THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER 7

Revelation 7:1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

The term four winds is an allusion from several Old Testament Scriptures. It speaks of the scattering to, or gathering from, the four winds (Jer 49:36; Eze 37:9; Dan 7:2-3; 8:8; 11:4; Zec 2:6; Mat 24:31; Mar 13:27).

The four winds were not to blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree until the Lord’s people were sealed. The four winds were held back from scattering until a sealing of the servants of God was accomplished.

The word ge (Greek), translated earth in verse 1, means “soil or region” as we have attempted to point out. It refers to a specific area or region (Israel) rather than to the planet (earth). Below is the word study for ge from the Strong’s Concordance.

Strong’s reference number: 1093
Greek: ge
Derivation: A primary word.
Definition: soil; region or terrain [Strong’s uses the word ‘globe.’ However it is not a part of the actual definition, which Strong’s gives in italics. Plus the thought of globe was unknown in Biblical times. The earth was thought of as flat.]

Young’s Analytical Concordance simply defines ge as “land.”

Herein lies one of the most critical interpretive problems with the Revelation. The primary concept from both Strong’s and Young’s is “land, terrain, soil.” It is not inclusive of a, or any, sea. Thus it cannot be referring to earth, as in planet. The word does not associate a global definition, although it is translated earth to which we associate “planet.”

The angels were standing on the four corners of the earth. Standing on the four corners relates to the concept of a flat world, not round.

The same Greek word ge is used in Matthew 9:31 and translated “country.”

Mat 2:12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country (ge) another way. (emphasis added)

The context is clear that the Magi (wise men) were escaping Herod by returning to their own land. They were not returning to their own planet.

Another passage using ge translated as “country” is Acts 7:3. This passage is very clear as to the projection of the word.

Act 7:3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country (ge), and from thy kindred, and come into the land (ge) which I shall shew thee.

The Lord God told Abraham to get out of Abraham’s ge meaning his home country (Gen 12:1). He was not told to leave the earth!

Jesus used the word ge in a teaching we know as the “Wise Man and the Foolish Man.” The translators have translated the word ge as earth. It obviously means soil or terrain. The “earth” upon which the foolish man built was not the entire planet. It was a piece of ge – soil or terrain. Matthew’s gospel says this soil or terrain was sand (Mat 7:26; Luk 6:49).

Once the principle of ge is grasped many passages take on a much different meaning. Jesus instructed His disciples to pray that the kingdom would come to their ge (Mat 6:10). Actually, this was an imprecatory prayer. The ascension had not happened yet. The coming of the kingdom upon the ge of the disciples was something much more intense than we have imagined. It actually was the total desolation of Judah, which happened in 70 A.D. This coming of the kingdom of God ravaged the land and region.

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[2] Robert Young, Young’s Analytical Concordance To The Bible, page 283
The Stone Cometh

Under this context, the following verses take on an entirely different meaning and image.

Mat 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth (ge).

Mat 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth (ge): but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Mat 5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth (ge) pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (Utilize also the prophetic language of “Collapsing Universe” referred to in chapter 6.)

Mat 10:34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth (ge): I came not to send peace, but a sword.

Act 2:19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth (ge) beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

The point we are desiring to show is that the Greek word ge must first be seen and translated as a smaller area than the planet (earth or world). Though translated “earth,” it does not mean earth as in the planet earth. It is similar to the Greek word kosmos, which is often translated “world,” but which never means “dirt or soil.”

The primary thought of ge in scriptures is the land and region of Israel. Then it expands as the context of the passage expands. One will never be mistaken if one’s mind is trained to think first of the soil, land, country, and region of Israel when the word “earth” is used. Then the context of the passage will be better understood. Usually when the Scriptures mean “world wide,” the word “nations” will be used. Usually this is the Greek word ethnos (English word ethnic) meaning “races” (Act 17:26; Mat 24:14; Mat 24:9; Rev 7:9).

For further study of the Greek word ge, we give several references (Mat 2:6; 2:20, 21; 4:15; 9:26; 10:15). In these, King James will translate ge as “land.” It is translated earth eighty one times in the King James Bible “earth” 188 times, “land” 42 times, “ground” 18 times, “country” 2 times, “earthly” one time, and “world” one time. Though the passage may be speaking about the “land” or “country,” if the translators decided they wanted to translate it “earth,” then it became “earth.” This adds mass confusion when interpreting Scriptures, especially in the Revelation, for King James translates ge as earth 81 times. Though it means soil, land, terrain, region, and country, King James translates it as earth. Herein lies one of the most critical interpretive problems with the Revelation.

The question is this, “In the Revelation, does John mean ‘land’ or the ‘planet earth’?” Does John mean a country, or does he mean the entire world? It does make a difference. It makes a huge, theological difference. If John is telling us these judgments will come upon the entire planet, we are in trouble. However, if John is telling us these judgments would come upon the region of Jerusalem, it makes a huge difference.

John is speaking about the region of Jerusalem. The Lord did not want those who pierced Him (1:7) to escape (scatter) when they saw the armies of Rome coming from the four winds. The armies were held back until the elect, the servants of our God, were sealed in their foreheads. This is exactly what happened. The Christian believers fled Jerusalem just as Jesus warned and instructed them (Mat 24:15-21).

Luk 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

Luk 21:21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

Luk 21:22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

The four angels held the four winds. The Jews did not flee or scatter into the four corners of the earth. The hurt did not come until the servants of God were sealed.

The sea in Revelation carries two thoughts. First, the sea is the nations and people of the world. The people of the world are never still. The sea is never still. There is always tide movement, waves, and often violent storms. This is the picture we are given of the nations (Isa 17:12-13; Eze 26:3; Rev
17:1, 15).

Secondly, the sea is shown as a part of the creation. There is no part of creation that the Son of man does not rule and control.

Rev 14:7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

The thought this passage gives is that the four angels hold the four winds to stop any man (tree) from scattering from Jerusalem into the nations (sea). Rather than scattering from Jerusalem, they were held captive in Jerusalem. (This is not seen or understood unless some historic research is done as we did with the War of A.D. 70 study.)

Revelation 7:2 And 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 given to hurt the earth and the sea,

Revelation 7:3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

From the east comes another angel. East is the direction the tabernacle faced. East is also the direction from which the glory of God comes. The sun rises from the east being a type of the rising of the Lord in a life. The Sun of righteousness (it is Sun) comes with healing in his wings (see Num 3:38; Eze 43:1, 2; Mal 4:2).

As seen and studied in 1:19, angel means the messenger of the Lord. The seven letters were addressed to the seven angels of the seven churches. We understood that the angel of the church was primarily the messenger of the church. This also includes all leadership - all held responsible to get the message to the people. Looking at this verse from that viewpoint will make the verse come alive with meaning. The messenger has the responsibility of the seal of God. The cry of the messenger is to produce sealed foreheads in the servants of God.

The living God dispatches His angels to obtain the forehead of men - the cranial cavity and what is in it. He is after our minds and souls. He comes to seal that part with His seal. The angel said to hold back the four winds till we have sealed the servants.

Notice that he said we (“till we have sealed the servants...) which shows a corporate responsibility for the sealing. More than one individual is functioning in this sealing.

The seal in the Scriptures points to authenticity (1Ki 21:8; Neh 9:28; Est 8:8; Rom 4:11; 1Co 9:2). It also speaks of a thing being preserved for a future date (Isa 8:16; Jer 32:44; Dan 9:24; 12:4). We are sealed – made authentic and preserved – by a sealing of the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph 1:13).

We tend to forget that the first believers were Jews! Jesus was a Jew. Peter was a Jew. John was a Jew. The three thousand souls saved in Acts 2:41 were Jews. The gospel of the kingdom would go first to the Jews. The reasons to scatter were held back until the chosen were sealed.

The word “sealed” in verse 3 is sphragizo (Strong’s #4972) and means “to stamp for security.” We find the sphragizo sealing in (Joh 3:33; 6:27; 2Co 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30). It’s amazing how everyone talks about the mark of the beast, but no one ever talks about the mark (seal) of God. Much more is said about the sealing of God than the mark of the beast.

The sealed of God are sealed by receiving the testimony of Jesus (Joh 3:33). They are sealed by seeking the things of eternal life (John 6:27). They are sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13; 4:30). These are not sealed because they are Jews. They are sealed because they have the testimony, the Holy Spirit, and seek after eternal life. They are sealed because they must be sphragizo, sealed – stamped for security.

As the study of the War of A.D. 70 showed, the Christians were told to “flee” when they saw the armies compass Jerusalem. Cestius had the city of Jerusalem taken, but for some unexplainable reason, he retreated (see “War of A.D. 70”, Cestius To Jerusalem, b). The angels held back the four winds till they were sealed – stamped for security. Cestius did the least damage to the land of all the Roman commanders. The angels were told to hurt not the trees till the servants were sealed. In a
literal interpretation Cestius was the only commander who did not cut trees!

The Old Testament allusion used by John in Revelation 7 for the sealing is from Ezekiel 9. Following is the passage from Ezekiel. Revelation 7:2, 3 is easily understood when interpreted by Ezekiel 9. In Ezekiel 9, the Lord God made an marking (sealing) in Jerusalem. This too was in the foreheads of people. Those marked in their foreheads were those who saw the abominations done in Jerusalem. Those not marked would be slain, old and young, male and female, children and women. Only those marked were preserved.

Eze 9:1 He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.

Eze 9:2 And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar.

Eze 9:3 And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side;

Eze 9:4 And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

Eze 9:5 And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:

Eze 9:6 Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.

Eze 9:7 And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.

Eze 9:8 And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?

Eze 9:9 Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not.

Eze 9:10 And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head.

As John’s readers associated this reference in Revelation with the Scriptural marking of Ezekiel and the reasons for it, they understood. God would not destroy Jerusalem until he had sealed - preserved the authentic - the servants of God.

Revelation 7:4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

Revelation 7:5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

Revelation 7:6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

Revelation 7:7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

Revelation 7:8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

The numbering of God’s people into groups of twelve thousand is a reference to the book of Numbers. In the book of Numbers the Lord God had the people numbered for war. For example, against the Midianites a regiment of 1,000 was taken from each tribe making a total army of 12,000 (Num 31:4-6).

In this passage from Revelation 7 we see the perfect (squared) army, or a total army multiplied by itself (12,000 X 12,000) equaling 144,000. The thought of all sides being equal is one way the Lord shows perfection. For example, the New Jerusalem is squared to show it’s perfection. It is altogether “equal.”

Rev 21:16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

Phi 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (emphasis added)

The opposite is true when not equal.

Pro 26:7 The legs of the lame are not equal...

This is what we have with the sealed hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. We see an ideal Israel. All are equal. All contribute equally. No tribe is more important than the next. Chilton says,
“St. John pictures for us the ideal Israel, Israel as it was meant to be, in all its perfection, symmetry, and completeness; the holy Army of God, mustered for battle according to her thousands.”

The tribes of Israel are mentioned in the scriptures. Following are the three primary, yet different tribal listings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revelation Order Of the Tribes</th>
<th>Correct Birth Order From Genesis</th>
<th>Tabernacle Marching War Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Reuben</td>
<td>2. Simeon</td>
<td>2. Issachar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Nepthalim</td>
<td>5. Dan</td>
<td>5. Simeon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Were we to study it, we would also find yet a different tribal order in Ezekiel 48. We could go to great discussion attempting to show why they are listed differently, but why do that? What difference does it make if all are “equal”?

We should note that the tribes of Dan and Ephraim are not listed in the Revelation listing. Concerning Ephraim, Joseph was the original tribe name. He became two tribes (Manasseh and Ephraim). To maintain twelve tribes, one of Joseph’s sons replaced Joseph, and one filled the location of Levi who had no inheritance. The list of Revelation places Joseph back into the listing, maintaining Manasseh, but does not list Ephraim. Levi is placed back into the listings which does show that all tribes are “equal.” Levi will receive an inheritance in the Kingdom, but it was not the only tribe that was priestly. (Some use the exclusion of Dan to predict from which tribe the Antichrist will come. It is amazing the theories theologians conjure.)

There is no doubt that these hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were Jews (better said Hebrews, for “Jews” are actually from the tribe of Judah). We need to remember that the first church was made up of all Jews (Hebrews). The twelve apostles would be the first church. The first followers of Jesus were Jews. The first converts on the Day of Pentecost were Jews. Most of the Christians in Jerusalem when the armies of Rome came into the land (ge) were Jews also. However, they obeyed the Lord’s admonition to flee Jerusalem because the abomination of desolation had come. The days of vengeance were about to be fulfilled. Until that day, the four winds were held back until these 144,000 were sealed. This is not to say that there were literally 144,000 Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. It is a good number, and well could be the number, but the point is not a number of actual people. The point is equality and perfection of the tribes and that they were sealed and removed prior to the destruction of Jerusalem.

The fact is that nothing could happen until the people of the Lord were sealed. The fact is they were servants (doulos), meaning a slave. The Lord allowed nothing to happen judgmentally until these servants were sealed – preserved and authenticated. And they were from all the tribes of the children of Israel. (See dispensational interpretation at end of the chapter.)

Revelation 7:9 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;

Revelation 7:10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

Revelation 7:11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

Revelation 7:12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.
Revelation 7:13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

Revelation 7:14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Revelation 7:15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

Revelation 7:16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

Revelation 7:17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

9, 10 John says, “After this.” We know this is a mini-vision separate from what we have just been told concerning the 144,000. We now are told of another group of people which are in contrast to the group we have just discussed. This group is innumerable. The prior group was 144,000. That’s contrast. John saw a great multitude, which no man could number. John makes sure he tells us that no man could number this group. It is not that they cannot be numbered by the Lord God Almighty. However, it is impossible for man to number them. The first group was definitely Jewish. This group is definitely Gentile. John tells us they are of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. [As noted earlier, when the Scriptures want us to know “earth” or “world-wide,” it uses nations.] The Lord knows exactly how many Gentiles he has also. He is keeping count (Rom 11:25).

Natural Israel’s eyes will not be opened to the Gospel of the kingdom until the fullness of the Gentiles is come. The Lord knows exactly how many he has, and it is lo! a great multitude!

The Gospel of the kingdom works. We too often accent the resistance of humanity to the Gospel instead of the helplessness of humanity when it is preached! The Gospel (Rom 1:16) is powerful! A great multitude, which no man could number, has fallen to its power. Charles Spurgeon said,

“I myself believe that King Jesus will reign, and the idols be utterly abolished; but I expect the same power which turned the world upside down once will still continue to do it. The Holy Ghost would never suffer the imputation to rest upon His holy name that he was not able to convert the world.”

Our generation, indeed this century, has heard the weakness of the Gospel rather than developing faith in the power of that Gospel. Our preaching machines today have developed more faith in the Gospel’s inability than in its mighty power. It was powerful enough for each of us. It is powerful enough for anyone. We have placed a hope in the “rapture” rather than faith that the Gospel can and does change the lives of man. When we preach the Gospel of the kingdom to anyone, that person will be affected. One reason we do not share what we believe is because we do not have faith and confidence in what we believe. The Gospel of the kingdom has affected the nations! All nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues are coming to the throne. Please note this: ALL nations, all kindreds, all people, and all tongues stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

The white robes are the rewards for the overcomer (3:5). There were not only a few overcomers. There was a multitude. They had the branch from the palm tree in their hands. The branch from the palms speaks of a time of plenty, blessing, prosperity, joy, and rejoicing (Exo 15:27; Num 33:9; Jdg 4:5; 1Ki 6:29; Eze 40:16). The palms became such a great sign of prosperity and rejoicing that the temple Solomon built had palms carved throughout (Psa 92:12; 2Ch 3:5, 6).

The first readers of the Revelation would associate palms with a specific feast. That feast is the feast of tabernacles described in Leviticus 23:34-44. It was established as a reminder to the nation that their fathers once lived in “booths.” That was the time of Exodus from Egypt. We have the idea that the Israelites lived in tents during the wilderness wanderings, and perhaps they did some

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of the time. However according to Scriptures, they dwelt in booths or a cukkah (Greek), meaning “a hut; a lair.” The structure of the hut was the branches from all types of trees, including the palm (Lev 23:40).

The feast time was during the time of early fall, at the time of in-gathering. They were to build a hut and dwell in it for seven days remembering how God brought their ancestors out of Egypt. Perhaps this sounds a little dreary and sad or boring. It was anything but a dreary time. It was a vacation camping trip for the family. They were to rejoice and wave their palms. We associate palms with Palm Sunday (Joh 12:13), but the palm actually refers to the feast of tabernacles or God’s salvation. The Lord gave this salvation as he delivered Israel, plundered Egypt, prospered Israel, and destroyed Egypt’s army. Because of this, Moses and all the people rejoiced. This is the way we should view Palm Sunday. Our salvation was provided by Jesus Christ.

In Revelation 7:10, this multitude was rejoicing with palms in their hands and saying with a loud voice, “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” Why were those in Revelation 7 rejoicing with palms? Because they too were delivered from Egypt (11:8) and out of great tribulation (7:14).

Revelation 7:11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

Revelation 7:12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

One of the elders asked John if he knew who these were arrayed in white robes and from where they came? Then the elder gave the answer. A true elder knows that overcomers - those in white robes - must come out of tribulation. There can be no overcoming if there is no tribulation (1Pe 4:12, 13; Act 14:22; Joh 16:33; Rom 5:3; 12:12; 2Co 1:4; 1Th 3:4; Rev 1:9; 2:9). There can be no victories without wars. However, those in Revelation 7 came out of great tribulation. The phrase “great tribulation” is found three times in the Scriptures (Mat 24:21; Rev 2:22; Rev 7:14). It is important that this point is communicated. It will clearly identify who these are and the time in which this is happening. Jesus used the term “great tribulation” to identify the desolation that Jerusalem would go through for the generation living in the A.D. 30’s. We saw this in the Olivet Discourse and the War of A.D. 70 studies.
We looked at the “generation” Scriptures. Over and over the Scriptures said that the generation to which Jesus came and ministered would be the generation that would receive the *great tribulation.* It was the “transitional generation” or the “terminal generation.” It would be the generation to witness the end of Moses and the beginning of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ (1:9). That generation was a generation of vipers (Matthew 3:7; Luke 3:7). John the Baptist recognized and warned that generation of the A.D. 30’s that the wrath was coming upon it (also see Mat 12:39, 41-42, 45; 16:4; 17:17; 17:17; Mar 8:38; 9:19; Luk 9:41; 11:29-32).

The thought of a specific “wicked,” “evil and adulterous generation,” “faithless generation,” and “perverse generation” goes back to the words of Moses speaking of the day that the law would end in what is known as the “Song of Moses” (Deu 32:5). Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. The generation to which Jesus preached did not repent. Nineveh would judge that generation. The Queen of the South recognized Solomon’s wisdom and greatness. The generation to which Jesus came did not recognize Him. It was a generation of vipers that could not escape hell!

*Mat 23:33* Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (emphasis added)

Jesus clearly tells the Pharisees and scribes in the temple that their house (Moses) would be left desolate.

*Mat 23:36* Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. (emphasis added)

*Luk 11:50* That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation: (emphasis added)

*Luk 11:51* From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. (emphasis added)

All the “woes” of which were spoken in Matthew 23 would come upon that generation of the A.D. 30’s. The statement began with “Verily I say unto you.” It was positive and trustworthy. It would come upon that generation.

*Luk 21:32* Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. (emphasis added)

*Mar 13:30* Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

*Mat 24:34* Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. All the events of Matthew 24 will come upon that generation. Matthew 24 is the chapter in which Jesus uses the term *great tribulation.* That *great tribulation* would come upon that generation of A.D. 33 - A.D. 73.

When correctly studied, there is no doubt that this was the generation chosen for Moses to end and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ to begin. This was the termination generation that the “great tribulation” came upon. Jesus clearly told the people and His disciples this very fact (Mat 24:21).

The elder told John these *came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

Were these “dead” saints who had been martyred? Possibly, however, one does not need to die to worship or to come out of tribulation. Were the 144,000 dead? It doesn’t sound that way.

The Scriptures teach that we are now in the heavens and in the kingdom (Eph 2:6; Col 1:13). We should now worship. We should now fall on our faces. We should now say, “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” We now experience the blood of the Lamb in this life.

Revelation 7:15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. 

15 Verse 15 is translated somewhat differently in modern translations.

*NIV - Revelation 7:15* Therefore, “they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne will spread his tent over them. (emphasis added)

Because this multitude came out of the great tribulation by experiencing the blood of the Lamb, they are now before the throne of God. The event that places us before the throne of God is not physical death, but rather the blood of the Lamb! Once there, we are to serve him day and night, and he who sits on the throne will spread his
tent over them (NIV). The Lord speaks of the household of God. We are brought into the tent - dwelling - of the Lord God.

Revelation 7:16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

Revelation 7:17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

16, 17 These verses are full of spiritual implication. We agree with David, “I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread” (Psa 37:25). Once one experiences the blood of the Lamb, puts on the overcomers robes, waves palm branches, and serves Him day and night in his temple, the Lord will make sure that one is cared for. He is placed in His dwelling place and feasts at the King’s table! These never hunger and never thirst. The Lamb is in the middle of the throne, and he will take good care of them! These will be happy and blessed. It is a promise!

It is realized that there are many spiritual implications here - water / Word of God; sun light / understanding; heat / hell; living fountains / Holy Spirit, etc. However, when the blood of the Lamb is experienced and service to Him day and night is happening in a life, all these spiritual things are already in progress. No one can argue that all these blessings are experienced now.

Contemporary Theological View(s)
1. Revelation 7:1... and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

In accepted, modern, contemporary theology, these are referred to as “the remnant.” The remnant doctrine is necessary to the dispensationalist. According to that doctrine, the Lord God has not fulfilled His end of the covenants that he made with natural Israel.

“The necessity of a remnant. The existence of a remnant in the last days is inextricably tied in with the covenants which God made with the nation of Israel. Since these covenants were unconditional, their very nature demands the existence of a remnant to whom and through whom these covenants can be fulfilled.”

Our position is that Jesus fulfilled all scriptures and ,therefore, all covenants. All things that were written, Jesus said, were fulfilled in the days of vengeance which was the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Mat 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

Mar 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Luk 21:22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. (emphasis added)

What more or what else can it mean when, upon the cross, Jesus Christ Himself said, “It is finished” (Joh 19:28, 30)?

There is neither doubt nor argument that this remnant is Jews. They are from the tribes of Israel. The tremendous problem is how does today’s Jew prove from which tribe they are. Matthew Henry commenting on this thought in Daniel 9 says,

“That hereby the sacrifice and oblation shall be made to cease. And it must needs cease when the family of the priests was so extirpated, and the genealogies of it were so confounded, that there is no man in the world that can prove himself of the seed of Aaron.”

The other tribes are even more confounded. Over 790 years before the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem, the northern ten tribes were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar in 721 B.C. Just as Nebuchadnezzar took the entire nation and sold them into slavery in 721 B.C., so Titus did in 70 A.D. The nation was totally dispersed and confounded the genealogies.

John Phillips, defending the dispensationalist doctrine, says,

“Israel’s tribal divisions are no longer known. But God knows them, and in a coming day he will see to it that each of the appropriate tribes is equally represented in the sealing. Joseph...”

5 J. Dwight Pentecost, Things To Come, page 291
6 Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry’s commentary On The Whole Bible, Volume 4, page 860
7 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Preface; III, vii, 1; III, vii, 31
provides us with an illustration. He could seat his brethren in proper order around the festive board and select his full brother, Benjamin, for a worthy portion... The Lord knows what Israel's tribal divisions are.\textsuperscript{8}
It is not that the Lord does not know the genealogies of Israel. No one said that. What is said is that the tribes are so mixed that there is no pure Levi, no pure Judah, no pure Asher, etc. Twelve thousand come from each pure tribe. Phillips uses Joseph and says he is the illustration. The truth is there is no pure Joseph. In fact, there never was a tribe called Joseph, yet John does list one. Joseph was mixed into his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh who mixed into the nations after Nebuchadnezzar confounded the northern ten tribes. How can there be twelve thousand from the tribe of Joseph when Joseph became Ephraim and Manasseh who became who knows what are where?

Phillips goes on to say,

"Those sealed will go unscathed through the Great Tribulation. They will be a perpetual thorn in the side of the Beast and a constant reminder to the devil that, while millions may bow to his will, God still has him on a leash and says to him, ‘Thus far and no farther.’"

If the devil is on a leash, as Phillips says, then he must be in the pit (Rev 20:3). If in the pit, then we must be in the millennium. Dispensational theology is confusing. The devil is on a chain they say, but we are not in the millennium. How can that be?

The passage shows a perfectly “squared” nation as it was intended to be. These are a remnant, but a people that heard the gospel. Because they sought the things of God, they were sealed. The winds of scattering were held back until this happened. To say they are a group of Jews who will return to Israel, rebuild the temple, and reestablish temple worship seems strange. This is especially true when one knows that Jesus Himself said that system would be laid desolate. Jesus connected that desolation with the abomination of desolation from Daniel. To know Jesus said this and that it happened in A.D. 70, then to say it did not is close to, if not, heresy.

2. Revelation 7:14... they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

In the school of the dispensationalist’s, there is great division on this matter. They unify on a tribulation (their doctrine hinges on a tribulation), but divide on the point of when the tribulation will happen. One group adopts a “mid-tribulation concept and uses this verse (Rev 7:14) as a key argument.

"In the parenthesis between the sixth and seventh seal, where the scope of the whole vision is given, those saved in that time are said to have come out of ‘great tribulation.’ This seems to indicate clearly that the time covered by the seals is considered a part of the tribulation period."10

The “pretribulation” proclaimers move this passage to the day of the millennium which seems entirely out of contextual order. It seems any reasonable progress through the Revelation is abandoned for the purpose of avoiding the fact that the tribulation is now in progress in Revelation 7 and these people viewed here “are they which came out of great tribulation.”

The most popular, contemporary teaching is this: through the ministry of the 144,000 Jews, this multitude of Gentiles without number is “saved.”  The 144,000 witness to and bring the great multitude to the Lord during the years (7 or 3 1/2) of tribulation. According to the popular contemporaries, this chapter shows the two reasons for the need of a tribulation. These two reasons are (1) to save Israel and (2) to bring in this great multitude of Gentiles. The Lord will use the 144,000 Jews to do this. Dispensationalists say that in Revelation 7 John is moved to the millennium where he views this great multitude.

"It is also God’s purpose to populate the millennium with a multitude of saved Gentiles, who are redeemed through the preaching of the believing remnant. This is accomplished in the multitude from ‘all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues’ (Rev. 7:9)... God’s purpose, then, is to populate the millennial kingdom by bringing a host from among Israel and the Gentile nations to Himself."

One monumental problem the Dispensationalists have in their doctrine is accomplishing the salvation of this great multitude. Their doctrine

9 John Phillips, Exploring Revelation, page 110

10 J. Dwight Pentecost, Things To Come, page 185

11 Ibid. page 238
also teaches that the Holy Spirit has been removed from the earth. Oswald Allis writes,

"The difficult question raised by this Dispensational doctrine is obviously this, How does this great body... of redeemed ones come into being? According to Darby and Scofield the entire church has then been raptured, the Holy Spirit, whom they hold to be the one ‘that restraineth’ (2 Thess. ii.6), has been taken away. How then will the saints of the tribulation period be saved?"  

Dwight Pentecost responds.

"Suffice it to say here that it is concluded that the restrainer is the Holy Spirit and that he will be taken away, yet it must be recognized that the Spirit is omnipresent. He will cease His particular ministry of indwelling the body of Christ, but that does not mean he will be inoperative. Before Pentecost the Lord told Nicodemus that a man must be born again by the Spirit (John 3:5-6). If a person could experience a new birth before the Holy Spirit began to indwell the body, certainly one could after he ceases that particular ministry. It should be noted that the indwelling ministry is related to the enablement of believers in their Christian walk, not to the method or means of salvation."

What it appears Pentecost is saying is this great multitude was “saved” but did not receive the Holy Spirit. These were only given “enablement” to walk as Christians. They did not receive the presence of the Holy Spirit into their lives. Perhaps that thinking is rational to some, but, to me, it is not understandable at all. A vital point for people to see about the dispensational doctrine is its belief concerning worship. During the time of their tribulation and in their millennium, worship will be by animal sacrifices. I suppose that if someone believes that, he will believe a person can be saved without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

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12 Oswald T. Allis, Prophecy and the Church, page 339
13 J. Dwight Pentecost, Things To Come, page 296