' Coming and what the sealing really represents.

As it was in the days of Ezekiel, so shall it be just before the coming of Jesus. God's people who cry out to Him for all the abominations in His Church and in the world and who remain faithful and true to Him despite the persecution, shall be sealed in their foreheads and will be protected when the wrath of God is poured out upon the wicked, the seven last plagues. See: **Psalm 91, Revelation 16:1-21**

Notice the Parallels in Ezekiel & Revelation

1. Jerusalem = The World
2. The sealing in the days of Ezekiel=The sealing of God's people in the last days
3. The abominations in the Old Testament Church=The abominations in the Last days Church
4. The greatest abomination (worship of the sun) = The mark of the beast (worship on the day of the sun)
5. The destruction of Jerusalem=The destruction of the World

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."

Now that we have understood what the sealing represents, now we can get a better understanding of the 144,000 and who they really represent.

From the study so far, we know now that these individuals will represent those in the church in the last days who will remain truthful to God and who preach the truth of God's Word, holding true to all the truths of the Bible and not deviating or compromising.

But are they literal Jews? No, they cannot be, as we notice that the **four winds** must blow across the entire earth not over the literal state of Israel and those sealed will be sealed from the **four corners** of the earth.

When we do a proper study of the Word of God, we get a true understanding of who "*Israel*" represents. Yes, the nation of Israel was God's people throughout the Old Testament period, however, the Israelites rejected the Messiah when He came and thus their time as God's people were up.

Who is Israel in the New Testament?

Paul tells us that a Jew is not one who is one outwardly but rather on the inside.

*“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but **he is a Jew who is one inwardly**; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit...” **Romans 2:28-29***

Bear in mind that Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles, and he is here saying to the early Roman Church, that a Jew is not one who is literally from the nation of Israel but rather one who is fully converted in the heart by the grace of God.

*“For you are all sons of God **through faith in Christ Jesus**. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is **neither Jew nor Greek**, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all **one in Christ Jesus**. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” **Galatians 3:26-29***

Abraham had many descendants, through Sarah, Hagar and Keturah, however the promise of the covenant was made between Abraham and Sarah through their son Isaac, of who the literal nation of Israel came. However, what Paul shows us is that through Jesus Christ, by **faith**, we can also become sons and daughters of Abraham, again cementing the fact that an Israelite is no longer a literal individual from the nation of Israel, but on the other hand, it is he or she who accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, thus becoming a true Israelite, a Spiritual Israelite, through the promise God made to Abraham.

Remember also that the city of God is called the New Jerusalem, **Revelation 21:2**, of which all of the saved shall be a part of, literal Jew or Greek, black or white, man or woman. Those who are faithful to God throughout all the generations, shall be inhabitants of this New Jerusalem.

See: **Ephesians 3:6, Romans 4:11-26**

Why 144,000?

In the Bible, 12 represents the number of God’s Church and it is a very foundational number in the government of God.

God is a God of order and structure.

He has made 12 months in a year, Jesus had 12 disciples and there were 12 tribes of Israel. The New Jerusalem has 12 foundations, 12 gates, 12,000 furlongs, a tree of life with 12 kinds of fruit which bear 12 times a year. Also, the 24 (12x2) elders in Revelation 4 and the 144,000 (12x12) are all multiples of 12.

So, from this understanding we know that the **144,000** must serve a special purpose in end time events.

In **Acts 1:12-26**, before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, *the early rain*, the 12 apostles were in deep prayer and submission to God, making sure that their lives were right before God; the Bible tells us that they were in one accord, or one mind, **Acts 1:14**.

It was then only after this time that the Holy Spirit was then poured out upon them **Acts 2:1-13**, and the Gospel message was then to go out into all the world with power and authority for the testimony of Jesus.

After this, we see that great multitudes were converted and brought into the Church of God as a result of the power with which the Apostles preached the message.

*“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day, about **three thousand souls** were added to them.” **Acts 2:41***

*“However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be **about five thousand.**” Acts 4:4*

*“Then the word of God spread, and the **number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem,** and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith. Acts 6:7*

“...the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit...” Colossians 1:5-6

Therefore, before the Holy Spirit is poured out, ‘the *latter rain*’, in these last days, as prophesied by Joel the prophet, God will again have a people who will be fully obedient to Him. By fasting and prayer and by gaining the victory over sin by the grace of God, they will be in one accord and one mind.

They will, like the Apostles of old, proclaim the Gospel message with power, just before the Second Coming of Jesus, in the period of the great tribulation.

Many will be converted and drawn to the faith, choosing to serve God and to come out of Babylon, to the light that is Jesus as this will be the last great warning that God will give to the inhabitants of the earth before He destroys it and the wicked within it.

“And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also, on My menservants and on My maidservants, I will pour out My Spirit in those days.” Joel 2:28

“And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.” Revelation 18:4-5

God will have another set of Apostles, in the last days, throughout the earth, to proclaim the gospel with power before He pours out His judgements upon the wicked and destroys them. **This is the 144,000.**

v.5-8

*“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.”*

John **hears** the number of those that were sealed, 12,000 from each tribe of **Spiritual Israel**, 144,000 in total. To the one who is not a diligent Bible student, they would read verses 5-8, and see nothing strange by it, but to those who study under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they would notice that throughout the entire Bible, there are only two instances where the 12 tribes are listed in this manner, once in the beginning of the Bible and once at the end, namely in **Genesis & in Revelation.**

The twelve tribes are first listed in **Genesis 29 & 30** and when they are listed as is common in the Hebrew culture, the first born was always listed first, as he was to be the one to inherit his father’s ‘dominion’ so to speak. The first born was to always receive a double portion of the blessing and he was to be the priests of the household.

“So, Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name **Reuben**; for she said, “The LORD has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me.” **Genesis 29:32**

- Notice here that **Reuben** was the **first born** and he is listed first in the list of Jacob’s children, however, in **Revelation 7:5**, **Judah** is listed first, even though he was the **fourth born**. This is because Reuben lost his birth right when he slept with his father’s concubine **Genesis 35:22**. It naturally should have gone to Simeon as he was the next in line, but Simeon also lost this right as he, along with the third born, Levi, slew the inhabitants of Shechem in their anger **Genesis 34:25**. As a result of all of these events, the birth right was then shared amongst three of the brothers.
- **Judah** became the head of the family, **Levi** and his descendants became the priests and the double portion of the blessing fell upon **Joseph’s** two sons, Manasseh & Ephraim.

In addition to this, we also notice that **Ephraim & Dan** are not listed in the 144,000 and this is because Ephraim and his descendants turned to idolatry and God eventually wiped them out, and Dan, who at first was a powerful tribe of which Samson and many of the other Judges came from, eventually became a ‘back-biter’, and a ‘serpent by the way’ and also lost his birth right. See: **Genesis 49:16-17, Hosea 4:17**

As a result, Ephraim was replaced by Levi, as Levi was never given an allotment of the land as he was a priest and priests were not to receive any allotment of the promised land, and Ephraim was replaced by his father Joseph.

We must also remember that after the 10 northern tribes were taken by the Assyrians into captivity, they spent many years living in the land of Assyria, and many ended up marrying and having children by the Assyrian inhabitants, thus spoiling the true line of descendancy from Jacob; the line was no longer pure. Those who returned to Israel after the captivity were now known as Samaritans, as they were now a mixed-race people between the northern tribes and the Assyrians. See: **2nd Kings 17:5-41**

Only the southern tribes of **Judah, Benjamin** and **Levi** remained pure.

So here we see that the layout of the 12 tribes in Revelation 7 are noticeably different to those in Genesis, further showing us that these 144,000 are not literal Israelites, but rather spiritual Israelites comprised of God’s faithful remnant of believers from all over the world, just before the great time of trouble.

v.9-10

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

Here we have a reference to the Old Testament **Feast of Tabernacles**, **Leviticus 23:40**. John sees a great multitude which could not be numbered which comprised of thousands upon thousands of people from various parts of the world, all saints of the Most High. They were clothed in white robes, signifying their triumph over sin holding palm branches in their hands.

Compare this scene with the Feast of Tabernacles, the final feast within the Ancient Israelite calendar. This was a festival of rejoicing and for giving God thanks for year of harvest and provisions. The Israelites were also to remember God’s protecting hand over them when He brought them out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, **Leviticus 23:33-44**.

In the same way, the righteous saints of God at the last day will give Him thanks and praise and glory for delivering them Spiritual Egypt, that is bondage to sin. They will rejoice because they have gained the victory

over sin and shall be forever clothed in white robes of righteousness and be crowned with the golden crown of life.

The true harvest has come, Jesus has separated the wheat from the tares and the wheat have received their reward of righteousness while the tares have received their reward of destruction.

*“Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the **Son of Man**, having on His head a **golden crown**, and in His hand a **sharp sickle**. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, **“Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”** So, He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. Then another angel came out of the temple, which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, **“Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.”** So, the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.” **Revelation 14:14-19***

This great multitude, some say are the righteous who have all died faithful to Christ from the days of Adam up until the last sinner who gave their life to Christ before the close of probation for all mankind, while others say these refer to the righteous who were converted by the work of the 144,000 during the last days.

Regardless of who the great multitude is, let us make sure that we are found amongst this great multitude of believers, that we may spend eternity with our Lord & Saviour, Jesus Christ.

v.11-12

*“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, saying: **“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honour and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”***

All the angels, the twenty-four elders and the four angelic creatures all bow before the Lamb in reverence & humility, giving Him glory and honour and praise.

Even the Angels in Heaven bow before the Lord and show reverence, unlike many in the Church today who jump up and shout and prance up before the presence of the Lord in His Church.

Maybe we should learn from the examples of those who reside in Heaven and give reverence to our God when we approach His presence in the Church with humility. It is time to put off the worldly behaviour, it has no place in the Church, it has no place in the presence of an Almighty, Omnipotent God.

*“Man is like a breath; His days are like a passing shadow.” **Psalm 144:4***

v.13-14

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

John gets his answer as to who the great multitude are, the elder says to Him, these are they who have come out of the time of great tribulation, they have been made spotless and received forgiveness of their sins and have also received a crown of glory.

It is highly probable then that these are they who have fully surrendered all to Jesus and have been converted during the time of the latter rain outpouring, when the 144,000 go out to preach the Word with power and glory. The Bible does not specifically say so I will not speculate.

v.15-17

*“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.** They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; 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.”*

Jesus has always wanted to dwell amongst His people. We see this theme running from the Garden of Eden, through to Israelite people, to the time of the Church and now after the devil has finally been defeated and the wicked have been destroyed, God will now dwell amongst His people for all eternity.

The Bride has made herself ready for the wedding banquet and she shall be forever married to her Groom, Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

*“And let them make Me a sanctuary, that **I may dwell among them.**” **Exodus 25:8***

*“And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: **“I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God and they shall be My people.”**” **2nd Corinthians 6:16***

*“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and **He will dwell with them,** and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.” **Revelation 21:3***

“For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

Revelation 6:17