

## Revelation 7.1-8.5

## "Shelter in the Storm"

Great Earthquake > Moon turns Blood Red > Stars fall from Sky > Mntns Crumble  
Ch 6 ENDS w/ One of Most FEARSOME Pictures in all Literature > TRUE Story  
Awesome and Dreadful WRATH of GOD > Righteous PUNISHMENT of Sinners

Chapter Ends with HAUNTING QUESTION > "Who can Stand?" 6.17  
Kings of Earth CANNOT Princes CANNOT Generals CANNOT Rich & Mighty  
GREAT are GROVELING in Caves > Hiding under Rocks > from Wrath of Lamb

Letter to 7 Churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia  
and Laodicea > Small and Struggling > Saints and Sinners > Holy and Hypocrites  
POWERFUL Words READ > Believers Hiding under THEIR PEWS > Trembling

Ch 7 > Contrast: Security of Faithful > Parenthesis btwn Opening 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Seals  
2 Visions: 144,000 & Great Multitude > Church > from 2 Vantage Points

Purpose > Demonstrate God's people STAND SECURE in Him on Judgment Day

Jesus was NOT BLOWING SMOKE when HE PROMISED:

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has  
eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

John 5.24

### 1. Sealed Servants    2. Standing Saints    3. Surprising Silence

#### 1. Sealed Servants

##### a. Confident

v. 1 "*After this* I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding  
back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or  
on the sea or on any tree."

4 Angels > at 4 Points of Compass N/S/E/W > holding 4 Destructive Winds

Apocalyptic Idea > Forces of Nature under control of Angels

14.18 "angel who had charge of the fire" // 16.5 "the angel in charge of the waters"

BOOK NOT Written in Chronological Order > NOT One Event following Another  
After 6.12-14 > No More CORNERS on Planet Earth > NO MORE EARTH!

v. 1 John does NOT SAY “After six seals were broken I saw...”

CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE > New Focus > before 4 Horsemen Ride  
BEFORE Conquest, Bloodshed, Famine, and Death FILL THE GUILTY EARTH

4 Horsemen // 4 Winds “there before me were four chariots coming out...The first chariot had red horses, the second black, the third white, and the fourth dappled--all of them powerful. I asked the angel who was speaking to me, "What are these, my lord?" The angel answered me, "*These are the four winds of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world.* The one with the black horses is going toward the north country... the white horses toward the west ...dappled horses toward the south." Zechariah 6.1-7

Revel 6 > Zechariah’s 4 HORSEMEN // Revel 7 > Zechariah’s 4 WINDS

vs. 2,3 “Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees *until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.*"

WINDS of Destruction about to be UNLEASHED > North, South, East, & West  
But WAIT! Angel with GOD’S AUTHORITY > God’s Deputy had More Power

“Those tempests would not arise or shake a single leaf till the securing of God’s servants was accomplished.” W. Boyd Carpenter

Seal = Signet Ring // Oriental Kings > to Authenticate and Protect Official Docs  
Seal of Living God > Intervenes on Behalf of His People > True and Eternal God

“God’s people are those who have the seal of God upon their forehead...in the Jewish story...the forehead was indicative of a person’s inner orientation toward God...to have God’s name upon one’s forehead is to have one’s nature conformed to the nature of God.” M. Robert Mulholland, Jr

1) Seal Confirms Truthfulness - put on MONEY Notes by GOVERNMENTS

“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit” Ephesians 1.13

“God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: ‘The Lord knows those who are his’”  
2 Timothy 2.19

## 2) Seal Confirms Ownership - Stamped upon PROPERTY by the OWNER

“He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts”  
2 Corinthians 1.22

Jesus to Faithful in Church in Philadelphia: “I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God”  
Revelation 3.12

## 3) Seal Confirms Security; Tomb of Jesus was CLOSED by Roman SEAL

The LORD said, "Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it." As I listened, he said to the others, "Follow him through the city and kill, without showing pity or compassion...*but do not touch anyone who has the mark.*"  
Ezekiel 9.3-6

SEALING is not EXEMPTION from PROBLEMS, PAIN, or PERSECUTION  
“the souls of those who had been *slain because of the word of God*”  
Revelation 6.9

Sealed = Entry to Heavenly Kingdom > they'll Remain Faithful thru Persecution  
Because GOD IS FAITHFUL to all His Promises

Those DESTINED FOR GOD'S INHERITANCE: “who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time”  
1Peter 1.5

## b. Complete > 2 Visions > One Church of Jesus: Militant and Triumphant

v. 4 “I *heard the number* of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel”

v. 9 “After this *I looked and there before me* was a great multitude”

2 Perspectives: ONE REALITY > Hears of 144,000 > Sees Multitude CHURCH  
All the People of God > All Time > Israel of God > fulfilled in Church of Jesus

## 1) Historical Reasons > 2 Visions of One Church: 12 Tribes were LOST

10 of the 12 Tribes disappeared in Assyria > N. Kingdom: Israel Exiled 721 BC ca.  
Remaining 2 (Judah & Ben) Lost Separate Identity when Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70

## 2) Theological Reasons > No ETHNIC Distinctions in the New Testament

“There is *neither Jew nor Greek*, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you *belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed*”

Galatians 3.28,29

“I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 8.11

Church > Eschatological People of God > has taken up Israel's Inheritance

“A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly...No, *a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly*; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit”

Romans 2.28,29

“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, *to the twelve tribes* scattered among the nations”

James 1.1

“You are a *chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation*, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. *Once you were not a people*, but now you are the people of God”

1 Peter 2.9,10

## 3) Textual Reasons > Most IMPORTANT > What does the Passage say??

### a) Style of Revelation

Book of Revelation > No Shortage of Images > Many Illustrate Same Things

Ch 5 > JESUS = LION of JUDAH / ROOT of DAVID / & LAMB that was SLAIN

Ch 7 > CHURCH = 144,000 Sealed Israelites AND Cosmopolitan MULTITUDE

Numbers in Book > More than STATISTICS > More Often SYMBOLS

12 Patriarchs of Israel? 12 Apostles of the Lamb? 1,000 = Great, Complete

144,000 Obviously Symbolic = Complete Company of the Redeemed

### b) Wider Context v. 3 “put a seal on the...servants of God” WHO ARE THEY?

“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show *his servants...*  
blessed are *those who hear it...to the seven churches* in the province of Asia”  
Revelation 1.1,3,4

“the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and  
his Father's name written on their foreheads... they sang a new song before the  
throne...*No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed  
from the earth.*”  
Revelation 14.1-3

WHO SINGS THIS SONG? a great multitude which no one could number, from  
every nation and from all tribes and peoples and tongues > Song of SALVATION

c) Immediate Context > Several Irregularities in List of 12 Tribes of Israel

20 Lists of the 12 Tribes in OT > 18 Different Orders > NONE LIKE THIS

Sons of Jacob (Genesis 35)	Sons of Israel (Revelation 7)
<i>Sons of Wives</i>	
<i>Of Leah</i>	
Reuben	Judah (tribe of Messiah, 5.5)
Simeon	Reuben
Levi	Gad
Judah	Asher
Issachar	Naphtali
Zebulun	Manasseh (replacing Dan)
<i>Of Rachel</i>	
Joseph	Simeon
Benjamin	Levi
<i>Sons of Concubines</i>	
<i>Of Bilhah</i>	
Dan	Isaachar
Naphtali	Zebulun
<i>Of Zilpah</i>	
Gad	Joseph
Asher	Benjamin

Judah FIRST > 4<sup>th</sup> Born Son of Jacob > 1<sup>st</sup> Reuben >> 1<sup>st</sup>?? Messiah from Judah  
 Dan LEFT OUT > Connection with Idolatry? > Rabbis: Antichrist from that Tribe  
 Inclusion of both Manasseh and Joseph > Manasseh was Joseph's son

Priority Placed on Sons of Jacob's Concubines: Gad, Asher, & Naphtali  
 OUTSIDERS Promoted to Higher Rank >> INCLUSION of GENTILES

“The difference between the 144,000 ‘Israelites’ and the countless multiethnic multitude is not in the ethnic composition of the two groups but in their *location*. The sealed and numbered army of Israel shows the faithful church on earth, shielded from apostasy and from God's wrath in union with the Lamb (bearing his name, sealed by his Spirit). The innumerable assembly of nations shows the victorious church in heaven, emerging triumphant from tribulation not through a painless rapture but through a faithful death.”  
 Dennis E. Johnson

## 2. Standing Saints

a. Crowd ANOTHER Shift in Focus > Change in Location & Perspective

v. 9 “After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count”

Fulfillment of God's promise Abraham: "Look up at the heavens and count the stars--if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."  
 Genesis 15.5

b. Cosmopolitan

v. 9 “from *every nation, tribe, people and language*, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb”

Ungodly get Judge's Condemnation > Cannot Stand > Hide from Wrath of Lamb  
 Multitude of Redeemed stand with Confidence before their God > GRACE

“Put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

Ephesians 6.13

ALL STANDING > Equally UNWORTHY but Equally WELCOME by Grace

“This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”  
Matthew 24.14

Sunday Morning at 11 > MOST SEGREGATED Hour in America > Church Meets Whites > Blacks > Browns > Yellows > Reds with THEIR KIND OF PEOPLE  
POOR PREVIEW of Where we will SPEND ETERNITY > Rainbow of Redeemed

“How often do we presume that our particular community represents God’s faithful people and all others are suspect to greater and lesser degrees? Perhaps we make our distinctions on theological grounds, ecclesiastical grounds, ethnic grounds, economic grounds, social grounds. Those who are not ‘like us’ are automatically relegated to being ‘outside’ our definition of ‘God’s people.’... John’s vision gives only two criteria for being the people of God. First, we must be washed in the blood of the Lamb. Second, to be God’s people we must have God’s name inscribed upon our forehead.”  
M. Robert Mulholland, Jr

c. Celebration “To our God . . . and to the Lamb, we owe our salvation!”

vs 10-12 “And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’ All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: ‘Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!’”

Robes of White > Victory of faith > Righteousness of Christ > thru Blood of Lamb  
Palm Branches > Scene of Festive Joy // Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday

No Confusion of Tongues > Babel is Distant Past > Every Voice as a Single Voice  
ONE HEART’S PASSION > ONE HUMBLE PRONOUNCEMENT

Glory > the Radiance of God Himself

Wisdom > Displayed in His Plan of Redemption

Thanks > Only appropriate Response for Salvation

Honor > Public Acknowledgment of God

Power > God’s ability to Act

Strength > God’s Redemptive Presence in the Events of History

Moses and the Israelites sang after crossing Red Sea: “The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation”  
Exodus 15.2

“If there is ‘rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents’, how unbelievably great will be the joyful adoration of the heavenly host when all the redeemed stand before their God!” Robert H. Mounce

#### d. Covering

vs. 9,13,14 “They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands...Then one of the elders asked me, ‘These in white robes--who are they, and where did they come from?’ I answered, ‘Sir, you know.’ And he said, ‘These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’”

Elder anticipates John’s Question > WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE??

“Sir, you know” > Confession of Ignorance and a Plea for Enlightenment  
 Not their Blood > Not their Suffering > Not their Righteousness > Lamb ALONE  
 “the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin” 1 John 1.7

“This blood and nothing else in the universe whitens us so that we may stand before God.” R.C.H. Lenski

"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city." Revelation 22.14

#### e. Comfort > Safety and Sustenance in Land of Scarcity and Insecurity

vs. 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 spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”

“It is impossible that any ill should happen to the man who is beloved of the Lord. Ill to him is no ill, but only good in a mysterious form. Losses enrich him, sickness is his medicine, reproach is his honor, death is his gain.” Charles Spurgeon

Dressed in WHITE > Blessings of HEAVEN are theirs WITHOUT DELAY  
 MORE INTENSE your SUFFERING for Him > More WONDERFUL the Comfort

God gave Pillar of Cloud by Day and Pillar of Fire by Night > Constant Presence



“He who sits upon the throne will shelter them with his presence”  
 “He will make his Shekinah to dwell with them”

“I will put my dwelling place among you...I will walk among you and be your  
 God, and you will be my people.” Leviticus 26.11,12

Ultimate Satisfaction of Soul’s Deepest Longing for Spiritual Wholeness  
 God was the Shepherd of Israel // Lamb is the Shepherd of God’s Flock

“He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries  
 them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.” Isaiah 40.11

“Like the tears of a child brought suddenly from sorrow to delight, they linger  
 rather ridiculously on the faces of the redeemed.” Robert H. Mounce

“The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the  
 disgrace of his people from all the earth.” Isaiah 25.8

### 3. Surprising Silence

a. Stop > Biblical Worship > as recorded here > LOUD and ACTIVE

“four living creatures...day and night they *never stop saying*: "Holy, holy, holy is  
 the Lord God Almighty..." Revelation 4.8

“the twenty-four elders... *say*: ‘You are worthy, our Lord and God...’”  
 Revelation 4.10,11

“they *sang* a new song: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals...’”  
 Revelation 5.9

“the *voice of many angels*, numbering thousands upon thousands” Revelation 5.11

“In a *loud voice* they sang: ‘Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain...’” Revelation 5.12

“I heard *every creature* in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea,  
 and all that is in them, singing” Revelation 5.13

“They called out in a *loud voice*, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord...’” Revelation 6.10

“they cried out in a *loud voice*: ‘Salvation belongs to our God...’” Revelation 7.10

v. 1 “When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.”

Following Interlude > Action Resumes > Opening of 7<sup>th</sup> Seal > ½ Hour of Silence  
SILENCE > Think!! – Why SOCIETY cannot TURN OFF POUNDING MUSIC  
Who DARES to Think? > Problems, Pain, Punishment from JUST, HOLY GOD

Psalms > SELAH > Note to MUSICIANS & Readers > PAUSE AND REFLECT  
Long and Ominous Silence > Calm Before the Ultimate Storm

Barry Bonds at the Plate > Ready to Hit Homerun # 755

World Cup Football > Game Ends in a Tie > Players gathered for SHOOTOUT  
SCREAMING STADIUM SILENCED > Stands in ANXIOUS ANTICIPATION

“The LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him”

Habakkuk 2.20

b. See >> Angel offer Incense to God with Prayers of Saints

vs. 2-4 “And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand.”

7 Trumpets > Anxious Anticipation of LOUD BLAST > Prayers taken to Throne  
Incense added to Hot Coals > Cloud of Fragrant Smoke Rises from Altar  
Angel does not make Prayers Acceptable to God > Worthy IN the LAMB

Angel at Altar with Golden Censer > Incense mingled with Prayers of all the Saints

‘Much Incense’ > along with Prayers of Saints > Prayer of Christ Himself

“Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood... he always lives to intercede for them”  
Hebrews 7.24,25

Prayer ascends to Throne > to Very Presence of God > Aroma Pleasing to Him

v. 5 “Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.”

THEN > Scene of Intercession > becomes One of Judgment  
 CENSOR Carrying PRAYER becomes CENSOR Conveying PUNISHMENT

Prayers of Saints play essential part in bringing Judgment of God on Earth

"I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!"  
 Luke 12.49

“On earth, we are distressed by the evil actions of others. When we get to heaven, will we be distressed over our earthly prayerlessness?...If God would move heaven and earth, to warn planet earth, what will he do for your loved one if you just pray? This scene from heaven reveals that in response to the prayers of His people, God moves in powerful ways!”  
 Anne Graham Lotz

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## Revelation 7

1. After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.
2. Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea:
3. "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God."
4. Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.
5. From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben 12,000, from the tribe of Gad 12,000,
6. from the tribe of Asher 12,000, from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000, from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000,
7. from the tribe of Simeon 12,000, from the tribe of Levi 12,000, from the tribe of Issachar 12,000,
8. from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000, from the tribe of Joseph 12,000, from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000.
9. After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.
10. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."
11. All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,
12. saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"
13. Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes--who are they, and where did they come from?"
14. I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have 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 spread his tent over them.
16. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.

17. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

## Revelation 8

1. When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

2. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

3. Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne.

4. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand.

5. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.