

**“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen; Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” Rev. 7:9-17.**

Trapp says this *“great multitude which no man could number”* includes all the faithful – (i.e., all God’s Elect) – *“to the end of the world.”* This may amount to millions of faithful non-Jews who end up in Heaven; whereas, the Jews may be limited to 144,000 – exactly; to wit: *“And I heard the number of them which were sealed; and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.”* Rev. 7:4. With further exactitude, we are told that the 144,000 consisted of 12,000 of each of the 12 tribes of Israel named – exactly; to wit:

***“Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.”***  
(Rev. 7:5-8)

This, Beloved, is a powerful lesson about the apostles’ doctrine of salvation by grace alone; that is, predestination, election, reprobation and related doctrines – sometimes called Calvinism. Beloved, the number of Jews predestinated to enjoy salvation – *“sealed in their foreheads as the servants of our God”* – is to be EXACTLY 144,000 (!) Not 144,001 (!) Not 139,999 (!) And, the 12 tribes could not be intermingled. EACH TRIBE had 12,000 – EXACTLY. With regard to each tribe, NOT 12,001 (!) NOT, 11,999. Beloved. There will not be a single Jew slipping in to that holy group whose forehead does NOT bear the Father’s seal of ownership; and there will not be a single Jew slipping OUT and going to Hell whose forehead DOES bear the Heavenly Father’s seal of ownership. With regard to each highly-favored member of the holy 144,000, we may be sure of the following: (1) The Lord God loved him unconditionally from before the foundation of the world; (2) The Lord God predestinated him to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ – also before the foundation of the world; (3) At some point certain during his lifetime, he will receive an irresistible inner call – an unction – an impulse upon his heart – driving him,

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relentlessly, to the Lord Jesus Christ; (4) Whereupon he will have the witness of the Holy Ghost bearing witness with his spirit that he is a born again, JUSTIFIED child of God [*“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” - Rom. 8:16*]; (5) and, *“Whom he justified, them he also GLORIFIED.” Rom. 8:30. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow”* – (i.e., fore-love, to know with approbation and favor) – I say, *“For whom he did FOREKNOW, he also did PREDESTINATE to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also CALLED; and whom he called, them he also JUSTIFIED; and, whom he justified, them he also GLORIFIED.” Rom. 8:28-30.*

Now, all we have said regarding those Jews who are saved, with respect to there being a finite, exact number of them, may be applied with equal exactness and enlightenment to the *“great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, kindreds, and people, and tongues,”* of the non-Jews, or Gentiles. The numbering of the saved Jews takes place in the first half of **chapter 7 of Rev.**, and the numbering of the saved Gentiles takes place in the second half. Gill takes notice of this fact, and comments as follows: *“vs. 9. What follows is a distinct vision (Rev. 7:9-17) from the preceding one (Rev. 7:1-8), and is not a continuation of that, as if the sealing of the Jewish believers was designed by the former, and the sealing of the Gentiles in this latter.”*

I will take that hint by Dr. Gill, and explore a few areas of intense interest to the church – though never have I seen proper interest paid thereto. For example, the exact number of saved Jews is given us, (144,000), but the number of saved Gentiles is said to be *“a great multitude, which no man could number.”* I understand it was a hyperbolic method, or figure of speech, signifying myriads upon myriads – maybe millions, or even billions, on occasion; nevertheless, it was an exact, definite number – but not an infinite number. Even so, the total number of God’s Elect – from Adam to the end of the world – is an exact figure. Zanchius was fond of saying, *“The total number of the Elect is fixed and certain; it cannot be increased or diminished by so much as one.”* It could be that it has pleased our Father to give us the exact number of Jews to be saved – the relatively small number of 144,000; – but not to give us the exact number of Gentiles to be saved – but certainly to be a very large and exact number; to wit:

***“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.” (Rev. 7:9)***

Just here, I must reluctantly part company with Dr. Gill, who, strangely to me at least, fixes the place of this vision on earth during the millennial (i.e., thousand-year) reign of Christ. Whereas the language of **Rev. 7:9-17** makes it as plain to me as words can make a thing plain, that this vision is in Heaven – and blessedly so, to us.

Moreover, I have found a confederate in the person of William Jones, the Scotch-Baptist author of Lectures on the Apocalypse, publ. 1829; to wit: *“It may, I think, justly excite one’s surprise, that any person should, AS DR. GILL AND OTHERS HAVE DONE, apply this vision to the state of the church on earth during the period of the millenium, or thousand-years’ reign of the saints. In my opinion, there is great beauty, propriety, and force to be perceived in it, when taken in its obvious and plain sense, as DRAWING ASIDE THE CURTAIN, if we may so speak, and furnishing the church militant with a view of the STATE OF THINGS IN HEAVEN, inviting them to look within the veil, and listen to the universal, unanimous concurrence of the redeemed, and the innumerable*

*company of angels, engaged in the worship of the heavenly sanctuary, adoring the perfections of the Diety, and ascribing worthiness to the Lamb that was slain. THE PLACE OR SCENE OF THIS VISION IS EVIDENTLY HEAVEN. The reason for this transporting vision being here introduced appears to be, that the followers of the Lamb yet on earth, who had to encounter the rage and malice of this new adversary, the man of sin, by a view of that eternal state of felicity (i.e., great happiness, bliss), might be strengthened and encouraged to follow their example. As great numbers” – (i.e., of people, demons, and Devil-worshippers) – “would be against them in this world, they are invited to take a view of their great number of friends in Heaven – those who have gone before, who have passed through a sea of tribulation – having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and who, while they look BACK to their own deliverance and ascribe it all to God, are looking DOWN upon their brethren on earth, and saying, ‘Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering;’ to wit: ‘Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.’ Heb. 10:23-25.”*

Beloved. Just to think of the metaphorical DRAWING ASIDE THE CURTAIN to give us a clear view of this great triumphant multitude of our brethren now in Heaven – is enormously comforting to us, and encouraging to us, while we are jeopardizing our lives unto the death in the high places of the field, every day, here below. **Jgs. 5:18.** And it appears that ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD are escorting this huge gathering of the saints in light – in highly respectful salutation and honor – just as our dear Lord Jesus promised; to wit:

***“Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God. But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.” (Lk. 12:8,9)***

***“But now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.” (1 Sam. 2:30)***

Whereupon one of the band of redeemed saints communicated directly with John – John standing exactly for the church militant, – lest there be any doubt about the blessed significance of this holy band of un-numerable saints now in Heaven; to wit:

***“And ONE OF THE ELDERS ANSWERED, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said, to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God; and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Rev. 7:13-17)***

Remember, Beloved, that this is John, “Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.” Rev. 1:2. Near the end, He reiterates; to wit: “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.” Rev. 22:16. The mystical curtain that was drawn aside by the Captain of our salvation to reveal unto us the comforting and encouraging vision of the great triumphant multitude that no man could

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number in Heaven – I say that curtain was also drawn back for the same salutary (i.e., producing a good result), salubrious (i.e., good for the physical, mental, and moral health) – reason earlier at Hebrews 12:1; to wit:

***“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside (cast away) every weight (or burden), and the sin (or original sin from Adam) that doth so easily beset (us), and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:1,2)***

This passage assures us that God’s Elect – at all times – are encircled by “so great a cloud of witnesses” – to witness – (i.e., [1] look upon as witnesses viewing events; and, [2] later to bear eye-witness testimony as to what was seen first-hand) – as to how we are performing as contestants in track and field athletic events.

Owen: *“For at the striving and contest in those public games which are alluded unto, there were great multitudes, – CLOUDS – of holy spectators, that looked on to encourage those that contended, by their applauses, and to testify of their successes. So it is with us in our patient perseverance; all the saints of the Old Testament do as it were STAND LOOKING ON US IN OUR STRIVING, ENCOURAGING US unto our duty, and ready to testify unto our success with their applauses. They are all placed about us unto this end; we are completely “compassed” (i.e., surrounded with them). And they are so in the Scripture; wherein they, being dead, yet see, and speak, and bear testimony. The Scripture hath encompassed us with them; so that when we are in our trials, which way soever we look in it (that is, the Scripture), we may behold the face of some or other of these worthies looking on us, and encouraging us. So the apostle chargeth Timothy with his duty, not only “before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ,” unto whom he was to give his account, but “before the elect angels” also, who were to be witnesses of what he did therein, 1 Tim. 5:21; to wit:*

***“I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, AND THE ELECT ANGELS, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.”(1 Tim. 5:21)***

*“And it is not un-useful for us, in all our trials for the profession of the faith, to consider that the eyes as it were of all that have gone before us in the same, or the like, or greater trials, are upon us, to bear witness how we acquit ourselves.”* And so, Beloved, in addition to our case loads, perhaps numbering in the millions, necessary in managing the punishment regimen for perhaps billions of billions of filthy convicted perverts and rebels against the King and blasphemers against the Sovereign God of all Creation – I say, in addition to all these activities in our eternal service for the love that we bear for the King of the Place – we are now adding grand and glorious positive things relating to the infinitude of Heaven, its nature, and its inhabitants.

Beloved, I’m talking joy unspeakable and full of glory. 1 Pet. 1:7-9; to wit: ***“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye REJOICE WITH JOY UNSPEAKABLE AND FULL OF GLORY, Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls”*** – (i.e., receiving your inheritance, and your new and glorified body).

I love you. Amen