

Revelation 7 (NASB)
An Interlude

7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads."

The four corners of the earth, or four winds in some versions, is believed by most to represent all four directions. In Scripture, wind shows God's power because wind is God's power. See Hosea 13:15, Exodus 14:21 and Genesis 8:1. Psalm 78:26 says "He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens And by His power He directed the south wind." The four angels in verse 1 are holding back God's final judgment. Before we get to the next angel, we must answer this. Where is the church? The Rapture has occurred and we are with Jesus in Heaven. Every day sunrise happens every morning. This new angel arising in the east symbolizes God's mercy and love. Lamentations 3:22-23 says "The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness."

This new angel has a seal of the living God. A 5th angel appears to be "calling the shots" here. The first thing this new angel does is tell other four angels to stop. Why? If the winds are stopped no more people could be saved. There is a chance for the 144,000 to be saved. Revelation 14:1-4 (Remember the church is gone.) This event is similar to Ezekiel 9:1-4, and they are describing the same events. In the following verses who was "Sealed".

John 6:27	Jesus
2 Corinthians 1:21-22	believers
Ephesians 1:13	believers
Ephesians 4:30	believers

That seal absolutely guarantees that every believer cannot lose salvation.

The 144,000

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

5 from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, 6 from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, 7 from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, 8 from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed.

There are to be 144,000 people sealed. These people are Jews. From each of the 12 tribes of Israel, there are 12,000. The tribe of Dan is not mentioned in Revelation. Many scholars believe it is because the Antichrist will come from that tribe. (Many, however, don't believe that is the reason). A case can be made from Scripture that the tribe of Dan had no respect for the God of their ancestors. See Daniel 11:37, Jeremiah 8:16, Genesis 49:17 and Judges 18:30 says "The sons of Dan set up for themselves the graven image; "

Jeremiah 8:16 and 17 say *"From Dan is heard the snorting of his horses; at the sound of the neighing of his stallions the whole land quakes; . . . For behold, I am sending serpents against you, Adders, for which there is no charm, And they will bite you," declares the Lord.*"

Jesus will return to the Mt. of Olives when He comes back to earth. (see Zechariah 14:4.) These 144,000 cannot be killed during the Tribulation, God's mark is on their foreheads. Revelation 14:1 says *"Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads."* The word "Israel" is used 65 times in the New Testament. The word "Israel" has never represented anyone other than the actual Jews.

A Multitude from the Tribulation

7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; 10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Next, John sees masses of people too many to count, more than the grains of sand. The significance of these people is that they are from everywhere, not just Jews. It tells us that there will be Gentiles in Heaven. These people are standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They are clothed in white robes. The white robes signify priestly service and righteousness. (Revelation 1:6 and Revelation 19:8). The last time people waved palm branches, they were yelling Hosanna or Save us now. John 12:12-16. This shows us He was doing what the people wanted. Savior to come. Salvation.

7: 11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen."

Everyone in Heaven is now singing praises to God. (7:4, 7:9, 7:11) This will include us. Read Matthew 24:30-31. *"30 And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. 31 And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other."* All people on the earth mourn. All of the saved people are already in heaven. This can be explained because of the Rapture.

A few thoughts about the Rapture.

Most Bible skeptics and rapture deniers teach that the "theory" was invented by a man named John Darby in 1830 and that it was never taught prior to 1830. There are two problems with that reasoning. First, many prominent early church leaders taught the Rapture, including Irenaeus, an understudy of Polycarp, an understudy of the writer of Revelation, the Apostle John, an understudy of Jesus.

Another is Cypriot, who lived within 120 years of John the Apostle. He was a Bible apologist, one who defends correct Bible teachings, and was martyred for his teachings on the Rapture.

There are many dozens of others, but the point is that the Rapture "theory" was not invented in 1830. Point number two comes from Daniel 12:4. NASB - "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."

So even if the teaching didn't start until 1830, it is a moot point because God himself said that there would be things in the Bible we wouldn't understand until the end times.

7:13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" 14 I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

One of the elders asked John who these people were. John had him answer his own question. They were martyred during the Tribulation. People will be saved during the Tribulation. For the people who never had a chance, i.e. babies and mentally challenged. We know this because it says so. The significance of these particular people (who were saved during the Tribulation) is that there are still people on the earth who haven't heard the Gospel. They will learn of Jesus from an angel that proclaims it. Revelation 14:6 says "6 And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people".

They get saved just like we did, by the blood. (Read Acts 20:28, Hebrews 9:22, Romans 3:25, Romans 5:9 and Ephesians 1:7 ("Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.")

7:15 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. 16 They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

When you die in Christ, we will be in God's presence in an instant. 2 Corinthians 5:8 says "we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord." The phrase "serve him day and night" tells us that we won't be tired, serving 24/7. These verses give an indication of how these saints suffered during the tribulation with hunger, thirst, torment by the Sun, crying . . . In order to "wipe away every tear", heaven must have no sadness, no memory of any bad, only good in heaven, we will not see our family that are not saved.