

## The Revelation of Jesus Christ – 17

### Revelation 7 – The Sowers and the Harvest

1. **Verse 1** – There are angels who are given responsibility for various aspects of creation (perhaps this is where the pagan idea of gods and goddesses comes from, where each has their area of responsibility) – the “four corners” refers to the four directions – north, south, east and west – it does not mean the Bible teaches a “flat earth”; throughout its history, the Church either ignored or outright rejected as heresy such a notion
2. **Verse 2** – Being given “permission to harm the earth and sea” anticipates the judgments in chapters 8 and 9
3. **Verse 3** – For another example of those “sealed” by God – also to protect them from the outpouring of His wrath - see Ezekiel 9:3-6: God does not promise to protect His people from harm, but He does promise to protect them from instances of His wrath (compare Acts 14:22 with 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and 5:9)
4. **Verse 4** – God begins to change the heart of Israel. This represents a decided shift of focus from the Church (in Revelation 1-3) to Israel (in Revelation 7-18); where is the Church? They have been raptured (Revelation 4:1, the presence of the 24 Elders, and the worshippers in verses 9-17). Their number brings to mind the fifth seal (see also Revelation 14)
5. **Verses 5-8** – The reference to the 12 Tribes by name further shows that God has not rejected Israel or replaced her with the Church – rather, with her rebirth, she signals our redemption as well (see Romans 11:11-26 and Ephesians 3:1-6)
  - a. No reason for the order of the tribes is given – though there might be
  - b. No reason is given for the absence of Dan – Dan DOES receive its portion in the land following Jesus’ return – in fact, it is the first tribe mentioned (Ezekiel 48:1) – there might be a reason but it is known only to God
6. **Verse 9** – This is the Church of true believers – its multitudes suggest it refers to all believers and not just those who come to faith in the Tribulation (Romans 11:11-13) –
  - a. **“Every nation”** – see 5:9
  - b. **“White robes”** are worn by believers cleansed by Christ
  - c. **“Palm branches”** remind us of how Jesus was greeted as King when he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday
  - d. This is the first time John notices them, and they worship God because the numbering of the Jews signals the nearness of the fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel and, thus, to them as well (just as Jesus’ birth signaled to Simeon the nearness of God’s salvation – Luke 2:25-32)
7. **Verse 10** – Compare their song with that of Simeon
8. **Verses 11, 12** – Any time anyone praises Jesus or the Father in Heaven, all Heaven joins in
9. **Verse 13** – Hmmm – I was wondering the same thing!
10. **Verse 14a** – There is no shame in admitting what we don’t know – if it hasn’t been revealed yet, how are we to know? And it’s always best to be honest (Ezekiel 37:3 and 1 Corinthians 8:2)
11. **Verse 14b** – “THE Great Tribulation” (see Matthew 24:21) suggests they came to faith during the last seven years of this Age, but their numbers, as well as Acts 14:22 (which uses the same word – ‘tribulation’) suggests it includes all believers (see Revelation 1:9, Hebrews 12:1). See note 6d above.
12. **Verse 15** – For the promise of serving in God’s temple day and night, remember Jesus promise to overcomers in his letter to Philadelphia, Revelation 3:12
13. **Verses 16, 17** – The ultimate promise!
  - a. To live forever in His most intimate presence
  - b. To serve Him night and day in His presence
  - c. To have God dwell with us
  - d. To no longer hunger or thirst, especially for Him (Psalm 42, Matthew 5:6; John 4:10, 7:38, 6:31-58)
  - e. No need for air conditioning!! NO risk of skin cancer!
  - f. Father and Son both will be with us
  - g. What tears are left, God will wipe all memory of them away when He wipes the tears with His own hand!
14. **What is there to obey in these verses?**
  - a. We too are “sealed” by God, protected from wrath (Romans 8:1, Ephesians 4:30, 2 Timothy 2:19)
  - b. Though we may suffer, we need never fear the wrath of God – Jesus absorbed that in our place on the cross
  - c. God knows our pain - He Himself will comfort us
  - d. Reasons for tears will one day disappear - 21:4
  - e. Let our lives resound with praise to God our Father and to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!