

The Glory of Christ in Salvation Through Judgment (Revelation 7)

Please take your Bibles and turn to Revelation 6, and if you're using a pew Bible, you'll find our passage on p. 666. You'll have to judge whether that's significant or not, depending on your theology! But I do want to start at the 6th seal again in Revelation 6, pew Bible p. 666. I'm not sure anti-Christ is in chapter 6 riding on the white horse. Chapter 13 is where John introduces us to the one whose number is 666. I think the horsemen of the apocalypse are more generally conquest, war, famines, and death that mark the present age and will increase at the end. In some sense there is an apocalypse now (like a famous war movie) but Jesus said wars don't signal the end, just the beginning of birth pains (analogy implies intensifying). Rev 6:12 is the end:

¹² When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood,¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale.¹⁴ The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

In v. 15-16 the end gets so bad people beg to be crushed by rocks instead of the crushing wrath of God in 17. The sinners ask in v. 17b *'who can stand?'* Rev 7:9 *'After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, **standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes...***

When unbelievers see the throne and the lamb, they see they can't stand, but John sees there are believers *'standing before the throne...before the Lamb.'* They're wearing robes of salvation and singing a song of salvation in v. 10. It explains in v. 14 these were saved in the great tribulation and the blood of the Lamb washed their robes, in other words Jesus saved and cleansed them

In Rev 6:16 all the unbelievers of all the classes of humanity on the face of the earth cry out *'hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?'* They would rather die in v. 15. They can't stand the wrath of God and Christ in v. 17. But then John is shown believers from every class of humanity who *can stand because of the Lamb who was slain for them, who died for them, and they worship Christ before the throne of God above.* Unbelievers want to hide from wrath; believers are hidden in Christ. Which are you? Have you taken refuge in Christ by repentant faith? All us who have will one day join the worshippers in v. 10 singing salvation

We know we don't deserve to be there based on anything in our hearts, but Christians 'know that while in heaven Jesus stands, no tongue can bid us thence depart...Behold Him there, the risen Lamb...our soul is purchased by His blood, our life is hid with Christ on high [so we don't need to hide like 6:16 if] Christ our Savior is our God...before the throne of God above'¹

[if Christ isn't your Savior yet, bow before His throne of grace in faith]

When the last seal of chapter 6 is opened, the judgment seems universal and inescapable, but chapter 7 begins with another type of seal to protect God's people through that time. Rev 7:2 *Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea,*³ *saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."*⁴ *And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel*

Before I read the list of the tribes and the rest of the text, let me remind you of our focus, the glory of Christ. A scholar wrote: "It will be vain to become occupied with 'sevens,' '144,000's,' '666's,' the restoration of the Roman Empire, the person of the antichrist, the two wild beasts, the 'millennium,' or even the new Jerusalem; unless, along with God the Father, who has subjected all things unto *Him, Christ* is ever before our eyes!"²

I want us to keep before our eyes 3 ways Christ is glorified in Rev 7:

1st Christ is glorified: **By SEALING His People Before Judgment (v. 1-8)**

It seems to me Rev 7 starts before the judgment at the end of Rev 6. This is a flashback to some time before the lights in the universe go out and the sky goes away along with every mountain and island. 6:14 says every island on earth and every mountain will be removed - even if they were just moved or displaced by the greatest earthquake ever from v. 12, that's massive harm to the earth and its trees. But 7:3 says "*Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.*"

Rev 7 starts sometime before the cataclysmic cosmic judgments on the earth and its trees and seas and skies at the end of Rev 6. This is like dramas even today you may be watching and the next scene flashes back and might even say "7 years earlier" (or sometimes it doesn't tell you, but you can tell by the clues it gives). It seems the end of Rev 7 fast forwards back to the future, to after the great tribulation is over and the fullness of God's people are saved? v.15-17 sound like eternity/heaven then Rev 8-11 rewinds to prior judgment on trees, seas, sinners; hell on earth before heaven's kingdom comes (11:15)

But first Rev 7:3 calls on angels to hold off judgment until they seal God's servants on the forehead. They are already believers, they're God's *servants*, they're already sealed with the Holy Spirit at salvation, but this is a sealing by angels before judgment, a seal of protection. In Ezekiel 9 angels put a mark on the forehead of some Jews to protect in judgment, just like Rev 7, and Ezekiel later speaks of a greater future saving of 12 tribes (37, 48-49).

[this is a spiritual sealing in the angelic realm, not a physical tattoo]

Keith Mathison is a theology professor at Reformation Bible College with R.C. Sproul, and he wrote a good summary of Rev 7 in Ligonier's *Table Talk* a couple years ago: 'Here John sees a vision in which God marks His people in order to protect them from judgment. He also sees a vision of an innumerable multitude worshiping before the throne of God. The first vision, in which 144,000 servants of God are sealed on their foreheads, echoes Ezekiel 9:4-6, in which faithful Israelites are protected from God's judgment. Although there is not complete consensus, the 144,000 likely represent believing Jews in Israel. The innumerable multitude in verses 9-17 would then likely represent the church triumphant from all nations.'³

⁴ *And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:* ⁵ *12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Reuben, 12,000 from the tribe of Gad,* ⁶ *12,000 from the tribe of Asher, 12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh,* ⁷ *12,000 from the tribe of Simeon, 12,000 from the tribe of Levi, 12,000 from the tribe of Issachar,* ⁸ *12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun, 12,000 from the tribe of Joseph, 12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin ...* [then in v. 9 he sees Gentiles] ⁹ *After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude ...*

Now some good men think the 144,000 is the church of all ages, the same multitude as v. 9. There are all kinds of arguments you can read why v. 4-8 can't be ethnic Jews. Some think the scroll of Rev 6 is God's divorce decree against Israel for rejecting Jesus, divorcing Israel and remarrying the mostly Gentile church as replacement.⁴ I would disagree. Despite the sin of Israel's leaders, it's estimated the early church had over 100,000 saved Jews and it's estimated there are over 100,000 saved Jews today.⁵ God kept faithful Israel safe in Ezekiel's day and in 70 AD, as historians say no Christian Jews died then, although Josephus estimated a million unsaved Jews were killed then. And if Mathison and many of the Puritans are right, God will save a perfect number of Jews through the last days, not by beaming them up to avoid the tribulation and then saving another 100,000+ during the tribulation, but like He's always done: sealing and saving true Israel on earth through tribulation

Whether or not the 12,000 from each tribe is a round number or the perfect representation of all sealed isn't the most important point, but I think we've missed the point if we think Rev 7 makes no point about Israel's future. If I say v. 4-8 can't be literal Israel because God's through with Jews, or because a favorite tradition or teacher says, I'm imposing man's ideas over the text.

But even if you're not sure whether there's symbolism or not in v. 4-8, look at v. 9 where John sees people from '*every nation, from all tribes...*' It's not every nation except Israel, or from all tribes except Israel's tribes, it's '*every nation, all tribes*'! So however you view v. 4-8 doesn't change the overall vision which includes all God's people, Gentiles and Jews of every tribe. If you don't think v. 4-8 is talking about Israel, v. 9 includes Israel, all nations! If you're concerned the tribe of Dan isn't in v. 4-8, v. 9 says every tribe will have representatives in heaven (Eze 48 confirms even Dan has future grace, and Jesus spoke of all '*12 tribes of Israel*' in '*the new world*' in Mt 19:28).

The book of James is written '*to the twelve tribes who are dispersed*' and it says Christians of the tribes are to '*be a kind of first-fruits*' (1:1, 18). That's the same word used of these 12 tribes in Rev 14: the 144,000 are '*redeemed from mankind as first-fruits*,' then the rest of earth is harvested (14:4,15-16). The same word '*first-fruits*' is used in Rom 11 of saved Israel and it says in the future harvest, the fullness of the Gentiles will also be saved along with Israel (11:16, 25-26). A number of Puritans saw a connection between Rev 7 and Rom 11 where a fullness of Jews and Gentiles convert before the end⁶
[several early church fathers shared a similar views of Jews in Rev 7]⁷

I'm interested in historic truth, not views unique to the last 100-some years. A Puritan pastor Increase Mather wrote a book subtitled *The 12 Tribes Shall Be Saved*, 1669: 'That there shall be a general conversion of the tribes of Israel, is a truth which in some measure hath been known, and believed in all the ages of the Church of God, since the Apostles days...even in the dark times of popery...men did assert this truth...[and] abundantly borne witness ...by the chief Reformers of Religion in this and the last century [1500s]'⁸

Most till the 20th century saw it in Rom 11, some weren't sure on Rev 7:4-8. Some writers of the *Westminster Confession* wrote Rev 7:4 may mean 'Jews or Israelites by natural descent, but some such as are hereafter [in the future] be converted, Rom. 11:26. Others, of those of that nation who retained the Christian profession ... in those [NT] times; Rom. 11:1-2 ... numerable, in comparison to the Gentile converts, which are said to be innumerable [Rev 7:9] ... to live in the times of the terrible trumpets ensuing ... [Rev 8-11]'⁹

Puritan Robert Hawker: ‘*John* is brought to see the...tribes of Israel, sealed ...looking forward to the last days events in the earth ... We live in a day approaching to the accomplishment of all the great events prophesied...’¹⁰ He then quotes from Rom 11 and Jer 31. Listen to the context of Jer. 30-31: 30:3 ‘*days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will restore...my people, Israel and Judah* [that’s another way to say the 10 tribes and the 2 tribes, all 12 tribes, 30:7] ... *That day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob* [or ‘Jacob’s trouble,’ Wycliffe had ‘great ... tribulation,’ same words as Rev 7:14]; *yet he shall be saved out of it.* ⁸ *And it shall come to pass in that day ... they shall serve...their God* [same words as Rev 7:3, servants of God, NLT: ‘*In all history there has never been such a time ... a time of trouble for my people Israel. Yet in the end they will be saved!*’]

[sounds like ‘the great tribulation’ of Mt 24:21, cf. Rev 7:14]

Jer 30 ends the same way Rev 6 ends and Rev 7 begins, winds of judgment in fury of a final coming where no unbeliever can stand or be saved from it. Jer 31:1 NAB *At that time, says the LORD, I will be the God of all the tribes of Israel, and they shall be my people...*[v. 4 calls them ‘virgin Israel,’ v. 12 ‘*they shall mount...Zion*’-in Rev 14 Israel’s 144000 are virgins on Mt Zion]. Look at Rev 7:17 where it says the enthroned Lord ‘*will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*’ Now listen to Jer 31:9-10 ‘*With weeping they will come* [i.e., with tears in their eyes]...*I will lead them; I will make them walk by streams of waters...Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, “He who scattered Israel will gather him And keep him as a shepherd ...”*’ (NASB)

Rev 7 fulfills that promise to Israel for the glory of God among the nations, and the end of Rev 7 graciously expands the blessings to all His people. It’s for God’s glory that He keeps His promises to Israel and for our good, too. Jews aren’t superior ethnically, the point is God’s glory fulfilling prophecy:

- Jer 13:11 ‘*I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah* [another way to say Rev 7:4 ‘all the tribes of Israel’] *cling to me, declares the LORD, that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory*’
- Isa 44:23 says in redeeming Jacob’s tribes God ‘*will be glorified in Israel*’
- Isa 45:25 ‘*all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory*’
- Isa 46:13 God says ‘*...I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory.*’
- Isa 49:3 God says ‘*You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified*’
- Isa 60:21 says to Israel’s 12 tribes in the last days: ‘*All your people will be righteous...in order to bring myself glory. The smallest family will become a thousand...*’ (NLT, NET ‘the least of you will multiply into a thousand’; in Rev 7 even the least and smallest family tribes are multiplied 12 x 1,000)

- Isa 66:19, judgment context, it doesn't mention a sign on their forehead, it says Israel will be God's sign and *'will declare my glory among the nations'*

That takes us from Christ's glory in sealing His people before judgment to ... **Point #2. Christ is glorified in saving His people through judgment**

I'm using that title and wording from Jim Hamilton's book *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment* where he traces that theme in all of Scripture, from the judgment in Gen 3 which included salvation promised through it, and the flood judgment in Gen 7 that God saved His people through, all the way to the end, He saves His people as He always does: through judgment. Through the time of judgment called 'the great tribulation' in v. 14, God's glory is being accomplished by Christ saving His people through judgment.

[not saving from death or difficulty, but saving from divine wrath]

In Rev 7:9-14 Israel is enfolded in a far bigger multitude of God's people, not just 1 nation, but every nation, the vision goes from 12 tribes to every tribe on earth, from a finite number to an infinite number, from the Hebrew people to all people and languages, from some on earth to all in heaven: Rev 7:9 *After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes ...*

It would be glorious enough that God fulfills His OT promises to a remnant in Israel of many thousands, but this redeemed multitude must be millions+! The old commentator Matthew Henry wrote of his Puritan contemporaries: 'Some take [v. 4-8] to be a select number of the Jews who were reserved for mercy ... [he says he thinks it's] proper to understand this of the remnant of that people [Israel in contrast to v. 9 as] God will have a greater harvest of souls among the Gentiles than he had among the Jews' [he quotes Isa 54]¹¹

Spurgeon said John 'As a Jew, when...the twelve tribes pass before him, he might have been tempted to say, "It is enough; there is a remnant, according to the election of grace in Israel" [but when the] 144,000 had passed before him, he saw a far greater multitude of the Gentile[s than Jews] ... before.'¹²

Rom 11:25 tells us how this gives God glory: *'a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*²⁶ *And in this way all Israel will be saved ...*³³ *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are **his judgments** ...*³⁶ *For from him and through him and to him are all things. **To him be glory forever.** Amen.*

Eze 39: *I will...have mercy on the whole house of Israel...I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see my judgment...* (v. 25, 21)

[the OT is a better guide to Revelation than many modern commentators]

God is glorified in Israel and the nations by salvation through His judgment. Historic reformed theology brings out this theme better than many do today. *Geneva Bible Notes*, 1560 (notes by Reformers), contrasts v. 4 and v. 9 as John first speaking ‘of the Jews a number certain in itself before God, and such as may be numbered ... But of the elect who are Gentiles [in v. 9], the number indeed is...not possibly to be numbered [but by] God (Gen 15:5),’¹³

The Reformers there quoted the promise of God to Abraham in a covenant that could only be broken if God was ripped into 2 pieces like the animals: Abraham would father Jews and a multitude of nations *too many to number*. Father Abraham has many sons, I am one of them, and so are you if Jesus is your Lord. Jesus said His kingdom starts small but becomes a massive tree, one tree and one people of God. Paul says we’re branches grafted into Israel and the waving of palm branches in v. 9 connects Christians to Jewish roots.

[Gal. 3 says we’re Abraham’s spiritual children, that’s our heritage]

On Palm Sunday John had seen huge crowds shouting with palm branches ‘*Hosanna to the King*’ (hosanna=save us now). Now John sees much bigger multitude around the king’s throne, v. 10: *and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”* No longer “save us now,” they wave branches knowing they’re saved now!

John had heard Jesus say there is great rejoicing in heaven among angels as one sinner repents (Lk 15), how about a multitude? v. 11: *And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,*¹² *saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”*

All hail the power of Jesus’ name, let angels prostrate fall ...

Let every nation, every tribe on this terrestrial ball ...

O that with yonder sacred throng we at His feet may fall

We’ll join the everlasting song and crown Him Lord of all!¹⁴

¹³ *Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” [prophecy pop quiz? Notice even John didn’t know all he saw] ¹⁴ I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

How would John know what *'the great tribulation'* was? Jesus told him in Mt 24:21 *'there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.'*²² *And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved.'* Is that just general or local (Jerusalem) tribulation? It's a global final one almost ending all life

Some think *'the great tribulation'* ended 70 AD, others think it's been going on for over 2,000 years and there's nothing special or stronger necessarily at the end, but it seems to me there's a greater tribulation to come and greater future grace to greater numbers before the end of the age and a resurrection. Daniel 12:1 says of the end times: *'there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered* [or *'rescued,'* literally *'saved'* in the original], *everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.'*² *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to eternal life ...*

...

At the time of resurrection (which everyone agrees there is the end), Daniel said there will be a *'time of trouble'* unprecedented in human history, and in the Greek translation used in NT times, it's the same word for *'tribulation'* in Mt 24 and Rev 7. One translation of Dan 12:1 says this tribulation will be *'greater than any since nations first came into existence...at that time every one of your people whose name is written in the book will be rescued'* (NLT) John knew that prophecy but now sees its fulfillment at that end before the final resurrection, in a massive multitude of saved Israelis, Arabs, Africans, Asians, Indians, former Muslims, and even some lighter-skinned Americans

I'm not sure on some things, like the idea that God must rapture Christians before Rev 7 because He needs a mostly Gentile church out of the way to focus on Israel again. Rev 7 does have some saved Israelites, but the focus of most of the rest of the chapter actually seems to be saved Gentiles and a far bigger number at that. Isn't God big enough to save Jews and non-Jews at the same time? The dispensationalists agree in the great tribulation more Gentiles than Jews will be saved, but they say they're not *the church*, they say God's Spirit will be taken away. I've often wondered how the greatest mass salvation in history could happen if the Holy Spirit is taken away. I've read some who say the church will be in heaven for 1,007 years before they join up with the believers of Rev 7. A former professor of mine explains the many millions of Christians saved in the final 7 years aren't the church and won't go to church, won't celebrate Communion those 7 years, etc. I'm not convinced on all of that, I question how they'll read NT letters to the church

Progressive dispensationalists and other historic views don't have a problem with seeing the multitude in Rev 7 as the church, and they see it's a problem to divide the 1 people of God (and I see their point of view). But I think we need to see this from John's point of view, not try to force on it a particular modern view, or to fit Christians into different categories in end time charts. We can't put God in a box and can't fit God's people into boxes, and I don't think John wanted to. From John's point of view, Christianity was small, it was largely Jewish at first but was growing in Gentiles, it was persecuted by Rome who wanted to stomp out the church, but John sees here, at the end it will grow from its Jewish roots to a multitude bigger than he could imagine! What an encouragement it must have been to a solitary Christian on Patmos. What a glory to Jesus to see the bigness of His multi-ethnic family! Amen?

Jesus is glorified by sealing from and saving people through judgment and **3rdly finally Jesus is glorified by: Shepherding His people in mercy**

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 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”*

Whatever you call these people in the prior verses, this is the privilege of all God's people in these verses. In v. 15-17 we see heavenly realities all God's people experience at the moment of death (and many of the multitude seem to have been martyred). The hungering and thirsting of famine from Rev 6 is no more and they're satisfied with living water, as God now shelters them

These verses on the Lord being our shepherd deserve a whole other series. I did a whole other series on these themes when I taught through Ps 23, so I'll refer you to that if you want to study the theme further. It also fulfills Isa 49 *'It is too small a thing ... To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth...'* *They shall neither hunger nor thirst ... nor sun shall strike them; For He who has mercy on them will lead them, Even by the springs of water He will guide them ...'* (v. 6, 10 NKJV, in v. 3 God explains why He does this: *'I will be glorified'*)

It's a small thing for God to raise up and restore the 12 tribes of Israel, He's going to do more through that seed to save and shepherd many of all nations

Christ does all these things for His glory, our chief end is to glorify Him, to enjoy Him forever. So with the 3 ways He's glorified, 3 ways we can apply:

1. Give Glory to Jesus as your Good Shepherd

- in v. 15 they serve Him day and night in His temple. You have an opportunity each Lord's Day and night to serve and worship here
- the end of v. 15 echoes what John wrote, Jn 1:14 *The Word became flesh and dwelt [tabernacled] among us, and we beheld His glory...*
- Behold His glory in v. 16-17 in meeting your needs, caring for you
 - All glory to Jesus begotten of God, The great I Am is He
 - Creator sustainer but wonder of all, The Lamb of Calvary
 - To think that the guardian of planets in space, The Shepherd of the stars
 - Is tenderly leading the church of His love, By hands with crimson scars¹⁵

2. Give All Glory to Jesus for Your Salvation

- Praise Him for undeserved sovereign grace sealing and saving you
- Pray for His glory in His saving many Jews, Gentile, all nations
- Preach the gospel to others and yourself and the glories of heaven

3. Give All Glory to Jesus By Making Him Your Focus

Timothy Paul Jones says none of the characters in Rev 7 or the rest of the book should be our main focus: 'it is clear that Jesus remains the true hero of God's plan. Jesus is the star of Revelation – literally! According to his own words...Jesus is "*the root and descendant of David, the bright morning star*" (Rev 22:16). Every righteous character in Revelation is righteous only because of Jesus, and every heroic witness gives all glory to Jesus.

- John saw himself first and foremost as a slave and witness of Jesus (1:1-2)
- The 24 elders fall on their faces before Jesus and sing a new song that recognizes the risen Lamb as the [only] one who's worthy of praise (5:8-12)
- The 144,000 take their stand around Jesus and the seal on their forehead is the name of Jesus...(14:1) [in Rev 14 they worship Him with His new song]
- The men and women in the great multitude remain faithful only because they have rinsed their robes in the blood of the Lamb (7:14). Jesus is their shepherd and their Savior, their comforter and their guide (7:17) ...

The man millennial viewpoints differ on the exact identities of the end-times heroes—but, when it comes to the central character, there is no debate. **The same Messiah who met John on Patmos is the Word by whom the cosmos was created, the teacher who called John to leave his nets, the Lamb who was slain for his people's sins, and the King who will return in triumph. Jesus is the star, and all glory belongs to Him.**¹⁶

¹ “Before the Throne of God Above” (lyrics adapted).

² William R. Newell, *The Book of the Revelation*, p. 31.

³ Keith Mathison, “Understanding John’s Prophecy,” *TableTalk*, 1/1/2012.

⁴ ‘With the final divorce and destruction of the unfaithful wife in A.D. 70, the marriage of the Church was firmly established.’ - David Chilton, as cited in *Revelation: Four Views*, edited by Steve Gregg.

⁵ David Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, note on Rev 7:4: ‘The number of Messianic Jews then, as now, was surely in six figures (see Ac 21:20), but it would be sheer speculation to fix it at 144,000.’

⁶ *Heaven Upon Earth: Joseph Mede (1586-1638) and the Legacy of Millenarianism*, ed. by Jeffrey Jue, p. 191: ‘Joseph Mede framed the doctrine of the national conversion of ethnic Israel within his millenarian eschatology...In his interpretation of Apocalypse [Rev] 7, Mede saw a connection with Romans 11.’ Puritan John Donne (born 1572) and William Hooke (1600s) cited in <http://www.pre-trib.org/data/pdf/Watson-AHistoryofChristianZ.pdf>

⁷ This appears to be the view of Hippolytus (170-235 AD), Victorinus writing around 260.

Francis Gumerlock, “The 144,000 and Early Christian Thought,”

<http://www.ptsco.org/The%20144000%20in%20Early%20Christian%20Thought%20by%20Dr.%20Francis%20Gumerlock.pdf>

⁸ Increase Mather, “Author’s Preface” to *The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation...Wherein is Shewed That the Twelve Tribes Shall Be Saved*, 1669.

⁹ *Westminster Annotations*, 1657.

¹⁰ Robert Hawker, *Poor Man’s New Testament Commentary*, 3:539: ‘Here, then, once more, John is brought to see the servants of the LORD, in the tribes of Israel, sealed, as if to confirm the blessed assurance, that, as the HOLY GHOST was now about to close the sacred volume of scripture, the Church of GOD might have these things in remembrance, looking forward to the last days events in the earth, when the whole should be accomplished. Reader! ponder well the thought, for it is blessed. We live in a day approaching to the accomplishment of all the great events prophesied concerning the Church. Sweet is that promise, He that scattered Israel, will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock. Jer. 31:10. There shall be a day, it is said, when the Deliverer shall come out of Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. Rom. 11:26. And who shall say where, and in what countries is Israel scattered? Who shall say their number, or count them up by their tribes? By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small? JESUS hath blessedly said, and that’s enough to comfort the whole Church of GOD concerning it, that he will gather his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven. Mark 13:27. If the Reader wishes to have his soul refreshed with a view of some of the sweet promises concerning this glorious event, he will find a multitude of them in the Bible. Isaiah 43:5, 6; Isa. 54:7; Jer. 31:8; Ezek. 11:17; Micah 4; Zeph. 3; Zech. 10. &c.’

¹¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2473.

¹² Charles H. Spurgeon, “The Multitude Before the Throne,” *MTP*, 60:193.

¹³ *Geneva Bible Notes*, Re 7:9.

¹⁴ Edward Perronet, “All Hail the Power.”

¹⁵ John W. Peterson, “All Glory to Jesus.”

¹⁶ Timothy Paul George, *Guide to End-Times Prophecy*, Rose Publishing, p. 238.