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## EP61 Revelation 7 verses 4-8

**144,000**

### **Revelation 7:4-8**

And I heard the number of them having been sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand having been sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand having been sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand having been sealed.

There are so many fascinating things to mention about this list, not just in the **Code** revealed by numbers but also in the **Code** communicated through the various tribes of Israel. This is a mind-blowing passage and reveals deep truths that have been distorted by far too many.

### **Fiction Alert**

**FICTION ALERT**

The typical fiction goes that this is a list which describes a Jewish remnant that becomes evangelists, or the witnesses of God, and testify of Him throughout the tribulation. They are deemed to be part of the **fictional** “tribulation saints.”

Later in **Revelation 11**, we will get to a group of witnesses whom they connect with this tribal list.<sup>1</sup> According to the **fiction**, these witnesses are all Jewish, and they are not deemed to be part of the church, since the church, in their **End Times** narrative, would have already been raptured. They purport them to be a collection of Jews that return to **Yahweh** and are His evangelists through the 7-year tribulation.

We will find however that this fiction is turned over on its head once we look at the **Code** revealed by numbers, but also in the meaning of the **Code** communicated through the various tribes of Israel. Again, this is mind-blowing and nothing short of beautiful.

### **Having Been Sealed**

This phrase “*having been sealed*” is rendered in the *perfect passive participle*. This speaks of a past event, where the result of the occurrence or the act seems to be present or simultaneous with the time of speaking. In other words, it is an act performed by God (or on God’s behalf through the agency of the

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<sup>1</sup> See **Revelation 11:1-13, 14:1-5, 19**

angelic), but an act which has a continuing or ongoing impact such that it seems to be present even now.

The Spirit was precise in His utilization of the *perfect passive participle*. He purposed not to use the *past* tense (through either the *imperfect* or the *aorist active indicative*). Thus, simply saying they were sealed is not what He wanted to communicate. He wanted us to know that they were sealed, and they are sealed. What He did continues to be in effect.

Thus, we can be assured that this tribal selection and this mesmerizing numbering is not random, it is not a result of chance, and there is nothing arbitrary about it. It has all occurred according to God's intentional plan and purposes. And what He did by marking these bondservants with His signet ring, is guaranteed to have a lasting and continual effect.

## Numbers

The number 144,000 can be expressed as 12 x 12 x 1000. According to the **Code**, the number 12 represents the perfect administration or governmental affairs of mankind. And 1,000 is just a multiplier to demonstrate a larger magnitude—a great multitude too big to count.

This number is oddly like the image we were previously given of the 24 elders (12+12), the collection of Jews and Gentile believers who are even now sitting on their thrones.<sup>2</sup>

As such, in connection with the **bondservants** of God who are marked on the forehead, the imagery draws us first to the Jews who will be converted by God and just as promised, grafted back into the vine (back into Jesus).<sup>3</sup> These Jews are represented, in general, by the list of tribes of the sons of Israel. I say “in general” because we will find some interesting twists that apply exclusively to the gentiles. Second, we are drawn to the 12 apostles, who are the foundation of the church—the New Jerusalem (who are a symbol of the bride of Christ)—the city which for the past 2,000 years has been built primarily of gentiles.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, with the multiplier of 1,000 (again designating a great multitude), in this number of 144,000 we likely see the completion of a **mystery** of God, the joining of the Jews and gentiles in faith.<sup>5</sup>

In the New Testament, the term “**Israel**” functions as **Code** for both Jew and gentile who live crucified to this world where “law” is irrelevant, and where all that matters is the new creation where faith expresses itself in God's *agape* love.<sup>6</sup> **Israel** (or the “*Israel of God*”) is therefore **Code** for the collection of all those who are now believing and now overcoming and who endure to the end.

And when the complete number of gentiles dig down deep in their souls and choose to become bondservants of Christ, then the Jews will also be welcomed back into the fold, and many will dig down deep in their soul and choose to likewise be bondservants of Christ; and so all “**Israel**” will be saved.<sup>7</sup>

You might be thinking, “Ok, I can get the 12 tribes of Jews since their tribal names are listed. However, this passage says nothing about the gentiles, or about the apostles being used as an idiom in this calculation for the gentiles.” That is most definitely how it looks on the surface, but when we dig into the

<sup>2</sup> **Revelation 4:4**

<sup>3</sup> **Romans 11:11-26**

<sup>4</sup> **Revelation 21:14**

<sup>5</sup> See **Romans 9 and 11**

<sup>6</sup> **Galatians 5:5-6, 6:14-16; Romans 9:22-26; 11:1-6**

<sup>7</sup> **Romans 11:25-26**

**Code**, we will find that this list is a much larger picture than it might otherwise seem.

## ***Tribal History***

It is important to note that during the time when John was writing, amongst the Jews, there was little tribal distinction remaining, except for some of those who belonged to Judah and Benjamin (the 2 southern tribes) and for certain Priests and Levites that still clung to their ancestral heritage. Therefore, understanding a little bit of history is important here.

### **Israel: Ephraim**

First, it is important to note that after King Solomon (the son of King David) died, the Kingdom was split into two halves, with 10-tribes to the North, which went by the nationalistic name Israel, and 2-tribes to the south, which went by the nationalistic name Judah. This occurred in 932 B.C.

Second, the nation of Israel quickly became apostate and turned from **Yahweh** to worship other gods. As a result, and after much warning and pleading, God brought judgment on Israel, and they were taken into captivity in Assyria in waves between 740 and 722 B.C. (and remember John was writing around 97 A.D. so there was over an 822 to 840-year time difference from when Israel was taken captive to when John was writing).

Third, prior to their captivity, God often used the tribal name “**Ephraim**” as a marker or a place holder in an idiomatic fashion that referred to the entirety of the nation of Israel (the 10-tribes). In other words, Ephraim is **Code** for the nation as Ephraim’s leap into idolatry was a picture of the nation’s plunge into Idolatry. Sometimes, “**Joseph**” is used in a similar idiomatic fashion.<sup>8</sup>

Fourth, unlike the two southern tribes (Judah and Benjamin) who were deported to Babylon beginning in 605 B.C. (at least that is when Daniel was taken into captivity) and allowed to return to their land around 537 B.C., those belonging to the 10-tribes of Israel were never given permission to return to their homeland. In fact, those who were dispersed to the region of Babylon by their Assyrian captors were in captivity for 135 years (4-5 generations) before the exiles from Judah and Benjamin arrived. Again, Israel had all but lost their tribal identity. And they remained scattered and over time assimilated into the various people groups to which they had been deported into the Assyrian, and later the Babylonian, Mede, Persian, Greek, and Roman controlled lands.

As a result, most of Israel lost their tribal distinction as they melted into the nations in which they were deported. Then carry that reality forward another 2,000 years or so to modern times and for the 10-northern tribes, there is simply little to no tribal connections that can be identified.

This entire process fulfilled a couple of key prophecies from the **Codex**.

First, there is a prophecy In **Genesis** where Jacob (also known as “Israel”) is prophesying over his grandchildren and he took the younger son of Joseph, Ephraim, and gave him the role of the first born ahead of Joseph’s actual eldest son, Manasseh.<sup>9</sup> The youngest was set before the eldest. Then he said of

<sup>8</sup> See *Isaiah 7:17, 9:8-9, 21, 11:12-13, 17:3, 28:1-3; Jeremiah 7:15, 16:18-20; Ezekiel 37:15-23; Hosea 4:16-17, 5:1-15; Zechariah 9:10, 13, 10:6-7; Psalm 80:1; Amos 5:15, 6:6*

<sup>9</sup> *Exodus 4:22; Jeremiah 31:9*

Ephraim, “**His descendants shall become a multitude of nations.**”<sup>10</sup> Clearly, this prophecy was fulfilled in an unusual way as “**Ephraim**” (euphemistically applied to the 10-tribes of Israel) has been dispersed far and wide and melded into the nations of the world.

Second, in *Isaiah*, **Yahweh** prophesied that Ephraim would be shattered, so that it would **no longer be a people**.<sup>11</sup> This prophecy has been literally fulfilled. “Ephraim” whether understood as a single tribe or idiomatically for the 10-tribes of Israel is no longer a separate people group, for they have been dispersed, spread out, and blended (or inter-bred) amongst the gentile nations of the world such that they no longer have a distinct Jewish identity. Truly, they have become a multitude of nations.

**This is an especially important piece of the puzzle to our understanding the picture of the tribes in Revelation 7 and the overall redemption of Israel.**

In fact, this idea that due to their interbreeding with the gentile nations they were not a people is reprised in **1 Peter** when the Spirit says to largely gentile believers: “*for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*”<sup>12</sup> This is quoted from *Hosea* where God also says that the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And where it is said to them, “*you are not my people,*” it will be said to them, “*you are the sons of the living God.*”<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, in *Jeremiah*, **Yahweh** said, “*Behold, I am bringing them from the north country, And I will gather them from the remote parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and she who is in labor with child, together; a great company, they will return here. With weeping they will come, and by supplication I will lead them; I will make them walk by streams of waters, on a straight path in which they will not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn.*”<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, through **Ephraim** (technically the second born of Joseph), the promises to Abraham that his descendants would be like the stars in the sky or the sand which on the seashore, is fulfilled in and thorough the gentile nations into which Ephraim or the 10-tribes of Israel has been spread.

**Ephraim has become a multitude of nations, a multitude of gentile nations.** As **Yahweh** promised to Abraham: “*In your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed.*”<sup>15</sup> Clearly, this prompted the following:

### **Galatians 3:7-9**

Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

<sup>10</sup> **Genesis 48:17-22**

<sup>11</sup> **Isaiah 7:8**

<sup>12</sup> **1 Peter 2:10**

<sup>13</sup> **Hosea 1:10, 2:23**

<sup>14</sup> **Jeremiah 31:8-9**

<sup>15</sup> **Genesis 17-18**

***Galatians 6:14-16***

But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. **And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.**

**Judah, Benjamin, and the Levites**

Now, regarding the two southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin, they have kept much of their tribal identification. Their quick return to their land (within less than 70 years of their captivity) enabled this dynamic, as they did not assimilate into the conquering nations. As such, we see Paul claiming that he was a descendent of Benjamin.<sup>16</sup> In addition, even today there are surviving identifiable members of the Levites. For instance, certain people with the name Cohen or Kohen have been genetically proven to descend from the Levites.

**THE POINT OF ALL THIS IS THAT THIS LIST OF 12,000 FROM EVERY TRIBE IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD SYMBOLICALLY EMBRACING BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES, AS PRACTICALLY NO CLEAR-CUT TRIBAL IDENTIFICATION CAN BE MADE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF JUDAH, BENJAMIN, AND SOME LEVITES, BECAUSE THE 10-TRIBES HAVE BEEN ASSIMILATED INTO THE GENTILE NATIONS OF THE WORLD.**

***The Unusual List***

It is critical to note that this list of tribes does **NOT** match any of the lists we find in the entirety of the **Codex**—**NONE!** Again, this points to more of an idiomatic understanding of this list of tribes. In other words, it is a picture of a bigger reality. The list is **Code**.

For example, the Levites were never counted among the tribes. They were pulled out of the community, so to speak, and offered to God in place of the first-born of each of the other tribes. As a result, they were not allowed to have any kind of tribal inheritance. They received no separate tribal land as did the other tribes. Instead, they were to be scattered across the nation and live amongst all the other tribes and minister before them and before the Tabernacle as priests.<sup>17</sup>

In like manner, Joseph was also not included in the customary tribal lists. Instead, **Yahweh** recognized the children of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) to account for both Joseph and the missing tribe caused by the Levites not being counted among the possessors of tribal territory in the Land.

Follow me on this. There were 12 sons of Jacob. But since Levi was not counted, there were technically only 11 tribes. But the Lord had a solution. He counted Joseph's two sons Manasseh and Ephraim among the tribes; thus, Joseph was also removed from the count (which would reduce the tribal count to 10), but

<sup>16</sup> ***Romans 11:1***

<sup>17</sup> ***Numbers 3***

since both Manasseh and Ephraim were added, the tribal count of 12 was restored.

Therefore, to have a list that includes Joseph and Manasseh is extremely odd since it specifically excludes Ephraim but in effect double-counts Manasseh (which is an especially important historical point tied to the original prophecy by which the younger, Ephraim, took the place of the Eldest Manasseh as the first-born). Thus, although Joseph's youngest son was prophetically advanced into the role of the first-born child, he is only incorporated by reference through the inclusion of Joseph.

Then to include Levi in this tribal list is very bizarre and it just screams for us to dig in deeper and understand why the Spirit would now include them when they were removed and dedicated to God.

Moreover, in addition to specifically excluding Ephraim, this list also purposefully excludes the tribe of **Dan**. Going back to the demonic connection to the tribe of **Dan**, we should not be surprised that they are not included. Still, to have them wiped off the list of the tribes of Israel is unprecedented.

This seems like a huge shell game that somehow still comes out with a list of 12-tribes, though this list is bizarre, never seen before, and which on its surface makes no historical sense.

## What could it all mean?

Clearly this list is meant to be understood as a picture, an exceptionally large picture that is fully identified in the verses that follow (**7:9-17**), and **NOT** as a definitive list of Jews that become evangelists for God, as the typical **fiction** goes. Therefore, we must take a deeper dive into this tribal list to understand the meaning of the **Code**. We will first address the tribes that were deleted and then we will come back around and address the unusual inclusions.

## Deletions: Dan, Ephraim

Following up from our study in **Jude** on apostasy, **Dan** and **Ephraim** represent a radical arm of the apostate church. The New Testament nomenclature for these 2-tribes would be a segment of the visible church identified as the "Called." Those who were called by God into His household, placed their faith in God (they took **Step 1** and were converted by God or born-again), but due to their not having made the choice to become a little child dependent upon God for all things, all the time, they choose to exchange their faith for what the world, and ultimately what the Beast, has to offer.<sup>18</sup> Some started down the path of faith and later retreated and still others never took **Step 2**. This is all imaged for us in the parable of the Sower and the seed.<sup>19</sup>

### **Dan: Marked on their Hands & Forehead**

**Dan** might be **Code** representing that segment of the "visible church" that ends up following the Antichrist. There is a poignant passage found in **Revelation 13:15-16** which states that the False Prophet is even now causing people to be marked with the mark or signet of the Beast on the forehead and right hand.

The **forehead** is a place of religious proclamation, but the **right hand** is a symbol of power and strength. Thus, the marking on the right hand gives us an image of those who are not just willing to join the Beast

<sup>18</sup> See **Matthew 18:3**

<sup>19</sup> See **Matthew 13:3-9** and the explanation found in **Matthew 13:18-23**

to ensure they do not die, but they will use their power and might to support his cultic religion.

In other words, **Dan** represents those who give their heart, mind, soul, and strength to the Beast. We read about these people. "*A brother will betray his brother to death, a father will betray his own child, and children will rebel against their parents **and cause them to be killed.***"<sup>20</sup> These are those who will make true believers' outcasts in their synagogues and churches, for this is the hour Jesus spoke about where those who kill the people of God think they are offering service to God.<sup>21</sup>

With the tribal standard of **Dan** being the viper, which was later changed to the Eagle, Jacob and Moses might as well have just called the tribe of Dan "Satan's people".<sup>22</sup> After all, that is how they acted since they were continually given over to idolatry. We are told that from when Dan first occupied territory in the Promised Land until their exile to Assyria, they worshiped a carved image, even though the Tabernacle of God was available to them in Shiloh.<sup>23</sup>

It is also no mistake that both John the Baptist and Jesus called the religious elite, the apostates of His generation, serpents, a brood of vipers.<sup>24</sup> They were in essence labeling these ardent believers in their apostate religion as members of the tribe of "**Dan**" (which explains why Jesus said that their father is the devil and they want to do the desires of their father who is a murderer and a liar).<sup>25</sup> This obviously stirred up the ire and hatred of these religious leaders.

There is also a strange apocalyptic passage in *Jeremiah* which seems to speak of the fact that **Dan** might be part of the apostates who join the kingdom of the Beast and come against the land of Judah in the last days.

### ***Jeremiah 8:16-17***

The snorting of their horses is heard from **Dan**; at the sound of the neighing of their stallions the whole land quakes. They come and devour the land and all that fills it, the city and those who dwell in it. For behold, I am sending among you serpents, adders that cannot be charmed, and they shall bite you," declares **Yahweh**.

This passage is in perfect alignment with the original prophecy about **Dan** being a serpent in the way, a horned snake in the path that bites the horse's heels, so that the rider falls backwards.<sup>26</sup> And as previously stated, we know that much of the persecution of the bondservants of Christ will come at the hand of those who believe they are doing a service for God, but who are in fact apostate—those who have fallen away from grace and have been cut off from Christ.

Jesus says that these apostates will cast the bondservants of God out of their religious institutions, for an hour is coming when everyone who kills the bondservants will think that they are offering service to

<sup>20</sup> ***Matthew 10:21***

<sup>21</sup> See ***John 16:1-4***

<sup>22</sup> See (control + Click to follow link): **Error! Reference source not found.**

<sup>23</sup> ***Judges 17-18***

<sup>24</sup> ***Matthew 3:7, 12:34, 23:33; Luke 3:7***

<sup>25</sup> ***John 8:44***

<sup>26</sup> ***Genesis 49:17***

God. They will be fully convinced they are honoring God, and they will do these things because in truth they have not known the Father or the Son.<sup>27</sup>

It may be hard for many believers to swallow the truth that there is a distinction between the Called (those brought into the Household of God) and the Chosen (the bondservants of God). However, we must never forget that Jesus told us that there will be religious people who prophesy in His name, cast out demons in His name, and perform **many** miracles in His name; yet He will say to them, “*I do not know you.*”

Jesus also warned us that there will be a great apostasy where many (not a few) will fall away, and the Spirit is clear that this falling away must occur before the rapture near or around the time that the man of lawlessness (the Antichrist) is revealed, the son of Destruction (the son of the Beast).<sup>28</sup>

We also discovered this truth in the letter to Sardis, where those believers had a great reputation among the community for being alive, but Jesus said that they were dead and dying, because their “good” works were not rooted in the Spirit of God, but only in their *flesh* as they were trying to be good for God.<sup>29</sup> We must never forget that both **Jude** and **Revelation** separates those who stand only on the goodness of God from those who are very busy trying so hard to be good for God.

And keep in mind, **Dan** was apostate from the beginning. When the Israelites first settled in Canaan, Dan’s original property grant was on the coast and was Philistine facing to the South. Though a small tribe, they had nothing to worry when it came to the Philistines, for they were backed up by the powerhouse tribes of Judah and Ephraim. However, Dan never fully possessed their land and in effect abandoned it to the Philistines. Dan abandoned their original calling, yes, they departed or apostatized from the very beginning. Years later, they settled north of Naphtali, as the northern most tribe on the border of Assyria.<sup>30</sup>

The imagery here is striking. The Called (like **Dan**) never possessed the land **Yahweh** gave them to conquer, rather, they abandoned their original calling and turned to religion and to idolatry, all of course done in His name! This is pictured for us in the warnings found in **Hebrews 3** and **4** regarding those consumed with wrong belief and unbelief. Hence, a segment of the Called will become ardent, sold-out, followers of their soon coming Messiah giving him their heart, mind, soul, and strength.

**DAN IS IDIOMATIC OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS WHO FALL AWAY, ABANDON THEIR CALLING, AND TAKE THE MARK OF THE BEAST UPON THEIR FOREHEAD AND RIGHT HANDS. THEY BECOME ARDENT BELIEVERS, FULLY CONVINCED THEY ARE SERVING THEIR MESSIAH.**

By the way, we will find out that this is already happening, this is not an event we are waiting on to occur. The **Code** is clear, people (believers) are even now being marked by the mark of the Beast, but more on that when we get to **Revelation 13**.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> **John 16:2-3; Matthew 23:34; Luke 12:11-12**

<sup>28</sup> See **Matthew 24:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4**

<sup>29</sup> **Revelation 3:1-6**

<sup>30</sup> **Joshua 19:40-48; Judges 18:27-31**

<sup>31</sup> Note: In **Revelation 13:16**, the demonic spirit known as the False Prophet is even now causing people to receive



### ***Ephraim: Marked on the Forehead***

As discussed above, **Ephraim** is **Code** and represents (in idiomatic form) the apostasy of the 10-tribes of Israel. Those from Ephraim would be more akin to those who receive the mark of the Beast only on their foreheads. They are licentious survivalists joined to idols by charms and spells<sup>32</sup> (versus the ardent followers of **Dan** who are also marked on their right hand). Those of Ephraim will compromise with the world system and do what is necessary to survive. Even in Jesus' days, the land of Ephraim was considered by the Jews to be defiled, as no proper Jew would set foot in Samaria, which was referred to as the "*head of Ephraim*."<sup>33</sup>

It is interesting to note that like Dan, Ephraim also has a history of betraying their brothers and turning against the bondservants of God. In *Isaiah*, Ephraim is called out for planning treachery with the Arameans against Judah and Jerusalem with the purpose of bringing terror upon them, all because of their jealousy towards those who worshiped **Yahweh**.<sup>34</sup>

In like fashion, we should expect that the persecution towards the bondservants of God will come not just from those identified as belonging to **Dan**, but also at the hands of those who belong to Ephraim.

**EPHRAIM IS IDIOMATIC FOR THOSE IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD WHO FOLLOW THE BEAST OUT OF PRECEIVED NECESSITY AND ARE THEREFORE MARKED ON THE FOREHEAD AND NOT ON BOTH THE RIGHT HAND AND THE FOREHEAD.**

But wait! All hope is not lost for Ephraim (the Jews who long ago assimilated into the multitude of gentile nations), hence the mention and inclusion of Levi and Joseph.

**THERE WILL BE A REMNANT!**

We will stop here for now and pick up in our next podcast with the inclusions to this list of Levi and Joseph (the Remnant)

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the mark of the Beast (666) in their right hand or forehead. This event is rendered in the *present active indicative*. It is happening even now!

<sup>32</sup> *Hosea 4:17*

<sup>33</sup> *Isaiah 7:9; John 4:9*

<sup>34</sup> *Isaiah 7:1-9, 11:13*