



### The Seventh Seal - Continued

**A**ND I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. 5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. 6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. 7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. 8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand. 9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. 13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Rev 7:4-17)

Chapter Seven is actually a parenthetical introduction prior to the opening of the seventh seal. We read, in today's text, of the sealing's of the complete Israel which is reflected in the number 144,000. It is a symbolic and figurative number, in my view, and not a finite one. It seems reasonable to believe that the numbers sealed out of each tribe of Israel represents those Old Testament Church of the wilderness (Acts 7:38) who had believed with faith in the promise made to Abraham of the coming Messiah. These numbers were comprised of both Jews and Gentiles as many in Israel were strangers who accepted that faith of Abraham, i.e., Rachab and Rachel, and many others. God does not grant grace by racial lines, but by impartial mercy and predestined will.

The greater part of the Jewish people and government rejected Christ and strove for His humiliation and crucifixion shouting, *22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. 23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. 24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. 25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.* (Matt 27:22-25) These were judged by the words of their own lips. Likewise, the greater part of racial Israel rejected the Promise made to Abraham from his day until Christ – but a remnant of the people believed and understood that Promise. Must we honestly believe that those who reject the Son of God are privileged to be God's own Chosen?

On His final trip to Jerusalem our Lord entered into the Temple and taught. The Jewish rulers and elders of the people could not abide His teaching, nor could they brood His favorable appeal among the people. *23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?* (Matt 21:23) These were those who claimed to have the favored place in the eyes of God, but did not recognize God's authority even in the miracles and acts of God's only Begotten Son. Frankly, they no more knew the God of Heaven any more than those of Babylon and Greece. Because of the unbelief of the Jewish nation, what did Christ say to these culprits?

*42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* (Matt 21:42-43) To which nation shall the Kingdom be given? To all who are the people called and chosen of God! Who are today, as in all past years, the Children of God? *6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.* (Gal 3:6-11) The Heaven of God has a special place for each of His children – either white, or black, or yellow, or red – all tribes, nations, tongues and peoples – who have received that same promise made to Abraham.

This brings us to the concluding verses of Chapter 7. *9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and*

tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. 13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

I take the historical and preterist view of these multitudes referred to here as those who had already, or were soon to pass through, the great tribulation of the then present and Apostolic Age. This does not mean that such a tribulation does not await the saints of future years, but this is recorded as a lesson and testimony to those of us who may, as well, undergo such a tribulation in the continuing years, and those years preceding the end.

It is clear that those who are before the throne of God are not those who maintain a rebellious opposition to the Son of God. These are all of the saved from Abraham to the Apostolic Age, I believe. They were already enjoying their reward with our Lord at the writing of this Book. They are doing the same even now. Such a privilege awaits all faithful people according to the promises of God. Here is what is spoken of them in the Revelation: 16 *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.* Now read what is promised to the saints of God at the fulfillment of God's plan for man (notice the reiterated blessings): 1 *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son (Rev 21:1-7)*