



FAITH PRINCETON SUNDAY SCHOOL

REVELATION 7:1-8 The Seal of the Servants

SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2026

REVELATION 7 Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

AN INTERLUDE

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 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.

Enduring Word Commentary: Revelation 7:1-8

The 144,000 and the Great Multitude

A. The 144,000.

1. ([Revelation 7:1-3](#)) Holding back judgment until the servants of God are sealed.

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

a. Four angels standing at the four corners of the earth: The phrase **four corners of the earth** is an ancient (and sometimes modern) equivalent to the idea of “the four points of the compass.” The idea is that these angels effect the entire earth.

b. Holding the four winds of the earth: These **winds** were a destructive force of God’s judgment, as they often are in the Old Testament.

i. [Hosea 13:15](#) gives an example: *Though he is fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come; the wind of the Lord shall come from the wilderness. Then his spring will become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up.*

ii. The **four winds of the earth** may refer back to the four horsemen of [Revelation 6:1-8](#), after the pattern of [Zechariah 6:1-8](#). In that passage, four

chariots with horses of the same colors of [Revelation 6:1-8](#) go out to all the earth, and are called *the four spirits of heaven*. *Spirits* in that passage translates the Hebrew word *ruach*, which can also be translated *winds*.

c. Another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: Another angel had a **seal**, and he sealed the people of God. In the ancient world, such seals were familiar. A king or a property owner could use a seal to show ownership or authenticity.

d. Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads: These servants of God will receive a protective seal on their forehead, containing God’s name in some manner ([Revelation 14:1](#)).

i. In [Ezekiel 9:4](#), a similar protective seal was given to the righteous before Jerusalem was judged.

e. The servants of our God: We are not told what exactly their service is, but the 144,000 are sealed for a specific and unique purpose. However, the general idea of being sealed is not limited to them.

i. Jesus was sealed; *God the Father has set His seal on Him.* ([John 6:27](#))

ii. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit as a down payment of our eventual total redemption. Paul wrote: *God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.* ([2 Corinthians 1:21-22](#))

iii. This sealing of the Holy Spirit belongs to every believer when they are saved: *having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.* ([Ephesians 1:13](#))

iv. The sealing of the Holy Spirit is meant to be both a *comfort* and a *challenge* to us. We are comforted in that it assures us that we belong to Him. We are *challenged* by it to depart from all evil and identify ourselves with the One we belong to: *Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."* ([2 Timothy 2:19](#)) *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.* ([Ephesians 4:30](#))

2. ([Revelation 7:4-8](#)) The number of those sealed.

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:

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;
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;
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;
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.

a. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed:

This is their *general* identification. They are of **all the tribes of the children of Israel**. Ethnically,

they are Jewish, and there are 144,000 of these chosen ones.

b. Of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed: This is their *specific* identification. The 144,000 are divided among the 12 tribes of Israel. Though only God may know their tribal ancestry, there are 12,000 from each tribe.

c. Of the tribe of: In this listing of the tribes, the tribe of Dan is left out. Some think this is because Dan is the tribe of the Antichrist, based on [Daniel 11:37](#) and [Jeremiah 8:16](#). This may or may not be the case, but without doubt, Dan was the tribe that introduced idolatry into the nation of Israel ([Genesis 49:17](#); [Judges 18:30](#)).

i. There is a wonderful redemption for the tribe of Dan. Dan is the *first* tribe listed in Ezekiel's millennial role call of the tribes ([Ezekiel 48](#)).

d. Of the tribe of: This list is also interesting in the way that the tribe of Ephraim is referred to, but only indirectly. The **tribe of Joseph** is mentioned, but Joseph was represented by two tribes: Ephraim and Manasseh. Since the **tribe of Manasseh** is mentioned, by elimination, the **tribe of Joseph** must mean the tribe of Ephraim — who is listed, but not by name.

i. Perhaps Ephraim was slighted because the tribe of Ephraim was also associated with great idolatry ([Hosea 4:17](#)).

e. Of the tribe of: It is sometimes claimed that this list must be purely symbolic because it is "irregular," but what is a *regular* listing of the tribes?

i. There are not less than 20 different ways of listing the tribes of Israel in the Old Testament, including one that omits the tribe of Dan ([1 Chronicles 4-7](#)).

ii. Just because a list is *different* doesn't mean it is fanciful symbolism. It is proper to regard each of these lists as legitimate, and to consider that each specific variation serves a purpose, meaning to emphasize something.

3. Who are these 144,000?

a. Many different groups have claimed to be the 144,000. For example, the Jehovah's Witnesses once said their entire group was, until they surpassed 144,000 in number. Now they say that the 144,000 are only a select group of Witnesses who go to heaven.

i. Most Bible scholars either regard the 144,000 as the *church* or as *converted Jews*, who are still identified as Israelites in some manner.

ii. It is an important issue. If they are a symbol of the church, then the church is definitely *in* the Great Tribulation, but sealed for survival *through* the Great Tribulation.

b. Some facts about the 144,000 from [Revelation 7](#) and [Revelation 14](#) give us insight regarding their identity.

i. They are called *the children of Israel* ([Revelation 7:4](#)).

ii. Their tribal affiliation is specific ([Revelation 7:4-8](#)).

iii. They seem to be protected and triumphant through the period of God's wrath, meeting with Jesus at Mount Zion at His return ([Revelation 14:1](#)).

iv. They are celibate ([Revelation 14:4](#)).

v. They are the beginning of a greater harvest ([Revelation 14:4](#)).

vi. They are marked by integrity and faithfulness ([Revelation 14:5](#)).

c. Taken together, these facts make it difficult to say that the 144,000 are a symbolic picture of the church.

i. *Israel* is a term never specifically applied to the church in the New Testament, and never by any Christian until a.d. 160

ii. Their tribal affiliation is emphatic and known to God. Even if God only knows it, there is absolutely no reason to regard their tribal affiliation as symbolic, not literal.

iii. It is difficult to imagine the entire church surviving through the tribulation without martyrdom and remaining celibate through the period, something that was never required for the church as a whole ([1 Corinthians 7:1-6](#)).

iv. If the 144,000 are a symbol of the entire church, what *greater harvest* are they the beginning of?

d. It is best to see the 144,000 as specifically chosen Jewish people who come to faith in Jesus, protectively sealed throughout the tribulation as a sign.

i. They are the beginning harvest of the salvation of Israel ([Romans 11:1](#), [Romans 11:26](#), [Matthew 23:37-39](#)).

ii. "They are not a part of the Church proper; for their repentance comes too late for that. They are a superaddition to the Church — a supplementary body — near and precious to Christ, but made up after the proper Church has finished its course." (Seiss)

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