

Revelation Chapter 7 - 144,000 and the Great Multitude

This is a parenthetical chapter - the sixth seal was opened at the end of Chapter 6, the seventh seal was opened at the beginning of Chapter 8 - This Chapter 7 is sandwiched between the two.

Rev 7:1-3 NIV After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. 2 Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, **having the seal of the living God**. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: 3 "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put **a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God**."

In a similar manner, God marked people to be spared the judgement against Jerusalem in Ezekiel's day

- Eze 9:3(b)-7 NIV ...Then the LORD called to the man clothed in linen who had the writing kit at his side 4 and said to him, "Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and **put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it**." 5 As I listened, he said to the others, "Follow him through the city and kill, without showing pity or compassion. 6 Slaughter the old men, the young men and women, the mothers and children, but **do not touch anyone who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary**." So they began with the old men who were in front of the temple. Then he said to them, "Defile the temple and fill the courts with the slain. Go!" So they went out and began killing throughout the city.

Begin at my sanctuary

- 1Pe 4:17-19 NIV **For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household**; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" 19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

The number of those who were sealed - 144,000

4 Then I heard the number of those who were **sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel**.

Who are these 144,000? Definitions will vary based on a person's school of interpretation

- **Dispensationalists** believe they are Jews who are converted and protected during the future tribulation - and who preach the gospel during the tribulation
- **Preterists** believe they are a symbolic number of Jews who escaped the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70
- **Historicists** believe it is a symbolic number representing the whole church (**the Israel of God**)

- **The Israel of God are those who are of “the new creation”** -- Gal 6:15-16 NIV
Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is **the new creation**. 16 Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule--to **the Israel of God**.
- **The new creation is made up of those who are “in Christ”** -- 2Co 5:17 NIV
Therefore, if anyone is *in Christ*, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Let's investigate to see what the Bible says about them

1) They are sealed

- Rev 7:3 above identifies those who are sealed as “the servants of God”
- They had the Lamb's name and His father's name on their foreheads (Rev 14:1) - my assumption is this would identify them as Christians

4 Then I heard the number of those who were **sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel**. 5 From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben 12,000, from the tribe of Gad 12,000, 6 from the tribe of Asher 12,000, from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000, from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000, 7 from the tribe of Simeon 12,000, from the tribe of Levi 12,000, from the tribe of Issachar 12,000, 8 from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000, from the tribe of Joseph 12,000, from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000.

2) There are 12,000 from each of twelve tribes of Israel

- **Not all tribes are listed** -- Dan is missing, Joseph is listed instead of Ephraim. These exclusions as well as the exactness of the number tends to make you think the number 144,000 *may be symbolic*.
- Whether the number is symbolic or not doesn't change the description of who they are
- The Bible gives no reason for why Dan was left out (some commentators think because Dan and Ephraim introduced idol worship into Israel -- Judges 18:30) - (others think that antichrist will come from the tribe of Dan -- Gen 49:17)
- Joseph is not typically mentioned in these lists (his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh are usually included as his “double portion”) ---Eze 47:13 NIV “*with two portions for Joseph.*”
- **Seems these are Israelites** - he goes to great lengths to describe them in terms of their tribes

More is mentioned about the 144,000 in Chapter 14

Rev 14:1-5 NIV Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had **his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads**. 2 And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. 3 And **they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders**. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who **had been redeemed from the earth**. 4 These are those who **did not defile themselves with women**, for they remained virgins. **They follow the Lamb** wherever he goes. **They were purchased from among mankind and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb**. 5 **No lie was found in their mouths**; they are blameless.

3) In heaven or on earth?

- They are standing on Mt Zion (vs 1) - yet singing before the throne (vs3)
- They were redeemed FROM THE EARTH (vs 3)
- **Seems they are in heaven, so “standing on Mt Zion” is possibly a reference to this vs the actual physical location** Heb 12:18-24 NIV You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; 19 to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, 20 because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." 21 The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." 22 **But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.** You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

4) They have the name of the Lamb and His Father's name written on their foreheads

- **In contrast to the mark of the beast in the previous chapter** -- Rev 13:16-18 NIV It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, **to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads**, 17 so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, **which is the name of the beast or the number of its name**. 18 This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666.

5) They sang before the throne (before the 24 elders and the 4 living creatures) -- a song that no one but them could learn

- It is difficult to sing about redemption unless you have experienced it
 - Psa 107:1-2 NIV Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. 2 **Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story--** those he redeemed from the hand of the foe
- Imagine the difference in a song being sung by someone who **heard** about the children of Israel going through the Red Sea vs **those who actually went through the Red Sea** on dry ground then sang about the redemption
 - Exo 15:1 NIV Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: "I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea.

6) They had been redeemed from the earth

- 1Pe 1:18-19 NIV For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that **you were redeemed** from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, 19 but **with the precious blood of Christ**, a lamb without blemish or defect.
- This is another reason I believe they are Christians

7) They did not defile themselves with women - they remained virgins

I think this is symbolic terminology

A person could be married, and NOT defiled - Marriage is not a defiling act

- Heb 13:4 KJV Marriage is honourable in all, and **the bed undefiled**: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

We are espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin in anticipation of being His bride - remaining a virgin in this sense seems to be related to our devotion to Christ

- 2Co 11:2-3 NIV I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so **that I might present you as a pure virgin to him**. 3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your **sincere and pure devotion to Christ**.

Friendship with the world is considered adultery

- Jas 4:4 NIV You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

Interaction with Mystery Babylon is thought of as adultery and fornication

- Rev 14:8 NIV A second angel followed and said, "'Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great,' which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries."

8) They follow the Lamb wherever He goes

- Another indication they are Christians, and dedicated at that

9) They were purchased and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb

James writes to the twelve tribes

- Jas 1:1 "to the twelve tribes"

They hold the faith of our LORD Jesus Christ - 12 tribes, yet Christians

- Jas 2:1 - my brethren - who hold the faith of our LORD Jesus Christ
- Jas 2:7 - they blaspheme the name to which you are called [*name of Jesus*]

He called them firstfruits

- Jas 1:18 - that we might be a kind of firstfruits
- These were first century Jewish Christians - contemporary with James
- He called them "**the twelve tribes**"

10) No lie was found in their mouths, they are blameless (no guile)

- Nathaniel - no guile
 - Joh 1:47 NIV When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite **in whom there is no deceit**."
- No pretention or hypocrisy
 - Jesus dealt with a lot of hypocrisy among the Pharisees

The Multitude No One Could Number

Rev 7:9-10 NIV After this I looked, and there before me was a **great multitude that no one could count**, from every **nation, tribe, people and language**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing **white robes** and were holding **palm branches** in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice: "**Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.**" 11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

The LORD's intent has always been to reach all peoples

- Gen 12:3 NIV I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and **all peoples on earth will be blessed** through you."
- Gen 22:17-18 NIV I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring **all nations on earth will be blessed**, because you have obeyed me."

It is the prime directive of the church

- Mat 28:18-20 NIV Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore **go and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
- Mat 24:14 NIV And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world **as a testimony to all nations**, and **then the end will come**.

These are saved people

- Innumerable company - vs 144,000
- White robes - (see vs 14 below) means washed in the blood of the Lamb
- Palm branches - victory - think of Jesus coming into Jerusalem on the donkey (Joh 12:13 NIV)
- Singing about Salvation

They have come out of the great tribulation

13 Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes--who are they, and where did they come from?" 14 I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "**These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**"

Four views of The Great Tribulation

Preterists -- the unsealing of the scroll represents the judgment of God upon Jerusalem (**A.D. 66–70**); 144,000 Judean Christians escape to Pella [in modern-day Jordan]. Thus, in the preterist interpretation, the events of Revelation 6.1–8.5 are basically past.

Futurist -. Many American Protestants believe that it lies in the future, just after Jesus Christ secretly returns to earth to rapture believers to heaven. **Those left behind endure the depredations of the Antichrist and False Prophet for seven years.** During that period, many convert, including Jews who acknowledge Jesus as Israel's Messiah. At the end of the seven years, Christ publicly returns, subdues the devil, and inaugurates a one-thousand-year reign of peace. This is the end-times scenario popularized by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins' best-selling series, Left Behind. It should be noted, however, that not all futurists subscribe to the rapture of the church. A basic issue that divides futurists is whether Christians who converted prior to the great tribulation will be spared its violence entirely (by means of the rapture) or given sufficient strength to endure it utterly (through the sealing of the Holy Spirit).

Idealism, -- The scroll and its unsealing represent God's dealings with mankind, seen in cycles of war, martyrdom, and judgment recurring **repeatedly throughout history.**

Historicism -- is the fourth school of interpretation. Although not common today, it is "the historic Protestant interpretation" of Revelation and sees the book as "a pre-written record of the course of history **from the time of the apostle to the end of the world.**" For historicists, the "unsealing of the scroll represents the beginning of the fall of the Roman empire." The seven trumpets (8.6–11.19) and seven bowls (15.1–16.21) unfold the remaining events of end-times history.¹

So depending on what school you subscribe to the Great Tribulation is past, future, present, and/or unfolding.

What does the Bible say about the Great Tribulation?

It is mentioned only twice (here in Rev 7:14) and in Mat 24:21 KJV For **then shall be great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

So let's take a closer look at Mat 24 for more detail

Mat 24:1 NIV Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his **disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings.** 2 "**Do you see all these things?**" he asked. "Truly I tell you, **not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.**" 3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "**when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?**"

¹ Adapted from article - <https://georgepwood.com/2007/05/25/four-views-of-the-great-tribulation-revelation-61-85/>

Two questions are asked:

The real value of Matt 24 is in discovering which parts of Jesus' responses are directed at which question:

1. When will this happen? (not one stone left on another)
2. What will be the sign of your coming?...And of the end of the age?

The context of Matt 24 begins here in chapter 23

Mat 23:33-39 NIV "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? 34 Therefore I am sending you prophets and sages and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. 35 And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 Truly I tell you, ***all this will come on this generation.*** 37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. 38 Look, ***your house is left to you desolate.*** 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

- The LORD is holding "this generation" accountable for all the righteous blood that was shed
- He says "your house is left to you desolate (empty - like a wilderness)"

First Question: When will THIS happen?

(ie the comment of "not one stone here will be left on another")

They are wanting to know when the buildings will be thrown down. Historically this happened in 70 AD. The historian Josephus, an eyewitness to what happened in Jerusalem in AD 70, wrote "The Chronology of the Wars" where he describes the tearing down of the walls and the temple.

Titus orders the whole city and Temple to be razed to the ground, leaving only the tallest towers and a small portion of the wall on the west. The Xth legion is left to garrison Jerusalem.²

What precedes this event?

Warning against false Christs

4 Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. 6 You will hear of **wars** and **rumors** of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. **Such things must happen, *but the end is still to come.*** 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be **famines** and **earthquakes** in various places. 8 All these are ***the beginning of birth pains.***

The Jews under Roman law were easy prey for false Messiah's to arise and offer hope

- Act 5:35-39 NIV Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. 36 Some time ago **Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody,** and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and

² <http://www.josephus.org/FlJosephus2/warChronology7Fall.html>

it all came to nothing. 37 After him, **Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census** and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. 38 Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. 39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

Persecution, and apostasy

9 "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. 10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, 11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. 12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, 13 but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

There was great persecution against the church - most of the apostles were martyred during this time

- Act 8:1 NIV And Saul approved of their killing him. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.
- Act 12:1-2 NIV It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. 2 He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.

The spreading of the gospel (I consider this to be a telescopic prophecy)

14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

- Rom 10:18 NIV But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, **their words to the ends of the world.**"
- Col 1:6 NIV that has come to you. In the same way, **the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world**--just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace.
- Col 1:23 NIV if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that **you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven**, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

The time to flee Judea - when you see the abomination that causes desolation

15 "So when you see standing in the holy place '**the abomination that causes desolation,**' **spoken of through the prophet Daniel**--let the reader understand-- 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. 18 Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. 19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again.

- **The desolation of Jerusalem was because they rejected Jesus as their Messiah** -- Matt 23:37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. 38 Look, **your house is left to you desolate.** 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"
- Luk 19:41-44 NIV As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it 42 and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace--but now it is hidden from your eyes. 43 The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. 44 They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. **They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.**"
- **This reference to "Abomination that causes desolation" is from Daniel** -- Dan 11:31 NIV "His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up **the abomination that causes desolation.**
- **Luke writes about this same event adding "when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies" as a sign the desolation is near** -- Luk 21:19-21 NIV Stand firm, and you will win life. 20 "**When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near.** 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city.
- **Mark says that when you see the desolation - then those in Judea should flee to the mountains** -- Mar 13:14 NIV "When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' standing where it does not belong--let the reader understand--then **let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.**

A few historical references about the Christians fleeing the city

- **Eusebius:** "The members of the Jerusalem church by means of an oracle, given by revelation to acceptable persons there, were ordered to leave the city before the war began and settle in a town in Peraea called Pella." Book III, 5:4
- "The whole body, however, of the church at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety there before the war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella. Here those that believed in Christ, having removed from Jerusalem, as if holy men had entirely abandoned the royal city itself, and the whole land of Judea; the divine justice, for their crimes against Christ and his apostles finally overtook them, totally destroying the whole generation of these evildoers from the earth. (Eusebius, 3:5.)
- "For when the city was about to be captured and sacked by the Romans, all the disciples were warned beforehand by an angel to remove from the city, doomed as it was to utter destruction.

On migrating from it they settled at Pella, the town already indicated, across the Jordan. It is said to belong to Decapolis (de Mens. et Pond., 15).

22 "If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

- Josephus claims 1.1 million Jews were killed and 97,000 enslaved in the war and siege -- Wars, VI, ix, 3

So the great tribulation Matthew speaks about is obviously the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Luke adds another dimension...the dimension of time..."until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled"

- Luk 21:21-24 NIV Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. 22 For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. 23 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. 24 They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. **Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.**
- Rom 11:11-12 NIV Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, **salvation has come to the Gentiles** to make Israel envious. 12 But if their transgression means riches for the world, and **their loss means riches for the Gentiles**, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring!
- Rom 11:25 NIV I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part **until the full number of the Gentiles has come in**,

When is the Great Tribulation?

Comparing Matthew with Luke, we see that the Great Tribulation is a time period that began in 70 AD and continues throughout the time called "the time of the Gentiles" - which actually continues to this day. So when Rev 7:14 describes this "great multitude that no one could count" as ... **"These are they who have come out of the great tribulation"**; ... it is likely describing Christians that have died during this entire time period.

70 AD

Rom 11



The concept of tribulation is actually prevalent in the NT

Words in bold are the same Greek word translated as TRIBULATION -- The point of this is to show that tribulation is not something necessarily relegated to a 3 ½ or 7 year period in the future (depending on your school interpretation) but has been an ongoing part of Christian life from the beginning and is a common experience among Christians even today. Another thought...such a large number in this company (a number no one could count) seems to indicate a longer period than could be produced in 3 ½ years.

- **John considered tribulation as something he shared in common with other believers of his day** -- Rev 1:9 KJV I John, who also am your brother, and companion in **tribulation**, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.
- **Tribulation can cause a person to fall away** -- Mat 13:21 KJV Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when **tribulation** or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.
- **Tribulation can include martyrdom** -- Mat 24:9 NIV "Then you will be handed over to be **persecuted** and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.
- Rev 2:10 KJV Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have **tribulation** ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.
- **Tribulation can include persecution** -- Act 11:19 NIV Now those who had been scattered by the **persecution** that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews.
- **Tribulation is a common denominator for all Christians** -- Act 14:22 KJV Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much **tribulation** enter into the kingdom of God.
- **There are benefits derived from tribulation** -- Rom 5:3 KJV And not only so, but we glory in **tribulations** also: knowing that **tribulation** worketh patience;
- **Tribulation will not separate us from Christ's love** -- Rom 8:35 KJV Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall **tribulation**, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
- **It takes perseverance to endure tribulation** -- 2Th 1:4 KJV So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and **tribulations** that ye endure:

- **We are destined for tribulation** -- 1Th 3:3 NIV so that no one would be unsettled by these **trials**. For you know quite well that we are destined for them.

Second Question: What will be the sign of YOUR coming?

Seems the theme of Matt 24 changes from “When shall these things be?” ... To “What shall be the sign of your coming?” with these statements: (I will not spend any more time there)

- 23 **At that time** if anyone says to you, '**Look, here is the Messiah!**' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it.
- 36 **"But about that day** or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

God will wipe away every tear from their eyes

15 Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne **will shelter them with his presence**. 16 'Never again will they hunger; **never again will they thirst**. The **sun will not beat down on them**,' nor any scorching heat. 17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; 'he will lead them to springs of living water.' **'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'**"

Shelter them with His presence - he will spread his tabernacle over them

These descriptions are similar to Rev 21

- **Thirst** -- Rev 21:6 NIV He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.
- **The sun beating down** -- Rev 21:23 NIV The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.
- **God will wipe away every tear** -- Rev 21:4 NIV 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Summary of my assumptions (as of this date Oct 2017)

- The seals are beginning to be opened soon after the ascension of Christ -- Their effects are felt over a long period of time, possibly with greater intensity over time as well
- Soon after the ascension of Christ, (70 AD) there will be the desolation of Israel that Jesus prophesied about it in Matt 23 and 24
- Jesus shared these things with his disciples so they would be prepared for this day -- that they were to flee from Judea when this destruction was about to happen
- Most of the Christian church at this time was still Jewish
- **These 144,000 could represent Jewish believers**, who were marked and preserved by God from this destruction
- James called Jewish Christians “the twelve tribes”

- James showed they were not only Christians, but also called firstfruits
- There was also a **great multitude that no one could count, which represents Christians from every tribe, tongue and nation** who have “come out of great tribulation” a period that has lasted since 70 AD until the present time
- Remember, Matthew called the period when Jerusalem was destroyed, the Great Tribulation
- When comparing those scriptures in Matthew with the same event from the gospel of Luke we see that the period of tribulation (though Luke does not use this term) would last during a period Luke called the “Times of the Gentiles”

This diagram is an attempt to capture what I have shared in chapters 6 and 7

