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If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, or aren't sure and would like to become one, then you need to believe that Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God, that he was God who became a man, that he lived a sinless and perfect life, keeping the Law of God perfect in every way, that he kept faith perfectly, and that he was crucified on that cruel cross for your sins, mine and the entire world - he died for our sins! His death on the cross paid the penalty fully, one time for all sins that we have ever committed and that we will ever commit. He died; he went down into the bowels of the earth, even into Hell, and was raised from the dead on the third day in a resurrected, eternal body. He ascended back into heaven, was seated at the right hand of God, and is now Lord over heaven and earth. He is coming again to judge the world, to raise the dead, where he will give an eternal, resurrected, glorified body to everyone that has believed on him as their Lord and Savior, and to establish his kingdom one earth.

You come become a Christian right now as you read this, by personally placing your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior; believing that he is God's only begotten Son, that He died on the cross for you and that he was raised from the dead and is now seated in heaven at the right hand of God the Father. *"Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.."* [Acts 16:31a](#) And when you do trust Christ, and Christ alone, as your Lord and Savior, then go to God the Father in heaven in prayer and tell him so. Tell him that you have believed on his Son, thank him for his Son, and thank him for forgiving your sins and saving you! *"That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord", and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."* [Romans 10:9,10](#) *"For; "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* [Romans 10:13](#) *"Therefore, being justified by faith (declared righteous), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* [Romans 5:1](#)

Revelation 7

A. The Four Angels. v.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."

Revelation 7:1 - και μετα ταυτα ειδον τεσσαρας αγγελους 'εστωτας επι τας τεσσαρας γωνιας της γης κρατουντας τους τεσσαρας ανεμους της γης 'ινα μη πνεη ανεμος επι της γης μητε επι της θαλασσης μητε επι παν δενδρον. Aorist active indicative of *horao*, standing is the perfect active participle

1. *"And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth,"* - *kai meta tauta eidon tessaras angelous hestotas epi tessaras gonias tes ges*. *Meta tauta*, **after these things**, connects this verse to the preceding ones in chapter 6 denoting the first 6 seals and what took place in them.

The word **saw**, *eidon*, from the verb *horao*, tells us that John just didn't glance at them, but he was really looking at them and trying to take in all that he was observing. There seems to be an interlude here between chapters 6 and 8 due to a change in tone from the subject matter of the 6th seal and the 7th seal and a delay until 8:1. It suggests a break between the opening and fulfilling of the 6th seal and the opening and fulfilling of the 7th seal.

Remember, the opening of the 7 seals is the unleashing of God's judgment on the earth with each one increasing and intensifying the judgment. The purpose of the interlude between the 6th and 7th seal would be for the sealing of the servants of God. The judgments of the end times will be a time of terror and devastation; the sealing of the faithful is so they can survive it, and so also that they can resist the mark of the beast.

The **sealing** of the servants of God does not exempt them from suffering, they will suffer from one degree or another, but they will not suffer like those to whom God's judgment is directed. One thing that their sealing will accomplish, other than not taking the mark of the beast, is that they will be protected from spiritual apostasy, demonic forces and the worship of the antichrist!

The word *gonia* is the word for an external angle and is translated as corner. Here it refers to the 4 corners of the earth. Modern science and satellite photography have tried to show that the external shape of the earth roughly has 4 corners to bring out the idea of extremities. The flat earth people say that the earth is laid out roughly flat with 4 corners.

The people of those days believed that the earth was basically flat having 4 corners to it, but then they could have regarded the "4 corners" like we regard the 4 points of the compass. They also believed that the 4 winds came from these outer extremities of the earth's land mass, the 4 corners. They believed that the winds that came from the north, south, east and west were favorable, but if they blew diagonally from the 4 corners, then they were evil and harmful winds.

Here we have 4 angels now standing on the 4 corners of the earth and with their way of thinking the winds that came from these areas were bad and would bring terrible destruction on the earth. What this tells us that God's terrible judgment and destruction that is about to be thrown onto the earth, which is signified by the 4 angels standing on the 4 corners, is going to be held back until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.

It was a common belief that all the forces of nature were under the charge and administration of angels, who were acting under the direct authority and command of God,

Revelation 1:1 - an angel transmitted the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 7:7 - 4 angels have power over the land, sea and air.

Revelation 8:5 - we have an angel with the thunder, lightning and an earthquake.

Revelation 9:1 - an angel has the key to the abyss.

Revelation 9:14,15 - 4 angels are kept at the Euphrates river.

Revelation 14:6 - angels flying proclaiming the Gospel.

Revelation 14:20 - an angel of judgment, death on the people.

Revelation 14:18 - an angel in charge of fire.

Revelation 15:1 - 7 angels in charge of plagues.

Revelation 16:5 - angel in charge of water.

Revelation 16:8 - an angel over the sun.

Revelation 16:10 - an angel in charge of dealing with the Antichrist.

Revelation 16:17 - an angel in charge of the air.

Revelation 18:21 - an angel with a large boulder.

Revelation 19:19 - an angel in the sun.

Each angel has been assigned to a different task, a different area that they are over, one that they are personally responsible for in the following categories: fire, water, the seas, the earth, thunder, lightning, earthquakes, deaths plagues, wars, the sun, air, all acting under the direction of God. These 4 angels, who are positioned at the 4 corners of the earth, hold back the 4 winds of destruction until the servants of God are sealed, so that they will be protected from the brunt of disasters to befall the earth, and to protect them from demonic forces.

2. "*Holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.*" - *kratountas tous tessaras anemous tes ges hina me pnee epi tes ges, mete epi tes thalasses, mete epi epi pan dendron.* **Holding back** is the present active participle of *krateō* and **should not** is the present active subjunctive of *pneō*.

We see here that the winds blowing would not be blowing from a direct north, south, east or west direction as they believed in ancient times, but diagonally from the 4 corners of the earth that these angels are standing upon. In the first part of the verse it has the angels **standing** using the perfect active participle of *histemi* giving the idea that they have been there for a very long time, maybe as long as the angels at the Euphrates river and could be better rendered as **stationed**.

Krateo meant to take into one's custody, to apprehend, to take hold of, to grasp, to seize forcibly, to hold back, to restrain, to hinder an action from happening. They will be holding back the 4 winds of the earth for the purpose that no wind will blow on the earth, nor sea, nor any tree. It may be inferred that these 4 winds that are being held back represent the trumpets and bowl judgments to follow.

What these plagues reveal is a major difference between the wrath of the **antichrist** directed at Christians resulting in wars, loss of life, disease, famine, death, etc. and the wrath of **God**, which will be directed against the ungodly on the earth.

B. The angel with the seal. v.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, " - Revelation 7:2 - και ειδον αλλον αγγελον αναβαινοντα απο ανατολης 'ηλιου εχοντα σφραγιδα θεου ζωντος και εκραξεν φωνη μεγαλη τοις τεσσαρσιν αγγελοις 'οις εδοθη αυτοις αδικησαι την γην και την θαλασσαν.

1. "And I saw another angel ascending from the east," - *kai eidon allon angelon anabainonta apo anatoles heliou*. Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun. The **east** here is really *anatoles helios*, which is the rising of the sun. Probably why they translated it as the *east* is that it carries the idea of from the direction of the rising of the sun, which is in the east. It also lends to the idea that this angel appears on the new day and he could appear with the rising of the sun in the morning.

Remember all the people of the world will see droughts, famines, plagues, pestilence, disease, death and wars with the wars being directed at Christians. All followed by something large striking the earth and causing the earth to shake and setting off fires globally leaving the atmosphere choked with smoke and dust. The general consensus will be that God's wrath is now on the earth. I imagine many of God's people will think, if this is only the beginning what will the end be like? Plus how can we survive what is to come? Or, have we lost God's favor?

To say that believers will be under great pressure is to say the least. That's why the sealing of God's people by this angel will have the effect of reassuring them of his great love for them and that he still has a plan for their lives. So this angel comes from the east and tells the 4 other angels stationed at the 4 corners of the earth to hold everything up until he has sealed the servants of God.

2. "Having the seal of the living God:" - *echonta sphragida theou zoontos*. **Having** is the present active participle of *echō* and **living** is the present active participle of *zaō*.

Sealing was a very common practice in those days, as it is today. It was used to certify legal documents; it was used on goods to make certain that which was inside stayed inside away from that which was on the outside; and for identification. The *sphragidos*, **seal**, was the instrument with which one stamped or sealed. The most common was a signet ring, or signet that one wore around their neck with which one would stamp its impression onto soft wax or clay.

The importance of the seal was to authenticate that the owner owns that which is the seal is imprinted on, that it belonged to him. So sealing was an authentication of possession or ownership. Even in the religious life back then men showed themselves to be the possession of their deity by the imprint of the deity's seal. The mark of the beast legally identifies that individual as belonging to the antichrist.

The sealing of the 144,000 is very significant in that it shows ownership of the individual by *Yahweh*; it shows that these believers belong to *Yahweh*; it shows that these believers are set apart by *Yahweh* and are under his protection and that no evil external forces can enter into him to defile him. Christians are sealed by the Holy Spirit at their salvation. Ephesians 1:13, "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," Ephesians 4:30

This sealing of these believers will distinguish them from those who take the mark of the beast. Evidently a time will lapse when men will choose to take the mark of the beast, some will, some won't. It is after this time that these people of God will be sealed. It appears that this will be a time of testing to see whether people will accept the antichrist and his political, religious and economic system. Those who do will be marked in the right hand or forehead signifying that they belong to him.

During this time of testing there will be those who will refuse to accept the mark of the beast at much personal cost to themselves. God will be testing men to see what they will choose. It is only after this period of time that God will send his angel to seal those believers who have not taken the mark. These people will have the seal of God on their foreheads signifying that they belong to God. This will be in contrast to those who have the mark signifying they belong to the antichrist.

The **seal** on the forehead of believers will not only identify them as belonging to God; 1) it will protect them from spiritual apostasy where they will not go along with the crowd of those who accept the devil's man; 2) it will protect their souls from demonism and 3) it will protect them from being subjected to the wrath of God. 4) possible RF radiation manipulation. Revelation 9:4, "*And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.*"

This idea of the sealing of God, or placing a mark on the forehead, was also found in the OT in Ezekiel 8:1-18; 9:1-11. Ezekiel 9:4, "*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.*"

Israel was so apostate that God had to judge it, but before he did he had his angels go through the land and place a mark on the forehead of all those who were grieving over the evil that was being done in the land to spare them from judgment. Ezekiel 9:6, "*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.*"

An interesting note on the mark placed on their forehead in that it was the Hebrew letter *tâv*, תָּ, or our letter the t. The ancient Greek letter looked like T, the early Hebrew looked like +; the middle Hebrew looked like X; and the modern Hebrew looks like ת. The letter looked like a cross. It doesn't tell us what the seal is, nor what it looks like. Will it be visible? Or will it be invisible? It's interesting in that it will be a sign similar to the cross, so is the seal saying that these belong to Jesus Christ?

3. "*And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,*" - *kai ekrazen phone megale tois tessarsin angelois hois edothe autois adikesai ten gen kai ten thalassan.*

We want to note these 4 angels are stationed at the 4 corners of the earth, so when he calls out to them he uses a voice so loud that they can hear him from such a great distance. His call is designed to delay them from carrying out their assignments, until he carries out his first. Their assignment was to hold back the 4 winds and hurt the earth and the sea.

C. Sealing the servants of God. v.3

"Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." - Revelations 7:3 - λεγων μη αδικησητε την γην μητε την θαλασσαν μητε τα δενδρα αχρισ ου σφραγισωμεν τους δουλους του θεου ημων επι των μετωπων αυτων.

"Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees," - *legon me adikesete ten gen mete ten thalassan mete ta dendra*. The aorist active indicative of *adikeo* is to injure or damage something. *Mē* plus the subjunctive mood introduces a prohibitive subjunctive used to express a negative entreaty or command. With the subjunctive idea we have action that is contingent upon certain condition. Used with *achris* it tells us **when** this condition will be met. Do not harm the earth, sea, or trees **until** we seal the servants of God first.

1. "Till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." - *achris ou sphragisomen tous doulous tou theou hemon epi ton metopon auton*. To **seal** is the present active subjunctive of *sphragizo*.

As we have seen, sealing was a very common practice back then using wax or clay whereby the owner of something authenticated it as his possession and protected the contents therein. The first order of importance was **legal** showing that the item sealed was the owner's property that it belonged to him. The second thing was that the sealing protected the contents of the property.

Being on the forehead we have the mind, brain, or soul of the believer in mind. It lends to the idea that the soul of the believer, and/or the brain, is not only being protected from false doctrine and deluding influence of demons, but very possibly the protecting of the brain from RF technology that is now in play to protect the brain from the influence and manipulation of our brains and bodies through RF technology and signals being broadcasted over the Internet and 5G cell phone towers!

In ancient times devotees of a deity would tattoo the name of their deity on their foreheads not only to show that they were the property of that god, but also that they were under his divine protection. In the tribulation people will take the economic mark of the beast to not only show that they belong to the antichrist's economic system, but also that they belonged to the antichrist! In Rome many people had the name of Caesar tattooed on their foreheads to show that they were Caesar's property and that they were loyal to him.

The ancient Israelites, who were marked showing that they were faithful to *Yahweh*, were marked on their foreheads with a *tav*; they were marked on their forehead with the Hebrew letter *tāv*, תָּ, or our letter the t. The ancient Greek letter looked like T, the early Hebrew looked like +; the middle Hebrew looked like x; and the modern Hebrew looks like ת. Some say that the NT sealing will be an x, others say that it will be the name of *Yahweh*. And there is the possibility that it can be figurative denoting that God will protect their minds and thinking. Revelation 14:1, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." Revelation 3:12, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

D - H. The 144,000. v.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 (**sons**) of Israel." - Revelation 7:4 - και ηκουσα τον αριθμον των εσφραγισμενων χιλιαδες εσφραγισμενοι εκ πασης φυλης υιων ισραηλ.*

*"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" - Revelation 7:5 - εκ φυλης **ιουδα** χιλιαδες εσφραγισμενοι εκ φυλης **ρουβην** χιλιαδες εσφραγισμενοι εκ φυλης **γαδ** χιλιαδες εσφραγισμενοι.*

*"Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand." - Revelation 7:6 - εκ φυλης **ασηρ** χιλιαδες εσφραγισμενοι εκ φυλης **νεφθαλειμ** χιλιαδες εσφραγισμενοι εκ φυλης **μανασση** χιλιαδες εσφραγισμενοι.*

*"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." - Revelation 7:7 - εκ φυλης **συμεων** χιλιαδες εσφραγισμενοι εκ φυλης **λεβι** χιλιαδες εσφραγισμενοι εκ φυλης **ισαχαρ** χιλιαδες εσφραγισμενοι.*

*"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." - Revelation 7:8 - εκ φυλης **ζαβουλων** χιλιαδες εσφραγισμενοι εκ φυλης **ιωσηφ** χιλιαδες εσφραγισμενοι εκ φυλης **βενιαμιν** χιλιαδες εσφραγισμενοι.*

There are two orthodox views on how these 144,000 are to be taken. The first view is the number and tribe identification are to be taken literally denoting men who are from the 12 ancient tribes of Israel, who have believed on Christ as their Savior. They refer to them as "Jewish Evangelists", which they are not for the term Jew denotes those who practice Judaism. The fact that they are from the 12 tribes does away with any Jewish idea. *Of all the tribes of the children (**sons**) of Israel.* Even Christ stated that those who call themselves Jews are liars and their synagogues are the house of Satan. *"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." Revelation 2:9 "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."* They actually are descendants of Esau.

The second view is that it uses the language of the new Israel referring to the completed Church of Christ comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. Those who hold to the view that the Church is the New Israel use such verses as: Romans 2:28,29, *"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."* Romans 9:6 *"Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:"* Galatians 3:29, *"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."* Galatians 6:16, *"And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."* Philippians 3:3, *"And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."*

The use of the 12 times 12,000 have been thought by many to be symbolic. For example the number 12 is used many times in both the OT and NT possibly originating from the idea of 1 months. Israel had 12 tribes, although there were 20 OT listings containing any where from 10-13 tribes. This NT passage deletes the tribes of Dan and Ephraim. It is thought that the antichrist will come from the tribe of Dan.

There were 12 tribes, 12 months, 12 apostles, 12 tribes of 12,000, New Jerusalem with 12 foundation stones, 12 gates, 12 angels at the gates, its walls 12,000 stadia long, 12,000 stadia wide and 12,000 high, its walls are 12 times 12 cubits thick, (144 cubits), and the tree of life has 12 crops a year one crop each month.

The number 12 is thought to represent corporate completeness, or organizational completeness, so that the grouping of 12 may be a way of expressing the corporate identity of the elect people of God with the number 144,000 not denoting a numerical limitation on the people of God, but symbolizing their final completion or perfection. The number 1,000 is also used symbolically not to denote a literal number of 1,000, but one that is a very large number that is also perfect and complete.

In Jewish imagery the number 144,000, 12 x 12 x 1,000, is made up of the perfect square 12 x 12, and then rendered more inclusive and complete by the number 1,000. 12 x 12 gives us a perfect square, which gives us a mathematical and geometrical concept of a square that is designed to encompass all that it was designed to encompass. The organizational number 12 multiplied by itself gives us the perfect square, which tells us that the number is perfect and complete.

The **square** represents the people of God telling us that all the people to be saved are saved and that the number of those saved is a perfect number and that the number is completed! Multiplied again by the number 1,000 it tells us that the number is not only perfect, and that it has been completed, but also that the number is a very large number!

The disagreement comes from the two ideas of who Israel is. Does it speak of the Israel of the flesh? Or of the Israel of God? Those who hold to the idea that it speaks of the Church made up of both Jew and Gentile use verses such as: Romans 2:28,29, "*For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*" Romans 9:6 "*Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are **not all Israel**, which are of Israel:" Galatians 3:29, "*And if ye be Christ's, then are ye **Abraham's seed**, and heirs according to the promise.*" Galatians 6:16, "*And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the **Israel of God.***" Philippians 3:3, "*For **we are the circumcision**, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*"*

One of the bigger mistakes that Christians make today is their confusion about who is a Jew. Just because someone calls himself a Jew doesn't mean that he is. Practicing Judaism doesn't make one a Jew any more than practicing Shintoism make one Japanese! Living in the political state of Israel doesn't make one a Jew either any more than moving to China make one Chinese! Even Christ himself addressed this issue in Revelation 3:9, "*Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, **which say they are Jews, and are not**, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*"

To go over it briefly we need to see, first of all, that the people of God were not referred to as Jews, but Hebrews. Later on they were called the sons of Israel, or Israelites, because those 12 sons came from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Later on when the kingdom was divided with 10 tribes in the north and 2 tribes in the south, the 10 northern tribes were referred to as the House of Israel and the 2 southern tribes were referred to as the House of Judah, which was named after the main kingly tribe of Judah. Later on they were referred to as Jews in the shortened form.

As time went by many migrated out of the land and later on the 10 tribes were taken captive by Assyria in 722 BC and eventually were scattered into India/Persia, France, Spain, Germany, southern Russia, the British Isles, also with reports of them being found as far away in northern Japan on the Isle of Hokkaido! Historians have placed them all over the world as God said he would do in his judgment on them scattering them to all nations among the Gentiles.

Christ referred to them as the house of Israel and it was to these descendants of the scattered people of God he commanded the Apostles to go first with the Gospel of the risen Messiah of Israel not to the lost sheep of Israel, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew 10:6, "*But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" Matthew 15:24, "*But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*"

It was the descendants of Esau, who were called Edomites, that began calling themselves "Jews" and still do to this day. The word Jew is not actually in the original; it comes from the Latin Iudaeus. In the Greek it's *Ioudaia*, and the word meant Judean, which meant an inhabitant of Judea. The word **Judea** referred to that geographical area that was the southern part of the kingdom after Israel was split into the Houses of Israel and Judah. The word **Judah** in the Greek is *Ioudas*, (Hebrew - *y^ehûdâh*) and it referred to one of the 12 sons of Israel called Judah and also the geographical area of Judah.

The term given to those who had descended from Esau was **Edomites** and the area of land on which they lived was called **Idumaea**, which was located south of and abutting the Kingdom of Judah, Judea; sometimes they were also referred to as **Idumaeans**. So there was that area of land called **Judea** and those living in it were called **Judeans**; and south of it was the land called **Idumea** and those living on it were called **Idumeans**. "*When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon.*" Mark 3:8 "*Be it known unto the king, that we went into the province of Judea (*y^ehûd* – Hebrew, *Ioudaia* - Greek), to the house of the great God, which is builded with great stones, and timber is laid in the walls, and this work goeth fast on, and prospereth in their hands.*" Ezra 5:8

So these 144,000 are not Jewish Evangelists, or saved Jews, but are 1) saved descendants from the actual 12 tribes of Israel, or 2) the other possibility would be a denoting the completed Church of Christ on earth. To have a thorough understanding into what the word "Jew" means see my Online study called "Jews - Edomites".

E-H. The 12 tribes. v.5-8

We have Juda, Reuben, Gad, Aser, Nephthalim, Manasses, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zabulon, Joseph and Benjamin. We note that Dan is omitted from the 12 tribes probably due to his wickedness.

I. The great multitude. v.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;" - Revelation 7:9 - μετα ταυτα ειδον και ιδου οχλος πολυς 'ον αριθμησαι αυτον ουδεις ηδυνατο εκ παντος εθνους και φυλων και λαων και γλωσσων 'εστωτες ενωπιον του θρονου και ενωπιον του αρνιου περιβεβλημενοι στολας λευκας και φοινικες εν ταις χερσιν αυτων.

1. "After this I beheld," - *meta tauta eidon*. To **behold** is the aorist active indicative of *horaō*, which has the idea of looking at something with perspective, that is, not merely glancing at it, but observing it with the mind engaged trying to understand what one is looking at. After the sealing of these 144,000 John now sees a great multitude of believers in Christ.

2. "And, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number," - *kai idou ochlos polus hon arithmesai auton oudeis edunato*. **Lo** or **behold** is the aorist middle imperative of *horaō*, to **number** is the aorist active infinitive of *arithmeō* and **can** is the imperfect active indicative of *dunamōō*.

As mentioned before, it is hard to put a definitive point on who these 144,000 are. Some say they are 144,000 Jewish evangelists, but their logic comes from a misunderstanding of who Jews really are and even their own logic they have 1) people living in Israel are Jews, 2) or people worshipping Judaism are Jews, 3) or people whose parents say they are Jews, 4) or people who were raised as Jews whatever that is. And none of them from the 12 tribes of Israel! Not to mention they ignore the Lord's words in Revelation 2:9 when he says, "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."

Now we get into the word the **great multitude** is *ochlos* and it referred to a crowd or mass of people. Used with *polus* it tells us it's a large number of people, a very large number. The number of saved people during this time of the Tribulation will be such a large number that people will not be able to number them, but God and his Son knows each one of them.

We do know that there will be a large multitude of people who come out of the Tribulation period victorious over the world system and the antichrist and his false prophet. Revelations 7:13,14, "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they **which came out of great tribulation**, (*εκ της θλιψεως της μεγαλης* - the great tribulation) and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

It could be a reference to those believers who had been previously killed at the earlier part of the Tribulation during the period of time that the antichrist was consolidating his rule over the world. Revelation 6:11, "And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

3. "Of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," - *ek pantos ethnous kai phulon kai laon kai glosson*. **Ek** signifies their origin.

The word **demos** emphasizes the public nature of the people's assembly. **Ochlos** is the word that simply denotes a crowd or large number of people. **Polis** is the word used to denote a people living under a legal constitution, a city, or state. **Ethnos** was originally all those who were not Hebrew, that is, those of the Gentile nations, then it also referred to all those who were outside the covenant, then in the NT it was used to denote those who were not Christians. Here we would take it of the various nations made up of those from different races. **Phule** is a tribe where people are united by kinship. **Laos** referred to at times to those who were the covenant people of God, but here it refers to people having the same race and language. **Glasson** is the subdividing of the laos group into a smaller group based upon language.

This is not saying that God will be saving every person from every tribe, nation and language, but that there will be people saved out of every tribe, nation and language. Salvation is based upon the grace of God. The fact that there will be and are people being saved regardless of their race, or sex, or political affiliation, or nation, or language demonstrates this fact.

4. "Stood before the throne, and before the Lamb," - *hestotes enopion tou thronou kai enopion to arniou*. To **stand** is the present active participle of *histemi*. **Ochlos** also denotes that they are unorganized; it simply tells us that this is a very large number of people standing before the throne of God. Because of the present participle we should render this as **standing** before the throne.

The word **before** is *enopion* and it denoted position that something or someone has been placed before someone else. It could be for judgment, or presentation, acceptance, or something else. The word **stood** is *histemi* and it denotes position of another kind. One is in a literal sense of standing somewhere and another is in a legal sense where it demonstrates that they have been accepted by God. The very fact that they are in the presence of God before his throne and the throne of the lamb and that the fire of his holiness has not consumed them is proof that they have been accepted by God!

Another aspect of standing is that when someone had **standing** in a court, then he had the right to petition the court on his behalf. Which is what we see happening with these believers petitioning God for his justice in Revelation 6:10, "*And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*"

5. "Clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;" - *periblebmenoi stolas leukas kai phonikes en tais chersin auton*. To **wear** is the perfect passive participle of *periballo*, which meant to put on, to wrap around, to cast on. And we want to note that it is used in the passive voice, which tells us that believers will be given these white robes to wear.

In Revelation 6:11, "*And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*" it says that white robes will be given to these believers; they will be clad by God's angels at that time. And the term **every one** is *hekastos*, which means that every single believer will be given a white robe to wear.

We also want to note the grammar of being clothed with these white robes, (the symbol of purity), in that the perfect passive participle is being used telling us that we are not only clothed by the angels, but this act is **permanent and eternal**; we will be wearing these white robes forever! Being clothed with white robes is not only for Tribulation believers, but all believers in Christ!

The robe symbolized victory and rest. **Victory** of these saints over the world system, the flesh and the devil. And **rest** from all their labors and hardships here on earth, as well as rest from the warfare that is being waged on this planet by Satan and his minions against the people of God. The **white**, as we have seen, symbolizes their purity because their sins have been washed in the blood of the lamb. The **robe** also speaks of, and manifests, their high position in the celestial hierarchy of God as kings and priests.

Being given a white robe also denotes their full induction into the priesthood showing that they are finally and fully entering into the thing for which God had called them and saved them, that is, to be priests of the Most High God with Jesus as the High Priest. The robe signifies the dress of the priest. Even Revelation 5:10 denotes this "*And hast made us unto our God kings and **priests**: and we shall reign on the earth.*" stating that Christ made us to be priests.

Himation was used for clothing in general, but *stole* was used regularly to denote priestly garments. The cults of Mithras, Isis and Andania had priestly garments as well. The cult of Mithras had black robes for those at the lower levels; red robes for those who attended the flame; and then on up to the top where white robes were worn. See also Ritual Clothing in the Andanian Mystery Cult.

Babylon is put as wearing fine linen, purple and scarlet adorned with gold. Revelation 18:16, "*And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!*" The head of the Mystery Religion always wears green, which is what the Queen of England wears in public.

12 garments were given to the initiates of Isis symbolizing their progress through the 12 cosmic zones of the Zodiac, thus symbolizing their final identity into the mysteries of Isis. Only when they had arrived at the final level of initiation, which was their final identity with the heavenly deity, was the radiant white robe of linen of Isis put on.

The idea of God, a priesthood and white robes goes back to the beginning both of the biblical concept and its satanic counterpart as well. We have white linen robes being given to the believers in Christ thus manifesting their final induction into the priesthood. Revelation 19:8, "*And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*"

The priesthood of God is given to believers in Christ out of the grace of God, while the priesthood of Satan is acquired by the works of the flesh through the process of **initiation**, hence the term mystery religion, which comes from the word *musterion*, which is a secret that is hidden from all, but only revealed to certain individuals at various levels through the process of initiation. The colors of robes they wore reveal what level of initiation they are at green being the highest.

Ancient Israel had its priests in the Levitical priesthood. The priests were the intermediaries between *Yahweh* and the people and the people and *Yahweh*. Out of those priests one priest was selected by *Yahweh* to be his High Priest and it was only this priest that was allowed into the Holy of Holies. The term High Priest meant that he was above the other priests. It was Jesus Christ whom God had selected to be his High Priest, not only that he swore on oath that Jesus was his High Priest forevermore. Hebrews 7:21, "*(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an **oath** by him that said unto him, The Lord **sware** and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)*" Hebrews 5:10, "*Called of God an **high priest** after the order of Melchisedec.*"

Getting back to the 12 gates of the city the idea of a gate is that it was not a door, but a larger gate, some of them massive, that was found on the entrance into a city, a palace, or a temple. In homes the gate was a part of the wall that formed an enclosure around a house with an inner courtyard. Gates have been used figuratively for a passage through mountains, or the opening up of a new territory, or the seaport of a city. When boats sailed into a city's port it was like going through a gate.

The promise to Abraham's descendants was that they would possess their enemies' gates, that is, they would have control over their enemies. It was also used for the inhabitants of a city, or for people who assemble at the gate of the city. It could also refer to the power and strength of a nation and those who govern it. The bigger the gates the more powerful the nation.

A gate also referred to an entrance into something, such, as the gates of Hell, or the barrow gate and broad gate. People in antiquity regarded the underworld, (Sheol or Hades), as a land, city, or fortress, or prison with strong gates. Christ referred to it in Matthew 16:18, "*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the **gates** of hell shall not prevail against it.*"

The gates of Hell are very strong and can only be opened by a key, or be forced open by a very strong man. They were the entrance into the subterranean domain of the dead and no one went back once they were in there. They were called the gates of Hades, but also the gates of death showing that it was only through death that one entered into the land of the dead.

Citizenship in a City-State or kingdom gave one the right to enter through the gate into his city. One had the right to enter into a city only if he was a citizen of that city. So when we come down to the New Jerusalem we see its foundation stones, which were similar to the 12 stones on the High Priest's breastplate reflecting the 12 apostles of the Church Age, but the 12 gates of the city, all made of pearl, are named after the 12 tribes of Israel.

Now if we see the different aspects of the term gate that they were a part of a wall that surrounded houses separated by a courtyard, and that they were the entrances into the city, and that they were identified with the inhabitants of the city, then it leads us to at least consider that the 12 gates of the eternal city, which were named after the 12 tribes of Israel show that 1) one had to be from the 12 tribes to enter in, or 2) this ties in with the symbolic idea of the 144,000 where God considers all believers, Jews, (believers from the 12 tribes), and Gentiles alike, as one of the 12 tribes.

This idea is indicated in Ephesians 2:15, "*Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain **one new man**, so making peace;*" where God created one new man out of the two. And in Ephesians 2:19, "*Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but **fellowcitizens** with the saints, and of the household of God;*".

We notice they were the citizens, they were the people of God; they were in this standing existence and we were brought into it. Ephesians 2:21, "*In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:*" They and we now compose this new temple of God. Ephesians 3:6, "*That the Gentiles should be **fellowheirs**, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.*" Fellowheirs means that we get to share in what was promised to them. Saved Gentiles now get to share in what was promised to the true Israel, who are the regenerated believers of the 12 tribes, which is the resurrection from the dead and inheriting the new Jerusalem.

And palms in their hands, *kai phoinikes en tais chersin*. **Phoenix** denoted all palm trees, especially the date palm. Palm fronds indicated **victory**, which these saints obviously have; victory over the devil, victory over the world, victory over the flesh nature and sin, and victory over death.

Under the old covenant ancient Israel celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles, or sometimes called the Feast of Booths, and when they did the used palm fronds. They would come from all over the country and build themselves little shelters made of poplar, or leafy boughs, or palm fronds in which they would live as families for 7 days.

It was celebrated in the month of Tishri 15-21, which would be our month of October. In the month of Tishri at the new moon the Feast of Tabernacles would begin. The feast celebrated the nation's wanderings in the wilderness when they finally came into the land. They had overcome all the hardships of those 40 years and finally made it into the land of promise. It was also a commemoration of God dwelling with them those 40 years.

And here we have these believers holding palm fronds in their hands to commemorate their victory over the world, sin, death, Satan and the rest and here they are in God's temple in heaven where God will dwell with them. Revelation 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 (skēnoō) among them.*" "*For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them.*" NASB

The Feast of Tabernacles follows the Feast of Trumpets, which occurs on the first day of the new year, or Rosh Hashanah where 7 trumpets are blown. Revelation 8 goes into that when the 7 angels are given 7 trumpets to blow.

J. The praise of the redeemed. v.10

"*And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*" - Revelation 7:10 - και κραζοντες φωνη μεγαλη λεγοντες 'η σωτηρια τω θεω 'ημων τω καθημενω επι του θρονου και τω αρνιω.

1. "*And cried with a loud voice, saying*" - *kai krazontes phone megale legontes*. Here we have the present active indicative of *krazo*, to **cry out**, and the present active participle of *lego*, to **say**.

Here we have a very large group of believers who had died at: 1) either the direct hand of the antichrist and his forces, 2) or by the hand of the world's people being driven by a maniacal hatred for Jesus Christ, 3) or by the elements of nature.

2. "*Saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*" - *legontes he soteria to theo hemon to kathemeno epi tou thronou kai to arnio*. To **sit** is the present active participle of *kathēmai*, which is used to denote the eternal reality of God on his throne.

What **salvation to our God** is actually saying is [our] salvation belongs to, or is due to, to our God, the one who is seated on the throne, and to the lamb, to them [we owe our]salvation. The redeemed know that their salvation is due solely to the works and planning of both the Father and the Son. The Father planned the means by which we get saved and the Son executes the Father's plan.

K. Around God's Throne. v.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," - Revelation 7:11 - και παντες 'οι αγγελοι 'εστηκεσαν κυκλω του θρονου και των πρεσβυτερων και των τεσσαρων ζων και επεσον ενωπιον του θρονου επι προσωπον αυτων και προσεκυνησαν τω θεω.

1. "And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts," - *kai pantes hoi angeloi hestekesan kuklo tou thronou kai ton presbuteron kai tessaron zoon*. To **stand** is the pluperfect active indicative of *histemi*.

Kuklo denotes a circle rather than perimeter, which is a measurement around a circle. So what we have here are concentric circles. In the middle, or the center, is the throne of God, then out from that are the 4 living creatures, then out from that is another circle composed of the 24 elders, then the saved great multitude coming out of the Tribulation standing before the throne, then further out we have all the angels of God forming another circle. The way the Greek reads is that we have all the angels of God standing in a circle around the throne, but also standing around the 24 elders and the 4 living creatures.

Some of the references to these elders are listed in: Revelation 4:4, "*And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.*", 4:10, "*The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever; and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,*", 5:8, "*And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.*", 5:11, "*And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;*", 5:14, "*And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.*", 11:16, "*And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,*", 19:4, "*And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.*"

When the 4 creatures give glory, honor and thanks to God the 24 elders lay their crowns before his throne prostrating themselves and worshipping him. Revelation 4:10,11, "*The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever; and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,*" This casting of their crowns before the throne of God is a symbolic gesture that their authority to rule as elders comes from God.

When the Lord Jesus took the scroll from God's hand the 4 creatures and 24 elders prostrate themselves before God and sang a new song about Christ's work concerning the people he had made to be kings and priests. Revelation 5:9,10, "*And they sung a new song, saying, **Thou** art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made **us** unto our God **kings and priests:** and **we shall reign on the earth.**"*

Then millions upon millions of angels encircling the throne of God and the Lamb, the 4 creatures and the 24 elders will be praising the Father and the Son joined in by everyone else. Revelation 5:11, "*And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;*" Hundreds of millions of angels praising Jesus Christ.

2. "And fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God," - *kai epeson enopion tou thronou epi prosopon auton kai proskunesan to theo*. These 24 elders encircle the throne of God and if we take a circle as being 360 degrees, then it would make them 15 degrees apart. Would that mean that each elder's rule over the universe extends outward in a 15 degree arc? There are also 24 hours in a day, so would that mean their rule is divided up into a one hour section?

The word for **worship** is *proskuneo*, which does mean to worship, but it also has the idea of obedience, so it tells us that they are in complete subservience to *Yahweh* and his Son's rule over the universe. If one knelt before a ruler, it meant that he was in submission to his rule. The greater form of worship, respect and obedience was to **prostrate** oneself on the ground before him, as we have here.

What's interesting is that the entire heavenly court has fallen down worshipping God, but the redeemed are standing. Now maybe they did too, but there is nothing in the text to show that they do. Perhaps that's one of the reasons why the elder asks, "*What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?*"

L. The praise of the angels. v.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.*" - Revelation 7:12 - *λεγοντες αμην 'η ευλογια και 'η δοξα και 'η σοφια και 'η ευχαριστησια και 'η τιμη και 'η δυναμις και 'η ισχυς τω θεω 'ημων εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων αμην.*

1. "*Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory,*" - *legontes amen he eulogia kai he doxa*. **Saying** is the present active participle of *lego* and its action takes place at the same time as the action of the main verb, which is to fall down. As the angels fall down and prostrate themselves before God the first thing that they say is "*Amen*", which is said in response to the praise that the redeemed give.

The word **amen** was used in both the OT and the NT and to say "Amen" was used to confirm a statement by someone else. It was a way of expressing that I believe what this other person said, or what they said was binding on me as well. If someone else was praying and you said an amen after theirs, then it was a way of saying that's my prayer as well. Or if someone was singing a doxology, then your amen was saying that that's your praise also.

Or if a minister is rebuking a congregation laying out the terms for blessing, or cursing for rejection of the Word, and someone in the congregation says "Amen", then what he's saying is that he believes exactly what the preacher is saying and binds himself to it, that is, he is publicly committing himself to what the preacher has said.

Praise, *eulogia*, is to speak well of someone. Here God is being praised for all his acts of kindness, goodness, blessings and provisions he has done for his creation. He has created the heavens and the earth and has made it possible for man to dwell eternally through his act of redemption, so they praise him for that. **Glory**, *doxa*, has several meanings, but the one that stands out is the radiance of God's holiness that comes from his person. Revelation 4:3, "*And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.*"

2. "And wisdom, and thanksgiving" - *kai he sophia kai he eucharistia*. In the determining the train of knowledge wisdom would be at the pinnacle. 1) there is knowledge where one has certain facts of a subject. 2) there is the progression or growth in knowledge where one accumulates facts. 3) there is the accumulation of facts and tying them altogether where one has understanding. 4) there is an accumulation and understanding on a subject where one has arrived at a complete understanding of the subject. 5) Then there is **wisdom** where one has all that knowledge and understanding and applies it to a given situation to accomplish a purpose.

I think the emphasis of *sophia* being used here, **wisdom**, is not so much to stress the omniscience of God, which he certainly has, but in context having the wisdom to devise a plan of salvation whereby people can get saved and at the same time defeat Satan in the angelic conflict! 1 Corinthians 2:7,8, "*But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*"

Thanksgiving denotes that inner attitude of gratitude and appreciation for all that God has done for you and expresses it toward God by actually thanking him. It takes into account that you understand that you do not deserve anything from God and that you have no claims for God to do anything for you. So when he does things for you, you are thankful for everything he does and expresses it to him.

3. "And honour, and power, and might, Be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen" - *kai he time kai he dunamis kai he ischus to theo hemon eis tous aionas ton aionon amen*. **Time** has the idea of worth or value, something was of such quality it was worth a lot. When used of people in one's community honor was given to a man because of his wealth, his integrity, his education, his wisdom, or his charitable acts for others.

There has to be the ideas of integrity, value and excellence for one to be honored. If there were people who produced things that were beneficial to other people, where he did things for others rather than for his own profit, then he was honored by the people. So one could be honored for his integrity, his wise decisions, for being kind and gracious to others, or for holding a position in the community where he ruled with justice, fairness and mercy.

Honor is used here with the definite article telling us that he has **the honor**. In society one might compare the honor of one man with another, but God is incomparable; he has the honor, the worth, the value, the integrity, the principles, the truth, justice, and his charitable acts toward men. Respect would be another way of putting it as well.

Power, *dunamis*, looks at the innate strength that one has to get something done. Some people are physically strong, but mentally or volitionally weak. While others may be weak physically, but very strong in their force of will and resolve. The fact that God is strong is brought out by our theological term of omnipotence stating that God has all power. Psalm 11:4, "*The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.*"

Might, *ischuo*, looks at the strength of God, which would take into account his wisdom, knowledge, planning and force of will to deal with anything that might come up and be the victor. These qualities belong to our God into the age of the ages.

M. The elder's question. v.13

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" - Revelation 7:13 - και απεκριθη 'εις εκ των πρεσβυτερων λεγων μοι ουτοι 'οι περιβεβλημενοι τας στολας τας λευκας τινες εισιν και ποθεν ηλθον.

1. "And one of the elders answered," - *kai apekrithe heis ek ton presbuteron*. To **answer** is the aorist passive indicative of *apokrinomai*, which was used for the giving of an answer in reply to a question. It was also used where one began to speak, but always where something had preceded. Which means that they could have been talking about it before, or most likely it was an act of having seen all these people in white robes before the throne and a question was brought up.

The only other reference to the **elders** is in Revelation 4:4, "And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw **four and twenty elders** sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold." Possibly in Daniel 7:9, "As I looked, "**thrones** were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze."

2. "Saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" - *legon moi outoi hoi periblemenoi tas stolas tas leukas tines eis in kai pothen elthon*. **Saying** is the aorist passive indicative of *apokrinomai*. **Arrayed** is the perfect passive participle of *periballo*. **Are** is the present active indicative of *eimi*. And **came** is the aorist active indicative of *erchomai*.

One of these elders stepped forward and asked John this question. The elder asked a question to start a dialogue between him and John, "who are these people in white robes and where did they come from?" **Arrayed** here is the same word and grammar as we have in v.9 where it says that they were **clothed** in white robes and both are in the PPP showing the permanence of them wearing white robes. The elder wants to know the identity of these people and where they came from. The elder's question is designed to begin a discussion with John, not because he didn't know the answer.

N. The redeemed from the tribulation. v.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." - Revelation 7:14 - και ειρηκα αυτω κυριε συ οιδας και ειπεν μοι 'ουτοι εισιν 'οι ερχομενοι εκ της θλιψεως της μεγαλης και επλυναν τας στολας αυτων και ελευκαναν αυτας εν τω 'αιματι του αρνιου.

Said is the perfect active indicative of *eipon*; **know** is the perfect active indicative of *oida*; **said** is the aorist active indicative of *lego*; **came** is the present middle participle of *erchomai*; **washed** is the aorist active indicative of *pluno*; and **made them white** is the aorist active indicative of *leukaino*.

1. "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest." - *kai eireka auto kurie su oidas*.

To which John answered back that he, that is, the elder, knows. Questions are designed to elicit a response, or to engage someone in conversation. Lord, you, you know.

2. "These are they which came out of (the) great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." - *kai eipen moi houtoi eisin hoi erchomenoi ek tes thlipseos tes megales kai eplunan tas stolas auton kai eleukanan autas en to haimati tou arniou*. The question of **who** these people are is answered by they are believers in Christ. And **where** did they come from is answered by the statement that they had come out of the great tribulation.

We know that this great multitude is made up of both Jews and Gentiles. And it appears that this is the group mentioned in Revelation 6:10,11 where we have these believers calling out for vengeance on their blood and the Lord telling them to rest for there are others to follow. "*And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*"

We want to note that they had believed on Jesus Christ and were born again, which requires the ministry of the Holy Spirit demonstrating that he is still on earth operating in the hearts and souls of people. They have white robes, as the others did. And that they will serve him day and night in his temple. Revelation 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.*"

Remember, only priests were allowed to be in the temple of God in the OT. In the NT believers are the temple of God here on earth. And only priests were and are qualified to not only be in his temple, but also to serve him, as we see found here.

And seeing that the old covenant had been replaced by the new covenant, and the old priesthood had been replaced by a new one, and that there are no other priesthoods, or covenants being established after the new covenant, then we can only deduce that these are Christians! And we note they come out of the great tribulation. We should also note that in the original the definite article **the** is used, **the great tribulation**, while the KJV translation here has omitted it.

Other references to this are: Daniel 12:1, "*And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of **trouble**, (tribulation - thlipsis - Septuagint), such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.*" Mark 13:19, "*For in those days shall be **affliction**, (tribulation - thlipsis), such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.*" Matthew 24:21, "*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*" And Matthew 24:29, "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:*"

Soiled clothes represented defection from the doctrines of Christ through unbelief and the worship of other gods. As we see in Christ's instruction to the Church in Sardis where there were some in the church there who had not soiled their garments, but there were others who did. Revelation 3:4, "*Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not **defiled their garments**; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.*"

Sardis was the center of a major wool industry and it was also a place where the mother goddess was worshiped, as in the other nations. In their pagan religion it was forbidden to approach the gods in garments that were stained or soiled. Those who did would have their names removed from the public list of citizenship in Sardis.

These believers living in Sardis had not submitted to the practices of washing their garments to be acceptable to the gods in the local religion, but had instead washed them in the blood of Christ through faith in Christ and forgiveness through his grace. It is faith in the blood of Christ's atoning death that cleanses us from all our sins.

Christ gives us a warning in Luke 21:34, "*And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.*" concerning the things that will be taking place up to and into the period of time called the great tribulation. So why does he instruct his followers concerning these matters if they were not subject to having to go through them?

The tribulation will not be a time of great pressure for unbelievers for the pressure of Satan's system will not be brought down upon them, but upon believers in Christ. The rest of the world will be enjoying the fruit of Babylon's political, religious and economic system. For the people of the world it will be a time of unparalleled prosperity, decadence, fun and pleasure that will be linked to their departure and rebellion against God. But for those who hold true to the testimony of Jesus it will be unparalleled pressure on a worldwide scale.

Matthew tells us that it will be a time of great pressure, or tribulation, unequalled since the beginning of the world, but never again - thankfully. Matthew 24:21, "*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*" The pressure of the tribulation, though, is not as the result of God's wrath against believers, but Satan's wrath against them! God's wrath towards the unbeliever will follow this.

Now, as to the identity of those going through the tribulation, they are identified in Revelation 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.*" We see that they have white robes and that they will be in God's temple serving him.

We also see that they are called the elect. Matthew 24:21,22,24, "*For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the **elect's** sake those days shall be shortened. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very **elect**.*"

We see that it is after the great tribulation that we see the sun being darkened, the moon not giving its light, the stars falling from the sky and the shaking of the heavenly bodies. Matthew 24:29,30, "*Immediately **after** the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And **then** shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*"

It is then we see Christ sending out his angels to gather the elect from one end of heaven to the other.. Matthew 24:31, "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Which is coupled with the resurrection and rapture of the saints of God in 2 Thessalonians 2:1, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our **gathering together** unto him,"

The shaking of the heavens and the earth are not only mentioned here, but also in Revelation 6:12-14; 8:6-12; 16:17-21 and in Hebrews 12:26,27 where it says, "Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet **once more** I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." This is a quote from Haggai 2:6, "For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts." The desire of all nations is a reference to Jesus Christ.

Christ told us in John 16:33 that in this world we will have pressure, (the key is not letting it turn into stress in the soul), and that this pressure will greatly intensify in the last days and the tribulation. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have **tribulation**: (pressure) but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." And Paul in Acts 14:22, "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through **much tribulation** (pressure) enter into the kingdom of God."

O. Serving God. v.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." - Revelation 7:15 - δια τουτο εισιν ενωπιον του θρονου του θεου και λατρευουσιν αυτω ημερας και νυκτος εν τω ναω αυτου και ο καθημενος επι του θρονου σκηνωσει επ' αυτους. To **serve** is the present active indicative of *latreuo*; **sitteth** is the present middle participle of *kathemai*; and **dwell** is the future active indicative of *skenoo*.

1. "Therefore are they before the throne of God," - *dia touto eisin enopion tou thronou tou theou*. The fact that these believers in Christ, this great multitude, who have come out of the great tribulation, are standing **before** the throne of God indicates that this is the day of their **presentation** to the Father and his **acceptance** of them.

This is the fulfillment of the promise that the Father made to his Son in eternity past. Hebrews 2:10, "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in **bringing many sons unto glory**, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Hebrews 2:13, "And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, **Behold I and the children which God hath given me.**"

2. "And serve him day and night in his temple:" - *kai latreuousin auto hemeras kai nuktos en to nao autou*. Present active indicative of *latreuo*.

The present tense of *latreuo* is a futuristic present that is used to describe an action that is going to take place in the future from the time of John's writing, but is so certain to happen that it is put as a present tense as if it is already occurring. We also want to note that their service unto God is around the clock, as we would say.

Originally *latreuo* was used to denote those who served the state in official functions; it was regarded as one of the highest positions a Greek citizen could have. But even higher than serving the Greek state were those who performed service to their "gods". So *latreuo* was used to refer to those who served in the temples as the priests unto their "gods". When the Septuagint translated the Hebrew into Greek the word *latreuo* was used to refer to the priests serving God in his temple.

The word for **temple** here is *naos* and it referred to the holiest of places in the Greek temples, which for them was where they had a statue erected of the "god" they worshipped. In the OT there was the Holy place where all the priests ministered, and than another room, which was called the Holy of Holies, (the holy room of the holy ones), where only the High Priest could enter into and that only was a year. Here we have **all the priests ministering in the naos of God in heaven!**

But the use of the word **temple** here brings up an interesting question, is this the final state of believers, or an intermediate state? In the final state we have in Revelation 21:22, "*And I saw **no temple** therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.*" where there is no temple in the New Jerusalem that God will have on a new earth, but here we have a temple.

3. "*And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.*" - *kai ho kathemenos epi tou thronou skenosei ep' autous*. The present middle participle of *kathemai* tells us that *Yahweh has seated himself on his throne and it also shows the continuing unbroken state of his existence that he has always been seated on his throne and he always will be! It also shows that Satan's attempt to depose him from his throne of glory has utterly failed.*

The word to **dwell** is *skenoo*, which borrows from a Middle Eastern custom of when you have taken someone into your house (tent) and life, then that person has now become a permanent fixture of your household and they will dwell with you forever. And not only that they will be privy to your provisions and protection. So **dwelling** with them in the future indicative of absolute certainty tells us that they will be dwelling with God permanently and eternally and there in his home they will be protected, provided for, comfortable and in his presence forevermore. It also has the idea of the shekinah glory of God's presence that was in the OT temple will be upon us all.

P. No more hunger or thirst. v.16

"*They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.*" - Revelation 7:16 - ου πεινασουσιν επι ουδε διψησουσιν επι ουδε μη πεση επ' αυτους 'ο ηλιος ουδε παν καυμα. **Hunger** is the future active indicative of *peinao*; **thirst** is the future active indicative of *dipsao*; **light** is the aojist active subjunctive of *pipto*.

Here we have a contrast between what so many believers have experienced during their journey on earth and what it will be like when we finally are brought to our heavenly Father. Of course it would take into account the suffering of the Tribulation Age saints under the persecution against them by the forces of the antichrist, which so many believers have suffered in this way, are suffering and will suffer in the future. Being hungry, thirsty and having the sun fall upon them certainly will be the case of believers who go out into the desert to flee the wrath of antichrist's forces.

Q. Wiping every tear away. v.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." - Revelation 7:17 - 'οτι το αρνιον το αναμεσον του θρονου ποιμανει αυτους και 'οδηγησει αυτους επι ζωσας πηγας 'υδατων και εξαλειψει 'ο θεος παν δακρυον απο των οφθαλμων αυτων.

1. "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters:" - *hoti to arnion to anameson tou thronou poimanei autous kai hodegesai autous epi zosas pegas hudaton.*

In the midst of is *anameson* and it meant to be in the middle of, or in the center of something, here it's the throne. Which opens up the door that the throne of God in heaven is much different than we all might have imagines. We tend to view a throne much like the thrones we have seen on earth, but here the configuration is much larger and more different than we ever could have imagined.

Shall feed is the future active indicative of *poimainō* actually meant to shepherd. The old oriental shepherd would lead his flocks from pasture to pasture so they could graze and be fed, so in this sense the shepherd is feeding them. But we must not lose sight of the fact that it is the Lord who is shepherding us now, he will continue to do so throughout our lives here on earth, and when we finally get to heaven he will be shepherding us there.

To **lead** is the future active indicative of *hodēgeō* and it is one of the things that the shepherd did. It is his Spirit that is leading us today into all the truth; he leads us as we go through life, and it will be him leading us in person when we get to heaven. John 16:13, "*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*"

Living fountains of waters is *epi zosas pegas hudaton*. **Springs** is *pegas* the accusative plural of *pēgē*, so we have the word for springs or fountains. And **waters** is *hudaton* the genitive plural of *hudōr*. Now as to what this is describing is another matter and where exactly is this fountain head? The word *pege* did not denote a river, stream, or a well, but water that came bubbling up from out of the ground, which we refer to as a spring today, or if having larger volume we would call it a fountain.

Because it is found in the plural we have more than one source of water springing up. Also the spring, or fountain would be the source of where rivers and streams come from. The Sacramento River found here in the Sacramento Valley is named after the sacraments of the church and its source is a spring, which you can walk up to, at the base of Mt. Shasta! The best water there is!

The ancient world believed that the dead suffered from thirst in the underworld. In Egyptian thinking the deceased was to bow before Osiris who would pour out to him the water of life that his soul would live on. And John does use a lot of Middle Eastern imagery in his writings. So is this water that is alive? Or is this water that gives life to all who drink it? And where exactly are these fountains of life located? The throne of God? And seeing that rivers begin from springs is this the source for the river of life at God's throne? Revelation 22:1, "*And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*"

2. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" - *kai exaleipsei ho theos pan dakruon apo ton ophthalmon auton*. **Wipe away** is the future active indicative of *exaleiphō*.

As God led Israel into the promised land, so also will he lead us to this throne of glory in heaven. There he will wipe away every tear from our eyes and comfort us a loving Father. Revelation 21:4, "*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.*"