

THE FOUR ANGELS, THE 144,000
AND THE GREAT MULTITUDE

REVELATION 7

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INTRODUCTION

- John sees this vision as from the Great Tribulation
- Chapter 7 is a glimpse from inside the Great Tribulation
- This may be an answer from 6:17, “who can stand?”

THREE GROUPS

- The 4 Angels
- The 144,000
- The great multitude

THE FOUR ANGELS VS. 1-3

- Four is the number of the earth.
- The 4 angels are standing at the 4 corners of the earth holding back the 4 winds
- The 4 winds are a regular feature of destruction in apocalyptic literature. See Dan 7:2, 8:8, 11:4

THE FOUR ANGELS VS. 1-3

- Belief of ancient peoples regarding wind
- O.T. indicates that the winds are the servants and agents of God, directed by Him for His purposes.
- Especially true of the Sirocco wind.
- See Hosea 13:15; Jer 4:11-17; Job 37:9-13; Isa 40:7-8, 22-24; Nahum 1:2-3; Zech 9:14; Isa 66:14-16; Ps 18:7-15

THE FOUR ANGELS VS. 1-3

- NOTE! There is a great calm before the storm
- The winds obey God and do not blow on the land, the sea, and on the trees.

A FIFTH ANGEL

- Comes from the East
 - Salvation comes from the East – See Ez 43:1-4
- He holds the seal of the Living God
 - A mark of God – Rev 14:1; 22:4
 - See also Ez 9:3-6

A NOTE ABOUT SEALS

- The ungodly will have been sealed as well
- See Rev 13:16-17; 14:9-11; 16:2; 19:20: 20:4
- All of humanity, during the Great Tribulation will be identified as with Christ, or with the Anti-Christ.

THE 144,000 VS 4-8

- Question: Who are these 144,000?
- Question: Is this a literal 144,000?
- Question: Are they from a literal Israel?

THE 144,000 VS 4-8

- Some explanations:
- 7th Day Adventist – they are from among them who are found keeping the Jewish Sabbath when Jesus returns
- Jehovah Witness- from among them who strive to do good works

THE 144,000 VS 4-8

- The number is a highly symbolic apocalyptic number
 - $12 \times 12 \times 1000$ – all numbers of completeness/fullness
- This could be referring back to 6:11 to designate the completeness of the martyrs
 - See Rev 13:5-10, 15-17

THE 144,000 VS 4-8

- There is a problem with the list of tribes
- No tribe of Dan is listed
- Joseph is listed instead
- Manasseh is listed, but not Ephraim – both are sons of Joseph

THE 144,000 VS 4-8

- O.T. does not hold a high regard for the tribe of Dan.
 - See Gen 49:17; Judges 18:30; I Kings 12:29
 - Jeremiah 8:16 – this saying came to be taken as referring to the Antichrist
 - The Antichrist was believed to come out of Dan.

THE 144,000 VS 4-8

- There is no particular order in the tribes as there is other places. Gen 49, Gen 29:31-30:24

THE 144,000 VS 4-8

- The church is referred to as Israel
 - Matt 19:28; Rom 2:28-29; 9:6-8
 - Gal 3:26-29; 6:15-16; Phil 3:3; James 1:1
 - I Peter 2:9 taken from Isa 43:20-21; Ex 19:6

THE 144,000 VS 4-8

- Conclusion: The church is the new Israel
- The Christians who are entering into the Great Tribulation

THE GREAT MULTITUDE – 9-17

- The vision is now from the end of the Great Tribulation; we have skipped ahead through to the end.
- From every tribe and language and nation and people, not just from Israel

THE GREAT MULTITUDE – 9-17

- It is clear that there will be Christians living throughout the Great Tribulation
- White robes to wear – see 5:11
 - Purity and victory over sin and death and satan

THE GREAT MULTITUDE – 9-17

- Palm branches are symbolic of festive joy – Jn 12:13
- They give praise to God and to Jesus, the Lamb
 - Ascribe salvation from sin and death to Jesus.

THE GREAT MULTITUDE – 9-17

- They lead all of creation to fall down and worship.
 - The angels, 24 elders, and 4 living creatures
- They are those that have come out of the Great Tribulation
 - Could be those who were sealed? A larger group if those who were sealed are the martyrs only

THE GREAT MULTITUDE – 9-17

- They have washed their robes and made them white by the blood of the lamb
 - How does washing in blood make them pure white?
 - See Heb 9:14; 1 Jn 1:7

THE GREAT MULTITUDE – 9-17

- They will serve God day and night – a picture of forever
- God will protect them and His presence will be with them forever – never leave the presence of God!

THE GREAT MULTITUDE – 9-17

- God will spread His tent over them – He will tabernacle over them.
- See Ex 13:21-22; 40:34-38; 2 Chron 7:1-3
- A fulfillment of Ezek 37:26-28

THE GREAT MULTITUDE – 9-17

- They will have no more hunger or thirst.
- No more hot, scorching sun and heat
- No more tears

THE GREAT MULTITUDE – 9-17

- The will be living water to which the lamb will lead them
- NOTE! The lamb becomes the shepherd! (the first shall be last and the last shall be first)
- The lamb will lead, rule, protect, and care for

CONCLUSION

- Once again we see that Jesus, the Lamb who was slain, is at the center of the fulfillment of time and eternity.
- For whatever we are not sure about regarding the 144,000 and the great multitude, we can be sure about who is at the center of all of creation. JESUS!
