Four Scenes, Three Groups, One Harvest

#1 in the series: **Tribulation to Glory — The Trail of the Saints**

Revelation is not always written on a strict timeline. Visions zoom out, zoom in, and reframe. But chronological markers are sometimes embedded in the text itself — and where they are clear, we can safely follow.

Four prophetic scenes in Revelation show us the saints at distinct moments in the end-time sequence. Two of those scenes show the 144,000 at different points in the narrative.

Following the chronological anchors carefully, produces a framework that is both textually honest and internally consistent.

Scene 1 — The 144,000 Sealed

The 144,000 are sealed before the time of trouble begins

*"*After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. Then I saw another angel... saying, 'Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.'" — **Revelation 7:1-3**

The sequence is stated, not implied. The winds of strife are actively held back. We assume this a reference to tribulation surrounding the mark of the beast. The sealing happens before the winds of strife are released. **Daniel 12:1** ties the same moment to Michael standing up — *"At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who stands for the children of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time..."*

The 144,000, "**sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel**"(Rev 7:4) are secured before the storm arrives.

Scene 2 — The 144,000 on Mount Zion

The 144,000 are gathered with the Lamb before the beast period begins

"Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads." — **Revelation 14:1**

Some read Rev. 14:1 as an earthly scene, with the 144,000 standing on the earthly Mount Zion and only hearing music from Heaven. However, Heb. 12:22 shows that "Mount Zion" can also name the heavenly city. An earthly setting with the Lamb present would also suggest after the Second Coming, which would be out of order for a scene that immediately precedes the three angels' messages to a world still deciding. The heavenly setting fits the chapter's sequence.

They are shown "before the throne"(Rev14:3) already gathered, already sealed with the Father's name, already with the Lamb — just prior to the three angels' messages of **Revelation 14:6-12** going out to a world that has not yet made its final decision about the the beast and it's mark. The 144,000 are the firstfruits — *aparchē* — already brought in before the main harvest. "These are those who follow the Lamb wherever he goes."(Rev14:4). And, as we saw before, in verse 1, the 144,000 were with the Lamb - Jesus, our "Messiah our Passover" Lamb(1 Corinthians 5:7). And verse 3 pictures them "before the throne". This is how we know they were in Heaven.

Scene 3 — The Sea of Glass Company

The 15:2-4 company are end-time saints already before the throne before the last plagues fall. Were they martyred?

"And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire — and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands." — **Revelation 15:2**

For additional clarity, **Revelation 4:6** states that the *"sea of glass"* is *"before the throne"*, so this scene is in Heaven.

The chronological placement of this group of saints is the most structurally certain of the four. **Revelation 15:1** announces the seven last plagues. **Revelation 15:5** releases them. Verses 2-4 are fixed between those two chronological markers. This company

must also be sealed because they are already before the throne, chronologically before the first of the 7 last plagues falls.

Although the beast 'overcame' them physically (Rev. 13:7), they overcame him in allegiance to God by refusing his mark (Rev. 15:2; 12:11).

Rev. 12:11; *"They **overcame** him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from **death**."* Their victory came through faithfulness, with death accepted as a possible cost.

But were they martyred? Consider this evidence:

1. **Revelation 6:9-11** shows martyred souls already under the altar, given white robes, told to wait.
2. *"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on... that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them."* — **Revelation 14:13** . This marks a forward-looking window beginning at that pronouncement, immediately after the three angels' messages and immediately before the harvest vision. The blessing lands precisely on those who die faithfully during the beast period — likely the same company we see standing victorious on the sea of glass.
3. In **1 Thessalonians 4:17** we see saints who went through the mark of the beast tribulation who are still alive when Jesus returns. I think it worth asking this question: If the saint's of Rev 15:2-4 were not martyred, then why did some survivors go to Heaven early and others had to wait until Jesus returned?

Three observations point toward martyrdom:** Rev. 6:9-11, Rev. 14:13, and the question of why some who faced the mark would be taken early while 1 Thess. 4:17 describes others remaining until the Lord returns. **On this basis, I hold that they were martyred.

Scene 4 — The Great Multitude

This is the most layered of the four scenes. Several questions require separate evaluation.

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Question 1: Does the great multitude include the redeemed of all ages, rather than just of the tribulation of the mark of the beast?

Answer:
"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands." — **Revelation 7:9**

These witnesses broaden the scope of ***"the great tribulation"*** beyond one end-time window:

- **Revelation 1:9** — John describes himself as already ***"in the tribulation"*** in the first century.
- **John 16:33** : Jesus tells his disciples, "In this world you will have **tribulation**. But take heart! I have overcome the world."
- **Acts 14:22** — *"through **many tribulations** we must enter the kingdom of God"* — Paul uses the same Greek root as the universal description of the saints' path across all ages.
- **Daniel 12:1** — deliverance is tied to **every name written in the book**, a covenant identity marker, not an event-specific one.

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Question 2: Is this Scene in the New Earth?

Answer:

This scene shares many features with the New Earth. God wipes away every tear (Revelation 7:17; 21:4), the living water flows (Rev.7:17; 22:1), and the throne of God and the Lamb is present. But another detail strongly suggests that this scene is a heavenly scene that comes before the New Earth.

Revelation 7:15 says of this company: *"That is why they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night **in his temple**."* But when John describes the New Jerusalem, he says: *"**I did not see a temple** in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple"* (Revelation 21:22).

A temple exists in the Revelation 7 scene and does not in Revelation 21. This points to a heavenly scene after the Second Coming but before the New Earth.

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Question 3: Could this scene be after the Second Coming?

Answer:
Three independent threads converge on the same moment:

1. **Leviticus 23:39-40** establishes the palm branches as Feast of Booths imagery — celebrated ***after*** the harvest is complete, not during it.
2. **John 12:13** shows the same gesture used to welcome Jesus, as their arriving king — *they took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet him, and cried out, "Hoshia'na! the King of Israel!"*
3. **1 Thessalonians 4:17** "*then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet(**apantēsis**) the Lord in the air. So we will be with the Lord forever.*" Paul used the Greek ***apantēsis***, the formal procession of citizens going out to escort a returning king, for the gathering of the saints at the return.

Palm branches welcoming an arriving king, immediately after the harvest is complete — all three threads point to the same moment: the Second Coming. Since this scene is already in Heaven, that arrival has already happened.

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Question 4: Are the surviving living saints of 1 Thessalonians 4:17 included in the Revelation 7:9-17 company?

Answer:
"Then we who are alive, and remain, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." — **1 Thessalonians 4:17**

They are caught up together with the resurrected dead at the First Resurrection and arrive before the throne together. The Revelation 7:9-17 company — the "great multitude" — unnumbered, all ages, all nations. This the natural home for both groups arriving together. No other scene in Revelation accounts for the live saints who survive until Jesus returns.

Scripture points to a Goshen-like protection for the surviving saints. The seven last plagues are directed at *"the people who had the mark of the beast"* (Rev. 16:2), not at those sealed by God. This follows the Exodus pattern, in which the plagues struck Egypt while God declared, *"On that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people live, so that no swarms of flies will be there... I will make a distinction between my people and your people"* (Ex. 8:22-23). Goshen was not a place of endurance through Egypt's suffering but of exemption from it, just as the blood-marked doorposts caused the destroyer to pass over Israel (Ex. 12). Paul states the governing principle: *"God has not appointed us to suffer wrath"* (1 Thess. 5:9). Christ's prayer is consistent with this: *"I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you **keep them out of the evil**"* (John 17:15).

The Three Groups

Three people groups emerge from this study, two nested inside the largest, each well-defined:

The Great Multitude — Revelation 7:9-17 — all the redeemed of all ages, the complete harvest, gathered before the throne after the First Resurrection. Unnumbered, "of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues"(Rev7:9) across all of human history.

The Sea of Glass Company — Revelation 15:2-4 — the end-time subset of the great multitude, martyred during the beast period, already before the throne before the 7 last plagues — defined by a specific conquest: the beast, his image, and the number of his name.

The 144,000 — Revelation 7:1-8; 14:1-5 — "of all the tribes of the children of Israel"(Rev7:4) — the living firstfruits subset of the great multitude, sealed before the time of trouble, gathered with the Lamb before the beast period concludes. The first portion of the final harvest, taken in before the main harvest faces its defining trial.

One harvest. Three people groups. Each textually distinct. Each chronologically placed by the markers the text itself provides.

Drafted in collaboration with Claude (AI), with all theological positions, Scripture selections, and final wording reviewed and approved by Sid Nash — Desiring to live by every word that comes from the mouth of Yahweh. (Deut8:3; Matt4:4). Version date: 11/01/2026 Latest version: https://sidnash.org/docs/4Scenes3Groups1Harvest.html