

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 7

This chapter contains a vision seen at the end of the sixth, and at the opening of the seventh seal, which expresses the security of the saints in all ages following, the praises of angels and men on that account, and the happiness of all the people of God in the millennium state. First, a vision of four angels is seen restraining the winds from blowing on the earth, sea, and trees, (^{<6601>}Revelation 7:1); then of another angel, described by the place from whence he came, the east; by what he had, the seal of the living God, and by his cry to the four angels not to hurt the earth, sea, and trees, until the servants of God were sealed, (^{<6602>}Revelation 7:2,3), and then follows the number of the sealed ones in general, (^{<6604>}Revelation 7:4), and the particular number of them out of each tribe of Israel, (^{<6605>}Revelation 7:5-8). After which is another vision of all the elect of God together, described by the numberless multitude of them; by their descent from all nations; by their position and situation before the throne, and the Lamb; by their habit and attire, and by their loud cry, ascribing salvation to God, and to the Lamb, (^{<6609>}Revelation 7:9,10), who are joined by all the angels around them, worshipping God, and ascribing glory to him, (^{<6611>}Revelation 7:11,12). And next is described the happiness of this numerous company, in the thousand years' reign, introduced by some discourse which passed between John, and one of the elders, (^{<6613>}Revelation 7:13,14), who are said to be before the throne, to serve God continually, and to have his presence, (^{<6615>}Revelation 7:15), to be free from everything troublesome and distressing, (^{<6616>}Revelation 7:16), and to be fed by the Lamb, and to be led by him to fountains of living water, and to have all their tears wiped away from them, (^{<6617>}Revelation 7:17).

Ver. 1. *And after these things*, etc.] After the opening of six of the seals of the sealed book, and after the demolition of Heathen deities, and of Heathen worship, and of Heathen magistrates, in the Roman empire, and the representation of these to John, he had the following vision; and which therefore does not refer to the preservation of the Christians, before and at the destruction of Jerusalem, which was under the first seal; nor to the

security of the saints from the wrath of the Lamb, when it fell upon the Pagan worshippers, of all ranks and degrees, which was under the sixth seal, and was now over; but rather it respects an intermediate space of time between the sixth and seventh seal, as reaching from Constantine to Theodosius; for upon Constantine's being sole emperor, the church enjoyed great peace and tranquillity after the blustering storms of Pagan persecution ceased; and great numbers of God's elect were converted and sealed, and the winds of Heathen persecution were held, and blew no more, unless for a short time under the Emperor Julian; though the church was not free from the wind of error and heresy; and the storms of contention which arose about them, nor from the tempest of Arian persecutions, which were very grievous; wherefore this refers to what should be between the sixth and seventh seal, which brings on the seven trumpets: and now, before John sees that seal opened, a pause is made, and this vision is shown him, to fortify his mind, and all other saints, that are observers of these things, who by the opening of the following seal would see what judgments and plagues would come upon the empire, now become Christian, and what changes and revolutions would be made in it, and might fear that the church of God would be wholly swallowed up and lost; wherefore this vision is exhibited to show, that notwithstanding the devastations by the Goths and Vandals, and the rise, progress, and power of Mahomet, and the dreadful apostasy of the church of Rome, and all the miseries of it, and the plagues that should come upon the church for it; yet God would have throughout all this, and in, every age of time, a sealed number, a true church, hidden and secured, even until the seventh angel has sounded his trumpet, and time shall be no more, and the mystery of God will be finished.

I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any trees. Four angels are mentioned, in allusion to the four spirits of the heavens, in (³⁰⁸⁵Zechariah 6:5); and though the earth is not a plain square with angles, but round and globular, yet it is said to have four corners, with respect to the four points of the heavens; and though there is but one wind, which blows sometimes one way, and sometimes another, yet four are named with regard to the above points, east, west, north, and south, from whence it blows. These are commonly called “the four winds of heaven”, (²⁷⁰⁸Daniel 8:8 11:4); but here, of the earth, as in the Targum on (²³¹¹Isaiah 11:12), and he shall bring near the captivity of Judah, a[ra

yj wr [bram, “from the four winds of the earth”. And such things as are chiefly affected with winds are particularly observed, as the earth, upon which buildings are thrown down by them; and the sea, in which ships are wrecked; and trees, which by the violence of them, are blown down, and torn up by the roots. Some by these angels understand evil angels, who are sometimes called angels, without any additional epithet to distinguish them, and that because a desire of hurting seems to have been in them, as well as a power, (^{<661D>}Revelation 7:2,3); and who are, in every part of the world, seeking to do all the mischief they can; and may be said to hold the winds, not in a literal sense, for God only gathers the wind in his fist, and holds it there, and lets it loose at his pleasure; but in a mystical sense, as these may refer to the word, and the ministers of the word, whose progress and success are often hindered by Satan and his emissaries; and some particularly understand by them the four monarchies of the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman; others the four emperors, after that Dioclesian and Maximianus had resigned, as Maximinus, Galerius, Maxentius, and Licinius; others Mahomet, or the Turk, in the east, who hindered the Gospel by his wars and devastations, as well as by false worship; the kings of France and Spain on the west, by fire, and faggot, and sword; and the pope in the south, by bulls and excommunications; and the empire and emperors of Germany on the north, by public edicts; or, in general, all the Popish tribe, popes, cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, and friars, by their decrees, anathemas, sermons, writings, and lying miracles, did all they could that the Gospel might not be preached neither in the earth, on the continent, nor in the sea, or in the islands of it; or that any of the saints, the trees of righteousness, who lived in woods and mountainous places, or were forced to fly into woods, might have any advantage by it. But, after all, rather this is to be understood of good angels, and either of their restraining evil angels from doing mischief, (see ^{<270B>}Daniel 10:13,20,21) (^{<661D>}Revelation 12:4,7); or keeping back the winds of false doctrines and heresies from the churches of Christ, in the several parts of the world; or rather, and which is the true sense, of their holding in the storms of calamities and war to the destruction of kingdoms, provinces, islands, and the several inhabitants of them, and intends a general peace throughout the world; (see ^{<248B>}Jeremiah 49:36 51:1,2). This mystical way of speaking seems to agree with the notions of the Jews, who speak of angels standing at the gates of the four winds, j wr yj tpmw “and the keys of the wind in their hands”, whose names they give us ^{f214}; and make

mention of *aj wr ykal m*, “the angels of the wind”^{f215}; and the Magi among the Persians call the angel of the wind “Bad”, or “Badran”^{f216}.

Ver. 2. *And I saw another angel*, etc.] Not Constantine, who came from the eastern parts to the empire, with the true knowledge of God, and the authority of God to propagate it; and who repressed the four angels, or evil spirits, contention, ambition, heresy, and war, from doing the mischief they otherwise would; and sealed the saints, by giving them a platform of doctrine at the council of Nice, as Brightman and others think. But the uncreated angel, the angel of the covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ; for who but he should have the privy seal of heaven, who is the angel of the great council, as the Septuagint render (^{<3906>}Isaiah 9:6) and who could speak in such an authoritative manner to the four angels, “saying, hurt not the earth”, etc. but he who is the head of all principality and power? and who should seal the servants of the Lord, but he who has them in his hands, and keeps them by his power, so that none of them shall perish? And to him agrees all that follows:

ascending from the east; from Judea, from Zion, from whence Christ, as the salvation, or Saviour of Israel, came, (^{<3947>}Psalms 14:7); and whose name is the east, as some render (^{<3908>}Zechariah 3:8); he is the dayspring from on high, the sun of righteousness, who rose from the east, the place of the rising sun, and brought light, life, and joy to his people, when he came to seal them. Compare with this (^{<3901>}Ezekiel 43:1,2,4 44:1-4 46:1,2) (^{<3901>}Ezekiel 47:1).

Having the seal of the living God; having the impress of deity upon him, being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image or character of his person; having a testimony, an authentic proof and demonstration of his being the Son of God, of his being the true and living God; as also a commission from God, as Mediator, being sealed by him; and having all power and authority from him, to seal and secure the people which were given unto him, and for which purpose he now came: to which may be added, that Christ has the Spirit, with his gifts and graces, without measure, by which the saints are sealed unto the day of redemption; and moreover has likewise the seal of the book of life, or of eternal election, in his hands; the elect are chosen in him, and the book of life, in which their names are written to eternal life, is in his keeping, and is therefore called the Lamb's book of life. The Jews speak^{f217} of the east gate of one of the palaces they suppose above, which they say is shut all the six days, and on

the sabbath day is opened, and the governor of this palace has two ministers, one on his right hand, and one on his left, and two seals in their hands, $\mu\upsilon\upsilon\eta\ \mu\tau\omega\eta$, “the seal of life”, and the seal of death, and all the books of the world, before them; an, some are sealed to life, and some to death, with which this passage may be compared. They speak also of an angel that presides at the eastern part of the heavens, who receives the prayers of the Israelites, whose name they call “Gazardia”^{f218}, as this same angel is said to offer up the prayers of the saints, (~~ffRB~~ Revelation 8:3).

And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels; to show his power and authority over them, they being his creatures and ministers; and to express his great concern for his people, his care of them, and affection for them; and to signify the danger they were in through the calamities that were coming on, should they not be sealed:

to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea: they had a commission from God to let loose the winds, or to bring on wars, devastations, calamities, and plagues, of various sorts, upon the Roman empire, now Christian; and on the seat of the beast, not only on the continent, but upon the islands also, even upon all the nations, tongues, and people subject to the see of Rome.

Ver. 3. *Saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees*, etc.] That is, as yet, for their commission was not contradicted, nor taken away by Christ; and at the time appointed, at the blowing of the several trumpets, they let loose the winds, and let in the Goths, Hans, and Vandals, the Saracens and Turks into the empire, and after that poured out the vials of God’s wrath upon the Romish antichrist: this retarding of them was but in appearance, that there might be an opportunity to show to John what care would be taken all along of the church of Christ, and true servants of the living God:

till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads; the servants of sin, Satan, and the beast of Rome, were took no notice nor care of; they were the persons to be hurt by the winds, signified by the earth, sea, and trees, even idolaters, small and great; but “the servants of our God”, who serve him with grace in their hearts, from a principle of love, in the exercise of faith, without servile fear, and with reverence and godly fear, in righteousness and true holiness, and with a view to his glory; and are worshippers of him in spirit and in truth, being followers of the Lamb,

whithersoever he goes; and so are the servants of his God, and their God; the sealing of them does not design the sealing of them with the seal of election, this was done in eternity; nor with the seal of the Spirit, which is common to all the saints in all ages; but it denotes the hiding and concealing, and so securing the saints amidst all the calamities of the empire, and throughout the whole time of the Romish apostasy, from first to last; and respects the time when the church fled into the wilderness, and was hid, and nourished with the hidden manna, for a time, and times, and half a time, (^{f124} Revelation 12:14). Christ set a mark upon them, as was upon the houses of the Israelites, when the destroying angel passed through Egypt, and destroyed the firstborn in it; and as was upon the foreheads of those that sighed and cried in Jerusalem, when orders were given to slay young and old, (^{f123} Exodus 12:23 ^{f104} Ezekiel 9:4). Christ will have a people in the worst of times; he knows who are his, and he will take care of them; he has his chambers of protection to hide them in, till the indignation is over past: the sealers, “we”, are either Father, Son, and Spirit, who are all jointly concerned for the welfare of the elect; or Christ and his ministering angels that attend him, whom he employs for the good and safety of the heirs of salvation: the seal with which these are sealed is the seal of the living God, the foreknowledge, love, care, and power of God; and the name of God, even Christ's Father's name, and their Father's name, in their foreheads; the new name of children of God, by and under which they are known and preserved by him: and this is said to be “in their foreheads”, in allusion to servants, who used to be marked in their foreheads; hence they are called by Apuleius ^{f219} “frontes literati”; and by Martial, a servant is called “fronte notatus” ^{f220}: but then these were such who had committed faults, and this was done by way of punishment ^{f221}; wherefore it can hardly be thought that the servants of God should be sealed, in allusion to them: but rather with reference to the mitre on the high priest's forehead, as some think; or it may be to (^{f104} Ezekiel 9:4), and shows, that though these persons were hid and concealed from men, they were well known to God and Christ; nor were they ashamed to make a public and open confession of Christ before men, as did the true and faithful witnesses of Christ, the Waldenses and Albigenes, in the midst of the greatest darkness of Popery, and of danger from men; and who seem to be chiefly intended.

Ver. 4. *And I heard the number of them which were sealed*, etc.] And therefore could be sure of the exact number, which did not depend upon

his sight, and telling them, in which some mistake might have been made, but he heard the number expressed:

[and there were] sealed an hundred [and] forty, [and] four thousand: which is a square number arising from twelve, the square root of it, being just twelve times twelve thousand; and may denote their being the true and genuine offspring of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, holding their doctrine, and being built on their foundation; (see ^{<6214>}Revelation 21:14); and these were

of all the tribes of the children of Israel; not that these were all Jews in a literal sense, for the time of their conversion in great numbers is not yet come. Dr. Goodwin thinks these sealed ones design the believers of the Greek and Armenian churches, and his reasons are not despicable; but this is to limit and restrain them to a particular part of the church of Christ; whereas they take in all the saints within this long tract of time, even all that are the true Israel of God, who are Jews inwardly, of what nation, kindred, tongue, and people soever; and is a certain and determinate number for an uncertain and indeterminate one; and only intends a large number of persons known to God and Christ; see the Apocrypha: “Arise up and stand, behold the number of those that be sealed in the feast of the Lord;” (2 Esdras 2:38)

Ver. 5. *Of the tribe of Judah [were] sealed twelve thousand,* etc.] Judah is mentioned first, because Christ sprung from that tribe, and the pure worship of God was preserved in it; and that itself was preserved a distinct tribe until the coming of Shiloh; its name signifies “praise God”, (^{<0235>}Genesis 29:35); and shows, that it becomes all the sealed ones, all true believers, and every member of the church of God, to praise him for all favours and blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

Of the tribe of Reuben [were] sealed twelve thousand; Reuben was Jacob's firstborn, but by his sin he lost the honour and privilege of birthright, and therefore is mentioned after Judah, who prevailed above him and the rest of his brethren; his name signifies “see the Son”, (^{<0232>}Genesis 29:32); and shows that the Son of God is to be looked unto for righteousness, life, and salvation, by all that expect to be saved, and to him does the true church look for eternal life and happiness.

Of the tribe of Gad [were] sealed twelve thousand; his name signifies a “troop”, (^{<0311>}Genesis 30:11), and may denote that there would be a

numerous company of saints and faithful witnesses during the time of sealing, and amidst all the troubles and afflictions that would attend the church and people of God, and who in the issue would be conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Christ; (see ^{<0499>}Genesis 49:19).

Ver. 6. *Of the tribe of Aser [were] sealed twelve thousand*, etc.] “Asher”, which the Septuagint pronounce “Aser”, as here, signifies “blessed”, (^{<0313>}Genesis 30:13); as all the sealed ones are, blessed with all spiritual blessings, with grace here, and glory hereafter.

Of the tribe of Nephthalim [were] sealed twelve thousand; the name of this tribe signifies “wrestlings”, (^{<0318>}Genesis 30:8); and may design the wrestlings of saints, both with God in prayer, and with their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, and also their strivings together for the faith of the Gospel.

Of the tribe of Manasses [were] sealed twelve thousand; this word signifies “forgetting”, (^{<0451>}Genesis 41:51); and shows that the followers of Christ should forget the things that are behind, their sinful lusts and pleasures, the onions and garlic in Egypt, and their former company and acquaintance, their own people, and their father's house, and all their labours and sufferings for the sake of Christ.

Ver. 7. *Of the tribe of Simeon [were] sealed twelve thousand*, etc.] The name of this tribe signifies “hearing”, (^{<0233>}Genesis 29:33); and such an hearing as is attended with obedience; and denotes the spiritual and practical hearing of the Gospel by those who hear, and understand, and believe, and practise what they hear, and yield the obedience of faith unto it.

Of the tribe of Levi [were] sealed twelve thousand; this name signifies “joined”, (^{<0234>}Genesis 29:34); and denotes, that these sealed ones were not only joined one to another in love and holy fellowship, but to Christ, and were one spirit with him, and were members of his body, flesh, and bones, and cleaved to him with full purpose of heart.

Of the tribe of Issachar [were] sealed twelve thousand; the interpretation of this name is “hire” or “reward”, (^{<0318>}Genesis 30:18); and may design those rewards of grace which God bestows upon his faithful servants, in times of tribulation.

Ver. 8. *Of the tribe of Zabulon [were] sealed twelve thousand, etc.]*

Which signifies “dwelling”, (^{<OR30>}Genesis 30:20); and was the tribe in which Christ had his dwelling, and where he much conversed; and may denote his gracious inhabitation, as well as that of God the Father, and of the Spirit, among the saints and sealed ones.

Of the tribe of Joseph [were] sealed twelve thousand; whose name signifies “adding”, (^{<OR30>}Genesis 30:24); and may intend the additions both of numbers, and of gifts and graces to the churches of those times.

Of the tribe of Benjamin [were] sealed twelve thousand; this word signifies “the Son of the right hand”, (^{<OR30>}Genesis 35:18); showing, that these sealed ones are as a signet on God's right hand, and are as near and dear unto him as a man's right hand is to him; (see ^{<OR30>}Psalms 80:17). Now twelve thousand out of each tribe make just the number of a hundred forty and four thousand, (^{<OR30>}Revelation 7:4); the tribe of Dan is not mentioned, it may be because of the apostasy of that tribe, one of Jeroboam's golden calves being set up there; showing that God had no sealed ones of that sort, and instead of him Levi is reckoned; though that tribe had no part in the division of the land of Israel, yet had a part in Christ, and is therefore mentioned in this mystical account. Nor is the name of Ephraim used, it may be for the same reason; there having been a great defection in that tribe from the pure worship of God, and instead of him the name of Joseph appears.

Ver. 9. *After this I beheld, etc.]* What follows is a distinct vision from the preceding one, 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; whereas in this vision there is no mention made of sealing, nor was there, or will there be any need of it in the time it refers unto; and which is not the time of the Reformation; nor when the vials began to be poured out upon the seat of the beast; for though there were great numbers converted in many nations, kindreds, people, and tongues, yet not in all; nor do the characters of this great multitude, and the happiness they shall enjoy, seem to suit with persons in a state of mortality and imperfection, (^{<OR30>}Revelation 7:14-17); wherefore many interpreters understand this vision of the saints in heaven: but it rather respects the millennium state, or thousand years' reign of Christ with his saints on earth, with which all that is here said agrees; compare (^{<OR30>}Revelation 7:14) with (^{<OR30>}Revelation 20:4); and (^{<OR30>}Revelation 7:15) with (^{<OR30>}Revelation 22:3);

and (~~617~~ Revelation 7:16,17) with (~~620~~ Revelation 21:4,6). And the design of this vision is to show to John, and every diligent observer, that after the seventh seal is opened, the trumpets are blown, and the vials poured out; during which time there will be a number sealed that will profess Christ; and at the close and winding up of all things, in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, Christ will descend, and all the saints with him; their bodies will be raised, and the living saints changed, and make one general assembly, who are shown to John here, as in (~~620~~ Revelation 21:9,10); to relieve his mind, and support his spirits, in a view of the calamities ushered in by the opening of the seventh seal.

And lo, a great multitude, which no man could number; which design all the elect of God in the new Jerusalem church state, the bride, the Lamb's wife, or the new Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven; these will appear to be a great multitude, not in comparison of the inhabitants that shall have dwelt upon earth, nor of the professors of religion in one shape or another; for, with respect to each of these, they are but a few, a seed, a remnant, a little flock; but as considered in themselves, and so they are many who are ordained to eternal life, whose sins Christ has bore, for whom his blood has been shed, and whom he justifies, and who are called by his grace, and are brought to glory; and who make up such a number as no man can number: God indeed can number them, but not man; for they are a set of particular persons chosen by God, and redeemed by Christ, and who are perfectly and distinctly known by them; their number and names are with them; their names are written in the Lamb's book of life; and God and Christ can, and do call them by their name; and when they were given to Christ, they passed under the rod of him that telleth them; and he will give an exact account of them, of every individual person, another day. But then they are not to be numbered by men; and they will be

of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, and therefore must consist both of Jews and Gentiles; these were not all nations, etc. but "of" all nations, some of all nations; and such God has chosen, Christ has redeemed, and the Spirit calls; God has not chosen all the Jews, but a remnant, according to the election of grace, nor all the Gentiles, but has taken out of them a people for his name; and so Christ has redeemed, by his blood, some out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, of Jew and Gentile: and hence the Gospel has been sent into all the world, and to all nations, for the gathering of these persons out of them; and when they

are all gathered in, they will all meet together in the new Jerusalem church state, and make up the body here presented to view.

Stood before the throne and before the Lamb; the throne of God, and of the Lamb, will be in the midst of the new Jerusalem church; the tabernacle of God will be with men, and he will dwell, among them; and before the presence of his glory will all the saints be presented; and the Lamb will then present to himself his whole church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; and they will behold his glory, and see him as he is: and as they are described before by their number, and their descent, so here by their position and situation, and, as follows, by their habit and attire,

clothed with white robes; agreeably to their princely and priestly characters: it was usual for princes and noblemen to be arrayed in vestures of linen, as Joseph was in Pharaoh's court; and the Jewish priests wore garments of linen, in their daily ministry and service; and in the thousand years' reign the saints will appear to be kings and priests, (⁶⁶⁵⁰Revelation 5:10 20:6); and accordingly will be clothed as such: and this may also be expressive of their entire freedom from sin by the blood of Christ, (⁶⁰⁷⁴Revelation 7:14); and their complete justification by his righteousness, which is sometimes compared to white raiment, and is called fine linen, clean, and white; and likewise their spotless purity and holiness, sanctification in them being now perfect, which was before imperfect: and these robes may also design their shining robes of glory and immortality; for they will now be clothed upon with their house from heaven, and will have put off mortality and corruption, and have put on immortality and incorruption, and appear with Christ in glory; for such will be the then state of things:

and palms in their hands; or branches of palm trees, as in (⁶¹²³John 12:13) as an emblem of their uprightness and faithfulness, which they had shown in the cause of Christ, even unto death, the palm tree being a very upright tree, (²⁴⁰⁵Jeremiah 10:5 ²¹⁷¹Song of Solomon 7:7); or of their bearing up under a variety of pressures and afflictions, by which they were not cast down and destroyed, but bravely stood up under them, and were now come out of them; the palm tree being of such a nature, as is reported, that the more weight is hung upon it, the higher it rises, and the straighter it grows; (see ¹⁹²²Psalms 92:12); and chiefly as an emblem of victory and triumph over their enemies, as sin, Satan, the world and death, which they had been struggling with, in a state of imperfection, but were now more

than conquerors over them; the palm tree is well known to be a token of victory. So Philo the Jew ^{f222} says, the palm tree is *συμβολον νικης*, “a symbol of victory”. Conquerors used to carry palm tree branches in their hands ^{f223}: those who conquered in the combats and plays among the Greeks, used not only to have crowns of palm trees given them, but carried branches of it in their hands ^{f224}; as did also the Romans in their triumphs; yea, they sometimes wore “toga palmata”, a garment with the figures of palm trees on it, which were interwoven in it ^{f225}: and hence here palms are mentioned along with white garments; and some have been tempted to render the words thus, “clothed with white robes”, and “palms on their sides”; that is, on the sides of their robes ^{f226}. The medal which was struck by Titus Vespasian, at the taking of Jerusalem, had on it a palm tree, and a captive woman sitting under it, with this inscription on it, “Judaea capta”, Judea is taken. And when our Lord rode in triumph to Jerusalem, the people met him with branches of palm trees in their hands, and cried, Hosanna to him. So the Jews, at the feast of tabernacles, which they kept in commemoration of their having dwelt in tents in the wilderness, carried “Lulabs”, or palm tree branches, in their hands, in token of joy, (^{f227}Leviticus 23:40); and in like manner, these being come out of the wilderness of the world, and the tabernacle of God being among them, express their joy in this way; (see Gill on “^{f228}John 12:13”).

Ver. 10. *And cried with a loud voice*, etc.] To show the strength of their affection, and the greatness of their joy, and how sensible they were of the favour they enjoyed, and how hearty they were in the following ascription of glory to God, and the Lamb.

Saying, salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb; by “salvation” is meant, not only temporal salvation, and those many deliverances, which God had wrought for them, and particularly in bringing them out of great tribulation, (^{f229}Revelation 7:14); but spiritual and eternal salvation, which is the salvation of the soul, and is owing to the free grace of God, and the blood of Christ; and the sense is, that God and the Lamb are the sole authors of it, and the glory of it ought to be given to them, and to no other: God the Father, who sits upon the throne, resolved upon it in his eternal purposes and decrees, and contrived and formed the scheme of it in the council of peace, and he made sufficient provision for it in the covenant of grace; and as he from eternity appointed his Son to be his salvation to the ends of the earth, so in the fulness of time he sent him to be the Saviour of the world, and delivered him up for all his people, unto

death itself, and spared him not, but awoke the sword of justice against him, and sheathed it in him; and since he had such a concern in salvation, the glory of it in right belongs to him: and the Lamb, the Son of God, he engaged to do the will and work of God, and from everlasting became the surety of the better testament; and in time he came to seek and to save lost sinners, and he is become the author of eternal salvation to them; his own arm has brought it, and it is in him, and no other, even a salvation from sin, Satan, the law, the world, hell, and death, and wrath to come; and it will be the employment of the saints, both in the new Jerusalem church state, during the thousand years' reign, and in heaven to all eternity, to ascribe the glory of all this, not to themselves, to their merits and works of righteousness, or to any creature whatever, but to God and the Lamb only.

Ver. 11. *And all the angels stood round about the throne*, etc.] The holy and elect angels, even all of them, the ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, the innumerable company of them, who are represented in the same position; (see Gill on “⁽⁴⁶⁵¹⁾Revelation 5:11”);

and [about] the elders, and the four beasts; the churches and ministers; yea, round about the great multitude before mentioned, the camp of the saints, and the beloved city; whose guardians they will be, and to whom they will always be ministering spirits.

And fell before the throne on their faces: in token of submission and reverence:

and worshipped God; by celebrating the perfections of his nature, and ascribing to him the glory of all his works.

Ver. 12. *Saying, Amen*, etc.] As approving and confirming what the great multitude of men had said in (⁽⁴⁶⁷⁰⁾Revelation 7:10); in ascribing the glory of salvation to God, and the Lamb: the angels, though they have no part in it themselves, yet highly approve of it as right and just, that men should give the glory of it where it is due.

Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, [be] unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. Here a seven fold praise is given to God by the angels, as to the Lamb, in (⁽⁴⁶⁵²⁾Revelation 5:12), and in words much the same they rightly ascribe blessing to God, who is blessed in himself, and is the source of all blessedness to his creatures, angels and men. And also “glory”; the glory of his divine perfections, who is the God of glory; and of all his works of

nature and providence, and especially of the salvation of men by Christ. “And wisdom”; he being the only wise God, whose wisdom is to be seen in all the works of creation, and in the government of the world, and in nothing more than in the scheme of redemption by the Son of God: “and thanksgiving”: for all mercies and favours, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, enjoyed by angels, or by men: “and honour”; which is due to him from all his creatures, as he is the Creator of them; and from all his children, as he is their Father; and from all his servants, as he their master: “and power”: which he has exerted, in making all things out of nothing, in supporting the whole universe in its being, and in saving and preserving his own people: “and might”; or “strength”, he being the almighty God, the strength of Israel, and the rock of ages, in whom is everlasting strength; and the praise and ascription of all this, the angels wish to be given him by themselves and others, to all eternity; and as desiring that so it might be, and as believing that so it would be, they add their to it.

Ver. 13. *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me,* etc.] This elder was not the Apostle Peter, as some Popish interpreters have thought; and still less Pope Silvester, who lived in the times of Constantine; he is much more likely, according to others, to be Constantine himself, the first of the elders, or the chief magistrate when the church sprung out of its troubles, and enjoyed rest and peace; though some have thought of the prophet Isaiah, since many things said by this elder are to be found in his prophecy; compare (~~6174~~ Revelation 7:14,16,17); with (~~2118~~ Isaiah 1:18 49:10 25:8); but it is needless to inquire who the particular person was; it is enough to say, that he was one of the four and twenty elders about the throne, one that belonged to the church, perhaps the same as in (~~6185~~ Revelation 5:5); who, in a visionary way, is represented as accosting John upon the above sight. The word “answered” is a common Hebraism of the New Testament, which is often used when nothing goes before, to which a return is made; and only signifies here, that the elder opened his month, began to speak, and called to John, and said as follows:

what are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? This he said, not as being ignorant of them, or of the reason of their being clothed in this manner, nor of the place and state from whence they came, as appears by the account afterwards given of them by him; but to stir up John to take more notice of them, as being a body of men that were worthy of observation and contemplation, and were worth his while to consider well who they were, and from whence they came; and also to try him

whether he knew them or not, and to bring him to a confession of his ignorance; and that he might have an opportunity of giving him some hints about them, which might be useful to him, and to the churches, and for the explanation of this vision, and other parts of this prophecy.

Ver. 14. *And I said unto him, sir, thou knowest*, etc.] John replies in a very humble, modest, and respectful manner, to the elder, calling him “sir”, according to the usage of the eastern people; and it is observable, that this word is much used in his Gospel, and more than in any other book; (see ~~EB11~~ John 4:11,15,19,49 5:7 12:21 20:15). Some copies, and the Complutensian edition, read, “my Lord”; and so do the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions. John confesses his ignorance, and ascribes knowledge to the elder, and desires information of him; for the sense is, that the elder knew who they were, and from whence they came, but he did not, and therefore desires that he would inform him; and so the Arabic version renders it, “and my Lord, thou art more learned”; that is, than I am, and therefore instruct me, as he accordingly did;

and he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation: seeing this company designs all the elect of God, that ever were, are, or shall be in the world; “the great tribulation”, out of which they came, is not to be restrained to any particular time of trouble, but includes all that has been, is, or shall be; as all the afflictions of the saints under the Old Testament; from righteous Abel to Zechariah; and all the troubles of the people of God in the times of the Maccabees, (~~SB15~~ Hebrews 11:35-38); all the persecutions of the Christians by the Jews, at the first publication of the Gospel; and the persecutions under the Roman emperors, both Pagan and Arian; and the cruelties and barbarities of the Romish antichrist, during the whole time of the apostasy; and particularly the last struggle of the beast, which will be the hour of temptation, that will come upon all the world; and in general all the afflictions, reproaches, persecutions, and many tribulations of all the saints, and every member of Christ in this world, who in the new Jerusalem church state will be come out of them; which supposes them to have been in them, and yet were not overwhelmed by them, and lost in them; but, by divine support and assistance, waded through them, and were now quite clear of them, and never more to be annoyed with them; (see ~~EB14~~ Revelation 21:4).

And have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; not in the blood of bulls and goats, which could not take away sin;

nor in their own blood, their sufferings for Christ, on which they did not depend, knowing there is no comparison between them, and the glory revealed in them; nor in any works of righteousness done by them, which are imperfect and filthy, and need washing; but in the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. The “robes” which they washed in his blood may either design themselves, their consciences, which this blood purges from dead works; or their outward conversation garments, which have their spots, and need continual washing; or else the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, or their justification, which is by the blood of Christ, (^{([Eph](#))} Romans 5:9). The act of washing from sin, by the blood of Christ, is sometimes ascribed to Christ himself, as in (^{([Rev](#))} Revelation 1:5); but here to the saints, and designs the concern which faith has in the blood of Christ, which deals with it for justification, peace, and pardon, for the removing of sin from the conscience, and for cleansing from all impurity, both of flesh and Spirit: and the effect of this is, that their robes were “made white”; that is, that they were freed from all sin, were without fault before the throne, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. This shows that these persons had no trust in themselves, or dependence on their own merits, and works of righteousness, but wholly trusted to, and depended on the blood and righteousness of Christ; which is the only way to come out of tribulation, and enter the kingdom.

Ver. 15. *Therefore are they before the throne of God*, etc.] (See Gill on ^{([Rev](#))} Revelation 7:9”); not because of their great tribulations, but because they were brought through them, and out of them, by the grace and power of God; nor because of their robes, or conversation garments, but because those were washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb; or because of the blood of the Lamb, and their justification, pardon, and cleansing by it:

and serve him day and night in his temple; not in any material temple, but in the new Jerusalem, the general assembly and church of the firstborn, the temple of the living God; for in this state there will be no material temple, or place of worship, but God and the Lamb will be the temple thereof, (^{([Rev](#))} Revelation 21:22); nor will there be any night there, (^{([Rev](#))} Revelation 22:5); wherefore this phrase, day and night, only denotes the constancy and uninterrupted of their service, there being nothing to obstruct them in it, or break them off from it, as now; in allusion to the priests and Levites, who were, one or other of them, night or day in the service of the temple: and the service of these persons in the new Jerusalem state will not lie in attending on the word and ordinances, or in the ministration of them, as in

the present state; but in praising God, singing Hallelujahs to him, adoring the perfections of his nature, and admiring his wonderful works of providence and grace, and ascribing the glory of salvation to him, and to the Lamb; and this their service will be the glorious liberty of the children of God. Hence the Ethiopic version renders it, “and they praise him day and night”; this will be the employment of the saints in the millennium state, and to all eternity:

and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; or “tabernacle over them”; for the tabernacle of God shall be now among men, and he will dwell among the saints; they shall enjoy his presence, and have the most intimate communion with him; it will appear most manifest that he is their covenant God, and they are his covenant people; and he will be a tabernacle, not only of inhabitation, but of protection for them; and the name of this city, this new Jerusalem, will be “Jehovah Shammah”, the Lord is there.

Ver. 16. *They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more*, etc.] The words are taken out of (²³⁹⁰Isaiah 49:10), and will be true in a literal and corporeal sense. Now the saints are often in hunger and thirst, then they shall be so no more; and in a mystical and spiritual sense, there will be no famine of the word; for though there will not be the outward ministration of the word, as now, the substance of it will be enjoyed, to full satisfaction; nor will there be any uneasy desires after spiritual things, and much less any hungerings and thirstings, or lusting after carnal, sensual, and earthly things.

Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; not the sun of persecution, (see ⁴⁰³⁶Matthew 13:6,22); nor the heat of Satan's temptations, or his fiery darts; nor of any fiery trial, or sore affliction; nor of the divine displeasure, or any fearful sense and apprehension of it; nor of toil and labour, called the burden and heat of the day, from all which they will be now free.

Ver. 17. *For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne*, etc.] (see ⁴⁰¹⁶Revelation 5:6); not before the throne, as the great multitude are said to be, (⁴⁰¹⁰Revelation 7:9); nor round about it, as the angels in (⁴⁰⁷¹Revelation 7:11); but in the midst of it, being equal to him that sits upon it; sitting on the same throne with him, and having the same power and authority, he

shall feed them as a shepherd his flock; for this Lamb is a Shepherd, and this great multitude are his flock; whom he will feed in this state, not by his ministers, word, and ordinances, as now; but in person, and with the rich discoveries of himself, and of his love, signified by a feast, by new wine in his Father's kingdom, and his own, and by eating and drinking at his table, in the kingdom appointed by him to his followers; and hence it is they shall never hunger more: or “shall rule them”, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; for the same word signifies “to feed”, and “to rule”, as a king rules his subjects; Christ will now be visibly King of saints, and King over all the earth, and will reign before his ancients gloriously; and, in these days of his, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely under his power and protection:

and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; by “water” is meant the grace, love, and free favour of God in Christ, that pure river of water of life, which proceeds from the throne of God, and of the Lamb, from divine sovereignty; and with which the saints in this state shall be sweetly and fully solaced and refreshed; and hence they shall never thirst more: and this is said to be “living”, because not only refreshing and reviving, but because it will last for ever; the love of God is from everlasting to everlasting; and it is signified by “fountains”, to denote the abundance of it, even as it will be perceived and enjoyed by the saints now; for these waters will not be only up to the ankles, and knees, but a broad river to swim in, which cannot be passed over; and hither will Christ lead his people, which is, one branch of his office as a Shepherd; and which shows his care of them, and affection for them.

And God shall wipe away all tear, from their eyes; or “out of their eyes”, as the Alexandrian copy reads; (see ^{<2358>}Isaiah 25:8). The sense is, that that which is now the occasion of tears will cease, as the sin and corruptions of God's people, which now are the cause of many tears; as also Satan's temptations, the hidings of God's face, and the various afflictions of this life, and the persecutions of the men of the world; there will be no more of either of these; all will be made to cease; (see ^{<6204>}Revelation 21:4); and in the room of them full and everlasting joy will take place, (^{<2350>}Isaiah 35:10). Mr. Daubuz thinks, that the whole of this chapter belongs to the sixth seal, and that the promises in it are such as were to be accomplished at the opening of the seventh, and do not belong to the millennium state; but had their fulfilment in the times of Constantine, who he supposes is the angel that came from the east, who restrained the persecutors of the church, and

introduced a general peace in church and state; and as he came with the seal of the living God, which he understands of the cross of Christ, he put upon his standard, and on the shields of his soldiers, so he sealed the servants of God on their foreheads with it, by allowing them to make a public profession of a crucified Christ, and by protecting them in that profession, even men of all nations, Jews and Gentiles; and particularly he thinks the innumerable palm bearing company may design the council of Nice, gathered by him, which consisted of the representatives of the whole Christian church in the several nations of the world, who had great honour, freedom, and immunities conferred upon them; and that the angels are the Christian magistrates, submitting to the Christian religion, and defending the church, which was now come out of the great tribulation of Heathen persecution, and had temples and places of public worship opened for them; in which they had full liberty to serve the Lord continually, without interruption; and were secure from all affliction and persecution, and were filled with joy and gladness; and the Lamb, by the means of Constantine, as Christ's vicar and servant, he declared himself to be, fed and protected the church in peace and quietness; all which are accomplished during the rest, or "silence", under the next seal; and which I should very readily agree to, since this interpretation carries on the thread of the prophetic history without any interruption, were it not for the description of the palm bearing company, both as to quantity and quality, and the declaration of the happy state of those come out of great tribulation, which I think cannot be made to suit with any imperfect state of the church on earth, without greatly lowering the sense of the expressions used; however, if anyone prefers this exposition to what is given, I am not much averse unto it.