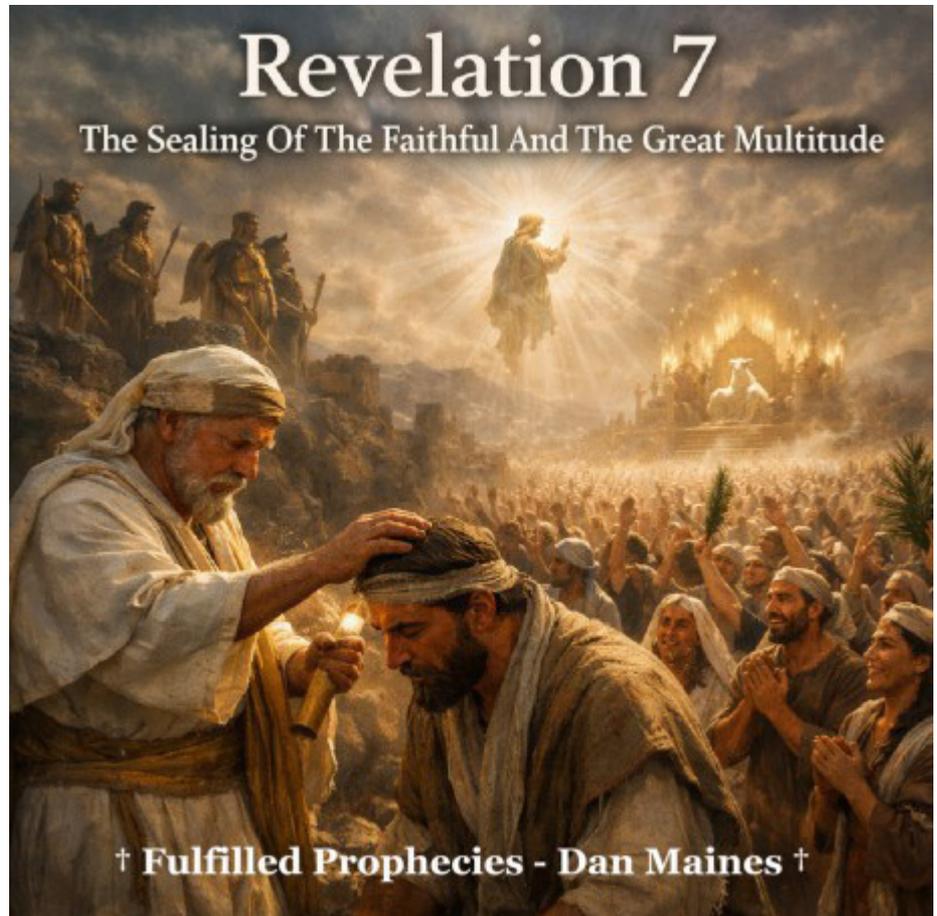


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Revelation 7 The Sealing Of The Faithful And The Great Multitude



By Dan Maines

Revelation 7 The Sealing Of The Faithful And The Great Multitude

Introduction

† Revelation 7 comes between the sixth and seventh seals, and that pause matters. It answers the question raised at the end of Revelation 6, who is able to stand.

† Before the next stage of judgment unfolds, God shows that His people are known, marked, and preserved.

† This chapter reveals both the faithful remnant of Israel and the

great multitude from the nations, showing the full reach of redemption in Christ.

† From the fulfilled perspective, this wasn't pointing to a distant future thousands of years later. It was showing what God was doing in the first-century tribulation that came upon that generation.

Revelation 7:1-3

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth, or on the sea, or on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, holding the seal of the living God, and he called out 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, or the sea, or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads.

† This pause between the sixth and seventh seals shows God's mercy. Judgment is restrained until His servants are marked for protection.

† The imagery recalls Ezekiel 9:4-6, where a mark protected the righteous in Jerusalem before Babylon's judgment.

† This seal wasn't physical but covenantal, showing ownership by God. The sealing guaranteed preservation of the faithful remnant in the first-century tribulation, consistent with Jesus' promise in Matthew 24:22 that for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

† The winds being held back show that judgment never moves outside God's authority. He controls its timing, scope, and purpose.

† The bond-servants of God are identified before wrath is released, proving that divine judgment never loses sight of divine mercy.

† The language of sealing parallels the protection of Israel during the Passover when the blood marked the houses so judgment would pass over them (Exodus 12:13).

† This reinforces the covenant pattern, God marks His people before judgment falls on the rebellious system.

Revelation 7:4

And I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel.

† The number 144,000 is symbolic, $12 \times 12 \times 1000$, the fullness of covenant people.

† They represent the faithful remnant of Israel preserved through the judgment.

† Paul affirmed that not all Israel is Israel, but only the remnant according to grace, Romans 9:6-8 and Romans 11:5.

† This fits John's vision, which identifies true Israel by faith in Christ, not by bloodline.

† John heard the number, which stresses order, purpose, and divine knowledge. God knew exactly who belonged to Him.

† The fact that John heard the number but later saw an innumerable multitude mirrors the pattern in Revelation 5 where John heard about the Lion but saw the Lamb.

† This shows that the sealed remnant and the great multitude are two perspectives of the same redeemed covenant people.

Revelation 7:5-8

From the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed.

† The listing is deliberate. Judah, the tribe of Christ, comes first.

† Dan is omitted, likely because of its association with idolatry in Judges 18.

† Ephraim is replaced by Joseph, yet Manasseh remains, showing rearrangement of tribal identity in Christ.

† The arrangement itself demonstrates this isn't about literal genealogy but covenant representation.

† The remnant Israel is redefined around the Messiah, a reality affirmed by the apostles in Galatians 3:29.

† This tribal order isn't accidental. It shows that covenant identity is now centered in Christ and not merely in old tribal descent.

Revelation 7:9-10

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes, peoples, and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands. And they cried out with a loud voice, saying, Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.

† The vision widens from the sealed remnant of Israel to an innumerable multitude of Gentiles, showing covenant expansion.

† Both groups together fulfill God's promise to Abraham, that all nations would be blessed in his seed, Genesis 22:18.

† Palm branches symbolize victory and celebration, recalling the Feast of Booths in Leviticus 23:40.

† Zechariah 14:16 foresaw the nations coming to worship the Lord, and here that covenant hope is shown fulfilled in Christ.

† The white robes show purity, acceptance, and victory before God.

† Salvation belongs to God and to the Lamb, which means redemption is entirely His work from beginning to end.

† This multitude fulfills the promise that the kingdom would be taken from unbelieving Israel and given to a people producing its fruit (Matthew 21:43).

† The nations now stand before the throne because the Messiah's kingdom has been established.

Revelation 7:11-12

And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, Amen, blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.

† The sevenfold doxology demonstrates fullness of praise, as all creation joins in honoring God for salvation.

† Heaven responds to redemption with worship because the victory of the Lamb is the center of God's revealed glory.

† The angels, elders, and living creatures all fall before the throne, showing that no creature stands above God's majesty.

† Chrysostom observed that heaven's worship reveals God's universal reign, not confined to Israel but extended to all nations in Christ.

† The scene makes it clear that the redemption of the saints is no small event. It is celebrated in heaven itself.

Revelation 7:13-14

Then one of the elders responded, saying to me, These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from? I said to him, My lord, you know. And he said to me, These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

† The multitude came out of the great tribulation, not a future one, but the tribulation of the first century, which Jesus predicted would come upon that generation in Matthew 24:21, 34.

† Josephus records unparalleled suffering in Jerusalem during AD 66-70 in Wars 6.9.4, aligning with Jesus' prophecy of the great tribulation.

† Tacitus also recorded the devastation of Judea during the Roman war, confirming the catastrophic nature of that conflict (Tacitus, Histories 5.13).

† Their robes are white, not from personal works, but through the cleansing blood of Christ.

† This is proof of justification by grace. The Lamb's sacrifice is what made them clean.

† The elder's question draws attention to the identity of the redeemed so the reader understands that tribulation did not defeat them, it brought them through into victory.

Revelation 7:15-17

For this reason they are before the throne of God, and they serve Him day and night in His temple, and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. They will no longer hunger nor thirst, nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any scorching heat, for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.

† The promise is covenantal and realized in Christ. The faithful are made His temple, as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6:16.

† He spreads His tabernacle over them, fulfilling the Feast of Tabernacles in its spiritual sense.

† This language echoes Isaiah 49:10 and Isaiah 25:8, promises of restoration for God's people, which find their fulfillment in Christ and His church.

† The Lamb as Shepherd fulfills John 10:11, guiding His flock to living waters.

† The wiping of tears isn't deferred for thousands of years, but begins in the new covenant relationship, fully realized in the overthrow of the old system that persecuted the saints.

† The promise that God would dwell with His people fulfills the prophetic expectation that the Lord would return to dwell among His people after judgment and restoration (Ezekiel 37:26-28).

† In Christ, God's presence is no longer confined to a physical temple but resides with His people.

Historical References

† Josephus recorded the horrific suffering in Jerusalem during the Roman siege, confirming the severity of the tribulation that fell on that generation (Josephus, Wars 6.9.4).

† Tacitus described the devastation of Judea during the Roman campaign, confirming the historical reality of the tribulation surrounding Jerusalem's fall (Tacitus, Histories 5.13).

† Eusebius wrote that the believers fled Jerusalem before its destruction, showing that Christ preserved His people just as He promised.

† Chrysostom emphasized the universal worship of God, showing that the praise surrounding the throne belongs to the full redeemed people of God in Christ.

How It Applies To Us Today

† God knows His own and seals them. Our security is in His ownership, not in worldly strength.

† The remnant of Israel and the multitude of Gentiles together form the one people of God, proof that the promises are fulfilled in Christ.

† The great tribulation already proved God's word true, and now we live in the age of His tabernacle presence.

† We are called to serve as His temple, to worship in victory, and to trust the Lamb who shepherds us to living waters.

† Revelation 7 reminds us that judgment doesn't overturn God's promises. It confirms them.

† We don't live waiting for God to gather His people. In Christ, He already has, and He continues to bring His people into the blessing of the fulfilled kingdom.

Q & A Appendix

Q Who are the 144,000 in Revelation 7?

A They represent the symbolic fullness of the faithful remnant of Israel preserved by God during the time of judgment. Paul explained that there is a remnant according to grace and that not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel (Romans

9:6-8; Romans 11:5).

Q Is the great tribulation still future?

A No. Jesus said it would occur in that generation (Matthew 24:21, 34). The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 matches that prophecy and is recorded by historians like Josephus and Tacitus.

Q Why does John first hear the number 144,000 but then see a countless multitude?

A Revelation often presents a truth in two ways. John hears the number of the covenant remnant and then sees the full redeemed people from all nations, showing the fulfillment of God's promise to gather His people through Christ.

Q What do the white robes represent?

A They represent the righteousness given through the sacrifice of Christ. The redeemed stand before God because they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14; Romans 5:9).

Q Why are palm branches in their hands?

A Palm branches symbolize victory and covenant celebration. They connect to the Feast of Booths and reflect the triumph of God's redeemed people before His throne (Leviticus 23:40).

Q Why are the servants of God sealed on their foreheads?

A The seal represents ownership and protection. Just as the righteous were marked before Jerusalem's earlier judgment in Ezekiel 9:4-6, God's servants in Revelation are identified as belonging to Him before judgment falls. This shows that the Lord preserves His faithful people even when covenant judgment unfolds.

Q Why are there two groups mentioned, the 144,000 and the great multitude?

A The vision presents the same redeemed people from two perspectives. John first hears the numbered remnant of Israel, then sees the countless multitude from every nation. This reflects the fulfillment of God's promise that the gospel would go first to Israel and then to the nations (Romans 1:16; Acts 13:46).

Q What does it mean that the Lamb will shepherd them?

A This fulfills Jesus' own promise that He is the good shepherd who leads His sheep to life (John 10:11, 27-28). The Lamb who was sacrificed now rules and guides His people, bringing them to the springs of the water of life.

Q Why is the throne of God central in this vision?

A The throne emphasizes that God reigns over both judgment and redemption. Even while Jerusalem was facing destruction, heaven's throne remained the center of authority and salvation (Psalm 103:19; Revelation 4:2-3). The redeemed stand before that throne because Christ has brought them into God's presence.

Q Are the 144,000 a literal group of Jews that will appear in the future?

A No. The number is symbolic and represents the fullness of God's covenant people. Revelation consistently uses symbolic numbers. The 144,000 is twelve times twelve times one thousand, showing the complete people of God. John first hears the number of the sealed remnant from Israel and then sees the great multitude from every nation, showing the expansion of the covenant people through Christ (Revelation 7:4, 9; Galatians 3:29). The vision demonstrates that the true Israel of God is defined by faith in the Messiah, not by physical descent (Romans 9:6-8).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Revelation 7:1-17; Ezekiel 9:4-6; Matthew 24:21-22, 34; Romans 9:6-8; Romans 11:5; Galatians 3:29; Genesis 22:18; Leviticus 23:40; Zechariah 14:16; Isaiah 25:8; Isaiah 49:10; Ezekiel 37:26-28; John 10:11; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Exodus 12:13; Matthew 21:43

† Josephus, Wars 6.9.4; Tacitus, Histories 5.13; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5; Chrysostom, Homilies on Revelation

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