

## Chapter 7

### *An Interlude*

**1. After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. 2. And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out 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 or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads.”**

“After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth” (v. 1); what is John giving reference to here. Remember, there are no chapter separations in the Greek translation of the New Testament. So the “after this” is speaking in reference to what was just mentioned in chapter 6:17, “for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” chapter 6:15-16 the unbelieving inhabitation of the earth were all running from the presence of He who sits on the throne and the Lamb. Chapter seven now seeks to answer that question. There are some who suggested that none will be saved during the Tribulation period. This chapter, however, contradicts that belief. Here we find not one but two distinct groups of people being saved. The first group represents the nation of Israel (vv. 1-8) and the second represents people from every nation, tribe and tongue who comes to saving faith in the Jesus Christ during the Tribulation period (vv. 9-17).

This chapter is clearly showing a distinction between God’s plan for Israel and the rest of the world. Many make the mistake today of calling Israel the church. If you fall in that category, or know of someone who does, please listen to what was revealed to John. God is about to fulfill His promise to Abraham. First He is going to bless the descendants of Abraham (biological), and then He is going to bless the whole world through Abraham (spiritual).

Verse one begins with four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds. These angels were sent by God to carry out His judgement upon the earth. The fifth angel to the four to hold off on this judgement until the bondservants of God are sealed on their foreheads. When this event occurs there will be a humid stale presence in the air effecting the entire planet. These angels came to bring judgement but were told to hold off until God had sealed His people. In other words, before the seventh seal is broken God’s people must first be sealed. Throughout the Scriptures we find God sealing those who belonged to Him. In Genesis 7:1 God saved Noah and his family by sealing them in the boat, separating them from the rest of the world which rejected Noah’s invitation (God’s sealing Noah was his salvation). There is also the story of the Exodus and how God delivered the Israelites from the 10 plagues (including death by placing lambs blood on the door as a seal of those who belonged to God). In Joshua 6:22-23 when God destroyed Jericho, He placed a covering over her and her household that

they should not perish with the rest of the city. They were saved because of the promise the spies made which sealed (protected from instant death) Rahab.

No one knows what this sealing looks like. It could be a physical mark or a spiritual one. It could be a simple reference to salvation. Just as God has saved us and sealed us with His Spirit it could be as simple as that. No one really knows; but what is known is this; God never leaves nor forsake His people and even when we are faithless He is always faithful.

#### **Revelation 14:1**

***Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.***

**4. And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: 5. From the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, 6. from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, 7. from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, 8. from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed.**

This is probably one of the most misinterpreted passages in the Bible. Who are the 144,000? They are not the church; they are not the multitude at the end of this chapter; they are not the Jehovah's Witness or any other modern day cult. The identity of the 144,000 is not a mystery or a puzzle to be solved. Yet there are those who form cults and develop heretical practices from this passage. The 144,000 are Jewish evangelist. Just as on the day of Pentecost, God will once again begin a revival with the Jewish people. The church has been raptured already; now God once again begins a work with the Jacob's descendants to fulfill His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Note, each tribe is called by name, 12 thousand from each tribe. This leaves room for no ambiguity. The tribe of Dan is omitted and Joseph and one of his two sons, Manasseh, are listed, but Ephraim, Joseph's other son, is omitted; Dan is mentioned in Ezekiel 48:2 in the millennial land distribution.