

**Revelation**  
**7:1-17**  
**“Those who are able to stand”**

**I. Intro**

**II. Vs. 1-8 Sealed bond servants**

**III. Vs. 9-17 Saved by the blood of the lamb**

**I. Intro**

The 6<sup>th</sup> chapter Revelation reveals the natural progression of the human race left to its own desires apart from any preserving influence from the Church. It also records the two responses of the human race to that.

- The first is to turn and trust God
- The second was to run from God’s love and grace

It is this second group that asked the question as to who was able to stand before the wrath of the Lamb. Before we are given the answer to their question (which is given us in this chapter) there is an observation between this chapter and the one that preceded it as well as the one that follows it. What John records is that “judgment suspended” as the scene switches to heaven! John introduces us to two groups that will be able to NOT ONLY stand but also worship and serve the Lamb as well.

**II. Vs. 1-8 Sealed bond servants**

Vs. 1 It is always important to take in account the setting in which something is said, here we notice that John specifically says the words “After these things” prior to telling us what he saw. The question that this brings up is, “*After what things?*” ***We see that this question came after the question of, “Who is able to stand” which was uttered by the inhabitants of the earth that were attempting to flee from the Lamb of God.*** When we look at verse 9 John informs his readers that the setting of the “After these things” appears directly in front of the introduction of the gentile

multitude in heaven. That helps the reader to understand that in conjunction with the word “servants” which is the Greek word “*bond servant*” in verse three that **these 144,000 Jews will be directly involved in leading those gentile multitude which no one can number to faith in the Messiah.** Jesus had told His disciples in 24:14 that “*this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come*” it is here in chapter 7 that we see the literal fulfillment of Jesus’ words.

We also see that four angels are holding back the winds and here as well as elsewhere in Revelation we are told of **the angelic influence over the forces of nature, (In 14:18 it is over fire and in 16:5 it is over water)**. We have become accustomed to hearing the phrase “*mother nature*” but in reality **it is God who is over the forces of nature and during the tribulation period He will use the forces of His creation to help judge those who refuse to love His truth.**

The word “*corner*” is literally **quarters or quadrants**, which would refer to North, South, East, and West. The effects this will have upon the global climate is perhaps the reason some of in the world to believe that the two witness have power over the rain as well as the waters for 3 ½ in chapter 11:6!

- The first five seals the effects were directly upon man
- Here the effects are upon that which man was to be steward over, the earth and its environment.

Vs. 2-3 It appears that the holding back of the winds will cause great damage to the “*the earth, the sea and the trees*” but they are not to do anything until **the servants of the Lord are sealed on their foreheads.** In chapter 14:1 we are told that “*His Father's name (is) written on their foreheads*”. Seals in scripture as well as ancient history, were for the purpose of identification specifically as it related too: “**Possession, Protection and Preservation**”. The timing of their

sealing is just prior to the opening of the seventh seal in chapter eight and suggests that these Jews are to be stamped as belonging:

- In the Lord's "*possession*"
- Being under the Lord's "*protection*" and "*preserved*"

This is for the Lord's purpose to witness to the gentile world. Isaiah the prophet spoke of this in Isa. 42:6-7 where the word of the Lord said, "*I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.*" Even though the Lord had always had that plan for Israel they more often looked as though they were the ones that needed the light but here we see that during the tribulation period God's plan for them will be fulfilled.

What made the difference in these 144,000 that had never before happened is that they were now "*sealed the servants of our God*". The word servants is "*bond slaves*" or servants by choice, *they had choose to stay with the Lord even when they were free to leave.*

Vs. 4-8 Many have placed themselves in this number of sealed servants, J.W's, Herbert W. Armstrong and even some groups of 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventists but the problem with their personal interpretation is that there is *NOT a hint of symbolism in this number.* we can know with absolute certainty the identification of this 144,000 as we are told that they were made up of 12,000 from the tribes listed below. For any group to claim that they are part of the 144,000 only they need to do is tell us *what tribe they are from!*

The list of tribes given here differs from other lists of tribes and presents more questions as to why then it provides answers. For instance:

1. Why is Levi mentioned when this tribe was given no inheritance of land?

2. Why is Joseph mentioned instead of his son Ephraim, who is usually connected with his brother Manasseh?
3. Why is Dan omitted here yet included in Ezekiel's prophecy concern the distribution of land during the millennial reign of Christ?

Here is my answer to these questions "*I don't know!*"

Much has also been made of the so called "*10 lost tribes*" of the Assyrian captivity but it must be pointed out that it is impossible for God to lose anything, much less His chosen people. The other thing worth noting is that this list represents God's choice not men and He is not bothered by the lack of genealogical records.

- a. **Judah**: Mentioned first is the tribe of Kings and especially the King of Kings.
- b. **Reuben**: The first born of Leah, who lost his birthright because his pride and insecurity caused him to sleep with his father's concubine.
- c. **Gad and Asher**: These were Leah's children through her handmaiden Zilpah, Anna who gave testimony at the birth of Jesus came from the so-called lost tribe of Asher.
- d. **Naphtali**: Rachel's 2<sup>nd</sup> son by her handmaiden Bilhah, as noted her first born son Dan is left off this list but placed in the list in Ezekiel 48 as having land even though it is the furthest from the temple.
- e. **Manasseh**: The youngest son of Joseph born to him while he was in Egypt and then claimed as a son by his grandfather's Jacob.
- f. **Simeon and Levi**: Leah's 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> children to whom Jacob calls cruel.
- g. **Issachar and Zebulun**: Leah's 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> children who were given land where Jesus first began His ministry (Galilee).

h. **Joseph and Benjamin**: Rachael's only two sons Benjamin was the tribe of Paul and again a so-called lost tribe.

12,000 from each, exactly whom God wants by His grace! In Isaiah 60:1-3 the prophet saw this saying, "*Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.*" Then in 49:9-12 we are given the outcome "*His glory*" being seen upon these 144,000 as we are told that "*You may say to the prisoners, 'Go forth,' To those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.' 'They shall feed along the roads, and their pastures shall be on all desolate heights. They shall neither hunger nor thirst, neither heat nor sun shall strike them; For He who has mercy on them will lead them, Even by the springs of water He will guide them. I will make each of My mountains a road, And My highways shall be elevated. Surely these shall come from afar; Look! Those from the north and the west, And these from the land of Sinim.*"

### **III. Vs. 9-17 Saved by the blood of the lamb**

Vs. 9 The timing of this vision and the fact that the number is so large that no man can number it answer two questions:

- a. **Will people get saved during the tribulation?**: The answer is a most undeniable yes as we will see the single greatest revivals in the history of the world.
- b. **How will the people of the world react to the events?**: The answer is a number so large that can't be counted will come to Christ.

Clearly the gospel is going to be preached after the rapture of the Church as verse 14 tells us when they got saved, "*These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation*". What I find

interesting is to combine the effect of the 144,000's evangelism with their method of doing so found in 14:4 "*These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.*" **If you follow the Lamb wherever He goes, He will always lead you to the Father and to those in need.**

Furthermore, you will live what you believe not just talk about it!

Notice that their salvation crosses every government, ancestry, race, and language. What we have here is the Spirit of God working through those servants of God! The people who would not receive the Lord are seeking to hide from the Lamb and ask "*Who is able to stand?*" The answer is those who receive Jesus! as we are told in verse 14 that "*washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*" In their hands is the symbol of victory (the palm branches) won on their behalf.

Vs. 10-12 Their praise is both for the source (God) as well as the instrument (the Lamb) of their salvation. **No matter what time frame upon the earth the source and instrument of our salvation has never changed!** At the words of their praise all stand and fall on their faces in praise to God! This praise is very similar to that of 5:12 with the only notable difference being in 5:12 the Lamb is said to be worthy of riches and here thanksgiving is what is offered. Perhaps the reason for this is that chapter 5 is a picture of the raptured church before the throne and here we have the full number of gentiles the combination of the seated elders and those martyred tribulation believers standing unite together in praise. In Eph. 1:18 we are told that the church is "*the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints*" in Matthew 13:46 we are called the Pearl of great price. The cry of the angels in revelation 5:12 was that the Lamb was worthy to receive His full reward of gentile believers and here He does!

Vs. 13-17 A rhetorical question is asked and then answered because John does not know the answer but the one that asks it the "raptured church" does.

In verse 14 the simple interpretation is the best that “*the innumerable saints came from the tribulation period and that their spiritual purity is based upon being washed in Jesus’ blood.*” Heb. 9:22 and 1 Peter 1:18-19 shed light upon being washed in Christ’s blood as we are told that, “*all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission*” and “*you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*”

Vs. 15- 17 John records *five blessings given these tribulation believers:*

- a. Vs. 15a **Presence** “*They are before the throne of God*”: They are continually in the presence of the Lord.
- b. Vs. 15b **Privilege** “*And serve Him day and night in His temple*”: They are given a place of continual service as Adam was in the cool of the day as He will amongst them. Their service will be in constant fellowship.
- c. Vs. 16 **Preserved** “*They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat*”: They will forever be delivered from any and all afflictions of life as they had to go through the tribulation where life offered them no preservation they will never again experience anything but God’s abundant grace.
- d. Vs. 17a **Provisions** “*the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters.*” Truly the 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm will be theirs personally as the Lord will be their shepherd and they shall not want!
- e. Vs. 17b **Precious** “*And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes*”: They will experience the tender comfort and care from all past heartaches as well as a promise of never more having any!