

2Peter 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; 7 and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked 8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)—9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,

2Peter 3:3 3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.” 5 For a]when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. 7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

THE TIME LINE OR CHRONOLOGY ISSUE IN REVELATION:

I have studied dozens of charts representing the timeline of the Book of Revelation. These are available

online by dozens of ministries and expositors. The charts and graphics illustrate their understanding of the Chronology of the events in Revelation and the 7 years of tribulation. It is hard to find any among the “experts” who agree on major events or the exact chronology. Clearly, good graphics do not always guarantee good hermeneutics (Bible interpretation or understandings). Even among those who hold a future prophetic view the chronology of Revelation is highly varied. Some of these time lines, to my way of thinking, are way off base!

Opening of the seals which we read in Revelation Chapter 6 appears quite early in the 22 chapters, but in my best understanding the seal judgments contain chronological events encompassing most of the 7 year tribulation period. Our instincts as readers is probably to associate later chapters with later occurring events. There are indeed many commentators who to take that view point.

Now in Chapter 7 we encounter another example of what I believe is a chronological inconsistency. We read about the calling out of the 144000 Jewish men who are **sealed** for ministry. I think it is reasonable that this event occurs quite early in the first 3 ½ years, a time quite early after the anti Christ is brought to prominence. We have seen in Chapter 6 the 5th seal introducing the martyrs from the tribulation, these are I believe, converts who have heard the message of the 144000 witnesses / evangelists and who pay the ultimate price for being believers during the time of anti-Christ.

We find another example in Chapter 11 where we read about the ministry of the two witnesses. One

might guess that this would place their ministry as a something happening after the mid point of the Tribulation - the last 3 ½ years. And we find many commentators who hold that view - - the two witnesses will minister 3 ½ years and then are killed, and they are resurrected I believe quite some time before the Great day wrath. This due to the celebratory flavor the world takes seeing their tormentors dead. Again, I furthermore, we know that in the last portion of the tribulation, the wrath of God is directed toward the anti-Christ in increasing fury. By this time many of those who preached Christ's kingdom to the nations will already have finished and most or many will have met with death. (Some speculate that the 144000 will survive miraculously owing to the power of being sealed.

PATTERNS OF STRUCTURE IN REVELATION 6 Events then a PAUSE then a 7th event:

There is a pattern to the structure of Revelation. Six events; then a pause; then 7: Between Seal 6 and 7 there is a pause or an additional expository where an angel provides heavenly information. We find this pattern, a parenthetical bracket or pause placed between the 6th and 7th SEAL, the 6th and 7th TRUMPET AND the 6th and 7th VIAL. During the pause or bracket before trumpet 1 of Chapter 7 we are told that Angels seal 144,000 Israelites from twelve tribes.

CHAPTERS 7 – 8

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CHAPTER 7: SEALING OF 144000 JEWISH EVANGELISTS

Those sealed consist of only men, Jewish men;

The nature of sealing; Physical seal of priesthood and God's Spiritual seal.

READ: JOHN 6:27 - - 27 *Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal."*

READ: 2 CORINTHIANS 1 21-22 21 *Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; 22 who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

READ: EPHESIANS 1: 13 *- in whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation,-- in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,*

READ: EPHESIANS 4:30 *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption.*

READ: EXODUS: 28:36-38 THE SACRED GARMENT OF AARON THE HIGH PRIEST - -36*And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. 37**And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. 38**And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD*

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WHAT DO THE 144000 PREACH?

MATT 10:6 -- THEY PREACH THAT THE KINGDOM OF THE MESSIAH IS AT HAND AND SHALL SOON BE BROUGHT FORTH CHRIST RETURNING TO RULE AND REIGN.

Revelation 7: PAUSE OR ANGELIC Interlude with exposition

1 After this I saw four [R341](#) angels standing at the four [R342](#) corners of the earth, holding back the [R343](#) four winds of the earth, so [R344](#) that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. 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. 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, saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."

a. Four angels standing at the four corners of the earth: The phrase four corners of the earth is an ancient (and sometimes modern) equivalent to the idea of "the four points of the compass." The idea is that these angels effect the entire earth. b. Holding the four winds of the earth: These winds are a destructive force of God's judgment, as they often are in the Old Testament. i.

Hosea 13:15

d. Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads: These servants of God will receive a protective seal on their forehead, containing God's name in some manner (Revelation 14:1).

e. The servants of our God: We are not told what exactly their service is, but the 144,000 are sealed for a specific and unique purpose. However, the general idea of being sealed is not limited to them.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from [R345](#) the rising of the sun, having the seal [R346](#) of the [R347](#) living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four [R348](#) angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,

2. (11-12) All heavenly creatures join in worship. All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen."

a. All the angels . . . the elders and the four living creatures . . . worshiped God: As the great multitude worships God, the others in heaven are compelled to join their voices in praise. All created beings around the throne join in.

b. Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might: As these other created beings hear the worship the great multitude brings to God, *they* see more clearly the power and wisdom and majesty of God. They can worship God all the more by seeing the salvation He brought to the great multitude.

³ saying, "Do ^{R349} not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed ^{R350} the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads." ^{R351}

The 144,000

⁴ And I heard the number ^{R352} of those who were sealed, one ^{R353} hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

⁵from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand *were* sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand,

⁶from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand,

⁷from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand,

⁸from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand *were* sealed.

a. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed: This is their *general* identification. They are of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Ethnically, they are Jewish, and there are 144,000 of these chosen ones.

c. The omission of the tribe of Dan: Why is Dan left out? Some think it is because Dan is the tribe of the Antichrist, based on Daniel 11:37 and Jeremiah 8:16. This may or may not be the case, but without doubt, Dan was the tribe which introduced idolatry into the nation of Israel (Genesis 49:17; Judges 18:30). (*There is a wonderful redemption for the tribe of Dan. Dan is the first tribe listed in Ezekiel's millennial role call of the tribes (Ezekiel 48).*the tribe of Ephraim was also associated with great idolatry (Hosea 4:17). i. They are called *the children of Israel* (Revelation 7:4). ii. Their tribal affiliation is specific (Revelation 7:4-8). iii. They seem to be protected and triumphant through the period of God's wrath, meeting with Jesus at Mount Zion at His return (Revelation 14:1). iv. They are celibate (Revelation 14:4). v. They are the beginning of a greater harvest (Revelation 14:4). vi. They are marked by integrity and faithfulness (Revelation 14:5). i. They are the beginning harvest of the salvation of Israel (Romans 11:1, Romans 11:26, Matthew 23:37-39). ii. "They are not a part of the original Ecclesi'a the Church proper; for their repentance comes too late for that. They are a superaddition to the Church - a supplementary body - near and precious to Christ, but made up after the proper Church has finished its course." (Seiss)

A Great Multitude from the Tribulation are Redeemed

⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every ^{R354} nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before ^{R355} the throne and before ^{R356} the Lamb, clothed in white ^{R357} robes, and palm ^{R358} branches *were* in their hands; ¹⁰ and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation ^{R359} to our God who ^{R360} sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

a. A great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues: The diversity here

is evidence that the Great Commission will be fulfilled before the end, even as Jesus promised (Matthew 24:14).

i. Because John knew they came from different nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, we know that there will be *differences* among people in heaven, just as there is on earth. We will not all be the same. We will be individuals.

b. Standing before the throne and before the Lamb: Again, John sees everything in heaven in reference to the *throne* of God. "This is a peculiar subject of their joy: that God has a throne, that he sits upon it, and that he ruleth over all things, and all things do his bidding. The central thought of heaven, then, is divine sovereignty." (Spurgeon)

c. Clothed with white robes: These robes remind us not only of the covering righteousness of Jesus, but also of *priestly service*. "They are *arrayed for holy service*, and arrayed at once, for they wear white robes fitted for their priestly service." (Spurgeon)

d. The palm branches remind us of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (John 12:12-16), where Jesus was also praised as Savior and King. The word *Hosanna* means "save now!"

i. Palm branches were emblems of victory. It shows this great multitude celebrates a great victory. "The palm, the ensign of triumph, indicates most certainly a conflict and conquest. As on earth palm would not be given if not won, we may conclude that the Lord would not have distributed the prize unless there had been a preceding warfare and victory . . . From the very fact that the glorified carry palms, 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 were men trained for war." (Spurgeon)

e. Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb! Having an emblem of righteousness (white robes), they worship God for salvation. They recognize that *God* is the source of salvation, and no one else. Salvation isn't something we achieve, it is something God gives.

i. Sometimes believers on earth take their salvation almost for granted. This isn't true of this great multitude in heaven.

And all the angels were standing around ^{R361} the throne and *around* the ^{R361} elders and the four ^{R362} living creatures; and they fell ^{R363} on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying, "Amen, ^{R364} blessing ^{R365} and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *be* to our God forever and ever. Amen." ^{R364} (7 Fold worthiness of the Lord God.)

13 Then one of the elders answered, R366 saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white R367 robes, who are they, and where have they come from?"

b. These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation: This vast multitude, from every tribe and tongue and nation, are those rescued for God's kingdom in the period of the great tribulation.

i. They have had trouble on the earth during the great tribulation. In the ancient Greek grammar of this passage, "the" is emphatic. This was a time of great tribulation *for this multitude*. This has led many to believe that most, if not all, of these are *martyrs* from the great tribulation.

ii. The presence of so many tribulation saints is a powerful statement of God's grace and mercy. Even in this time of judgment and wrath on the earth, many are saved.

I said F69 to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great R368 tribulation, and they have washed R369 their robes and made them white R370 in the blood R371 of the Lamb.

They did not reach this state due to their earthly sufferings, nor through any sort of ritual sacrifices but only by the acknowledging that it was the blood of the lamb that bought their righteousness.

15 "For this reason, they are before R372 the throne of God; and they serve R373 Him day and night in His temple; R374 F70 and He R375 who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle R376 over them.

b. And serve Him day and night: In heaven, the redeemed serve God. We don't know exactly how, but they do. "Heaven is not only a place of rest from earthly toil but also a place of privileged service" (Walvoord)

16 "They R377 will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat F71 down on them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, R378 and will guide them to springs of the water R379 F72 of life; and God R380 will wipe every tear from their eyes."