

## THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

### Revelation 7:1-8:6 | Session 13 | The 144,000 and the Second Vision in Heaven

We recall from session nine that there are seven pairs of visions given to John in the book of Revelation. The first pair of visions pertains to events that are taking place in Heaven, and the second part of the pair concerns events taking place on Earth. We have seen the first vision in Heaven, and tonight we will conclude the first vision on earth and see John's second vision in Heaven.

1.1 | The First Vision "In Heaven" (4:1-5:14).

1.2 | The First Vision "On Earth" (6:1-7:8).

1.3 | The Second Vision "In Heaven" (7:9-8:6).

#### 1.2 THE FIRST VISION ON EARTH (6:1-7:8) CONTINUED FROM SESSION 12

The first vision in Heaven consisted of the Throne Room of God, the Twenty-Four Elders, the Four beasts (or living creatures), the seven-sealed scroll, and the Lamb, who was able to open the seven seals.

In the first vision on Earth, the seven seals were opened. Chapter 6:1-17 paralleled the prophecy Jesus gave his disciples on the Mount of Olives in Matthew 24:5-30. Seals one through four were precursors of the Tribulation, Seal five was the summary of the entire Tribulation, and seal six foretold the Tribulation's catastrophic ending, culminating in the *great day of the Lord's wrath* when Jesus will return as Judge of all nations and people.

Chapter 7:1-8 continues with the vision of the events on Earth as seen by John.

#### 1.2.8 THE SEALING OF THE 144,000 (7:1-8)

The identity of the 144,000 has resulted in false teaching from cults like the Jehovah's Witnesses. They claim there will only be 144,000 "Christians" who will reign with Christ and spend eternity with God. This is nonsense, and nowhere in this passage is there a likeness of the 144,000 Christians who will rule and reign with Christ in His Kingdom. These 144,000 will receive a *mark (or sealing) of God*. The passage, taken literally, tells us exactly who these 144,000 are.

Verses 1-3—

**And after these things,** John saw another vision of **four angels standing on the four corners of the earth** or simply marking the *four points of the compass*. Daniel saw a vision of *four winds* in Daniel 7:2,3:

*"Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another."*

We see this imagery in Jeremiah 49:36 and Daniel 8:8 and 11:4. And the idea here is *stillness*, or as we might say, *not even a leaf moves*. The imagery of stillness may indicate that the sealing of the 144,000 will take place before the opening events of the Tribulation. Likely, at some point during the breaking of seals 1-4.

The purpose of the seal of God on their foreheads is to protect these *men* from the devastation of the Tribulation. Revelation 9:4 states,

*“And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.”*

Those who have the *mark of the beast* are under Divine judgment, but those 144,000 of god’s elect are protected by the seal of the Living God.

Verses 4-8—

**And I heard the number of them which were sealed...a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.**

There is no indication that we should take this number other than literally 144,000. The identity of the *seal* is found in Revelation 14:1:

*“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.”*

Reuben
Simeon
Judah
Issachar
Zebulun
Ephraim/ <b>Joseph</b>
Manasseh
Benjamin
Dan/ <b>Levi</b>
Asher
Gad
Naphtali

All of the *tribes* of Israel are listed, but curiously *Dan* and *Ephraim* are missing. Instead, *Joseph* and *Levi* are inserted to take their place.

The reason for this may be because of Deuteronomy 29:18-21. All the curses written in this book shall lie upon anyone who should introduce idolatry into Israel, *and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven*. Both the tribe of Dan and later Ephraim introduced idolatry (See Leviticus 24:10-16; Judges 18:2,30,31; 1 Kings

11:26; 12:28-30; Hosea 4:17). Therefore, Ephraim and Dan will not be protected during the Tribulation. However, they will be restored one day and receive their earthly inheritance in the Millennial Kingdom.

Based on the following verses, their purpose seems to be worldwide evangelism, and the results of their preaching that Jesus is the Messiah is seen in Heaven.

### 1.3 THE SECOND VISION IN HEAVEN (7:9-8:6) VERSES 9, 10--

**After this** would indicate, this next vision occurs after the vision of the 144,000. John sees a **great multitude...of all nations** (i.e., *ethnos*, Gentiles). Many think this refers to the Church in Heaven, but this is not how the Church is described in Scripture. The Church is the Body of Christ, the Church is “a new man,” and the Church is distinct from both Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:14-17). This **great multitude** is indeed in Heaven, but it is not required that they be a part of the Church; if we read a little further in the passage, their identity is found in verse 14; they are Gentiles who believed in Jesus as Messiah during the Tribulation likely as a result of the preaching of the 144,000. This multitude would include those saints described in the fifth seal in 6:9-11.

Through the 144,000, the Holy Spirit is still at work during the Tribulation performing the ministry of regeneration, filling, sealing, etc., but not baptizing since that was His special ministry for the Church only. So not only will an *elect remnant* of Israel survive through the Tribulation, but a *countless number* from all Gentile nations will be saved *out of it*.

It is stated in many passages that God first deals with Israel and then with mankind in general.

For example:

Psalm 67:1-2: *God be merciful unto us, and bless us; And cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations.*

Isaiah 49:6: *And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, That thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*

Verses 11,12—

As the heavenly host stands around the Throne of God, they ascribe a sevenfold blessing to God; **Blessing, and glory and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen.** We would do well to look upon God in this manner.

Verses 13,14—

**These are they which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

How can something washed in blood become white? It can't. The preposition “in” is not a clear translation. The Greek preposition *en*, constantly, is translated *by* and *through*. So the meaning must be *washed by or because of the blood*. Likewise, this cannot mean the Church. This passage is one of works; notice **they...have**

**washed.** It is in the active tense, something they did. For those in the Body of Christ, we are *washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God*, which was done to us when we believed. Ephesians 2:8 says we are saved/washed “not of ourselves.” Justification is a gift given to us, not by any *active work we do*.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:11, we are washed...in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. The song Are you washed in the Blood is one of those songs that is not correct for us in the Body of Christ – Are you Washed by the Spirit might be more theologically correct.

Verses 15, 16, 17—

This multitude in Heaven performs priestly services **before the throne of God... day and night.** In contrast to what they endured on the earth during the Tribulation, they will experience ultimate blessings: No hunger, no thirst, no suffering, fed by the Lamb, led by the Lamb, and all their tears shall be wiped away by God.

### 1.3.1 THE SEVENTH SEAL (8:1-6)

Verse 1—

We have seen how the six Seals cover the events leading up to the Tribulation, then the Tribulation itself, and finally, its culmination of the return of Christ. When the seventh Seal is opened, it is followed by **silence in Heaven.** It breaks off all continuity and shows us that we are now going to go back to learn about the details of the judgments—the events of seals five and six are going to be filled in for us now.

In the fifth Seal, the saints cried out to God ***How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*** (Revelation 5:10).

Their request is answered by the commencement of a series of judgments beginning with seven Trumpets sounding.

Verse 2—

**The seven angels are the seven spirits before the throne we saw** in 1:4, 3:1, 5:5, and 8:6. **To them were given seven trumpets.** We are not told by whom. But trumpets publicly proclaim war or alarm. Here they give notification of the *Great and Terrible Day of the Lord* (Zephaniah 1:14-16).

Verse 3,4,5—

**Another angel**, we are not told who this angel is. The **censer** carries **incense** representing the prayers of the saints we read in Revelation 5:10. This scene is the answer to the prayers of the saints.

Verse 6—

The events about to unfold will exceed those events when God brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt (Jeremiah 23:7,8). With the sounding of the trumpets, *God will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth.* (Exodus 34:10).