

In Revelation 6:12-17 we read of the glorious return of Jesus Christ accompanied by cosmic signs, tremendous upheaval and the cries of unbelievers.



Q1 **What will be the cry of the wicked?**  
Revelation 6:17

A

This question is so important that the opening of the seven seals is interrupted while the answer is given in Revelation 7. In this seminar we examine this answer and our response.

## WHO WILL BE ABLE TO STAND?



Q2 **Among those alive when Jesus comes, who will be able to stand?** Revelation 7:1-3

A

Q3 **Where is the seal of God placed?**  
Revelation 7:3

A

Q4 **What is the seal of God?** Revelation 14:1

A

In the symbolism of Revelation 7, four angels hold back the winds of strife and conflict until God's sealing work is finished. The sealing of

God's people is a life and death issue. The seal of God is the name of Jesus Christ and the Father. (Also see Revelation 3:12 and 22:4.) God's seal or mark is so important that we will look at it in greater detail in our next seminar. Only those who have this seal will be ready for Jesus Christ to come. We will also discover that the counterfeit of the seal of God is the mark of the beast. (See Revelation 13 and 14.)

## THOSE READY FOR JESUS TO COME

In this seminar we will consider the characteristics of those who will be able to stand when Jesus Christ comes in glory. We will examine ourselves to determine whether we are ready to meet our Lord. Revelation 7 reveals two groups who will be able to stand when Jesus Christ returns.

### 1 The 144,000 will be able to stand



Q5 **How many will be sealed or marked for salvation just before Jesus comes?** Revelation 7:4

A

In that the vision is clearly symbolic, it is logical to see the 144,000 as a symbolic number. It is 12 times 12 a thousand times. (Compare Revelation 21:15-17.) The number 12 is symbolic of God's kingdom. Here is pictured a large number of people ready for God's kingdom and the coming of Jesus as King.

Q6 **What are the characteristics of the 144,000?**

- A
- 1 Revelation 7:2,3 They have
  - 2 Revelation 7:3 They are called
  - 3 Revelation 14:1 They have
  - 4 Revelation 14:2,3 They have been
  - 5 Revelation 14:4 They have not

These faithful believers in Jesus have separated themselves from the evil woman Babylon and have remained spiritually pure. (See Revelation 17:1-6; 18:1-5. Compare Revelation 21:9,27.)

- 6 Revelation 14:4 They follow
- 7 Revelation 14:4 They have been

and are offered as

- 8 Revelation 14:5 They are

The symbolism of the first-fruits comes from the experiences of God's Old Testament people. One of the yearly services of the Jews had been the bringing of the first-fruits of the harvest to the Lord. (Leviticus 23:9-14.) In Revelation it is applied to God's new nation of believers in Jesus Christ. In Revelation 14:14-20 we read of the harvest of the earth which is the coming of Jesus at "the end of the age." Matthew 13:39. (See Matthew 13:36-43.) The 144,000 are believers who will be gathered as the first-fruits at the return of Jesus Christ. The 144,000 will be gathered and caught up when Jesus comes in power and glory. (See Matthew 24:31 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17.)



Q7 **Where does John see the 144,000 standing with the Lamb?** Revelation 14:1

A



Q8 **What city and mountain are of special interest to all believers in Jesus Christ, including the 144,000?** Hebrews 12:22-24

A

In Old Testament times the literal city of Jerusalem was located on literal Mount Zion. It was the symbol of God's presence with His literal nation of Israel. That city was the object of God's love and the target of Babylon's attacks. However, believers in Jesus now make up God's new nation of spiritual Israel. We are members of God's nation if we are believers in Jesus. (See 1 Peter 2:4-10.) The book of Revelation is addressed to the holy nation of believers in Jesus and the city and mountain are descriptive of different realities. Jesus said, "I am going . . . to prepare a place for you . . . I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." John 14:2,3. (Compare Galatians 4:26.)



Q9 **The 144,000 are believers in Jesus. Where do they come from?** Revelation 7:4

A

The question is often asked: Are these the tribes of literal Israel or are they symbolic of believers in Jesus Christ? Five facts would indicate that these "tribes of Israel" represent believers in Jesus Christ or God's new nation of spiritual Israel:

1 The vision is symbolic. If the vision is to be understood literally, then God will place a literal mark upon the foreheads of a literal 144,000 men who have remained celibates. They will follow a literal lamb around on a literal mountain. It is quite clear that the vision is symbolic.

2 The tribal distinctions are symbolic. Tribal lines became extinct as the result of several captivities and intermarriage with each other and the heathen. The number 12 is symbolic of God's kingdom. John was shown

12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of God's new nation of Christian believers. (Also see Matthew 19:28.)

**3** The tribal listings are symbolic. This Revelation list of tribes does not match any list of the tribes of literal Israel of Old Testament times. (Compare Revelation 7:5-8 with Genesis 35:23-26; 49:3-28; Numbers 1:5-15; Deuteronomy 27:12,13 and 1 Chronicles 2:1,2.) Neither Dan nor Ephraim are mentioned in this Revelation list. They both fell to idolatry. (See Joshua 19:40-48; Judges 18:1,2,30,31 and Hosea 4:17.) It is also significant to note that the Old Testament lists usually begin with Reuben the firstborn of Israel, whereas, the Revelation list begins with Judah for Jesus was born of this tribe. (See Revelation 5:5 and Hebrews 7:14.)

**4** In the New Testament "A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly ... No, a man is a Jew if

he is one inwardly." Romans 2:28,29. (Also see Romans 9:6-8.) Jesus told the literal Jewish leaders, "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit." Matthew 21:43. (Also read Matthew 21:33-46 and 23:37-39.) Paul wrote, "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 2:29. (Also read Galatians 3:28,29 and 3:7.)

**5** In Revelation, literal Jews who are hostile to Christians are not true Israelites. "Those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan" persecuted the Christians at Smyrna and Philadelphia. Revelation 2:9. (Compare Revelation 3:9.) The true Israelite in New Testament times is the believer in Jesus Christ.■

**AMONG THE LIVING, WHO CAN STAND WHEN JESUS CHRIST COMES?** The answer to this question is found in Revelation 7 where the true Israel, the nation of believers in Jesus Christ, is described. Consider the meaning of the tribal names because in Bible times names were given that conveyed experiences and convictions. (See Genesis 29:31-35; 30:1-24; 35:16-20; 41:50-52.)

Revelation 7:5	<b>Judah</b> means	: Let the Lord be praised.
	<b>Reuben</b> means	: See, a son.
	<b>Gad</b> means	: Good fortune or a troop.
Revelation 7:6	<b>Asher</b> means	: Happy, blessed.
	<b>Naphtali</b> means	: My struggle.
	<b>Manasseh</b> means	: Forgetting past troubles.
Revelation 7:7	<b>Simeon</b> means	: The Lord hears.
	<b>Levi</b> means	: Joined or attached.
	<b>Issachar</b> means	: God has rewarded.
Revelation 7:8	<b>Zebulun</b> means	: Honoured.
	<b>Joseph</b> means	: Added—may the Lord add.
	<b>Benjamin</b> means	: Son of my right hand.

## 2 The great multitude will be able to stand

The 144,000 represent the message of these names: Let the Lord be praised. He has a people, a happy troop, who have struggled and overcome. They have forgotten self and the past. They have heard God's call in His Word and in answered prayer. The Lord has heard their cry. They are attached to God, honoured by God and added to His kingdom. They are the sons, and daughters, of His right hand. They are believers who have the name and character of Jesus Christ and are sealed and ready to be caught up to meet Jesus Christ in the air at His second coming. They are believers who are alive when Jesus Christ returns.

After seeing the salvation of the 144,000, John saw "a great multitude that no-one could count." Revelation 7:9.



Q10 **Read Revelation 7:9-13. What two questions were asked by one of the elders?** Revelation 7:13

- A 1.  
2.



Q11 **What are their identifying characteristics of the great multitude?**

- A 1 Revelation 7:9 They are wearing  
2 Revelation 7:39 They are holding

The *WHITE ROBES* represent the righteousness of Jesus Christ. "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Revelation 7:14. The great multitude are also believers.

The *PALM BRANCHES* remind us of the Old Testament Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. After the crops had been gathered, all the people moved into booths or tents for a seven day festival. They celebrated and waved palm fronds for the harvest had been gathered and the work had been completed. (Read Leviticus 23:33-44.)

The 144,000 represent the "first-fruits" of the harvest and the *GREAT MULTITUDE* represent the bulk of the harvest. Perhaps the 144,000 are believers who are alive when Jesus comes, and the great multitude are believers from every age. The "harvest is the end of the age" (Matthew 13:39) when Jesus Christ comes in glory to gather all of His faithful people. Believers who are alive and those who have died over the years will be gathered. (See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.)

Q12 **What experience have these believers been through?** Revelation 7:14

A

The great multitude have been through tribulation on account of their faith. Our Lord prophesied betrayal, hatred and persecution for His followers. (Matthew 24:9-13.) He told His disciples, "In this world you will have trouble." John 16:33. Paul and Barnabas warned believers, "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." Acts 14:22. (Compare 1 Thessalonians 3:2-4 and 2

Timothy 3:12,13.) The apostle John knew what it was to suffer tribulation as a slave on the Island of Patmos. (Revelation 1:9.) Jesus Christ urged the believers in Smyrna to remain faithful in spite of their "afflictions" and what they were "about to suffer." (Revelation 2:9,10. Also see Revelation 3:9

The tribulation of "1,260 days" follows the ascension of Jesus Christ to heaven. (Revelation 12:5,6,13,14.) It parallels the duration of Christ's ministry. Then at the very end of time, just before Jesus Christ comes back, the tribulation intensifies. It will be Satan's final attack upon God's people. It is referred to in Revelation 12:17 and enlarged on in Revelation 13.



Q13 **What is the reward of the faithful multitude of believers who have suffered tribulation?** Revelation 7:15

- A "They are before  
and serve him day and night in

and he who sits on the throne will

”

These believers who are waving palm branches are not sitting in tents or booths of their own making. They are in God's "tent" or temple. They are caught up to be with Jesus Christ at His second coming.

Q14 **Whom do the great multitude follow?** Revelation 7:16,17

A

The Lamb has become the Shepherd. He saves, protects, sustains and comforts the 144,000 and the great multitude. The living believers and those who have died as believers are caught up together to be with Jesus. (See Matthew 24:31 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17.)

my

response...



**What do you think it will mean to follow the Lamb wherever He may lead?  
How do you feel about this?**