

**The Fate of Believers in the Great
Tribulation (Part I)
A Remnant of 144,000
From Israel Will Be Saved**



**REVELATION 7:1-8
TEXT, EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL
HELPS**

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THE SEVEN SEAL JUDGMENTS: EVENTS PRECEDING THE GREAT TRIBULATION, [Revelation 6:1-7:17](#)

A. The Fate of Believers in the Great Tribulation (Part I): A Remnant of 144,000 From Israel Will Be Saved, [Revelation 7:1-8](#)

[\(Revelation 7:1-8\)](#) **Introduction:** Jesus Christ is holding the great book of God in His hands, the Book of Destiny, the book that tells what is to happen at the end of the world. The book is so important and so secretive that God has it bound with seven seals until it is time for it to be opened.

Remember: the events have not yet happened upon earth. They are things that are to happen in the end time. But God has given us a glimpse into the things. **Why?** To warn us to turn to His Son. Christ alone can save us from the judgment to come. Therefore, we must follow Him ever so diligently while we walk upon earth. This glimpse into the great book of God, into the destiny of the world, is given to us in this great book of Revelation.

We have just seen Jesus Christ break open six of the seals that bind the book. To our horror, when He broke them open, the four horsemen of the Apocalypse were seen storming across the face of the earth with their terror and devastation. We have seen how the four horsemen represent the wars and killing, famine and pestilence, hunger and starvation, death and hell that the antichrist will unleash upon the earth. We have seen how evil will mass together every force of demonic power it can in order to make a final assault upon the earth. And we have seen that the destructive devastation will kill one fourth of the world's population. Shocking! One fourth of the population will be killed by the catastrophic devastation of evil unleashed upon the earth. But to our horror, this is not all.

God's great book declares this is just the *beginning of sorrows and woes*. But this terrible devastation, as horrible as it is, is nothing compared to what is yet to come. When all the judgments have fallen, the earth and the world shall be utterly destroyed. How it is to happen will be seen when the seventh seal is broken open. When the seventh seal is broken, the seven seal judgments are over; the period of history that will be known as the *beginning of sorrows and woes* will be finished.

But the *great tribulation* itself will be launched by **the seventh seal**.....

- a. the *great tribulation* that will witness the shattering blast of seven trumpets of judgment.
- b. the *great tribulation* that will witness the wrath of seven bowls of judgment poured out upon the earth.

Now, for a critical question: Will anyone be saved through such terrible days? Can anyone survive such terrible happenings? As Scripture itself has just asked:

"The great day of [God's] wrath is come...who shall be able to stand?" ([Rev. 6:17](#)).

Can anyone stand? Will anyone turn to the Lord and be delivered through this terrible time? Yes! There is to be a remnant of Israel saved: 144,000 Jews shall be saved.

- 1. The winds of judgment are in the hands of God and His angels, not in the hands of evil (v.1-2).**
- 2. God will give the most wonderful command: to delay the judgments until God's people can be sealed (v.2-3).**
- 3. God will give the wonderful counsel to seal 144,000 Jews from all the tribes of Israel (v.4-8).**

1. (Revelation 7:1-2) End Time— Israel— Jews— Salvation: the winds of judgment are in the hands of God and His angels, not in the hands of evil.

This is a most wonderful truth, and it is exactly what is being declared here. Four angels stand at the four corners of the earth holding the four winds of judgment so that they cannot blow upon the earth. **"The four corners of the earth are the four main points of the compass: north, south, east, and west"** ([Lehman Strauss. *The Book of the Revelation*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1964, p.170](#)).

The picture is that God is in control of the whole earth, of every direction upon earth. And He is merciful. He has not unleashed His avenging angels of wrath upon earth, not yet. In mercy He has chosen to wait a little while longer.

Thought 1. This is a most comforting thought: to know that judgment is in the hands of God; to know that it is God Himself who is to execute judgment. It is comforting because of what Jesus Christ has done for us. Just think! Every person has the privilege of escaping judgment. No person has to stand before the face of God at the throne of judgment. Every person can be saved and delivered from condemnation by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.

But note: the winds of judgment are to be unleashed upon the earth. Every person will face these awful times unless he has surrendered his life to Christ. And then most tragic of all, he will have to face the eternal judgment and condemnation from the presence of God forever.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" ([Matthew 25:31-32](#)).

"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" ([2 Peter 3:7](#)).

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" ([Rev. 20:12-15](#)).

2. ([Revelation 7:2-3](#)) Seal— Israel, Salvation of: God will give the most wonderful command.

The command will be to delay the judgments of the great tribulation until all the servants of God can be sealed. The *seal* means the mark of possession, authority, power, protection, and preservation.

- a. In ancient times a king's ring was his seal. He would stamp the mark of his ring upon all official documents showing their possession, authority, and power. This is certainly part of the meaning here. The 144,000 will be sealed—protected and preserved—by God (cp. [Genesis 41:42](#); [Esther 3:10](#); [Esther 8:2](#); [Daniel 6:17](#); [Matthew 27:66](#)).

"And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads" ([Rev. 9:4](#)).

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads" ([Rev. 14:1](#)).

"And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads" ([Rev. 22:4](#)).

"Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads" ([Rev. 7:3](#)).

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

- b. In the New Testament the believer is sealed with the Spirit of God; that is, the Holy Spirit seals and guarantees that the believer belongs to God. The presence of the Holy Spirit living within the heart and life of the believer is his seal and his guarantee that he will escape the judgment of God and live eternally with God.

"Which is the earnest [guarantee] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" ([Ephes. 1:14](#)).

"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" ([2 Cor. 1:22](#)).

"Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit" ([2 Cor. 5:5](#)).

In contrast to the seal of God upon His servants, the lawless and rebellious followers of the beast (**the antichrist**) will bear his mark or seal ([Rev. 16:2](#)). God will seal His servants to identify them and to assure their protection from the wrath and destruction coming upon the earth. Remember: God does not condemn His followers. His followers escape the judgment of God. The judgment and destruction from God's hands fall only on **"those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads."** This is clearly stated in Revelation.

- a. The demonic forces that are to be unleashed upon earth will not touch God's people.

"And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads" ([Rev. 9:4](#)).

- b. The bowl judgment of sores will not touch God's people. Judgment is poured out only upon those who have the mark of the beast.

"And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image" ([Rev. 16:2](#)).

This should not seem strange to us, that God will judge the unbelievers who follow the antichrist and not judge believers. As stated, God does not condemn His people; He condemns and judges unbelievers. And the judgments of the great tribulation are to be upon an evil and apostate world. A good example is Moses and the plagues of Israel. Remember the event: the ten plagues, as terrible and devastating as they were, fell upon all the Egyptians; but they did not afflict the believers among Israel. The true believers were *sealed* from the plagues.

However, it should be remembered that believers will be persecuted and slaughtered by the antichrist during the last three and a half years of his reign, that is, during the great tribulation (cp. [Rev. 7:14](#)). The believers of the end time will not suffer the judgments of God upon the apostate world, but they will suffer the persecution of the antichrist.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" ([2 Peter 3:9](#)).

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" ([Jude 14-15](#)).

"Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work" ([Psalm 62:12](#)).

"I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" ([Jeremiah 17:10](#)).

Thought 1. God gives the most wonderful promises to genuine believers. No believer will ever be judged and condemned to death and hell. There is nothing, absolutely nothing that can separate a genuine believer from the love of God.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" ([John 3:16](#)).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" ([John 5:24](#)).

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" ([Romans 5:8-10](#)).

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" ([Romans 8:35-39](#)).

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" ([1 John 3:1](#)).

3. ([Revelation 7:4-8](#)) Israel— Salvation: God will give the wonderful counsel to seal 144,000 Jewish believers.

And note: there will be **12,000** from each of the twelve tribes. This is exactly what this passage says. This is a clear indication that Israel will be saved in the end time. This is exactly what Christ revealed to Paul. (See [Romans 9-11](#) where the problem of Israel is dealt with and [Romans 11:25-36](#).)

This passage should be taken at its face value, that is, that 144,000 Jews will be converted during the tribulation. There are several strong reasons for this.

- 1.** This passage says that **144,000 Jews** will be converted. This is the very subject of [Rev. 7](#): to show who is to be saved during the tribulation. The answer is that both Jews and Gentiles will be saved, some **144,000 Jews** and an innumerable number of Gentiles ([Rev. 7:9-17](#) of the next outline). This is described in the simplest and plainest of terms.
- 2.** The 144,000 are apparently a special body of Jewish believers who are dedicated to serve the Lord Jesus Christ totally and wholly during the tribulation of the last days. Note three things that Revelation says about them. (See [Rev. 14:4-5](#) for more discussion.)
 - a.** They are virgins, that is, they have never married. The days of the end time will be filled with horror after horror. The worst holocaust the world has ever witnessed will be launched by the antichrist and millions will be killed. A special commitment will be needed to stand up for Christ. Apparently, these **144,000** form a *special body of believers* who vow and commit their lives to the end to never deny Christ. They apparently take a special vow to be the encouragers and ministers to the believers and to the others who will be so severely attacked and persecuted by the antichrist. (The vow and commitment the **144,000** will take will be somewhat like the vow the Pharisees took when they first formed to stand against Antiochus Epiphanes. See below [Deeper Study # 1, Pharisees—Acts 23:8](#) for more discussion.)

"I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be [single]. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife" ([1 Cor. 7:26-27](#)).

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in the mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" ([Rev. 14:4-5](#)).

- b. They are called the servants of our God. They are a body of believers who give themselves to serve God while ungodliness and evil are raging in the end time. They will be ministering, witnessing, and encouraging the believers and the Jews who are having to flee into the wilderness and hiding places of the world to escape the holocaust. The 144,000 will have a great part to play in the turning of Israel to Christ, their true Messiah, in the end time.

"Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads" ([Rev. 7:3](#)).

- c. They are said to be redeemed from among men (Jewish men), the firstfruits offered to God and Christ. This simply means that they will be the first Jews to be saved in the tribulation.

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb *withersoever he goeth* [leads]. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb" ([Rev. 14:4](#)).

3. This is undoubtedly part of the restoration of Israel. Christ clearly revealed that Israel was to be saved in the end time. (See [Romans 9-11](#).)

"God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot [know] ye not what the scripture saith of Elias [Elijah]? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel" ([Romans 11:2](#)).

"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" ([Romans 11:15](#)).

"And they [Israel] also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou [Gentile believers] wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?" ([Romans 11:23-24](#)).

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" ([Romans 11:25-26](#)).

DEEPER STUDY # 1

([Acts 23:8](#)) Pharisees: the word means *the separated ones*. The Pharisees were strict religionists. Their religious sect arose about B.C. 175. A Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes, tried to stamp out the Jewish religion and replace it with Greek customs and

practices. A number of Jewish men opposed this threat and determined among themselves to save the Jewish religion. They refused to practice Greek customs and dedicated themselves to practicing the Jewish law in the strictest sense. They felt that by carrying out every little detail of the Jewish law and by teaching others to do the same, they could save the Jewish religion and nation and keep it from dying out. (See below [Deeper Study # 2—Matthew 12:10](#) for more discussion.)

Several things should be noted.

1. They were the orthodox of their day—a sect or school of religious thought. They were organized solely for preserving the law and the Jewish religion. Thereby, they were to save the Jewish nation.

2. They were strict literalists. The Jewish law was expanded into thousands and thousands of little rules and regulations by the Scribes. These rules and regulations were known as the Scribal or Oral Law. More than fifty volumes or books were eventually needed to hold the regulations. (See below [Deeper Study # 3—Luke 6:2](#) for more discussion).

3. The Pharisees were a body of the most zealous religionists.

4. There were never many Pharisees—never more than 6,000. The strictness and demands of the sect were too hard for the common people.

5. They were in dead earnest—dedicated and zealous, self-denying, and moral. No man could give his life to so desperate and restrictive a task unless he was totally genuine.

6. They were self-righteous, heartless, and hypocritical ([Luke 18:9](#)). They lacked any sense of need or sin ([Luke 7:39](#)).

7. They were bitterly opposed to the Sadducees, hating and despising them, feeling that the Sadducees were traitors to the nation. However, the Pharisees were forced to quietly cooperate with the Sadducees because the Sadducees were the primary ruling party of the nation.

8. They were the main opponents of Jesus Christ and were unsparing in their denunciation of Him. Their savage attacks were primarily for two reasons. First, He was not a graduate of any of their rabbinical schools, nor a member of any of their religious sects. Second, He attacked their rules and regulations which had been added to God's law (see [Matthew 23:1-36](#) ; [Luke 11:37-54](#)).

DEEPER STUDY # 2

([Matthew 12:10](#)) **Religionists:** the religionists' conflict with Jesus over religious beliefs and rules is sometimes thought by modern man to be petty and harsh, or else such conflicts are just not understood. Three facts will help a person in understanding why the conflicts happened and were life-threatening, ending in the murder of Jesus Christ.

1. The Jewish nation had been held together by their religious beliefs. Through the centuries the Jewish people had been conquered by army after army, and by the millions they had been deported and scattered over the world. Even in the day of Jesus they were enslaved by Rome.

Their religion was the binding force that kept Jews together, in particular.....

- a. their belief that God had called them to be a distinctive people (who worshipped the only true and living God).
- b. their rules governing the Sabbath and the temple, intermarriage, worship and cleansing, and what foods they could and could not eat.

This belief and these rules protected them from alien beliefs and from being swallowed up by other peoples through intermarriage. Their religion was what maintained their distinctiveness as a people and as a nation.

Jewish leaders knew this. They knew that *their religion* was the binding force that held their nation together. Therefore, they opposed anyone or anything that threatened to *break or weaken* the laws of their religion and nation.

2. The religionists were men of deep, deep conviction. They were strong in their beliefs; therefore, they became steeped in religious belief and practice. To break any law or rule governing belief or practice was a serious offense, for it taught *loose* behavior. And loose behavior, once it had spread enough, would weaken their religion. This is the reason Jesus was committing a great offense by breaking their law. In their minds, He was weakening their religion and threatening their nation.

3. The religionists were men who had profession, position, recognition, esteem, livelihood, and security. Anyone who went contrary to what they believed and taught was a threat to all they had. Some religionists undoubtedly felt that Jesus was a threat to them. Every time Jesus broke their law, He was undermining their very position and security. (See [Matthew 12:1-8](#); [Matthew 16:1-12](#); [Matthew 21:23](#); [Matthew 22:15-22](#); [Matthew 22:23-33](#); [Matthew 22:34-40](#); and [Matthew 23:1-12](#).)

The errors of the religionists were fourfold.

1. They misinterpreted and corrupted God's Word (see [Matthew 12:1-3](#); cp. [Romans 9:4](#)).

2. They committed serious sin after serious sin in God's eyes (see [1 Thes. 2:15-16](#); cp. [Romans 2:17-29](#)).

3. They rejected God's way of righteousness, God's Messiah, which is Jesus Christ (see [Romans 11:28](#); cp. [Romans 10:1-21](#), esp. [Romans 10:1-4](#); [Romans 10:19-21](#)).

4. They allowed religion in its tradition and ritual to become more important than meeting the basic needs of human life: the need for God and the need for spiritual, mental, and physical health. Christ, being the true Messiah, was bound to expose such error.

Thus the battle lines were drawn.

- a. The Messiah knew that He had to liberate people from such enslaving behavior. He had to save them so they could worship God in freedom of spirit.
- b. The religionists felt that they had to oppose Christ because He was a threat to their nation and to their own personal position and security.

The religionists' attack took two forms.

1. First, they tried to discredit Christ so the multitudes would stop following Him (cp. [Matthew 21:46](#)).

"And they asked him, saying; Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse Him" ([Matthew 12:10](#)).

"And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him" ([Luke 6:7](#)).

"Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" ([Matthew 22:15-17](#).)

2. Second, failing to discredit Him, they sought some way to kill Him.

"The Pharisees went out, and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him" ([Matthew 12:14](#)).

"Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas. And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him" ([Matthew 26:3-4](#)).

"And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him: for they feared the people" ([Luke 22:2](#)).

"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God" ([John 5:18](#)).

"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry because the Jews sought to kill him" ([John 7:1](#)). (Cp. [John 7:19-20, 25](#).)

DEEPER STUDY # 3

([Luke 6:2](#)) **Scribes—Scribal Law—Pharisees**: these Pharisees were probably Scribes. The Scribes were a profession of men sometimes called lawyers (see below [Deeper Study # 4—Matthew 22:35](#)). They were some of the most devoted and committed men to religion in all of history, and were of the sect known as the Pharisees. However, every Pharisee was not a Scribe. A Scribe was more of a scholar, more highly trained than the average Pharisee (see above [Deeper Study # 1, Pharisees—Acts 23:8](#)).

They had two primary functions.

1. The Scribes copied the written law, the Old Testament Scriptures. In their copying function they were strict copiers, meticulously keeping count of every letter in every word. This exactness was necessary, for God Himself had given the written law to the Jewish nation. Therefore, the law was not only the very Word of God, it was the greatest thing in the life of the Jewish nation. It was considered the most precious possession in all the world; consequently, the Jewish nation was committed to the preservation of the law ([Neh. 8:1-8](#)). A young Jew could enter no greater profession than the profession of Scribes.

2. The Scribes studied, classified, and taught the moral law. This function brought about the Oral or Scribal Law that was so common in Jesus' day. It was the law of rules and regulations. There were, in fact, so many regulations that over fifty large volumes were required when they were finally put into writing. The great tragedy was that through the centuries, the Jews began to place the Oral law over the written law (see [Matthew 12:1-8](#); see above [Deeper Study # 2—Matthew 12:10](#); and [Matthew 15:1-20](#)).

The Scribes felt that the law was God's final word. Everything God wanted man to do could be deduced from it; therefore, they drew out of the law every possible rule they could and insisted that life was to be lived in conformity to these rules. Rules were to be a way of life, the preoccupation of a man's thoughts. At first these rules and regulations were taught by word of mouth; however, in the third century after Christ they were put into certain writings.

The Halachoth: rules that were to govern the ritual of worship.

The Talmud: made up of two parts.

1. The Mishnah: sixty-three discussions of various subjects of the law.
2. Gemara: the sacred legends of the people.

Midrashim: the commentaries on the writings.

Hagada: thoughts on the commentaries.

DEEPER STUDY # 4

([Matthew 22:35](#)) **Lawyer (nomikos)**: a profession of laymen who studied, taught, interpreted, and dealt with the practical questions of Jewish law. They were a special group within the profession commonly called Scribes (cp. [Mark 12:28](#)). They functioned both in the court and synagogues (cp. [Luke 7:30](#); [Luke 10:25](#); [Luke 11:45, 46, 52](#); [Luke 14:3](#); [Titus 3:13](#)). They apparently dealt more with the study and interpretation of the law.