

37. The Book of Revelation—7:9-14

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(4-14-21)

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Tonight, in our study of the Book of Revelation we are in Chapter 7—which is a parenthetical chapter.

As we came to Chapter 6, we saw it consisted of the 7 Seal Judgments—all contained in a single scroll (Chapter 5).

As Jesus stepped forward and took the scroll out of the Father's right hand—He began to break those seals and as He did various judgments were poured out upon the earth (Chapter 6).

After the sixth seal judgments (6:12-14) there is a parenthesis or pause, if you will, to help us catch our breath in preparation for the greater and more catastrophic Trumpet Judgments that are about to be unleashed on the inhabitants of the earth when the 7th and final seal is broken (Chapter 8).

Revelation 7:1-4 (NKJV)

¹ 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. ² 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, ³ saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." 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:

One hundred forty-four thousand Jewish believers will be sealed by God as His servants (evangelists) during the Tribulation—144,000 "Paul the apostles"!!.

This is God turning back to Israel (the Church has been raptured to heaven) for the 70th week of Daniel as God is now going to be using Jewish believers to bring the gospel to the world during the Tribulation Period (Daniel 9:24-27).

To put to rest any lingering confusion, to further clarify for any and all who still might have some doubts as to the identity of the 144,000 people—the Holy Spirit goes on, in tedious detail to list them in verses 5-8—*"12,000 from this tribe, 12,000 from this tribe..."*

(And notice that Jews from all 12 tribes are sealed—there are not 10 lost tribes!)

- Acts 2 at Pentecost all 12 tribes are represented
- Epistles of James and 1 Peter speak to the 12 tribes

(Explain the false teaching of "British Israelism" by explaining the Assyrian policy of distributing captives throughout the Assyrian Empire and the Samaritans in the New Testament.)

There are 29 lists in the Bible of the 12 Tribes of Israel—that often place the tribes in different orders.

➔ Footnote—there are really 13 tribes which is why Levi could be left out when God gives Israel its marching orders (the Levites were exempt from military duty) and still 12 tribes are mentioned—and that is because Jacob adopted Joseph’s 2 sons Ephraim and Manasseh...so if you want to include Levi and still get 12 tribes you include Joseph. If you want to leave Levi out and still get 12 tribes, you split Joseph in 2 calling it ‘Ephraim and Manasseh’.

So once again, there are 29 lists in the Bible of the 12 Tribes of Israel—that often place the tribes in different orders.

The original list appears in Genesis 35:22-26 and the last list (chronologically) appears in Ezekiel 48:30-34 which is speaking about the Millennial Kingdom. But there is something wrong with the list of the 12 Tribes as they are listed in Revelation 7—something is missing.

In this listing of the tribes—the tribe of Dan is left out—why?

Some scholars believe it is because Dan is the tribe the Antichrist will come from—based on Daniel 11:37, Jeremiah 8:16, and Genesis 49:17.

This may or may not be the case, but without a doubt—Dan was the tribe that introduced idolatry into the land of Israel—

Judges 18:30 (NKJV)

³⁰ Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

1 Kings 12:28-30 (NKJV)

²⁸ Therefore the king [Jeroboam] asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!"
²⁹ And he set up one in Bethel [in Ephraim], and the other he put in Dan. ³⁰ Now this thing became a sin, for the people went *to worship* before the one as far as Dan. (Comment on the history of this passage)

This list of the Tribes in Revelation 7 is also interesting in the way the tribe of Ephraim is mentioned—not directly by name but only indirectly by inference.

You see, the tribe of Joseph is mentioned—but Joseph was represented by two tribes: Ephraim and Manasseh.

Since the tribe of Manasseh *is* mentioned—that means the “**tribe of Joseph**” must be referring to the “*tribe of Ephraim*”—again, not directly but only by inference—why?

It could be that the Holy Spirit is ‘*slighting*’ the tribe of Ephraim because they also were associated with great idolatry (1 Kings 12:29, Hosea 4:17).

Back to the tribe of Dan—it seems likely that, especially because of the idolatry that the tribe of Dan led the children of Israel into—that God is marking them (or ‘not marking them’) for judgment during the Tribulation Period by not sealing them for protection when His judgments are poured out (interestingly, the name ‘Dan’ means *judgment*).

This would be the fulfillment of a promise God gave His people before they even entered the land of Canaan—a promise of judgment:

Deuteronomy 28:58-62 (NKJV)

⁵⁸ "If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, ⁵⁹ then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues--great and prolonged plagues--and serious and prolonged sicknesses. ⁶⁰ Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. ⁶¹ Also every sickness and every plague, which is not written in this Book of the Law, will the LORD bring upon you until you are destroyed. ⁶² You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God.

This passage is teaching that God *must* judge the tribe of Dan because they led Israel into idolatry. (1 Kings 12—Dan is the leader of the apostasy and idolatry)

The judgment of God upon this apostate tribe takes place during the Tribulation Period when He judges the world. Because God has sworn that the tribe of Dan must be judged—He doesn't seal them with His seal of protection from His judgments that come upon the earth.

"What happens to the tribe of Dan—are they destroyed?"

They will emerge from the Tribulation Period very few in number (Deuteronomy 28:62)—but they will survive!

We know that because the tribe of Dan is the first tribe listed in Ezekiel's list of tribes that enter the Millennial Kingdom (Ezekiel 48:1).

And the reason for that is because of God's grace and that He promised He would never utterly wipe out an entire tribe in Israel.

Revelation 7:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ **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, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"**

Who is this great multitude which no one could number?

Well, first of all, whoever they are I think it's safe to say—they're saved!

The "**white robes**" speak of the '*righteousness of Christ*' with which they are clothed.

We cannot stand before God in our own righteousness because our own righteousness is as "*filthy rags*" in the eyes of God (Isaiah 64:6).

"Palm branches"

This reminds us of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (John 12:12–16), where He was praised as Savior and King—the word Hosanna means "*save now!*"

One author said—

"Palm branches were emblems of victory. It shows this great multitude celebrates a great victory. [Quoting Spurgeon] 'The palm, the ensign of triumph, indicates most certainly a conflict and conquest. As on earth the

palm would not be given if not won [therefore] we may conclude that the Lord would not have distributed this prize unless there had been a preceding warfare and victory ... From the very fact that these glorified ones are holding palm branches—we may infer that they did not come from beds of sloth, or gardens of pleasure, or palaces of peace—but that they endured hardness and battle, as men and women trained for war.”

The fact that these people are holding palm branches could be intended to bring to our minds the Feast of Tabernacles also known as the Feast of Ingathering—a feast celebrated with palm branches.

The Feast of Tabernacles was both an agricultural and a memorial feast.

It’s an agricultural holiday because it takes place at the time of the great fall harvest when God had blessed His people with an abundance of crops. That’s why it’s also called the *Feast of Ingathering*, a harvest festival and time of thanksgiving for all that God had provided.

Even to this day the Feast of Tabernacles is the most joyous of all the Jewish holidays.

They would take some of these crops and they’d build little booths or tabernacles behind the synagogue or behind their house or even on top of their house. They would bring in some of the good things that God had provided, the grapes, the barley, the wheat, and so on, into this temporary dwelling place (tabernacle).

God wanted them to remember the hardship their ancestors had endured during their forty years in the wilderness so that they could enjoy the blessings of the Land of Promise with all of its abundance.

Leviticus 23:42-43 (NKJV)

⁴² You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, ⁴³ that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.' "

They were to make these “*booths*” or tabernacles out of palm branches or with the boughs of some other leafy trees and for seven days they were to move out of the comfort of their homes into these makeshift huts.

God said that they were to leave enough space in between the branches of the roof so they could see the stars at night and in the walls so that the breeze could pass through. It must have been great fun for the kids—but it did serve an educational purpose as well.

When they asked their fathers why they had to do this their fathers could use it to teach them of the hardship their forefathers endured in bringing them into this land and the faithfulness of God in providing for them in the wilderness all those years.

So, it could be that these standing in heaven with palm branches in their hands speak of the “*ingathering*” of souls into heaven—a great harvest which the Feast of Ingathering symbolized.

How did they get saved?—No doubt through the ministry of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists.

And how did the 144,000 get saved?—I believe through the ministry of the Two Witnesses who will be introduced to us in Revelation 11 and who conduct their ministry during the first half of the Tribulation Period.

In case anyone is still not sure as to the identity of who these people are—we’re really not left to guess the identity of these people—verse 14 tells us who they are:

Revelation 7:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" ¹⁴ **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.**

So, these people are Tribulation saints—they're wearing white robes which represent that they are clothed in the righteousness of Christ—the only way anyone can enter into heaven!

As opposed to the 'filthy robes' of self-righteousness that all unbelievers clothe themselves in in their efforts to earn heaven (Isaiah 64:6).

So, in Chapter 7 we see two groups—the 144,000 Jewish evangelists; and the fruit of their ministry consisting mostly (if not exclusively) of Gentiles.

The second group will consist of a harvest of souls from all over the world—so many John says they couldn't even be numbered.

Someone might say, *"That'll be me, cause I'm going to wait and see if all this stuff you're telling me about the Rapture and all you Christians disappearing happens and if it does—then I'll become a Christian during the Tribulation Period."*

I always tell people who say something like that to me—*"If you can't live for Jesus now (in the day of grace)—what makes you think you're going to be able to die for Him then (in the day of great tribulation)?"*

However, many commentators don't believe that it will be possible for someone who is living now, and has heard the gospel but has rejected it—to believe once the Tribulation Period begins and the Antichrist comes to power—why?

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 (NKJV)

⁹ The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

I'm not convinced that that is a correct interpretation and here's why...(Explain definitive statements that allow for exceptions... *"it is appointed for man to die once..." "true Christians love other Christians..."* etc.)

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 could be speaking of those who are militant in their rejection of Christ not of those who haven't received the Gospel because they are not ready to let go of their sin.

These possibly could be saved after the Rapture—but I don't know for sure so pray for your unsaved loved ones!

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Want to know more? Click [here](#).

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