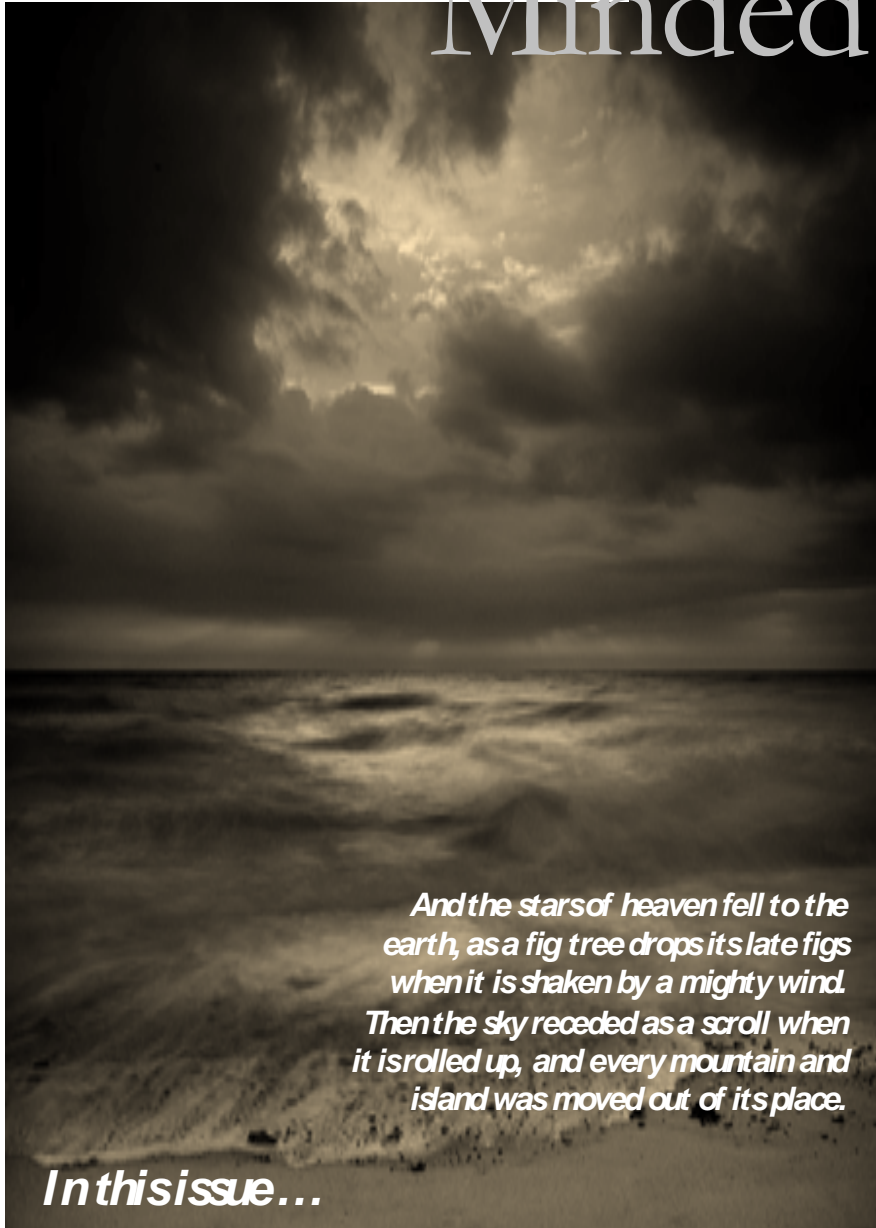


You're of no earthly value unless you're...

Heavenly Minded



And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

In this issue...

Tragedy and Triumph Unsealed A Happy Troop of Warriors

See www.heavenlyminded.com for this issue and much more!

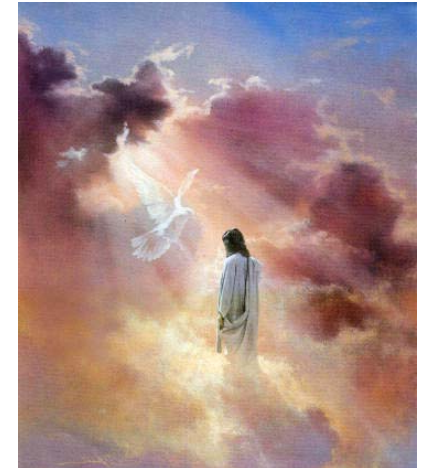
Dear Friends,

It's easy to get worked up if you tune in to the political chatter or the propaganda oops, I mean news channels. Chaos reigns in this world or so it can seem. I can fall into that mindset, and so, it was such a blessing to talk with my wife yesterday about her overhearing a guy just pouring out his heart to a friend at the coffee shop. His friend used it as an opportunity to share the gospel and shortly, a new child of God was born! Just hearing that revived my stressed out heart and shined beautifully upon my inner man. I'm sure you all know what I mean.

This sin filled world is not going to last much longer but that young man will live forever in joyful adoration of His Savior.

If you're a student of Bible prophecy, you know that the turmoil in our political, economic, social, international and religious arenas is worsening as the world is rejecting God's light. Sinful men and women prefer darkness; they celebrate their egos and hate whatever smacks of godliness. But the good news for all who trust sincerely in the risen Jesus Christ is that it's all going to be made right quite soon.

May we each find and use the opportunity God has given us to make a difference in eternity while there's time – to share God's great news. There's real peace and purpose in that, isn't there. "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."



*In Christ's Love,
John and Darlene*

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Tragedy and Triumph

Revelation 5

The Bible says that in heaven, God will wipe every tear away, and John the apostle, while viewing the throne room in heaven, is about to weep profusely. That's because a cataclysmic tragedy is presented to him.

*And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" And **no one** in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.*

So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

As John is watching, a scroll is in God's possession. What could possibly be in this scroll that's so confidential and so important? No one in the created order, seen or unseen, can open it or even look upon it. As he describes it, there are seven seals upon it and writing both inside and on the outside of it.

Some have suggested that this is the title deed to planet earth

and initially that sounds good, but there's a problem with that – the earth is already the Lord's forever. Psalm 24:1 says, "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." For this reason, I think there's a better explanation.

In the book of Leviticus 25:25 – 31, we find a very interesting law laid down by God pertaining to redemption. In short, if someone loses possession of his land, he can redeem it from the new owner at the appropriate price. If he that lost the property is too poor to redeem it, he has to wait till the year of Jubilee at which time it will once again become his possession. However, there's a different rule for houses in walled cities. If someone loses possession of this type of property (i.e. man made) and cannot redeem it within the allotted time (one year) because of poverty or indebtedness, that property forever becomes the property of the new owner. It can never be redeemed again.

All that is to say that the land, the earth, is redeemable, but that which pertains to man can only be redeemed by the appropriate price within the specified time.

Back in the garden of Eden, mankind 'sold' his property to Satan. In willful rebellion against God, he effectively sold his soul and became the servant of sin. From that point, Satan had certain property rights and only a

very specific price and time of redemption could apply to that property. The price of redemption was one sinless man, an Adam for an Adam, so to speak. The time limit or 'deadline' on the redemption was seemingly set by God in Daniel chapter nine. For more on this, see our lesson entitled, "This Your Day" in which we showed that the period concluded on the Friday following the exact day prophesied that He would enter Jerusalem, hailed as the King, the Son of David.

When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, one of the temptations included this man made property. In Luke's account, *The devil led Him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to Him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours."* (Luke 4:5-7) Jesus did not contest this point, He simply refused to worship him.

The next concept we should consider pertaining to the heavenly scroll is that of inheritance. God has an inheritance to pass along. In Deut 4, Moses says to the people of Israel, *But as for you, the LORD took you and brought you out of the iron-smelting furnace, out of Egypt, to be the people of his inheritance, as you*

now are. And in Deut 9, Moses speaking to God says, *But they are your people, your inheritance that you brought out by your great power and your outstretched arm.* That is, God's people are His inheritance.

Both property documents (as in Jeremiah 25) and inheritances were typically sealed, and if they became encumbered by some debt or obligation, the price to satisfy that debt was often written on the outside.

Therefore, I submit that this scroll in the hand of God represents the encumbered inheritance of God's people (the Hebrews) and all the kingdoms of man whom God would redeem from Satan for the price of one sinless man. Of course John wept bitterly, for when he learned that no one was found worthy to take and open the scroll, it meant that this inheritance would forever become the property of Satan – eternally unredeemable.

But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to lose its seven seals." The mighty Lion of Judah was found worthy – the resurrected, glorified Son of God, Jesus Christ. He paid the debt we all owed/owe. It's wholly a past tense situation for the honest believer. For everyone else, the debt, though paid by Christ, is as yet fully

burdensome because of disbelief.

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. When John heard of a mighty Lion, he surely did not expect to see a mutilated Lamb. It would seem that His position -- that is, the Lamb's -- as being in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures, places Him squarely in the same location as Father God and, of course, this makes sense for He is God the Son. But, He also has seven horns and seven eyes -- which signify omnipotence and omniscience -- that are the seven Spirits of God or the manifestation (to every tribe, tongue and nation) of the Holy Spirit to each of the seven churches. So there on the throne, in effect, you have God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit in perfect unity.

Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. You know, He didn't have to take that scroll. He was found worthy to do so, but He didn't have to do it. After all, what it represents is a corrupted, rebellious group. Remember, as we covered in our last lesson, the church, at this point, is already in heaven --

because of that, this scroll represents the encumbered inheritance of those who have as yet rejected salvation by grace, who stubbornly hold on to their spiritual indebtedness.

But He took the scroll because He is committed to His people and though it will take a hellish tribulation to bring them all to Him, as lost sheep to their Shepherd, He will do it.

Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. So we have 28 instances of prayer and worship surrounding the Lamb. Interestingly enough the curtains of the tabernacle which surrounded the myriad types and symbols of Jesus including the altar of incense, the altar of sacrifice and the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies were each 28 cubits long -- perhaps another foreshadow of the heavenly realm. By the way, the saints here are not of Roman Catholic origin but rather those who are saved by faith and set apart for God. In the OT prophecy, they represent Hebrew believers like Daniel or father Abraham. In the NT, the word can also refer to gentile believers.

And they sang a new song, saying:

"You are worthy to take the scroll,

*And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God
by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue
and people and nation,
And have made us kings and
priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the
earth."*

It's interesting that this tribute is called "a new song". Seven times, the scriptures tell us to sing or be filled with a new song. Here in heaven, this continues. The redeemed church sings this new song, and later in chapter fourteen, the 144,000 redeemed of Israel sing their own new song. Now, the lyrics are as ageless as God's plan of redemption for Jesus is the Lamb who was slain from before the foundations of the earth. Nevertheless, it's a new song; this word for new means fresh, and it is indeed fresh praise that comes forth from the hearts of the redeemed. In heaven, this sense of His worthiness is ever fresh and alive. The message doesn't change, it is the sense of its truth and profundity that are ever new.

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice:

"Worthy is the Lamb who was

slain

*To receive power and riches
and wisdom,
And strength and honor and
glory and blessing!"*

Now, I don't know about you, but I don't want to be a 'worship nerd' in heaven. I don't want to be attributing these awesome things to Jesus only because everyone else is. It's not at all that I have any doubt as to His worthiness, I just want to be as sincere as possible. For that reason, I've spent considerable time meditating on this passage and affirming in my own heart why He is worthy of each thing. (See: Power to the Lord, Wisdom's Cry, Wising Up, Muchness, Priceless Love, Pitch Black and His Desire, Our Delight at www.heavenlyminded.com)

Notice how many creatures are around the throne! Angels, elders, and the living ones -- more than 100,000,000. The implication is that it's an innumerable host.

And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

"Blessing and honor and glory and power

Be to Him who sits on the throne,

And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

At this point, every other created being chimes in, and

together they all praise both Father God and the Lamb.

And so, what we can look forward to is that the curse upon creation will be removed – in Christ. As Paul wrote of Father God, ...*having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.* (Eph 1:9,10) Man redeemed, creation restored, reconciliation universal – all in Jesus Christ. *For it pleased the Father that in Him **all the fullness** should dwell, and by Him to **reconcile all things** to Himself, by Him, whether things*

on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. (Col 1:19,20)

Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever. These four apparently have awesome authority for in confirming the desire of all creation toward the One on the throne and toward the Lamb, they say, “So be it!” and with this the first act, so to speak, in the throne room of heaven concludes. As for this praise, the audience is not the host of creation but the One. ‘So be it’, is in effect, His acceptance. In worshipful appreciation, those who represent all redeemed believers bow before Him. What a glorious, glorious triumph!



Unsealed – Graves and Grace

Revelation 6

Many people like to call the entire Tribulation period the wrath of God and though that's a fair appraisal of the tone and tenor of the times, a more accurate characterization concerning the forthcoming seals in this chapter would be the wages of sin. They will be followed by trumpet warnings from the Lord and finally the bowls of God's wrath. I think you'll see why.

As we progress, you'll note that it is the four living creatures that are associated with the going forth of the four horsemen. This is important, for the living creatures, as we've pointed out before, represent the expression of God's nature in and through Christ. Now the tribulation time, though it afflicts a sin-filled, Christ-rejecting world, is targeted specifically at the Hebrew people. They rejected their own Savior and as Jesus foretold, during the Tribulation, many of them will buy into the idea that the antichrist is their messiah.

So as these four horsemen go forth, they represent the antitheses of the living creatures or the opposite of Christ. The Hebrew people and the unbelieving world, having rejected Christ's payment for sin

-- which we saw in the previous chapter made Him worthy to open these seals -- have only one recourse and that is to 'pay' for their sins themselves; and it won't be pretty. When I say pay for their sins, I don't mean atone for them but rather reap their wages or consequences. You know the Bible says, *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* (Rom 6:23) It's simply one or the other. Either you accept that Christ paid the debt for your sins or you will pay the penalty yourself. What God is doing in the Tribulation is helping both Jew and gentile to discern exactly that. Let's begin:

Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.” And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

As we can tell from the way the other living creatures are mentioned in the following verses, this creature is indeed the first one and is mentioned as such in chapter four – that is, he is the Lion. His thundering or roaring (both words are related) command can mean either “come” or “go forth” and is

augmented with the word “see” or literally to discern.

Though the “going forth” aspect of the words can be applied to the rider, I believe the command as a whole is spoken to both John and the ‘target’ people on earth, the Hebrews. It is they who need to discern who is going forth. Now, this rider is NOT Jesus Christ. He’s riding a white horse, yes, but that is simply because he is imitating Christ; he is the antichrist. When Jesus does come to conquer, see chapter 19:11-16, He is clearly identified as the One who is “Faithful and True” as opposed to being nameless and is called the “Word of God” as well as the “King of Kings and Lord of Lords”. In addition, He comes with the saints, and He conquers with the sword not the bow.

Now this word for bow in the Greek is interesting for it comes from a root meaning to “bring forth” as when a tree brings forth fruit or a pregnant woman brings forth a baby. I believe this is implying that the power of the antichrist to conquer is rooted in his authority to bring forth what is naturally in man – that is, the sinful human nature. By deceptions, lies, signs and wonders, he will exalt that nature and himself as its epitome. We will see shortly how that turns out.

Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The sword He conquers with is the truth of His word. *For*

the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb 4:12) On the other hand, this aper or imitator who goes forth here will conquer, as we said, with lies and deception. Of him, the scriptures say:

Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thes 2:3,4,9-12)

You could say, the antichrist will ‘bring forth’ the natural man which is dead in sin, but to the contrary, Jesus, the true and only Christ, implants His Spirit in us to give us life. Thus, the first

living creature and the first rider are polar opposites.

When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come and see.” Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

The second living creature is the calf or bullock. This is the animal we find in the law as being used for the peace offering. As such, he typifies the gentle submitted nature of Christ who said, *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* (Mat 11:29) It is Jesus who has made peace between God and us as believers through His own blood.

Completely contrary to this, the second rider takes peace from the earth so that people start killing, or more literally butchering, each other. Additionally, it is fascinating that a “great sword” was given to him. The word for this sword in the original language, machaira, is a large curved knife which we would call a scimitar. It is significant that the scimitar has been the symbol of Islam for many centuries. Many Islamic traditions adopted scimitars as attested by their symbolic

occurrence such as on the coat of arms of Saudi Arabia. According to legend, Muhammad’s sword was a scimitar that came from his share of the spoils after the Battle of Bakr. Muhammad’s scimitar was named Dhu ‘l-Fiqar which means “cutter”. The curved scimitar was the battle standard for the Muslim armies. It later changed into the crescent and has been the universal symbol of Islam.

For this and other reasons, I’m convinced that Islam will play a very important role in the time of Tribulation.

When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come and see.” So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.”

The third living creature has the face of a man. Of course, this is also Jesus Who came to us as “the Son of Man”. The invisible God gave Himself a human face so to speak through Jesus. Remember when Jesus said to His disciples, *“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.” Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it*

is sufficient for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father;”

In Jesus, we witnessed the giving nature of God. Throughout His entire ministry, we read of Him giving out, healing, helping, serving, teaching, loving. Yet, contrary to this, the third rider has the opposite nature which is to take, take, take. He charges effectively a whole day's wage for a loaf of bread and hoards the delicacies. As a merchant, he oppresses people and reminds us of the other scriptures that tell us the antichrist and his false prophet will use economic control to force people to accept their mark or number thus damning them to hell.

When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come and see.” So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

The fourth living creature is he who appears as a flying eagle. It is he who is associated with the going forth of the fourth rider. When God's people were

delivered from destruction, it was Christ who bore them up on eagle's wings. *And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. (Ex 19:3,4)*

For the LORD's portion is His people;

Jacob is the place of His inheritance....

*As an eagle stirs up its nest,
Hovers over its young,
Spreading out its wings,
taking them up,*

*Carrying them on its wings,
So the LORD alone led him,... (Deut 32:9,11,12a)*

Thus, while the Lord, as a flying eagle, delivered His people from eternal slavery and death, this fourth rider delivers his people to eternal slavery and death. And so, we have the last in this series of opposites which go forth unto the earth.

In short, the judgment seems to play out like this -- the antichrist, the rider of the white horse, will go forth deceiving and corrupting men's souls. He will conquer by playing upon men's sin nature. Following him, wide spread war will break out as men butcher and destroy each other insanely. Following that, those remaining on earth will experience terrible economic

oppression and starvation. Finally, additional massive death will sweep the planet via violence, disease and nature itself. Consequently, earth will be like hell, the antithesis of heaven.

Many people though will discern the dreadful difference and come to faith in Christ because of it -- including, specific to this prophecy, many Hebrew people.

When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

For several reasons, I'm inclined to regard these souls as being faithful children of Israel. First, there is an altar involved. This speaks to the altar of incense or the altar of sacrifice both of which are distinctly Hebrew. Secondly, these souls want vengeance which contrasts with the command of Jesus to His church to “love your enemies” and to forgive.

Thirdly, these souls are told to wait on their fellow servants (gentile believers) and on their brethren (fellow Hebrew believers). All of them are martyrs for there will be no 'secret saints' during the terrible days of Tribulation.

I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

You can't help but get the impression that large scale nuclear war will take place. Earthquakes, the skies being darkened with nuclear fall-out and fire raining down on earth -- the atmosphere itself recedes or literally separates somehow while geologic cataclysms level mountains and islands. Here, man reaps what he has sown, so to speak, in his fetish for weapons of warfare and the environmental damage he's brought on the earth. Clearly, this all comes about in the midst of, or as a result of, the four horsemen and their powers.

And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the

commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Consequently, everyone is freaked out! The judgments coming upon a rebellious mankind are so severe and so wide spread that people seem to prefer being buried alive rather than face what they perceive to be the wrath of the Lamb. However, recall that these are people who have held on to their stubborn willful hatred of Christ throughout all these disasters. They refuse to accept their own accountability for what they are experiencing and thus blame all of it on the Lamb – it's His wrath they say. As a consequence, I don't accept their perception of these events as being accurate any more than I'd accept their perception of the Lamb. I wouldn't be surprised if later we learn that this attitude was fostered by the antichrist himself in order to alienate people from Christ.

As a matter of fact, all ten mentions of such wrath specify it as the "wrath of God", never the Lamb. (See Jn 3:36, Rom 1:18, Col 3:6, Rev 11:18; 14:10,19; 15:1,7; 16:1 and 19:15.) The

work and nature of the Lamb are to deliver from God's wrath (See Rom 5:9 and 1 Thes 5:9). The only time we see Jesus wrathful is in Rev 19:15 where He is treading out the winepress of His Father's wrath in going to Armageddon.

The irony is that God has given man, up to this point, exactly what he wanted. Rebellious man has always craved a sin filled world. In rejecting the grace of God in Jesus Christ, mankind opted for the continuing burden of sin and death. The wages of sin that man is receiving in the release of these seals is simply a law of creation – you sow, you reap. But additionally, because of the mercy of God, this time is also a wake-up call for man to discern the 180 degree difference between the true expression of the nature of God in Christ and the false expression of Satan and his lies. With the rapture of the church God could simply have wrapped things up, but His love and compassion are actually a part of the unsealing of the scroll. We'll see later that, as always, God knows what He's doing – many, many people will turn to Him during this terrible time.

A Happy Troop of Warriors

Revelation 7

If you enjoy reading novels, you know that a common writing technique is to bounce the readers around between competing storylines or vantage points and thus keep their interest. As effective as that is in keeping a reader engaged, God doesn't share the same concern in recording the scripture for us. Entertainment value is not His priority. Thus, when you have a situation in which He wants to communicate what's happening in say two events that are chronologically overlapping, He seems to simply put them in a sequence that shows the most obvious linkage between cause and effect of the events.

Such is the case, I believe, in considering chapters six and seven of Revelation. The first half or so of this chapter could have preceded chapter six in the scripture and indeed does so I think in actuality, but if it were presented that way, like a modern novel, it would be less likely to be understood as being tightly linked to the second half as a cause and effect. I'll try to explain and you can decide for yourself.

In the previous chapter, we witnessed the going forth of four riders on horses of four different colors – white, black, red and pale or grey. These four riders or messengers were given power to

bring forth the deception and destruction of the antichrist conquest of our planet. Just before that, in chapter four, we read of the rapture of the church and their consequent worship of the Lamb around the throne.

It is important to understand that when the church leaves this planet, God is still committed to providing a witness to the world of His truth. As long as there are those who He knows can be saved, He extends His hand to them, so to speak, in truth, grace and mercy. In fact, this is a principle you can follow throughout history from Adam to Abel to Seth to Enoch to Noah to Shem to Abraham to Isaac to Jacob... all the way to John the Baptist, then Jesus, then the church. God is faithful to provide a witness.

As we will see, this chapter wonderfully explains just how that witness will continue in absence of the mostly gentile church.

After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.

I am personally persuaded that the "four winds of the earth" here refer to the four horsemen of Revelation six after the pattern of Zechariah 6:1-8. In that passage, four chariots with horses of the same colors as in Revelation 6:1-8 go out to all the earth, and are called *the "four spirits of heaven"*. *Spirits* in that passage is the translation of the Hebrew word

ruach, which can also be translated *winds*.

Next, recall that in our studies of Daniel, we saw that the prophetic imagery of earth and sea can portray the land of Israel and the gentile nations. In addition, there are other scriptures which speak of trees as symbolic of men in general. So this blowing upon the earth, sea or any tree could very well point to the unleashing of the destructive powers of these antichrist messengers upon the whole world of men as well as nature. That is consistent with the situation in Revelation six.

Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,...

This word for harm above means to do wickedly or sinfully to and comes from the word which means one who deals fraudulently with others, who is deceitful. This also, is consistent with the mission of the four riders/messengers of chapter six.

...saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed:

As for this sealing, all we have to do is look at John 6:27, Rom 4:11, 2 Cor 1:22, Eph 1:13 or Eph 4:30 to see that these servants are

being filled with the Holy Spirit – indeed, they are getting saved and filled for service to God Almighty. They are in no way related to any cult nor are they representative of the mostly gentile church. That is plain heresy and/or substitutionalism. Don't you believe it! They are who they are – from the tribes of Israel. Now, twelve thousand may be significant for when it is mentioned in other scriptures pertaining to men (see Num 31:5, Judges 21:10 or 2 Sam 17:1) it is speaking of men being sent to do battle.

*of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Zebulon twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed.*

Now, there are many variations of the list of Jacob's children in the Bible, but I believe that every listing has its purpose. God

simply doesn't do things randomly or haphazardly -- your own DNA for example. We may not know enough to understand the purpose of each listing but in this case, I'll submit something for your consideration.

Dan and Ephraim are both missing from this list and it may have something to do with their tribal affiliation with idolatry in the past. In any event, the names as presented here, I think can be understood to give us a message about them and God's plan. Let's examine their names:

Name	Meaning
Judah	Praise
Reuben	Look at or perceive Son
Gad	Troop or army, from word for invade or attack
Asher	Happy or blessed, from word meaning to go on, advance, make progress
Naphtali	Wrestling or fighting
Manasseh	To forget or causing to forget
Simeon	Heard, from word meaning to hear, listen, obey
Levi	Joined to
Issachar	There is recompense, from word meaning to lift or carry
Zebulon	Exalted or honored
Joseph	Jehovah will add or increase
Benjamin	Son of/at right hand (like Jesus,

see Mat 25:34 and 26:64)

Admittedly, taking some modest liberty, I've strung these meanings together:

Praise God! They look at and perceive the Son. As a consequence, a troop or army is formed. Happy and blessed, they advance in order to wrestle with the enemy, to fight the 'good fight'. For God has caused them to forget their past and instead to hear Him, to listen and obey Him. They are no longer separated from Him by sin but joined to Him in faith. Their labor and warfare has recompense, that is, reward, and they will be carried to and honored in heaven for Jehovah will add, by them, sons at His right hand.

This message is completely consistent with the rest of scripture. The 144,000 saved and filled men of Israel will indeed go out like an army of evangelists, doing battle in the spirit and will lead an enormous number of people to Jesus Christ even as the antichrist is spewing forth his lies like a flood. Even as catastrophe after catastrophe is coming upon the world, these Hebrew 'Billy Grahams' will faithfully proclaim the gospel and thus be God's witness to the world.

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a

loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying:

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,

Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,

Be to our God forever and ever.

Amen."

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"

And I said to him, "Sir, you know."

So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

There you have it. As a direct result of the sealing of the 144,000, there appear in heaven an innumerable company of people from all the nations, tribes, peoples and tongues. All of them are in white robes which the Bible says, shows that they are righteous before God – they are saved by the blood of the Lamb during the great tribulation. This mighty harvest moves all the angels of heaven, the church and the four living creatures to fall and worship God intensely.

Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He

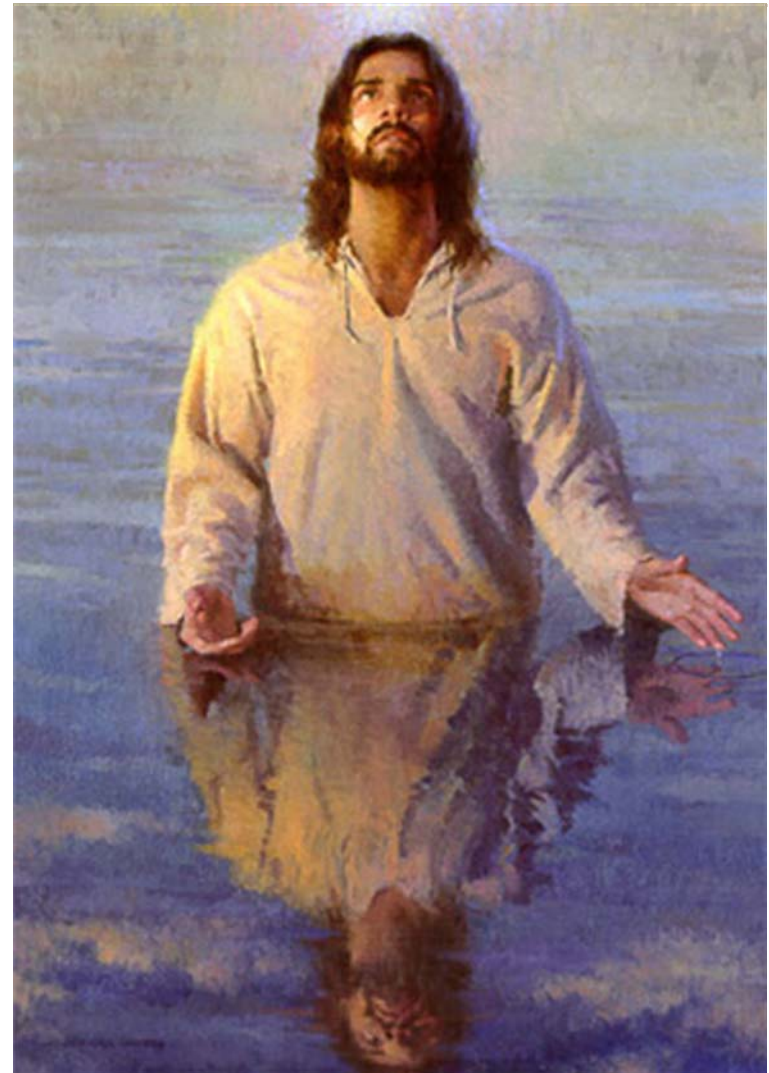
who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

As you can see, these redeemed are not treated like second class citizens of heaven. Father God Himself will dwell among them and Jesus will care for them, and as a result they will never hunger or thirst again nor suffer the intense heat of the sun as during the tribulation. They will be the privileged ones who serve the Lord in His dwelling place.

So what are these tears? They certainly are not tears of regret or condemnation. *This passage does not have the idea that in heaven, we will weep over our wasted life or unconfessed sin, ... That idea may be a powerful, guilt-inducing motivator, but it has nothing to do with the meaning of this verse. "The point is that the grief and tears of the past, speaking of their trials in the tribulation, will be over when they get to heaven . . . God will wipe away all tears resulting from their suffering on earth."*

(Guzik/Walvoord)

And so, their suffering is over, the race is run, the prize is in hand, the future is beautiful and has no end, and it was all worth it!



Art by Morgan Weistling