

# THE SEVEN SEALS (CONTINUED) – CH. 7

**Introduction:** In the sixth seal (6:12-17), we have one of Revelation's accounts of Judgment Day. It closes with the question, "Who can stand?"

Who can stand in God's presence on Judgment Day? Compare these two sections of Psalms.

**Those with sin still on their record cannot dwell with God. Those whose sins are all washed away can stand in God's presence and will dwell with Him**

In addition to turning to passages throughout the length of the Bible, the question that closes out ch.6 - "Who can stand?" – is answered by God right away in Chapter 7.

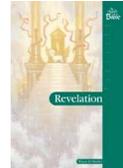
**Two different ways to view this chapter:** A vision of...

- The church on earth (7:1-8) and the church in heaven (7:9-17) as we await the Last Day – in this case, ch.7 is an interlude of sorts (giving a message of comfort), before once again picking up with the opening the 7<sup>th</sup> seal in ch.8.

[this is the view that Prof. Becker presents, *The Distant Triumph Song*]

- The church on earth and the church in heaven being brought together on the Last Day and being described together – in this case, ch.7 is a continuation of the events of the Last Day described at the close of ch.6.

[this is the view Pastor Mueller presents, *People's Bible*]



The message of comfort, which is the key point of ch.7, remains the same with either of those interpretations. We're going to follow the first view listed.

## **The Church Militant – the Church on earth: 7:1-8**

Vs.1 "after this" – this phrase belongs with the words "I saw."

John is not proposing a chronological framework for the contents of the visions; he is simply recalling the order in which he saw the visions. (see 4:1)

### *The numbers in Revelation:*

Why do we conclude from this verse - along with others - that in the book of Revelation the number four is the number that symbolizes the earth / the created world / all the earth's inhabitants? (look also at vs.9 in this chapter)

**See chart on sheets for ch.5.**

Let  interpret 

Psalm 5:4-5 You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell. The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong.

Psalm 130:3-4 If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared."

Vs.3 Who is going to take part in Judgment Day? And, until when is Judgment Day going to be held at bay? **God's holy angels. After the sealing of all God's servants/people is complete.**

When you put a seal on something, what are you claiming? (similar to the symbolism of 2:17, 3:12, 14:1, 22:4)

*Concerning this act of "sealing," remember that a seal serves to:*

- a. mark ownership (for example: the practice of branding cattle)*
- b. protect, make safe (for example: the intent behind the seal on Jesus' tomb)*
- c. certify genuineness (for example: putting a king's seal on a document)*

What description is given here in vs.3 of the people who are sealed?

**God's servants.**

What is the seal that marks a person as belonging to the LORD?

**The Spirit living in us. This began at the time the Spirit worked spiritual life in us, bringing us to faith.**

How & when were you/are you sealed by God?

**See above.**

One of the chief comforts given in vs.1-3 is: The destruction of the earth on the Last Day is not going to take place until...

**The last person who will be brought to faith in Jesus is brought to faith.**

- Agree or Disagree. These verses indicate that Christians will be exempt from earth's misery (the wars, famines, sickness & death described in ch.6).

**Disagree. This section assures us of God's care amidst the current troubles and pains.**

Vs.4-8 In commenting on these verses, Prof. Becker observes:

*"Often after John has seen a cluster of catastrophic events, he is granted a vision of the saints in glory or at least one which reminds him of the security and hope of God's people."*

- Can you understand why God would do this, namely pair the later together with the former? Other examples in Revelation: 11:15-19; 14:1-5; 19:1-8; 21:1-22:5.

**You are kept safe now; the victory awaits you as a child of God through faith in Jesus.**

How well does the message of Revelation fit together with the rest of the Bible? Consider:

Let  interpret 

Matt. 13:39-43 (Jesus explaining the parable of the weeds)  
The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. ... The Son of man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ... Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Let  interpret 

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Eph. 1:13-14 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory.

2 Corinthians 1:21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, <sup>22</sup>set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Let  interpret 

Romans 8:18 "Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

This list of twelve tribes cannot be understood as the literal 12 Tribes of the Old Testament. The list does not agree with any listing that was used in the Old Testament for the literal, historical twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

1. Who is included in the list in Revelation, one never included in the OT lists of tribes?

Levi

2. What two tribes are missing from the list in Revelation, which are included in the OT lists of tribes?

Ephraim. Dan.

Let  interpret 

Numbers 1:4 One man from each tribe, each the head of his family, is to help you. <sup>5</sup> These are the names of the men who are to assist you: from Reuben... <sup>6</sup> from Simeon... <sup>7</sup> from Judah ... <sup>8</sup> from Issachar... <sup>9</sup> from Zebulun... <sup>10</sup> ...from Ephraim... from Manasseh... <sup>11</sup> from Benjamin... <sup>12</sup> from Dan... <sup>13</sup> from Asher... <sup>14</sup> from Gad... <sup>15</sup> from Naphtali...  
<sup>47</sup>The families of the tribe of Levi, however, were not counted along with the others...

What makes a person a member of “Israel” in the way the term is used here in Rev. ch.7 and in other places in the New Testament?

Let  interpret 

Matthew 3:7-10 (John the Baptist speaking to a group of Pharisees and Sadducees) “You brood of vipers... And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.”

Romans 2:28-29 A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code.

4:11-12,16 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised... Therefore, the promise comes by faith so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring – not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.

9:6-8 It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. ... In other words, it is not the natural children who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring.

Galatians 3:7, 26-29 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham... You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus... If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

*The numbers in Revelation:* What does the 144,000 signify?

- Hint: remember what the number 12 is used to signify; if you square 12 what number do you get. Remember what the number 10 is used to signify; if you cube it what number do you get. Multiply those two numbers.

**144,000 = the full number of the elect (the Church as it is known to God alone = the full number of believers in Jesus)**

### **The Church Triumphant – The Church in Heaven: 7:9-17**

Vs.9-10 The previous verses speak/about the safety of the church on earth throughout trials and tribulations. What do these verses picture?

**The ultimate and eternal safety enjoyed by those in heaven**

Whom did Jesus come to save?

**His work was carried out for all people from all nations and of all time.**

Of what significance are the:

- white robes: **Holy, sinless**
- palm branches: **\_victory**
- presence of the Lamb & the throne: **Heaven, God’s presence**

Let  interpret 

John 12:13  
Psalm 118:27

The Jehovah's Witnesses falsely teach that only 144,000 will be “saved” in the highest sense, namely in heaven enjoying the presence of God, while the rest of the believers will live on a perfected earth forever. What do these passages say about this teaching?

**Vs.9 – multitude that no one could count = more than a literal 144,000. In Revelation as a whole, numbers are used symbolically. Here too that is the case. 144,000 is not literal.**

Vs.11-12 Who joined in the hymn of praise?  
angels

*The numbers in Revelation:* How many words of honor did they sing? Any significance?

**7. 7 is a number representing God's gracious interaction with people.**

Vs.13-14 A reason is given why this throng of people has the privilege of “standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.” What is it?

**They've been washed, made clean in the blood of the Lamb.**

Some millennialists use this verse to support their false teaching that before Jesus sets up his earthly kingdom, there will be a seven-year tribulation. They claim that this passage teaches a rapture, namely that all believers will be taken from the earth before this seven-year tribulation.

Why is this an impossible interpretation?

- Use the context of the rest of the Bible
- What does the Bible teach us will happen as we get closer to Judgment Day? 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Jn. 16:33
- Does it say anything about Christians being taken out of these terrible last days? **NO**
- Note: there is not one passage of the Bible that says that the Church (believers) will escape tribulation by being “raptured” out of this world
- Note: nowhere in the Bible are the words "seven year" and "great tribulation" used in the same sentence
- “...are coming out of the great tribulation...” is the correct translation. The NIV incorrectly translates: “...have come out...” How does that correct translation remove any idea of a “rapture” preceding the Last Day?

What comfort does it give you to know that people “are coming out of the great tribulation” day-by-day? **They are enjoying the victory and peace won by Jesus. One day that will be me.**

Vs.15-17 List the aspects of life in heaven that are described here. (Note the total number.)

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____  |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____  |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____  |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

What do the first three deal with?

What effects of the Fall into sin are reversed in the second four blessings?

What does verse 17 - the last three aspects of heaven - remind you of?

What's your view of heaven after reading Revelation ch.7?

**Final application:** What have you learned about your life with Christ from this chapter that gives you strength and comfort?