

Christ & His Bride

Lesson #13

Hour of Trial: The Seals

April 30, 2025

Rev. 1:3 Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. [certain, sure to take place]

There is coming an end to the sinful story of the human race.

It concludes with the advent of a new heaven and new earth. [Isa. 65:17]

Three Accounts of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ:

Rev. 1:7

Rev. 14:14-20

Rev. 19:11-21

Rev. 1:7 Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Rev. 1:19 Write...

The things which thou hast seen

Glorified Christ in Heaven

Rev. 1:12-18

the things which are

Letters to 7 Churches

Rev. 2 & 3

the things which shall be hereafter

Future/Trib./Kingdom/Eternity Rev. 4-22

Note the "Jewishness" beginning in Rev. 4: words such as "Lion," "Lamb," "Root of David," etc.

Rev. 4:1 AFTER THIS I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet [#4536] talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

➤ After these things > after the Church Age > Rev. 2 & 3

➤ The door in heaven does not open again until Rev. 19:11.

And I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

➤ Voice John heard was like a trumpet calling him to heaven.

I Thess. 4:16-17 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump [#4536] of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

When the rapture occurs, the church will ascend into heaven at the sound of a trumpet.

Note: The Church is not mentioned after Revelation 3:22 - Rev. 19:4

Revelation 5: The stage is set for the 7-year Tribulation which will be activated by the commands found in the scroll sealed with 7 seals.

Rev. 5:1-2, 5 And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. ² And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

⁵And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

The sealed scroll the Lamb takes from the right hand of God is the "purchase deed" to the Earth. Jesus is the Kinsman Redeemer, being the only one worthy to open the sealed scroll and reclaim the Earth.

Subsequent chapters show that the contents within the "purchase deed" are judgments which must come to pass on Earth to prepare for the Lord's return and His earthly reign.

Revelation 6-18 focuses primarily on the "Seven-Year Tribulation," a period of intensified judgment and suffering on the whole world to test the earth dwellers and nation of Israel. God's purpose: judge evil, utterly defeat Satan and complete His plan of salvation for Israel.

This period is depicted through three sets of judgments:

- the seals [Rev. 6] the trumpets [Rev. 8-9] the bowls [Rev. 15-16]
- They are a consecutive sequence of judgments that occur during the Tribulation Period, specifically Daniel's 70th week.
- Each phase represents a different intensity of God's wrath.

Three Population Reduction Predictions:

4 th Seal	Rev. 6:8	Kill $\frac{1}{4}$ of population
6 th Trumpet, 2 nd Woe	Rev. 9:15, 18	Kill 1/3 of mankind
7 Bowls of Wrath	Isa. 13:12	Man scarcer than gold

From Rev. 6 - 18, John describes a 7-year Tribulation Period.

The Tribulation Period, established in the OT, was first mentioned by Moses in Deut. 4:30. He told the Children of Israel there would come a time "in the latter days" when they would be placed in great "distress" and would return to the Lord.

Deut. 4:31 For the Lord thy God is a merciful God; He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He swore unto them.

- Jeremiah referred to it as "the time of Jacob's distress." [Jer. 30:7]
- Isaiah and Zephaniah, with John in Revelation, make it clear that the Tribulation will affect all the world. [Isa. 24; Zeph. 1; Rev. 6-18]
- The last $3\frac{1}{2}$ years will focus on the nation of Israel.
- For this reason, Jesus in speaking to the Jews, referred to the last half as the "great tribulation." This is when the Jews will suffer the most.
- These 7 years are also called "Daniel's 70th week." [Dan. 9:24-27]

Daniel is given 6 purposes [Dan. 9:24] which God intends to accomplish among the Jewish people during a period of 490 years. [70 weeks x 7 = 490]

- The first 69 weeks or 483 years will stretch from the commandment to restore Jerusalem [445 BC] after the Babylonian captivity to the coming of the Messiah.
- Then the final week [70th week = 7 years] will begin when "the prince who is to come" [a reference to the Antichrist] makes a covenant with Israel that will allow them to rebuild their Temple. [Dan. 9:27]

Israel is the center piece in the Old Testament; and it now reemerges as the centerpiece of God's climax in Revelation.

Revelation 6 > Begins with the Lamb opening the first seal of the scroll.

Key: Satan does not initiate the seven years of tribulation.

It is God who has set the times and seasons. [Acts 1:7; I Thess. 5:1; Gen. 1:14; Daniel 2:21]
Terrible catastrophic events come down from the "wrath of the Lamb."

With each successive opening of a seal, the world falls further into ultimate disaster.

"The wrath" is detailed from Rev. 6 through Rev. 19, until God interrupts it.

Rev. 6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard,

as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

This action launches the first series of judgments from God's throne. > Seal Judgments

Seal #1: Rev. 6:2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow;

and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

➤ Offers diplomacy; promises peace; plans for 1 world government

Note: He has a bow, but no arrows. Daniel gives information regarding the coming world leader.

Notice the phrase "by peace (he) shall destroy many." He is known as a peacemaker.

Dan. 8:25 And through his shrewdness He will cause deceit to succeed by his hand (influence);

He will magnify himself in his mind, He will corrupt and destroy many who enjoy a false sense of security. He will also stand up and oppose the Prince of princes, But he will be broken, and that by no human hand [but by the hand of God]. [Amplified]

Daniel 9:27 [NET] He will confirm a covenant with many for one week. [7 years]

- This event inaugurates the last 7 years, the Tribulation period.

But in the middle of that week [$3\frac{1}{2}$ years] he will bring sacrifices and offerings to a halt.

On the wing of abominations will come one who destroys,

until the decreed end is poured out on the one who destroys.

Interesting Thought: "Bow" was used in scripture as the token of the covenant that God gave Noah, which was a "Rainbow" [Gen 9:13]. The same word used in Genesis is used here in Revelation. It can mean a weapon, and it can also mean a rainbow. The "bow" he is holding could symbolize a covenant because this coming world leader's definitive role will be to enforce a covenant with Israel for seven years. Three & one-half years later, he violates the covenant.

Remember: There are 2 white horses in Revelation. The white horse in Rev. 19 is

Jesus Christ returning as King of Kings. Jesus' weapon will be a sword that proceeds

"out of His mouth" Rev. 19:11

the Word of God Rev. 19:13.

This one with the Antichrist [Satan's man] playing the role. He is an imposter.

The white horse represents the coming of the Antichrist who carries a destructive bow. He is

- the beast Rev. 13:1-10
- the man of lawlessness II Thess. 2:3
- the son of perdition John 17:12
- the Antichrist I John 4:3

The Prince that Shall Come Old Testament Allusions [from 33 Titles]

- Seed of the Serpent Genesis 3:15
- Idol Shepherd Zechariah 11:16-17
- Little Horn Daniel 7:8-11, 21-26; 8:9-12, 23-25
- Prince that shall come Daniel 9:26
- Willful King Daniel 11:36

New Testament Allusions: from 13 titles

- Beast Revelation 11:7; 13
- False Prophet Revelation 13
- Antichrist (Pseudo-Christ) I John 2:22
- Lawless One II Thessalonians 2:8
- Man of Sin II Thessalonians 2:3
- One come in his own name John 5:43
- Son of Perdition II Thessalonians 2:3

His Characteristics

- An intellectual genius Daniel 7:20; 8:23; Ezekiel 28:3
- A persuasive orator Daniel 7:20; Revelation 13:2
- A shrewd politician Daniel 11:21; 8:25
- A financial genius Rev. 13:17; Ezek. 28:4-5; Ps. 52:7; Dan. 11:38, 43
- A forceful military leader Dan. 8:24; Rev. 6:2; Rev. 13:4; Isaiah 4:16
- A powerful organizer Revelation 13:12; 17:17
- A unifying religious guru II Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:3, 14, 15

Jesus reveals the meaning of the first four seals when we compare them with His words in the Olivet Discourse [Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21].

Matthew 24: Jesus' prediction of the tribulation time to come.

Revelation 6: Jesus the Lamb is worthy to open the seals of His predicted events.

The reading of Revelation 6 proves Matthew 24 was written to the Nation of Israel and not the Church. This also gives back up proof that Matthew 24 is a discussion in regard to the Tribulation period and not the Rapture. Matthew 24 is a description of the tribulation time to come whereas Revelations 6 is the actual prediction revealed.

Matt. 24:3-5 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

⁵ For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

The Antichrist, rider on the white horse, will come under the pretense of bringing peace to the world. He is given a crown, which indicates he will exercise great authority. He holds a bow, which shows his true intentions, and he advances "as a conqueror bent on conquest" [Rev. 6:2].

Seal #2: Rev. 6:3-4 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. ⁴ And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. [Red Horse of Destruction]

Seal #3: Rev. 6:5-6 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. [scarcity of food; death & famine]

⁶ And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

Seal #4: Rev. 6:7 And I looked and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

The result is war, famine and death. One-fourth of the earth dies in this initial pouring out of the seal judgments. That is ~1 billion 950 million people in today's terms.

Four horsemen of the apocalypse: Note the expressions:

Was given in v. 2

Was granted in v. 4

Authority was given in v. 8

These are in the passive voice = an outside force or power allowed or gave permission for these things to take place.

Since the scroll comes from the throne room of God the Father and since the Lord Jesus Christ is the One who breaks open the seals, the conclusion is that divine sovereignty is allowing these terrible events to come about on the earth.

Matt. 24:6-8 And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of sorrows. [Birth pains] [Seals #2, 3 & 4]

- Red Horse represents wars and rumors of wars. Rev. 6:4 Matt. 24:6
- Black Horse represents famines. Rev. 6:5-6 Matt. 24:7
- Pale Horse represents pestilence and death. Rev. 6:7-8 Matt. 24:7

In the Bible, "birth pangs" [sorrows] metaphorically describe the period of intense suffering and upheaval that will precede the return of Jesus Christ.

They represent a time of great distress and tribulation for the world.

Signs of the Times: Jesus mentions specific signs, like wars, famines, earthquakes, and false prophets, as part of these birth pangs.

Salvation: The term "birth pangs" also implies a promise of a new birth,
a salvation or redemption that will follow the period of suffering.

Creation's Groaning: The idea of birth pangs is extended to creation itself, described as
groaning and laboring for a new heaven and earth. [Romans 8:19, 22]

Seal #5: Shifts to a heavenly vision:

This passage introduces the martyrdom of those who are converted under the preaching of the
144,000 Jewish witnesses described in Rev. 7.

Note that evangelism during this period is back in the hands of the Jews.

Rev. 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them
that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

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?

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 fellow servants also and their brethren, that
should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

Like the martyrs in Revelation 6, we long for justice over the injustices that we see in the
world. The judgments let us know that God is just and has justice already planned out.
He is also patient waiting for repentance and calling people to turn to Him.

Matt. 24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you:
and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

Three Groups of Saints before the Throne of God during the Tribulation

The following table provides further contrasts between the three groups.

Appearance of the Saints	Church -Raptured Rev. 4:4	Tribulation Saints 5 th Seal Rev. 6:9	Great Tribulation Saints Rev. 15:2
How They Appear	White Linen With Crown	White Linen	White Linen
Why They Appear	Raptured	Martyred	Martyred
Where They Appear	On Thrones Before The Lord	Under The Altar	Before The Lord
When Did They Appear	Before the Tribulation	After the Rapture of the church through The Mid-Trib	Through the 2 nd half of the Tribulation
What They Do	Serve as Kings/Priests; Sing songs to the Lord	Ask When Their Blood Will be Avenged	Sing the Song of Moses & the Song of The Lamb

Seal #6: Rev. 6:12-17 We are given a taste of how terrible that day will be when Jesus returns.

¹²And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

¹³And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

¹⁴ And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

Rev. 6:15-16 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶ And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the Wrath Of The Lamb:

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

Isa. 2:19 They shall go into the holes of the rocks, And into the caves of the earth, from the terror of the LORD and the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily.

Note: Worldwide convulsions; 1st of 3 earthquakes [Rev 6:12; 11:13; 16:18-19]

Dr. Vance Havner: The day will come when the most expensive piece of real estate will be a hole in the ground.

The Sixth Seal and Jesus' Eschatological Discourse in Matthew 24:29-30

Matt. 24:29-30 speaks of events just prior to Jesus' return.

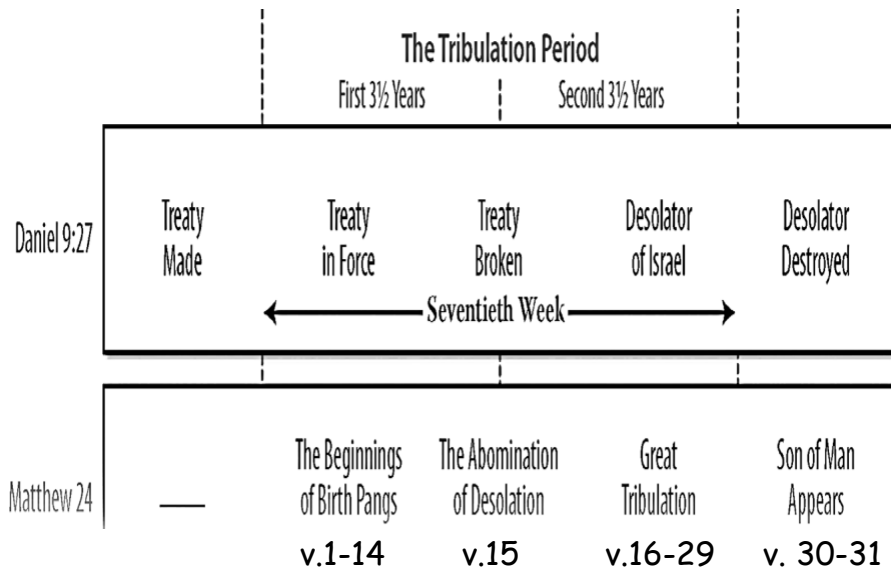
²⁹Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: ³⁰ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

GROUP OF SIGNS

There are a group of signs listed in Matthew and Luke, and these same signs are paralleled and in the same order listed in Revelation chapter six.

	Matthew	Luke	Revelation
• False Christs	24:4-5	21:4	6:1-2
• Wars	24:6	21:9-10	6:3-4
• Famines	24:7a	21:11	6:5-6
• Death	24:7b-8	21:12	6:7-8
• Martyrs	24:9	21:24	6:9-11
• Global upheaval	24:10-13	21:25	6:12-17

Comparison of the first six seals with the Olivet Discourse		
Seal	Writting on scroll, (<u>Revelation 6</u>)	The Lord's Olivet Discourse (<u>Matthew 24</u>)
1	Conqueror and conquest, white horse, <u>Revelation 6:1</u>	Deceptions and false-christs, <u>Matthew 24:5</u>
2	No peace on earth, red horse, <u>Revelation 6:3</u>	Wars and rumors of wars, <u>Matthew 24:6</u>
3	Famine and economic collapse, black horse, <u>Revelation 6:5</u>	Famines and earthquakes, <u>Matthew 24:7</u> (second half of the verse)
4	Horrific numbers of deaths, pale horse, <u>Revelation 6:7</u>	Nation against nation, <u>Matthew 24:7</u> (first half of the verse)
5	Slain tribulation saints, <u>Revelation 6:9</u>	Persecution of the saints, <u>Matthew 24:9-14</u>
6	Planetary and celestial catastrophes, the wrath of the Lamb, <u>Revelation 6:12</u>	Planetary and celestial catastrophes and the appearance of the Lord, <u>Matthew 24:29-30</u>



Isaiah also spoke of this day, the 6th seal of Revelation, stating:

Isa 34:4 All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree.

He uses the exact same language from the 6th seal about the stars like figs falling.

The context? It is the second coming of Jesus! People are delivered over to the slaughter.

- It is when He fights the armies of the world

Isa 34:2 For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.

- soaking the mountains with blood

Isa 34:3 Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

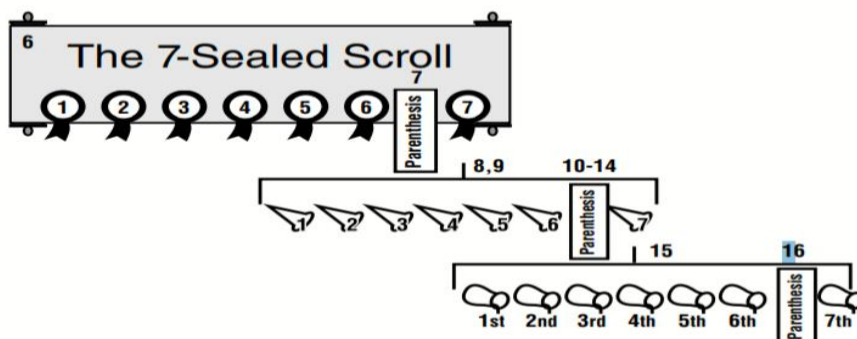
- even mentioning Bozrah

Isa 34:6 The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness,
and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams:
for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.
He goes to Bozrah at His second coming to save the hidden remnant of Israel [Isa 63:1-6].

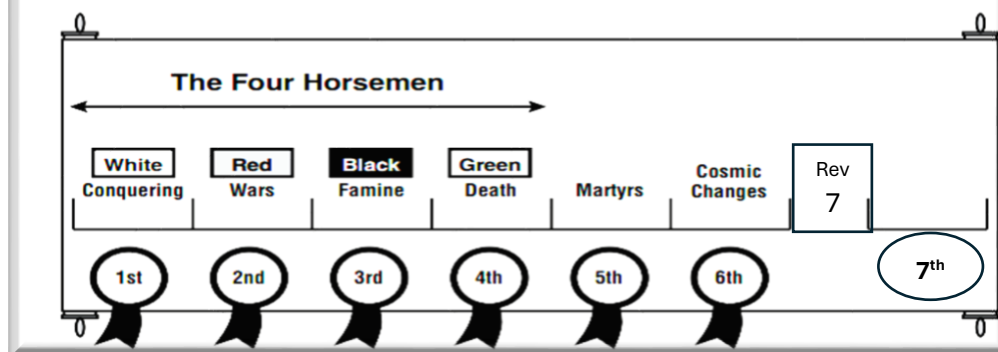
The Sixth Seal and the Day of the Lord in Joel 2:30-32

³⁰ And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.
³¹ The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. ³² And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

THE HEPTADIC STRUCTURE



THE SEVEN-SEALED SCROLL



In each of the major series of "sevens," the seals, trumpets and bowls, there appears to be an inserted parenthetical passage between the 6th & 7th of each series. Rev. 7 serves as an interlude between the opening of the 6th & 7th seals to explain things that transpire during the 6 seals & offer a glimpse of God's protection & salvation for His people during a time of judgment.

Rev. 6 concludes with the statement, "For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. 7 seems to answer the question.

Rev. 7:1-8 deals with "Sealed Servants," a special group of 144,000 from 12 Tribes

Rev. 7:9-17 deals with "Saved Servants" from out of the Tribulation

Rev. 7:3-4 Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an 144,000 of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

➤ They are preserved through (sealed) the Tribulation, not "kept out" of it, as in Rev. 3:10.

Note: The purpose of the Tribulation is not just primarily punishment, but also to bring people to repentance. God does not wish that ANY should perish but that ALL should be brought to repentance. [II Pet. 3:9]

Their mission seems to be to evangelize the post-rapture world and proclaim the Gospel during the tribulation period. As a result of their ministry, ..

Rev. 7:9-10 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; ¹⁰ And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

¹³ Then one of the elders addressed me, saying,

"Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?"

¹⁴ I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁵ Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sits on the throne shall dwell among them.

Rev. 7 ends with all of heaven on its face before God. His sovereignty is extolled in His redemption of Israel and the Gentiles alike. God is the One who saves people.

Sealing the 144,000: The tribe of Dan, one of the original 12 tribes of Israel, has been omitted from the list and Joseph's son Manasseh has been added, but not Ephraim.

➤ Both Dan and Ephraim were centers of idolatry in the Northern Kingdom.

The tribes were guilty of allowing Jeroboam to set up golden calves, as gods to be worshipped. One was set up in Bethel in the territory of Ephraim and another in Dan. [I Kings 12:25-30].

These verses provide support for the reasoning that they were excluded because of idolatry:

Hosea 4:17 Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.

Gen. 49:17 Jacob's prophecy: Dan is a serpent.

In Jewish hermeneutics [Scripture interpretation], a *remez* is a hidden message or a deeper meaning that is below the surface or behind the words.

In Genesis we find the meanings of the names listed in Rev. 7:7-8. In birth order they are:

Reuben: *"surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction;
now therefore my husband will love me."*

Gen. 29:33 Simeon: *"because the LORD hath heard... he hath therefore given me this son..."*

Gen. 29:34 Levi: *"now this time will my husband be joined unto me"*
God is called Israel's husband in Isa 54:5.

Gen. 29:35 Judah: *"now will I praise the LORD"*

Gen. 30:8 Naphtali: *"with great wrestlings...I have prevailed."*
Gen. 30:11 Gad: *"a troop cometh"* [Gad in Hebrew means "good fortune"]
Gen. 30:13 Asher: *"happy am I, call me blessed"*
Gen. 30:18 Issachar: *"God hath given me my hire"* [wages, compensation, reward]
Gen. 30:20 Zebulun: *"now will my husband dwell with me"*
Gen. 30:24 Joseph: *"the LORD shall add"*
Gen. 35:18 Benjamin: *"the Son of the right hand"*
Gen. 41:51 Manasseh: *"for God hath made me forget all my toil."*

The list in Rev. 7:7-8 does not follow the birth order. rearrange the names in the order in which they are listed in Revelation 7:7-8 with the meaning next to each:

Judah: Praise the Lord,
 Reuben: He has looked on my affliction
 Gad: good fortune comes
 Asher: happy and blessed am I
 Naphtali: my wrestling
 Manasseh: has made me forget my sorrow
 Simeon: God hears me
 Levi: has joined me
 Issachar: rewarded me
 Zebulun: exalted me
 Joseph: adding to me
 Benjamin: the Son of His right hand.

Praise the Lord. He has looked on my affliction [and] good fortune comes. Happy and blessed am I. My wrestling has made me forget my sorrow. God hears me, has joined me, rewarded me, exalted me [by] adding to me the Son of His right hand.

If the tribe of Dan had been included or Ephraim added instead of Manasseh, or if the tribes had been listed in birth order, this message would not have been the same.

- There's definitely a message found in the passage.
- Another proof of the divine Author of the Bible.

God's Amazing Grace:

And yet, Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel.
 Dan will inherit land in the Millennium.

Gen 49:16

Ezek. 48:1

Seal #7 Rev. 8:1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. [It's as if all of heaven is holding its breath before the pouring out of another series of terrible judgments.]

Like the "lull before the storm" > God's intensified judgments are about to be hurled to the earth. Expectation and suspense can be so intense that one dares not breathe.