

Lesson Ten

The Great Multitude & Seal Seven (7:9-8:6)

The vision of the 144,000 and the vision of the Great Multitude are the first two of several proleptic visions in Revelation. Proleptic visions are visions of what is to come although they are experienced as occurring at the current time. The vision of the Great Multitude is given at this time to provide assurance.

Multitude from the Tribulation (7:9-17)

The multitude represents the total number of Believers who come out of the Great Tribulation (v.14). Notice that this multitude is greater than the 144,000 Jewish Believers. This great multitude comes out of the Tribulation either through martyrdom or perseverance. God's people will escape God's judgments but not persecution from the Beast (13:7). Jesus said the time of Tribulation is short so the elect will endure and be saved (Matthew 24:21-22).

7:9. Robes and branches were pictures of victors. Believers of all nations and ethnicities are found in the Great Tribulation.

7:10-12. Their song was not about them but about Christ. Heavenly angels, the 24 elders, and the four living creatures all joined the worship celebration. They humbled themselves and worshipped in a seven-fold chorus: blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor,

power, and might. Their praise began and concluded with a statement of affirmation, “Amen.” No sad song or funeral dirge was sung by them. Being in the presence of God Almighty caused their pain to fade into insignificance.

7:13-17. John enters a conversation with one of the 24 elders.

- 7:13. One of the elders asks a question to engage John in a conversation.
- 7:14. John’s use of “my lord” should be interpreted in the vernacular, “Sir.” The elder answers his own question; this was for clarity of answer.
- 7:15. In the throne room of God they are in the presence of God, enjoy perfect fellowship with God, and serve God without hesitation.
- 7:16-17. They are cared for by the lamb. They are never hungry or thirsty again (no scarcity), and they never experience scorching heat. Jesus the lamb provides for them and God wipes away the tears from times of trouble.

Seal 7: Silence in Heaven (8:1)

Now that saints are sealed and protected from God’s judgment on the world, it is time to break the seventh seal. The seventh seal is a brief period of silence in heaven. Silence punctuates the importance of what is to come.

One must image the flow of the breaking of the Seven Sealed Scroll. Once the final seal is broken the majority of events within the scroll follow. Seal seven takes us to the End but the End does not occur. The trumpet judgments immediately follow. The seventh trumpet anticipates the Coming of Christ but seven bowl judgments must occur. Once the seven bowl judgments occur, the Lord returns.

Angelic Preparation (8:2-6)

8:2. Seven is the divine number. Seven angels illustrate that God is authority over what is to come. Each angel blows a trumpet that announces the judgments of God.

8:3-5. Before the first angel blows his trumpet and God's judgment commences, John has a vision that adds to the assurance of Believers. An angel assists the prayers of the saints on earth by adding sweet incense. This assures Believers that God welcomes their prayers. In verse 5 the thunder and lightning emphasize and augment the importance of what is to come.

8:6. It is now time for the fearful day of God's judgments.