

Rev. 7:1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

“after these things” – after the opening of the first six seals.

Wuest Expanded Greek: “...firmly holding the four winds of the earth lest the wind keep on blowing....”

John sees four angels at the four corners of the earth (north, south, east & west) who are preventing the winds from blowing anywhere on the earth. That doesn't seem like such a big deal until you think about how that impacts the weather (no air currents) which in turn impacts food production, our health and many other areas that I can't articulate since I am not a scientist.

Note from Dixie: “No cooling breeze in the daytime, no relief from the heat, no evening breezes, no movement of seeds by the wind, air pollution that won't clear the area, difficulties in breathing in polluted industrial areas and from car exhausts, less pollination of plants....”

We see throughout Revelation that angels function as agents that carry out God's will concerning events on planet earth. In light of the glimpse provided in the biblical record, I believe they have been just as busy behind the scenes throughout history as they will be in the future. The Revelation record makes a point of revealing many ways they serve God.

Rev. 7:2 And 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 given to hurt the earth and the sea,

Rev. 7:3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

Right after he sees the four angels he sees another angel ascending from the east. Since the earth is a sphere in the heavens, the angels could appear to come from any direction—up or down--and still be coming from the heavens. I would assume that John is speaking from the perspective of “his” corner of the world around the Mediterranean since directions in scripture are identified as pertaining to Israel.

This angel has the seal of the living God. The purpose of a seal is to protect and is a mark of privacy/genuineness (from the Greek), which I think indicates ownership. The angels who are in control of the wind have a purpose—to hurt (cause injury to) the earth and the sea; but they are told not to do anything harmful to the earth or sea or trees until “we” have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads. This angel is going to have help in sealing the servants of God. The mark of privacy probably also indicates that this mark is not visible to those on earth.

I think it is significant that the seal will be in the forehead since the head is recognized as the control center of the body. The individuals being sealed are

called “servants.” They are choosing to yield control of their lives to God. In **Revelation 14:1** we are told that the seal is the Father’s name. This has to be in the same relative timeframe as the signing of the covenant between Antichrist and Israel. It is the 70th week of Daniel (or 7-year tribulation period) that has been determined for God to finish His work with Israel. (See reference to Daniel 9:24 below.)

There is another reference in scripture of the use of a seal to protect God’s servants.

***Ezekiel 9:4-7** And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.*

Note: Believers today are sealed with the Holy Spirit. He is the earnest of our salvation (a part paid beforehand as a pledge; a token of what is to come).

***Ephesians 1:13-14** In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

Since this is the 70th week determined on Israel and Jerusalem (**Daniel 9:24** *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city.*), I tend to think that God will be dealing with man as He did during the first 69 weeks—especially regarding the work of the Holy Spirit. I don’t necessarily think He will be the “earnest...seal” that He is to those of us in the church age.

It is also interesting that the four angels controlling the wind are told not to hurt the earth or sea or trees “until” This implies that there will be particular harm that will be caused by the wind. The earth has already been greatly impacted by the events of the first six seals. It would seem that its inhabitants are about to experience tornadoes, hurricanes, sandstorms, etc. as never before experienced on planet earth.

It comes to my mind that every time there is a pause, there is another golden opportunity for salvation.

I also think it is important to note that God always ensures He has a witness on earth. In light of the preceding rapture, this 144,000 along with the two witnesses become the primary witnesses of the gospel and the truth of scripture on the earth.

Rev. 7:4 And 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.*

The events of the sixth seal judgment have evidently resulted in many Jews finally accepting the truth of scripture and turning to the Lord in faith. It is also fitting that God's primary witnesses during the tribulation period be Jewish, since the purpose of that time period is to produce a purified remnant of Jewish believers through whom God will fulfill His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.

In contrast to his attempt to express the number of angels he saw in Rev. 5:11, John is very specific about the number of servants sealed; it is 144,000.

"ALL the tribes" – Dan is omitted??

There seems to be two main thoughts about why Dan is omitted.

1. Dan is the tribe that introduced idolatry into Israel. The story is told in Judges 18. The book of Deuteronomy states "*Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations.... And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel....*" (**Deuteronomy 29:18&21**)
2. There is also a train of thought that the Antichrist will come from the tribe of Dan. The Antichrist is directly connected to "that old serpent," the devil.

Rev. 12:9 *And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan...*

Rev. 13:4a *And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast.*

The beast in the above verse is referencing the Antichrist. This thought seems to be given support from the prophecy Jacob made over his sons in Genesis 49.

Genesis 49:17 *Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path....*

I was reading some ideas on Revelation at www.yashanet.com, and they noted that Ephraim is also missing from the list. I guess it never gets noticed because Joseph, his father, is listed in his place. They noted that Jeroboam (of Ephraim) established idolatry in the Northern Kingdom in Beth-El (Ephraim) and Dan (Dan). This was long after the rebellion of Dan. In the tribulation they are both deprived of the opportunity to testify of Messiah.

The wonderful thing is that the tribes of Dan and Ephraim will be restored to a place of blessing in the millennial kingdom according to Ezekiel. God will fulfill

His promise to Abraham. **Romans 11:29** states that “*the calling of God is without repentance.*”

Ezekiel 47:13 *Thus saith the Lord GOD; This shall be the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel:*

Ezekiel 48:1 & 5 *Now these are the names of the tribes. From the north end to the coast of the way of Hethlon, as one goeth to Hamath, Hazarenan, the border of Damascus northward, to the coast of Hamath; for these are his sides east and west; a portion for Dan....And by the border of Manasseh, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Ephraim.*

I tend to agree with David Guzik’s thoughts re the listing of the tribes. “There are not less than 20 different ways of listing the tribes of Israel in the OT.... Just because a list is different doesn’t mean it is fanciful symbolism. It is proper to regard each of these lists as legitimate, and to consider that each specific variation serves a purpose, meaning to emphasize something.”

Rev. 7:5 *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.*

Rev. 7:6 *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.*

Rev. 7:7 *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.*

Rev. 7:8 *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.*

Not only is John specific about the number of servants being sealed, he is also very specific on the heritage of these servants—they are descendants of the tribes of Israel. Not only that, there will be specifically 12,000 from each of the tribes listed. The truly amazing thing is that God has no problem in identifying the heritage of these servants—even after they have been scattered among the nations of the world for 2,000 years.

Rev. 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;*

Rev. 7:10 *And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*

“After this” – after the 6th seal and the sealing of the 144,000

Now John sees a great multitude in heaven that no man can number. This multitude is composed of people from all nations (Gentile races), kindred (clan,

tribe), people (generic term of humanity), and tongues (languages). I think the point being made is that God is the Creator and Savior of the whole world—not just the Jewish people. They are standing before the throne and the Lamb. I relate this to showing honor—like we do when a bride walks down the aisle or the President comes into the room. They are clothed in white robes and carrying palm branches (which makes me think of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem before His death). The whole scene is one of praise, honor, and worship.

Luke speaks of being worthy to stand before the Son of Man.

***Luke 21:36** Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*

It seems as plain as the nose on my face to identify this multitude with the resurrected saints, including those that were raptured and delivered from God's wrath. The description of this group in verse 9 is a definition of the body of believers—the very same terminology that was used in chapter 5, verse 9. It accords with the truth declared by Paul.

***1 Corinthians 15:51–52** Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

***1 Thessalonians 4:15–17** For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

This also fits perfectly with the words of Jesus recorded by John in his gospel.

***John 14:1–3** Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

When John was caught up to heaven in the fourth chapter, which many people interpret as meaning that the rapture happens at that point, Jesus is nowhere to be found and the 24 elders are assumed to represent the body of believers. At this point in chapter seven, however, we see a great multitude of believers from every people group standing in the presence of Jesus before the throne of the Father—“*that where I am, there ye may be also.*” It just makes so much sense to me.

The scene is one of worship and praise by all who are in heaven. Notice that the scene includes the peoples of the nations, the angels, the elders and the four beasts. If the 24 elders represented those raptured, why are they identified separately?

I've never really stopped to analyze what they were saying before. "Salvation to our God." When I looked up the original, there was no word given for "to." I tend to think it should read "of." Salvation speaks of deliverance. I think they are praising God and the Lamb for deliverance on their behalf. **Psalm 3:8** is a good reference:

"Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah."

Obviously, God does not need to be delivered from anything. Again, the reference is made to the One "upon the throne." In other words, they are aware of who is in control. The expanded Greek translation by Kenneth Wuest reads, *"The salvation [is to be ascribed] to our God...."*

Rev. 7:11 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,

Rev. 7:12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Heaven is a glorious place of worship and praise of the triune God—although most of the attention seems to be given to the Father and the Son. The word for worshipping "God" here seems to indicate The Three in One, Supreme Divinity. The angels and elders and four beasts never tire of the opportunity to prostrate themselves in the presence of God. The word for "worship" is interesting:

4352. proskune÷w proskuneo, *pros-koo-neh'-o*; from 4314 and a probable derivative of 2965 (meaning to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand); to fawn or crouch to, i.e. (literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore):—worship.

This is indicative of complete subservience, love, and adoration. Their praise is an emphasis and verification of the truth embodied in the worship of God. He is the One deserving of all:

- 1) Blessing – fine speaking, reverential adoration, abundance of gifts
- 2) Glory – dignity, praise, worship, good opinion, honor
- 3) Wisdom – cleverness, learning, thoughtful, discreet
- 4) Thanksgiving – gratitude, actively grateful language to God as an act of worship
- 5) Honour – valuable, precious, marks of respect, esteem of the highest degree
- 6) Power – might, strength, miraculous power, able
- 7) Might – strength, forcefulness, power, ability, might

Some of these words seem to overlap one another, but that doesn't matter. The key is that God is worthy of every attribute He possesses, and He will maintain those attributes forever—beyond our comprehension of time—time without end. Amen—truly, trustworthy, surely, so be it, verily.

Another picture just came to my mind--ALL the angels are standing around the throne. This is the group that John couldn't figure out how to express in numbers. What an awesome sight and experience that will be!!

Rev. 7:13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

Rev. 7:14 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.

Rev. 7:15 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.

“tribulation” = pressure, affliction, persecution, trouble

One of the elders asks John if he knows who all those arrayed in white robes are. John doesn't attempt to guess at the identity of this great multitude; he asks the elder to tell him. The elder tells him that they are believers who have come out of great [not “the” great] tribulation and whose robes have been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

I have most often heard it taught that this represents those who have died during the tribulation, but it just doesn't fit. “The great tribulation” is a reference to the last 3.5 years of that seven-year period; we haven't even gotten to the midpoint yet. I think people forget that Luke tells us that all believers will enter the kingdom of God through “much tribulation”—from the Greek: affliction, anguish, burdened, persecution, tribulation, trouble.

***Acts 14:22** Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*

***1 Thessalonians 3:4** For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.*

***John 16:33** These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

We know that the church age has been filled with times of persecution for believers. It is also true that events associated with the “birth pains” leading up to the years just before Christ establishes His kingdom will be filled with “pressure, affliction, persecution, and/or trouble.” I think you can read verse 14 from two perspectives that are both true.

- Believers of all ages will have come from a time of persecution/trouble for those who seek to follow God and identify with Christ as Savior.
- Those at the end of the age in particular will be emerging from some pretty troublesome times on planet earth due to the increase of tensions and wars among peoples and nations, the rampant spread of diseases, famine, earthquakes, and other physical disturbances—not to mention the rapidly growing influence of the forces of evil in preparation for the Antichrist to take control.

Verse 15 tells us that the throne is in the heavenly temple; this will be verified in Rev. 16:17 as it is in **Isaiah 6:1**--*In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.*

Rev. 7:16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

Rev. 7:17 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.

The body of believers as a whole had undergone great tribulation (as referenced in Acts 14:22 above) while on earth and yet remained faithful in their commitment to the Savior. Many would have suffered hunger—but they will never hunger again. Many were thirsty—but will never thirst again. (This could refer to physical and/or spiritual thirst and hunger.) Many must have suffered due to the weather—but they will never again be subject to that kind of suffering.

Jesus Himself, the Lamb on the throne, will take care of their every need, and the Father will wipe away all tears from their eyes. I think this is a reference to never again suffering in any way. There will never again be a reason for tears of sorrow or pain.

“Heaven is not only a place of rest from earthly toil, but also a place of privileged service.” --Walvoord