

Revelation

Notes #7A

Seal #6 -144,000 & Great Multitude

Chapter 7

A few comments are in order before discussing the details of chapter 7, which are still under the 6th seal.

With the angels holding back the four winds, two groups of Christians came into John's view. First, John heard of the sealed 144,000, and then he saw the great multitude that came out of the great tribulation. John did not say that he saw the 144,000, only that he heard the number that were sealed from the sons of Israel, meaning descendants of Jacob-Israel or, going back further, descendants of Abraham.

The first group was a remnant, and the second group was a multitude that John saw but could not count because of their size.

Commentators are split in their interpretation of these groups, based on the various interpretive approaches to the book of Revelation, whether it is the futuristic, historicist, allegorical, preterist, or some other approach. Again, these study notes are based on the historicist approach, which means we are attempting to link the symbology of the book to specific events that began to occur in John's day or shortly thereafter, and the historical events have been unfolding and will continue to unfold until the Day of God and the arrival of a new heaven and earth.

With this in mind, from the historical perspective, the 144,000 and the great multitude should be looked at in the context of the first few centuries of the early Church that Jesus is building. The embryonic church experienced great hardship and persecution in her infancy and, from a natural standpoint, one living through the times might have wondered if the light would be snuffed out forever.

Perhaps John himself wondered what the future held for God's people. After all, he had been banished to the rocky, desolate isle of Patmos. One can only wonder what thoughts rose up in his mind as he stared out over the sea to the land of the seven churches that lay beyond.

Thus, historically speaking, the message of Revelation 7 is that the Body of Christ, which is the Church, would not only survive the onslaught against it in that period, but that it would be victorious over it. The blood of the martyrs was not in vain, for upon their faithful witness and testimony the Church not only survived but triumphed, and it will do so throughout all centuries to follow and until the coming of the Lord.

Given this, chapter 7 was written primarily to encourage the saints that lived during that time. They especially needed it because they had just come through centuries of great persecution, but a very dark day lay ahead for the Church in which scripture would become a closed book to the common people.

However, having made this point, it must also be stressed that there is a universal application to chapter 7 for all the saints that have lived and will yet live until the coming of the Lord in all His glory. There is an encouragement to the conquerors or overcomers to **press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus** (Philippians 3:14). There are other such encouragements throughout Revelation. These are God's way of encouraging His people not to shrink back but to press on even as events around them seem so desperate and even if they find themselves in the midst of great persecution. Don't give up; press on; you are more than a conqueror through Him who loves you!

Now, let us return to the details of this chapter.

Seal #6 [Part 2]	Description After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth , so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree . (Revelation 7:1 NASB)
Symbology Four Winds	Meaning(s) Number of creation; God's creative work Earthly directions (north, south, east, west); great moving force
Period 395-400 AD	Interpretation Preparation for the opening of the 7th seal

Some commentators treat all of chapter 7 as an interlude to the chronological sequence of the six seals. In other words, they pull it out from the events of the opening of the sixth seal and treat it as if it were universal to the entire **Age of Pentecost** and not specific to a period of time in Church history. As stated already, undoubtedly, a case could be made for a universal application; nevertheless, this seems to miss the point that is clearly represented by the holding back of the four winds.

The end of chapter 6 made it clear that the Pagan Roman Empire had fallen and been replaced with (quaked into) an empire of an entirely different character; one that tolerated all religions and placed Christianity above them all. It could be called the beginning of **Christendom**, that is, a Christ-based (*Christen*) kingdom (*dom*).

In one sense, this was great news, for it released true believers in Christ to follow and obey the Lord openly and freely. Also, Christians were recruited to help run the government. However, in another sense, it was fraught with a new set of dangers, for new responsibilities also went with this new Christian power.

How would Christians, especially the visible church of bishops and priests, handle these new responsibilities? Would they manifest the **love of God** and the **righteousness of Christ**? Or, would they abuse it and act like the pagans had acted while they were in power? It didn't take long for the answer to manifest itself. **Schisms** over doctrinal matters began to crop up almost immediately until the love of God was drowned out over the supposed correctness of doctrine. True Christians who disagreed with mainstream thinking of the leadership were called **heretics**. Soon pagans, as well as the so-called heretics, were mistreated and persecuted until the character of Christendom was no better and, at times, even worse than Paganism because of its own arrogance, pretentiousness, and corruption.

In essence, the visible church failed to truly change the character of the kingdom and the heart of its leaders. Power in the hands of the carnal nature is a disaster no matter the label on the person. It matters not if the person or nation is labeled Christian, for the end result is the same. God's righteousness demands that it be impartially judged, irrespective of the person or nation.

Consequently, the judgment of God was about to come to the new Roman Empire or, what some have called, the new **Christian Empire**. To the north of Gaul (France), the **Goths** were being raised up to come against the WRE, putting it on a path to its downfall in 496 AD. The winds that were being held back were the mighty forces of God's judgment that would come upon the RE from all directions, beginning from the north, and they would affect God's creation, specifically, the **earth** (territory), the **sea**, and the **trees** of the RE. The opening of the 7th seal and the sounding of trumpets #1-2 attest to this fact.

Seal #6 [Part 3]	Description (2) And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God ; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, (3) saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads." (4) And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel : (Revelation 7:2-4 NASB)
Symbology Rising sun Seal Mark Bond-servant 12	Meaning(s) Sun of Righteousness Ownership; protection Cross Follower of the Lamb Number of the perfection of government or governmental perfection
Period 395-400 AD	Interpretation Protection of God's Remnant

Ascension of the Sun of Righteousness over the Roman Empire

With the four winds of judgment held back by the four angels, another angel ascended from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God. Previously, the blackened sun and the falling stars represented the fall of the pagan leaders of the RE, along with their pagan sun god. Their light was blocked out and fading away, eclipsed by a new light called *Christianity*.

But here the sun signifies something else, for where the sun was previously blackened, this one was rising in all its glory as the dawn of a new day. This sun was in ascension, meaning it was rising in power and authority not only over the Roman Empire but over the entire civilized world in that day. In other words, paganism was being replaced by a new Sun (Son), the very **Light of the World** manifested through a people having the seal of the living God. Malachi pointed to such as day.

"But for you who fear My name, the **Sun of righteousness shall rise up**, and healing will be on its wings. And you shall go out and frisk like calves of the stall." (Malachi 4:2 LITV)

Sealing the Remnant

Prior to the judgment of God being poured out on an empire that now openly espoused Christ in some measure, the angels had another work to do and that was to seal those who truly belonged to Christ in order to protect them from the coming judgments. This sealing is fashioned after what the Lord spoke to Ezekiel.

(4) The LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and **put a mark [tav] on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst**." (5) But to the others He said in my hearing, "Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity and do not spare. (6) "Utterly slay old men, young men, maidens, little children, and women, but **do not touch any man on whom is the mark**; and you shall start from My sanctuary." (Ezekiel 9:4-6 NASB)

Judgment was coming upon Jerusalem because of their abominable acts committed in defiance of the law of God and His covenant with the people. However, the Lord always has His few called a *remnant* who do not defile themselves in such a fashion and who remain true to their God. A mark on their foreheads indicated that they were not to be touched along with the unfaithful majority. They were set aside and protected from the judgment of God that fell on the rest. A similar promise was made to the church in Philadelphia (Revelation 3:10).

Mark, a Sign of the Cross

The Hebrew word for *mark* is *tav*, which is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In Phoenician Hebrew, which is what Ezekiel used, the *tav* is shaped like a cross. However, the shape changed while Judah was in Babylonian captivity where they learned to use Babylonian Aramaic letters, which were subsequently adopted into the Hebrew language. At any rate, the original shape of the word *mark* (used in Ezekiel 9:4) looked like a cross; so, it could be concluded that the mark of God was (and is) the Cross of Christ.

Carrying this thought forward to the 144,000, it is safe to assume that they were spiritually marked with the cross on their foreheads, thus identifying them as faithful followers of Christ to be protected from the coming judgments of God.

144,000 Bond-Servants of God

In his opening to *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, John identified himself as a bond-servant, and that he was writing to God's bond-servants to signify the things that must take place (Revelation 1:1). Some have used the term *bond-servant* to argue that this is a book written entirely for the Jew. However, as will be shown, this cannot be so. But first, what is the meaning of bond-servants? The answer starts with **the law of the bond-servant**.

(5) "But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; **I will not go out as a free man,**' (6) then his master shall bring him to God, then **he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently.** (Exodus 21:5-6 NASB)

Hebrew slaves were to serve for six years and in the seventh year they were to be set free, unless they chose to remain with their master whom they loved and desired to continue serving. If the slave desired to remain, then the master would pierce the slave's ear on the door as a sign that the slave had continually listened to his master and his law was written within the slave's heart. Henceforth, the slave would permanently serve his master as his bond-servant. Perhaps it could be seen as a promotion; he was promoted from slave to bond-servant.

Jesus is the perfect example of a bond-servant, for He **emptied Himself, taking on the form of a bond-servant** (Philippians 2:7). His ears were continually opened to His Father whose Law was written within His heart. David prophesied of Jesus as the suffering servant, the bond-servant of God, who came to do the will of God.

(6) Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired; **My ears You have opened;** burnt offering and sin offering You have not required. (7) Then I said, "Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. (8) **I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart.**" (Psalm 40:6-8 NASB; quoted in Hebrews 10:5-9 as proof this speaks of Jesus)

Jesus is the pattern or example for all who desire to be bond-servants of Christ. In his first epistle, John wrote that if we say we are abiding in Him, we ought to walk in the same manner as He walked (1 John 2:6). Thus, God's children should walk as bond-servants.

As a further proof, Jesus called Himself **the Door of the sheep** (John 10:7, 9). His sheep are to be attached to Him and His law written on their hearts, meaning their spiritual ears must be opened by being nailed to the Door, abiding in Him. The pierced sheep will obey His law because they delight to do His will, to be obedient to Him. These will become **sons of God**.

This is an important point, for some commentators point out that a bond-servant is not a son, implying they will never be one. But this is not true. Being a faithful bond-servant is the path to **sonship**. First, we must be a servant, then a bond-servant, and finally a son. When we first believe on the Lord, we are not sons in the fullest meaning of the word. We are immature, just as a baby is immature. We are born a son, but until we reach maturity, we are still a minor.

(1) Now I say, as long as **the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything**, (2) but he is **under guardians and managers until the date set by the father**. (3) So also we, **while we were children**, were held in **bondage** under the elemental things of the world. (Galatians 4:1-3 NASB)

In other words, at the first, there is no difference between a child and a slave. A child of God must grow up and mature to be a son of God, one who will receive the full inheritance on the date set by the Father.

The point is this: The 144,000 bond-servants belonged to the Lord Jesus; they were on the path of sonship, but they had not attained to it at this point in John's vision. Simply, they were sealed because their ears had been pierced to the Door, they had His law, and **they followed the Lamb wherever He goes** (Revelation 14:4). They are conquerors.

144,000 Sealed Conquerors

As to be expected, commentators differ over the question of whether the 144,000 is a literal or a symbolic number.

First, John did not count the number that had been sealed; he was told the number by the angel. After this vision, he saw many others in white robes, but he was not told their number nor could he count them, so he said he beheld a great multitude. Given this, it is safe to assume that the 144,000, whether literal or symbolic, must signify a limited number, such as would be found in a remnant.

Second, the number 144 is symbolic, for it is a multiple of the number **12**, which is **the number of governmental perfection**. Thus, 12 tribes times 12,000 from each tribe yields 144,000. At a minimum, **the 144,000 signify God's perfect government**. This makes sense given this is recorded in the section of Revelation generally regarded as the **throne section** and the judgments of the seals have pertained to pagan Rome and its political-religious (pagan) system. Whereas the governments of men are imperfect and often filled with corruption and glaring flaws, God's government is perfect and flawless.

Third, governments require leaders, and not everyone can be nor will be a leader. It takes many kinds of people to run a government. The **Kingdom of God** is no different. In fact, Jesus told His twelve disciples that they would sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). In the parable of the minas, Jesus promised that those who had been faithful with the minas would rule over cities (Luke 19:14-17). This confirms the idea that the 144,000 is indeed a limited number and does not include the masses of believers, at least in the context of the historicist interpretation of the 6th seal.

Fourth, as He ended His epistles to His seven churches, Jesus confirmed that only the conquerors or overcomers would be granted the right to reign with Him.

The one **who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne**, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. (Revelation 3:21 ESV)

This has led me and others to view the 144,000 as conquerors. I continue to hold this view; however, most of us who see it this way have also believed that the 144,000 signify all the conquerors throughout the entire **Pentecostal Age** (last 2,000 years). Some of my past writings have made this point and I continue to make the point; however, I am open to adjustment. So, let me explain.

Fifth, since the **four winds** are specific to the sounding of trumpets #1 and #2 after the 7th seal is opened, which deal with events that occurred from 400-543 AD, it seems logical that the 144,000 are the conquerors, the ones sealed to be protected through this period. After all, again, the winds seem to have a very specific purpose related to a specific period of time.

I suppose that a counter argument to this could be that the winds are actually representative of all the judgments that follow all the way through to the end of the 7th bowl judgment. There is some merit to such thinking; however, the winds are held back specifically in reference to harming the *earth*, the *sea*, and the *trees*, and the only places these are mentioned in this *direct* fashion are in Revelation 8:7 (1st trumpet) and 8:8 (2nd trumpet) that immediately follow the so-called *interlude* of Revelation 7.

Thus, I conclude (at least for now) that they do not specifically represent all the conquerors for all times, except, perhaps, in the sense that they are a type of the remnant that have followed them down through the centuries. Thus, all conquerors can identify with the 144,000.

From the Tribes of the Sons of Israel

Now, there is one more piece of evidence to support the above conclusion, and it has to do with the fact that John was told that the 144,000 were from twelve of the tribes of the sons of Israel.

As to be expected, there are many interpretations of the 144,000 sons of Israel, one of which says that they represent converted Jews who will evangelize the world for 42 months during the great tribulation that is yet to come. This is most often held by those who interpret Revelation futuristically and believe in a pre-tribulation rapture. I was taught this view early in my Christian life, so I held to it for a season, until I began to search scripture on my own. Now I see it much differently. So, let us simply look at the facts.

First, we know that the 144,000 are sealed for the living God, meaning they are saved and, as such, are **Christians under the New Covenant**, not the **Old Covenant that had been made obsolete** (Hebrews 8:13) and passed away. At this point in Revelation, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD, as prophesied by Jesus (Matthew 22:7), had occurred.

Second, scripture is abundantly clear that one is **saved by grace through faith** (Ephesians 2:8) and not on the basis of pedigree, bloodline, or genealogy. John made this point in his gospel.

(12) But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, (13) **who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.** (John 1:12-13 NASB)

Third, being saved by grace through faith does not disqualify one based on genealogy either. In other words, one's background does not prevent one from becoming a Christian. Salvation is always **but of God as the gift of God**. Of course, this point is so obvious that it is hardly necessary to even mention.

However, let us not discount the idea that the 144,000, whether a literal or symbolic number, are/were, in fact, Christians who were legitimate blood-descendants of Israel. After all, Paul wrote that **all Israel shall be saved** (Romans 11:26). Were they a **new creation** that is part of **spiritual Israel** (Galatians 6:6:15-16)? Most definitely! Were they **true Jews** as God defines a Jew (Romans 2:28-29)? Most definitely! Were they members of the **Body of Christ**, which is the Church that Christ is building? Most definitely! Could they have also been honest-to-goodness **descendants of Jacob-Israel**? Why not!

Fourth, Jesus stated that He **was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel**, and He sent out His disciples with the same mission (Matthew 10:6; 15:24). Now, we know that Jesus is the Savior of the World, but we cannot discount His mission. The fact of the matter is that the lost sheep of the house of Israel had to hear the gospel and a remnant birthed out of these sheep so that the other nations could hear the good news.

In Jesus' day, He was mostly surrounded by but not entirely those of the house of Judah (Jews), which included Judahites, Benjamites, and Levites. The rest of the tribes, known as the house of Israel (10 tribes), had gone into captivity in 723-721 BC, never to return to Palestine as a united nation. Their national identity was lost and has not been recovered to this day.

The first disciples of Jesus understood this so that, after Jesus' crucifixion, they knew they had to go beyond the borders of Judea to seek out the house of Israel and tell them the good news. Of course, Jesus had instructed them to do this (Acts 1:8), but they did it with Israel's history in mind. This is why James addressed his epistle to twelve tribes in dispersion (James 1:1); Peter wrote to the scattered aliens (1 Peter 1:1); and Paul, later in his life, most likely, traveled to the British Isles, a place that Jeremiah the prophet probably had fled to nearly 700 years earlier.

Fifth, as one of the first disciples and the longest living one, John knew all this. Can you imagine the excitement this must have brought to John's heart? We are not told, so we can only surmise, but I believe that Revelation 7:4-8 was the Lords' way of telling John that the mission had been accomplished. It was an encouragement to the aged apostle: **Well done, good and faithful servant**. John and the others had reached the remotest parts of the earth and brought the good news to all the lost tribes of the house of Israel. Up to this point in John's life, there had been no way of knowing for sure that they had in fact reached all the tribes with the gospel. But now John knew for sure. He might not have known the date attached to the conversion of this remnant, but he knew the mission succeeded. However, although this might have been a great encouragement to John, it obviously was not the main point.

Finally, the main point is that, by the year 400 AD, there was indeed a believing remnant from the tribes of the sons of Israel that had been sealed in order to protect them from the great judgment that was about to befall the Christian Empire of the West based in Rome. This judgment would lead to the demise of the WRE in a short 76 years. Interestingly, the number **76** signifies "**cleansing**" or "**blotting out**." The testimony of Jesus and the Word of God would not be lost as the political system was blotted out, and this remnant would be part of a great multitude, as evidenced by the remainder of Revelation.

There is much more regarding the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the true Jew, and the meaning of the order and names of the twelve tribes that are listed. These are explained in supplemental notes.

Seal	Description
#6 [Part 4]	<p>(9) After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; (10) and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." (Revelation 7:9-10 NASB)</p> <p>(14) ... "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (15) "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. (16) "They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; (17) for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes." (Revelation 7:14-17 NASB)</p>

Symbology	Meaning(s)
Temple	Body of Christ, Holy Temple in the Lord, Dwelling of God in Spirit
Tabernacle	New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:3)
White	Color of saintly righteousness; justification by faith, acts, and crown
Robe	Clothed in glory
Palm Branches	Tabernacles (immortality) (Leviticus 23:40)
Water of Life	Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39); New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:2)

Period	Interpretation
395-400 AD	Victory of the Martyrs & Conquerors

Again, there are commentators who see this great multitude as coming out of *the* great tribulation that will close out our present wicked age. In the universal sense, the great multitude is representative of all the saints throughout Church history, especially those who go through the sufferings of great trials and tribulations. Even in our day there are Christians who are suffering through great trials. An image of a great throng of suffering saints standing victoriously before the throne is a great encouragement to all saints.

However, from a historical perspective, these must be the saints who came out of the great persecution that occurred during the entire time that pagan Rome ruled, for this scene is recorded after the pronounced fall of the *pagan* Roman Empire.

The cry of the blood of the martyrs went up from beneath the altar with the breaking of the 5th seal. Their witness demanded to know how long until their blood was avenged. Symbolically, they were given white robes and told to wait a while longer, for there was more persecution to come. The 5th seal is primarily dated during the time of Diocletian's 10-year period of harsh persecution; nevertheless, persecution, in varying degrees of intensity, occurred during the first four centuries until the Christian Empire took root. The good news is that many saints came through the great tribulation victoriously. They are more than conquerors and for that they will be rewarded when mortality is put off and immortality is put on in the first resurrection.

This last statement is vital to our understanding of this particular vision. They are not in heaven at this point in history, for **no one has ascended into heaven, but He who has descended from heaven: the Son Man** (John 3:13); and **the King of kings and Lord of lords alone possesses immortality** (1 Timothy 6:15, 16); and the soul is not immortal, for **the dead do not**

know anything (Ecclesiastes 9:5), for those who believe on Jesus and die are **dead in Christ, asleep in Jesus** (1 Thessalonians 4:14, 15, 16).

The imagery of this vision is all symbolic of what is to come for the saints who victoriously lived through or died during the great tribulation, along with all the saints who would follow in their footsteps in the centuries that followed, and who will yet conquer to the end of the age. If these great tribulation saints will make it to the throne in the Day of Christ, so will the rest of the conquerors make it. This was the encouragement to John and those who lived in the centuries that followed and is our encouragement in this day.

We need to keep in mind that when John saw this vision, which was most likely in the late 90's AD, there was well over 200 years of additional persecution remaining that would be directed at the Body of Christ. The Lord's people needed to know that their suffering was not in vain, but that there was great reward in it.

As a side note, I find it rather strange that some who insist that all of Revelation is about symbols and not to be taken literally, view the scene of the great multitude as literal; that is, the saints are literally "in heaven" at this point in John's vision.

To recap, this scene is an encouragement to those who lived through or died in the past great tribulation, for it reveals that there is reward waiting for them. BUT, it does not mean they received the reward then; it pointed to the **Day of Christ** (Philippians 1:6, 10; 2:16), which is when they will stand before the throne of the Lamb to receive their reward. Paul makes this clear.

(7) **I have fought the good fight** [i.e., a conqueror], **I have finished the course, I have kept the faith**; (8) **in the future** [not in his death but in resurrection] there is laid up for me **the crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, **the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day** [Day of Christ]; and not only to me, but **also to all** who have loved His appearing [all the conquerors]. (2 Timothy 4:7-8 NASB)

Now, let us go back to the verse in question and look at some of the other details and symbols.

First, the great multitude came out of **every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues**. This is in contrast to the 144,000 from the tribes of the sons of Israel, which could be called the first fruits. The multitude is not restricted to the tribes of Israel but includes some from all the tribes. In other words, salvation is open to all and the gospel has successfully reached some from every nation, presumably the known Roman world in that day, and all the tribes, just not of Israel. But it includes even more, for those not identified with a particular tribe are included along with all of the various known tongues. This is simply an all-inclusive statement to emphasize that no one is excluded from the gospel. This would be especially directed to the Jew who thought they alone were (are) God's chosen people, and later, the Mohammedans (Islamists) who thought they alone were (are) Allah's chosen people.

Second, again we see the white robes. The great multitude was justified by **the righteousness from God on the basis of faith, through faith in Christ** (Philippians 3:9). But they will also be rewarded for their righteousness and faithfulness to Christ. To those who conquer, the Lord Jesus promises **white garments** (Revelation 3:5), and His bride is given to wear **bright fine linen** which is **the righteous acts of the saints** (Revelation 19:8). They will wear the victor's **crown of righteousness** (1 Timothy 4:8).

Third, the **palm branches** being in their hands symbolize the **Feast of Tabernacles** or Booths. (39) **On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD for seven days, with a rest on the first day**

and a rest on the eighth day. (40) 'Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, **palm branches** and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. (41) 'You shall thus celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. (42) 'You shall live in **booths** for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths.... (Leviticus 23:39-42 NASB)

Israel was to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days and on the eighth day they were to have a holy convocation. This feast symbolizes the glorification of the saints when they will put on immortal bodies (booths) and from their innermost being will flow rivers of living water, which speaks of the great multitude being led to **the springs of the water of life**, being full of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:19) in the image of the Son of God (1 John 3:2). Jesus confirmed this as he went up to the Feast of Tabernacles and cried out on the last day or the eighth day.

(37) Now on **the last day, the great day of the feast**, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. (38) "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, '**From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.**'" (John 7:37-38 NASB)

John further confirmed this with his vision of **New Jerusalem**.

And he showed me a pure **river of water of life**, bright as crystal, coming forth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. (Revelation 22:1 LITV)

This leads to the last two symbols: They serve Him day and night in **His temple**; and He who sits on the throne will spread **His tabernacle** over them. Paul tells us who the Temple truly is.

(19) So, then, **you are** no longer strangers and tenants, but you are fellow citizens of the saints and of the family of God, (20) being built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the cornerstone, (21) in whom all the building being fitted together grows into **a holy temple in the Lord**, (22) in whom you also are being built together into **a dwelling place of God in Spirit**. (Ephesians 2:19-22 LITV)

John confirms that the identity of the Tabernacle and the Temple. It is New Jerusalem, a city of living stones, of a people called sons of God.

(2) And I saw **the holy city, New Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. (3) And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, **the tabernacle of God is among men**, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them.... (Revelation 21:2-3 NASB)

I saw no temple in it, for **the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple**. (Revelation 21:22 NASB)

Thus, all the imagery surrounding the great multitude speaks of a people called New Jerusalem. Again, this great multitude has passed off the scene and is awaiting the resurrection into immortality, the eighth day of Tabernacles, when they will receive their dwelling from heaven, a new body, conformed to Christ. They will be joined with other multitudes (making up New Jerusalem) that follow in their footsteps who are found worthy of the Kingdom and to gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ in that Day (1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:5; 2:14).