

Chapter 1

Slaves of God (7:1–17)

The statement that no one will survive the wrath of God implied by the terrified humanity is corrected by two new visions recorded after the sixth seal. The first related to the angelic action of restrain and sealing.

1.1 Those on Earth: The 1,44,000 (7:1-8)

The visions of ch 7 separating 6th and 7th seal contrasts the preparedness of God's people and the unpreparedness of the humanity. Even though the condition of the world is fast deteriorating, God is faithful in taking care of the need of His servants. Further, the status of the believers at this point is radically different from that of the rebelling humanity.

Revelation 7:1

After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.

1. **After these things:** Natural meaning of this places these events after the sixth seal. It answers the question of 6:17 by showing the survival of the faithful and even their spiritual prosperity even during the troubled times. The sealing is to protect the believers from the trumpet judgment. Hence, it is reasonable to place this just before the middle of the seventieth week.
2. **Four angels:** are similar to the angel of fire

Rev 14:8. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire . . .

and the angel of water

Rev 16:5. And I heard the angel of the waters saying . . .

and have charge of the forces of nature with specific responsibility assigned to them.

3. **Four corners:** designate four directions

Is 11:12. He will . . .gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth

Rev 20:8. and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth . . .

Jer 49:36; Mat 24:31). Language is figurative to indicate the worldwide nature of the angel's responsibility. The word *four* is used three time again points the universal scope.

4. **Holding the four winds** shows that the angels are restraining the wind from blowing and causing destruction

Jer 49:36-38. Against Elam I will bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and scatter them toward all those winds . . .

Dan 7:2. Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea

Hos 13:15. Though he is fruitful among his brethren, An east wind shall come; The wind of the Lord shall come up from the wilderness. Then his spring shall become dry, And his fountain shall be dried up. He shall plunder the treasury of every desirable prize

These winds are symbolic of the destruction that is going to happen, but is restrained seemingly till the first two trumpet

Rev 8:6-9. So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. 7 The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. 8 Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

The sealing protects the servants from the effect of the trumpets just like OT servants

Rev 9:4. They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

Ezk 9:4-5. and the Lord said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.” 5 To the others He said in my hearing, “Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity.

5. **Wind should not blow** indicate destruction is about to begin, only sealing is remaining before its commencement.

Revelation 7:2

Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,

1. **Another:** indicates this is an angel just the earlier four and not Christ or Holy Spirit or arc angel etc. Further, the use of we in the next verse confirms this conclusion.
2. **Ascending from** indicates the angel was in action and now coming to deliver this message. He is coming from the east of Patmos and going in the direction of Palestine.
3. **East (rising of the sun)** is significant in Bible: Paradise was in the east

Gen 2:8. The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.

the glory of God comes to the temple from the east

Ezk 43:2. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory.

Magi came from the east

Mat 2:1. Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,

Jesus is called *day-spring* which is associated with east

Luk 1:78. Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Spring from on high has visited us;

judgment come from east

Rev 16:12. Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared

and Jesus is called *morning star* which is associated with east

Rev 22:16. "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

The most significant to the Israel is that the Messiah will come from the East towards Palestine and is cause of joy and encouragement.

4. **Seal sphragis** was usually a signet ring used by kings to give validity to official documents or to mark the property

Gen 41:42. Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand

Est 3:10. So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman

Est 8:2. So the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai

Dan 6:17. Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed

To believers, it is a rich word indicating ownership

I Co 1:22. who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

authentication

Jh 6:27. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

and protection

Eph 1:14. who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Eph 4:30. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

5. **Of the living God** indicates that the seal contain the name of God and the Lamb

Rev 14:1. Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads

Isa 44:5. One will say, 'I am the Lord's'; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; another will write with his hand, 'The Lord's,' and name himself by the name of Israel

This is unlike the **mark charagma**, which is the word to describe the label placed on the followers of the beast (Rev 13:6,7) used in pagan practices and has a negative connotation. The title *living God* also denotes the unending nature of God's existence and makes the seal so unique. This is a significant allusion to OT where righteous is marked to protect them from the impending massacre in Jerusalem

Ezk 9:4. the Lord said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."

6. **Cried with loud voice** pointing to the urgency of his mission which is to protect the righteous before the outbreak of destruction on the earth by the next seal.

Revelation 7:3

saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."

1. **Saying:** The message of this angel explicitly fixed the sequence of the sealing and the release of the four winds.
2. **Do not hurt:** it tells the four angels to continue their restraint of judgmental action against the cosmos on which they have control.
3. **Until we have sealed:** These angels have to do the sealing and the other angels must wait. *Purpose of sealing:* Many explain sealing as baptism, protection from demons, protection from physical death, eternal destruction, etc. The context strongly suggests that the protection is from the judgment brought by the the four winds of the seventh seal which also includes the seven trumpets. This explanation is confirmed by the parallel situation of Ezk 9:4-7 where the faithful are sealed for protection from the destruction. Note that they are protected against the judgment from God which was directed against the enemies of God and not from the enemies of God.
4. **Servants (slaves) of our God:** *Identity of the servants:* although servants are used broadly in the NT, the context requires them to be a narrow group as evident from the list of twelve tribes.
5. **Foreheads:** the seal was a sign of consecration to God and forehead is the most conspicuous, the most noble, and the part by which a person is identified. It will be clear to whom these slaves belong and whom they serve.

And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed:

1. **And I heard:** The sealing has taken place. From an unidentified source John heard the number of those sealed.
2. **1,44,000:** Whether this number is (a) symbolic or (b) literal?
 - (a) **Symbolic:** Many understand this number as symbolic of the vastness and perfection of God's people. Reasons: $1,44,000 = 12 \times 12 \times 1000$. The number 12 is squared and multiplied by 1000 indicating perfection. Number 12 is special as there are 12 tribes and 12 apostles. The dimension of the city is 12,000 (Rev 21:16). The tree of life in Rev 22:2 has 12 fruits. There are 24 (double of 12) thrones and 24 elder in Rev 4:4. However, the motivation of those holding the symbolic view is to show that 144000 refers to the NT church.
 - (b) **Literal:** The portion strongly support a literal understanding of this number. John uses the word *multitudes* for denoting vastness. Further, these numbers were added explicitly ($12 \times 12,000$) indicating they are not symbolic. We read a similar record of a large number when God reserved 7,000 prophets in the days of Ahab

1Ki 19:18. Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

Ro 11:4. But what does the divine response say to him? “I have reserved for Myself **seven thousand** men who have not bowed the knee to Baal”

- (c) **Who are they?** This is not the total number of believers during that time. Instead, they are a special group of Jews set aside for the purpose of witnessing to the rebellious world. They will be protected from the impending divine destruction. Nevertheless, they will face martyrdom apparently after their witness is over.

Rev 14:1-5. Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads ... 3 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth

- (d) **Why they were sealed?** They were sealed (or marked) for
- i. not for taking them safely through the great tribulation,
 - ii. not for martyrdom,
 - iii. not saving during this time,

iv. but, for giving special protection from the wrath of God while they witness, though afterwards they will be martyred.

(e) **Their time?** The period of their witness will be the last half of the seventieth week.

3. **Tribe:** every tribe of Israel will be represented in this group.

4. **Children of Israel:** Some think this refers to the spiritual Israel which is church. Some reasons why this is not church.

(a) It is true that some NT passages shows that church is spiritual Israel

Eph 2:12. that at that time you [Gentiles] were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel . . .

Gal 6:16. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God

(b) However, to identify 144000 as church has serious difficulties. The most important one is to divide the church into twelve. Whereas the following verses (5-8) clearly divide 144000 into 12 distinct groups. Hence, the term '[children of Israel](#)' literally refers to the physical descendants of Jacob. This alone will account for the detailed division of 5-8. This is also the earliest Christian tradition. Israel and church is clearly distinguished elsewhere in this book

Rev 21:12. Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: . . . 14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb

- (c) Paul clearly distinguishes Israel and Church in Rom 9-11.
- (d) OT records 20 times the list of the twelve tribe. Some omissions and additions are common. However, always the number is 12.
- (e) They are also distinguished from the multitude of Rev 7:9 which come from all tribes and nations
Rev 7:9. After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb
. . .
- (f) It can be verified in Scripture through a literal understanding of the promise to ethnic Israel in the OT and NT that Israel has not and will not lose her distinctive national identity before God.
- (g) Now, what about the lost tribes of Israel. It is true that it may be lost from human point of view. God knows them and has the power to keep their identity hidden from the eyes of the world.
- (h) In conclusion, these are a sub-group of the faithful Israel entrusted with a responsibility to witness for Christ during the world's darkest hour.

Revelation 7:5

of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed;

Revelation 7:6

of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed;

Revelation 7:7

of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed;

Revelation 7:8

of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed.

1. **Tribe of:** The OT lists the twelve tribe 21 times: (1) Ge 29:32-35:18; (2) Gen 35:22-26; (3) Ge 46:8-25; (4)

Ge 49:3-17; (5) Ex 1:2-5; (6) Nu 1:5-15; (7) Nu 2:3-31; (8) Nu 13:4-15; (9) Nu 26:4-51; (10) Nu 34:19-28; (11) De 27:12-13; (12) De 33:16-22; (13) Jos 13:7-22:34; (14) Jud 5:12-18; (15) 1Ch 2:1-8:40; (16) 1Ch 12:24-37; (17) 1Ch 27:16-22; (18) Ezk 48:1-7; (19) Ezk 23-28; (20) Ezk 31-34; and (21) Rev 7:5-8.

2. These lists differ each other. Various order is followed in their listing.
3. Few highlights of Revelation list: (i) it agrees with none of them, (ii) Levi is included, (iii) Judah heads the list. Messianic expectation is coming from Judah

Gen 49:10. The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet. . .

1 Chr 5:2. yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him came a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph's

Heb 7:14. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood

Rev 5:5. But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."

(iv) Dan is omitted and possible reason could be its participation and leadership in idolatry (Judg 1:34; 18:14-31; 1Ki 11:26; 12:28-30). (v) Absence of Ephraim, may not be an issue since Joseph is included, (vi) Manasseh is included in spite of Joseph's inclusion resulting in a kind of double counting. Manasseh was faithful son of Joseph and Joseph was given double portion (Gen 37:3; Josh 17:16-17). Explanations above may not be satisfactory, but what is certain is that these are the ones protected by the sealing.

Application:

1. **Never be pessimistic:** God has the power to protect us even in the midst of extreme destruction on the earth.
2. **God preserves His people:** Just like God preserves the 12 tribe, He will also preserve us to eternity.

Revelation Rev 7:1-8 addl. notes

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1. **Two groups:** first, those described in verses 1-8 are the Jewish evangelists who will be preserved on earth. They will enter the millennial kingdom alive (?). The second group to escape divine fury (9-17) are those who will be martyred and thereby ushered into the blissful rest of heaven, where they will be preserved.

2. **Wrath Restrained:** Four corners of the earth holding back the four winds of the earth (Jer. 49:36; Matt. 24:31). Unsophisticated skeptics imagine that John's poetic reference to the four corners of the earth reflects a primitive notion that the earth is flat and square. But the phrase actually refers to the whole earth by designating the four primary points on the compass (north, south, east, and west), from which directions the four winds (i.e., all the winds) of the earth originate. No wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree is an incredible display of power.
3. **Saints Sealed:** God marked Israel with blood on their doorposts and lintels to spare them when He killed Egypt's firstborn. He marked Rahab with a scarlet cord to keep her and those with her from being killed. But the illustration that most nearly parallels the present passage comes from Ezekiel 9:36. They are referred to as bond-servants indicates they are already redeemed. This passage also teaches that the so-called ten lost tribes' were, in fact, never lost (cf. 21:12; Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; James 1:1).
4. **12 Tribes:** In the Old Testament lists, sometimes the order of birth is followed (Gen. 29:32-35:18?). At other times, it is the order of Jacob's blessing them (Gen. 49:3-27?), the order of encampment (?Num. 2:3-31?), the order of the census before the invasion of Canaan (?Num. 26:4-51?), the order of blessing and cursing (?Deut. 27:12-13?), the order of Moses' blessing (?Deut. 33:6-25?), the order of the princes? (?Num. 1:5-15), the order of inheritance (Josh. 13:7-22:34), the order by the wives and concubines (1 Chron. 2:1-8:40), and the order of the gates of the city (Ezek. 48:31-34). Though Israel failed in its mission to be

a witness nation in the Old Testament, that will not be the case in the future. From the Jewish people will come the greatest missionary force the world has ever known. The result of their effort will be a redeemed Israel, as promised by God, and innumerable redeemed Gentiles.

After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. 2 Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” 4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed: 5 of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed; 6 of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed; 7 of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed; 9 of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed.

1.2 Those in Heaven: The Innumerable Multitude (7:9-17)

Revelation 7:9

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

1. **After these things:** The scene contrast the panic of earth's inhabitants and the worship of a group in heaven. This vision shows that the 144000 are not the only group maintained witness on the earth. Three distinctions are to be noted between the former and current vision: (i) there the number was definite but here it is indefinite, (ii) there the group was from Israel but here they are from every nation, and (iii) there the group was prepared to face the imminent peril, but here they are victorious and secure. These multitudes come from the days during the great tribulation.
2. **A great multitude:** can be identified as the Gentile and Jewish believer who have died either natural or violent deaths during the period of the first six seals and come out from the Great Tribulation, as evidenced by placing of this vision after the six seals and before the seventh. The vision happens during the seven year period, just before the middle of the seven year period.

3. **Of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues** is a four fold division of humanity which indicates the universal source of these people. However, this does not mean that everyone on the earth will be saved, as we see in Rev 11:9-10 others from these group rejoice over the death of the two witnesses.
4. **Standing before the throne and before the Lamb:** is an indication of the worthiness and victory of these people.
5. **Clothed with white robes:** is an indication of the rejoicing coming out of the victory and the righteousness obtained through the death of Christ.
6. **Palm branches in their hands:** further confirm the victory symbolism of the robes. The palm branches were associated with joy and triumph

Jh 12:13. took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' The King of Israel!"

Palm branches were also used in the construction of tents during the festival of the tabernacle

Lev 23:40. And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days.

This multitude is exuberant in celebration of its victory.

Revelation 7:10

and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

1. **Cry out:** They kept on crying in loud voice is strong expression reflecting the depth of gratitude of the crowd and a determination to give credit to God and the Lamb.
2. **Salvation:** The word denotes deliverance from sin in a generic sense, and here the connotation is with respect to the victory in the midst of persecution similar to the victory over the dragon in Rev 12:10; and the victory over Babylon and the persecutor of the saints as in Rev 19:1. Remember the background of this cry has strong connection with the Feast of the Tabernacles evident from the Palm tree and verse 7:15. Jewish tradition says during the feast of the tabernacle they use to sing hosanna as a victory song

Deut 16:13-15. “You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days . . . 14 And you shall rejoice in your feast . . . 15 . . . the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.

Neh 8:15. and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the mountain, and bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written."

2 Macc. 10:6-7. And they celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing, in the manner of the feast of booths, remembering how not long before, during the feast of booths, they had been wandering in the mountains and caves like wild animals. 7 Therefore bearing ivy-wreathed wands and beautiful branches and also fronds of palm, they offered hymns of thanksgiving to him who had given success to the purifying of his own holy place.

This annual time of joyfulness among the Jews gives glimpse of the excitement of this multitude in heaven.

3. **Our God ... Lamb:** Victory is ascribed to God now is a possession of this multitude.

Revelation 7:11

All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,

1. **Angels:** Although angels do not experience victory and salvation in the same sense as humans, they still rejoice over a repentant sinner

Lk 15:10. Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

and have an intense desire to know more about the salvation that is available to men

1Pe 1:12. . . . those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

2. **Worshipped God prosekynesan to theo** It is a regular practice of angelic orders (Rev 4:10; 5:14; 11:16; 19:4) and appropriate of men also (Rev 19:10; 22:9).

Revelation 7:12

saying: “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

1. **Saying Amen . . . Amen:** Two Amen in this verse. First Amen is to the words of worship of the multitude given in the previous verses. Second Amen is to their own words of worship given in this verse.
2. **Blessing Eulogia:** It is what is due to God. Considering God as a blessed being.

3. **Glory Doxa**: It is the honor derived from good reputation.
4. **Wisdom Sophia**: Divine knowledge of God exhibited in the plan of salvation.
5. **Thanksgiving Eucharistia**: Gratitude to God for the accomplishment at the end of tribulation.
6. **Honor Time**: recognition of God's provision of salvation.
7. **Power Dynamis**: Show the omnipotence of God, i.e His ability to act effectively against all opposition. God has delivered them from all the evil forces on the earth.
8. **Strength Ischys**: refers to a quality one possesses, whether he exerts it or not.
9. **Our God**: Like the redeemed (7:10), the angels also claim that God belongs to them. It is for ever and ever.

Revelation 7:13

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"

1. **One of the elders answered**: A dialog between one of the 24 elders and John begins. Note that these visions were not given to amaze us, but to reveal some truths. The dialogue was initiated by the elder in the

form of a question. The purpose is to identify who are these multitudes. Such dialogues and interventions are common in Scriptures (Jer 1:11-13; Amos 7:8; 8:2; Zech 4:2-5, Josh 9:8, Jonah 1:8).

2. **In white robes:** The elder is interested in revealing who they are. The white robe is the vivid distinguishing feature of this group.
3. **Where did they come from?** The second aspect that is of interest is their origin. Their count is not of interest here. The grammar suggests that this group may include those keep coming during the great tribulation.

Revelation 7:14

And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

1. **Sir, you know:** Sir means 'My Lord' **kyrie mou**. Note that this address is another reason why these elders are not human being, but they are angelic beings. John was surprised by the question and replied with respect to the angel. This address shows deep reverence and respect John shows to heavenly beings. Such address happened earlier also (Dan 10:16-17; Zech 1:9; 4:5, 13; Gen 19:2; Rev 19:10; 22:8-9).

2. **You know:** These words are both a confession of ignorance and an indirect request for information. The grammar suggest the nuance that the elder/angel already knows the answer. John could not recognize the multitudes probably because they were from the tribulation period. Note also that this is yet another reason why the multitudes does not belong to the NT church.
3. **Coming out from:** The identifying mark of the innumerable multitude is that they are coming out from the great tribulation. The grammar suggests they keep coming. Nevertheless, the interesting fact is that the saints enjoy the heaven immediately after their death although the resurrection of their bodies awaits the personal return of Christ (Rev 20:4).
4. **The Great Tribulation:** This is not: (i) simply general persecution during the time of John, (ii) Jerusalem destruction, (iii) persecutions throughout the church age. The article **the** distinguishes it from the rest. This must be the future world wide great day of wrath of God and of the Lamb

Rev 2:22. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.

Rev 3:10. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

Rev 6:17. For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?

1 The 5:3. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

2 The 1:6-10. since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you. . . 10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed

Mt 24:15,21,22. "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" . . . 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened

Dan 9:27. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate

It will be period that will exceed all past and future sorrows endured by the earth whose length will be 1260 days. $1260 = 1260/30 = 42$ months $= 42/12 = 3.5$ years $= 7/2$ years.

Rev 11:3. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth

Rev 13:5. And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months

5. **Washed . . . white:**

Gen 49:11. Binding his [Judah] donkey to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, And his clothes in the blood of grapes.

Ex 19:10. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes.

ive background of it where washing denotes cleansing

Isa 64:6. But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousness are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away

Zech 3:3. Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel

Ps 51:7. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Note that washing in blood to make something white is paradoxical today, but the Jewish thinking was different.

6. **Blood of the Lamb:** Not just any blood even if they are the martyrs will not cleanse but only that of Jesus (Rev 1:5; 5:9; Rom 3:25; 5:9; Eph 1:7; Col 1:20; Heb 9:14; 1Pet 1:2, 19; 1Joh 1:7).
7. **Made white:** The Greek construction points to this cleansing in the past for their faith in the work of Christ.

Revelation 7:15

Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.

1. **Therefore:** They are before the throne of God due to the cleansing work by the Lamb.
2. **Serve Him:** Standing before the throne means to serve Him continually. The service is primarily acts of worship.

3. **Day and night** is an idiomatic way of saying continuously since the distinction does not exist in heaven (Rev 22:5).
4. **In His temple:** Although there is no temple in heaven (Rev 21:22), there will be a temple on the earth during the millennium

Isa 56:7. Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.

Ezk 40-44). However, this is a picture of the whole heaven as a sanctuary in which God's people are priests. The temple is heaven itself and the view is that of saints after their death, but awaiting the final eternal state of glory that will take place in Rev 21:22.

5. **And:** Three provisions of the saints are listed below.
6. **Dwell** (*tabernacle*). First provision- The presence of God to protect the people from all harm (Ex 13:21-22; 40:34-38; 1Ki 8:13; Lev 26:11-12; Jh 1:14; Rev 12:12; 13:6; 21:3). It is a fulfillment of the OT promise that God will dwell in the midst of His people (Lev 26:11-12; Ezek 37:37; Zech 2:10, 11; 8:3, 8).

Revelation 7:16

They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat;

1. **Hunger ... thirst:** Second provision; More than the physical satisfaction, spiritual is viewed here (Isa 49:10; Jh 4:14; 6:35; 7:37). Saved people will thirst for God, but will be satisfied always.
2. **Sun ... heat:** Third provision; God's protection from the heat (Isa 49:10) contrasting those on the earth (16:9).

Revelation 7:17

for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

1. **For:** The reason why multitude is able to have all the provision and protection is given in this verse. Both the Lamb and God is involved in fulfilling this promise. The presence of the Lamb contrasts the state on the earth and the heaven.
2. **Shepherd:** Jesus as the shepherd is a common concept. If so, the Lamb is characterized by patient submission to the shepherd who will patiently care for His sheep. (Jh 10:11, 14; Heb 13:20, 1Pet 2:25; 5:2-4)

3. **Lead**: Like a blind man is lead, He will lead His people.
4. **Tears**: From every sorrow. The ultimate fulfillment of these seven promises (7:15-17) will come in the eternal state described in Rev 21-21.

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