

~GREAT CROWD (534)

.. Popular Views

.. Their Identification

- An expression that, in itself, is quite common in the **Christian Greek Scriptures**. Great crowds is sometimes used with regard to the large groups of persons who heard Jesus Christ's public teaching.
- Now when he came forth he saw a **great crowd**, and he felt pity for them, and he cured their sick ones. (**Matthew 14:14**)
- Also, **great crowds** followed him, and he cured them there. (**Matthew 19:2**)
- Now as they were going out of Jericho a **great crowd** followed him. (**Matthew 20:29**)
- After the vision of the destruction of the symbolic Babylon the **Great**, the apostle John heard what was as a loud voice of a **great crowd** in heaven.
- After these things I heard what was as a loud voice of a **great crowd** in heaven. They said; Praise Yah, you people! The salvation and the glory and the power belong to our God. (**Revelation 19:1**)
- After these things I saw, and, look! A **great crowd**, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes, and there were palm branches in their hands. (**Revelation 7:9**)
- However, a **great crowd** is mentioned whose identification has particularly been a matter of keen interest.
- In this chapter, the apostle John first refers to the sealing of 144,000 slaves of God out of every tribe of the sons of Israel.
- And I saw another angel ascending from the sunrising, having a seal of the living God, and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea. (**Revelation 7:2**)

- **Saying; Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until after we have sealed the slaves of our God in their foreheads. (Revelation 7:3)**
- **And I heard the number of those who were sealed, a hundred and forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the sons of Israel. (Revelation 7:4)**
- **Out of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand sealed. Out of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand. Out of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand. (Revelation 7:5)**
- **Out of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand. Out of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand. Out of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand. (Revelation 7:6)**
- **Out of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand. Out of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand. Out of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand. (Revelation 7:7)**
- **Out of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand. Out of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand. Out of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand sealed. (Revelation 7:8)**
- **After this, he saw in a vision a **great crowd** out of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues. These ascribe their salvation to God and to the Lamb as they stand before God's throne.**
- **They have come out of the great tribulation, they serve God in his temple, and he spreads his tent over them. All their hunger and thirst are to be ended and every tear is to be wiped from their eyes as his Son, the Lamb;**
- **The next day he beheld Jesus coming toward him, and he said; See, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)**
- **Guides them to the waters of life.**
- **After these things I saw, and, look! A **great** crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes, and there were palm branches in their**

hands. (**Revelation 7:9**)

- And they keep on crying with a loud voice, saying; Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb. (**Revelation 7:10**)
- And all the angels were standing around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell upon their faces before the throne and worshiped God. (**Revelation 7:11**)
- Saying; Amen! The blessing and the glory and the wisdom and the thanksgiving and the honor and the power and the strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen. (**Revelation 7:12**)
- And in response one of the elders said to me; These who are dressed in the white robes, who are they and where did they come from? (**Revelation 7:13**)
- So right away I said to him; My lord, you are the one that knows. And he said to me; These are the ones that come out of the **great** tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (**Revelation 7:14**)
- That is why they are before the throne of God, and they are rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple, and the One seated on the throne will spread his tent over them. (**Revelation 7:15**)
- They will hunger no more nor thirst anymore, neither will the sun beat down upon them nor any scorching heat. (**Revelation 7:16**)
- Because the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life. And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes. (**Revelation 7:17**)

.. Popular Views

- Various views have been advanced as to the significance and identification of this **great crowd**. Many commentators view the 144,000 sealed ones, first mentioned, as members of Spiritual Israel and believe that they symbolize the Christian congregation **while on earth**.

- They feel that the **great crowd** represents that same Christian congregation **in heaven**, after the individuals have died in faith and have been resurrected. Others hold that the 144,000 are literally from every tribe of the sons of Israel.
- And I heard the number of those who were sealed, a hundred and forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the sons of Israel. (**Revelation 7:4**)
- That is, **fleshly Jews who become Christians**, and they consider the **great crowd** to represent all the **Gentile** Christians. A consideration of (**Revelation Chapter 7**) and other related texts, however, reveals **serious inconsistencies in these views**, at the same time pointing to a different conclusion.
- To hold that the 144,000 sealed ones are the members of the Christian congregation while on earth whereas the **great crowd** are the resurrected Christians in heaven does not harmonize with the other mention of the 144,000, in (**Revelation Chapter 14**). There the 144,000 are stationed with the Lamb on, Mount Zion.
- For you have not approached that which can be felt and which has been set aflame with fire, and a dark cloud and thick darkness and a tempest. (**Hebrews 12:18**)
- And the blare of a trumpet and the voice of words, on hearing which voice the people implored that no word should be added to them. (**Hebrews 12:19**)
- For the command was not bearable to them; And if a beast touches the mountain, it must be stoned. (**Hebrews 12:20**)
- Also, the display was so fearsome that Moses said; I am fearful and trembling. (**Hebrews 12:21**)
- But you have approached a Mount Zion and a city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem, and myriads of angels. (**Hebrews 12:22**)
- In general assembly, and the congregation of the firstborn who have been enrolled in the heavens, and God the Judge of all, and the spiritual lives of righteous ones who have been made perfect. (**Hebrews 12:23**)

- And Jesus the mediator of a New Covenant, and the blood of sprinkling, which speaks in a better way than Abel's blood. (**Hebrews 12:24**)
- The apostle Paul contrasts the experience of the Israelites at the earthly Mount Sinai with that of the Christians who have approached a Mount Zion and a city of the living God, **heavenly** Jerusalem, and myriads of angels, in general assembly, and the congregation of the firstborn who have been enrolled in the heavens. Obviously, then, although
- And they are singing as if a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, and no one was able to master that song but the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been bought from the earth. (**Revelation 14:3**)
- Says that the 144,000 have been bought from the earth, the context depicts them as being, not on earth, but in heaven with the heavenly Lamb, Christ Jesus.
- And they are singing as if a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, and no one was able to master that song but the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been bought from the earth. (**Revelation 14:3**)
- These are the ones that did not defile themselves with women, in fact, they are virgins. These are the ones that keep following the Lamb no matter where he goes. These were bought from among mankind as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. (**Revelation 14:4**)
- This renders invalid the view that the 144,000 represent the Christian congregation while on earth in contrast with their being the **great crowd** in heaven.
- Additionally, the way in which the apostle John introduces his vision of the **great crowd** indicates a clear distinction of identity between them and the 144,000 sealed ones. He states; After these things, the account of the 144,000 sealed ones, I saw, and, look! A **great crowd**, which no man was able to number.
- **After these things** I saw, and, look! A **great crowd**, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and

tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes, and there were palm branches in their hands. ([Revelation 7:9](#))

- He thus presents the **great crowd** as a separate entity and makes a definite contrast between the specific number of the 144,000 and the unnumbered **great crowd**.

- They are also distinguished by their being, not of the sons of Israel, but out of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues. They are not seen standing with the Lamb as are the 144,000, at;

- And I saw, and, look! The Lamb standing upon the Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. ([Revelation 14:1](#))

- But are before the Lamb. These several factors all argue that the **great** crowd is separate and distinct from the 144,000 sealed ones.

- On the other hand, the view that here Christians of Jewish stock are being distinguished from Gentile Christians runs counter to the apostle Paul's inspired statement that fleshly distinctions are of no consideration in the Christian congregation, its members being all one in union with Christ Jesus.

- For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for there is the same Lord over all, who is rich to all those calling upon him. ([Romans 10:12](#))

- There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one person in union with Christ Jesus. ([Galatians 3:28](#))

- Yehowah, having fully reconciled both peoples, Jews and non-Jews, to himself in one body through Christ, could hardly be expected to make a division between the two groups now by separating fleshly Jews from Gentiles in the vision given to John.

- Therefore keep bearing in mind that formerly you were people of the nations as to flesh, uncircumcision you were called by that which is called circumcision made in the flesh with hands. ([Ephesians 2:11](#))

- That you were at that particular time without Christ, alienated from the state of Israel and strangers to the covenants of the promise, and you had no hope and were without God in the world. ([Ephesians 2:12](#))
- But now in union with Christ Jesus you who were once far off have come to be near by the blood of the Christ. ([Ephesians 2:13](#))
- For he is our peace, he who made the two parties one and destroyed the wall in between that fenced them off. ([Ephesians 2:14](#))
- By means of his flesh he abolished the enmity, the Law of commandments consisting in decrees, that he might create the two peoples in union with himself into one new man and make peace. ([Ephesians 2:15](#))
- And that he might fully reconcile both peoples in one body to God through the torture stake, because he had killed off the enmity by means of himself. ([Ephesians 2:16](#))
- And he came and declared the Good News of peace to you, the ones far off, and peace to those near. ([Ephesians 2:17](#))
- Because through him we, both peoples, have the approach to the Father by one spirit. ([Ephesians 2:18](#))
- Certainly, therefore, you are no longer strangers and alien residents, but you are fellow citizens of the holy ones and are members of the household of God. ([Ephesians 2:19](#))
- And you have been built up upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, while Christ Jesus himself is the foundation cornerstone. ([Ephesians 2:20](#))
- In union with him the whole building, being harmoniously joined together, is growing into a holy temple for Yehowah. ([Ephesians 2:21](#))
- Now when much disputing had taken place, Peter rose and said to them; Men, brothers, you well know that from early days God made the choice among you that through my mouth people of the nations should hear the word of the Good News and believe. ([Acts of Apostles 15:7](#))

- And God, who knows the heart, bore witness by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us also. ([Acts of Apostles 15:8](#))
- And he made no distinction at all between us and them, but purified their hearts by faith. ([Acts of Apostles 15:9](#))
- This is particularly evident when the divine principle stated by Paul is taken into account. The apostle wrote;
- For he is not a Jew who is one on the outside, nor is circumcision that which is on the outside upon the flesh. ([Romans 2:28](#))
- But he is a Jew who is one on the inside, and his circumcision is that of the heart by spirit, and not by a written code. The praise of that one comes, not from men, but from God. ([Romans 2:29](#))
- Why, too, would there be no mention of any sealing of the Gentile Christians in this divine vision? And why would not the Gentile Christians be able to master the new song sung by the 144,000?
- And they are singing as if a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, and no one was able to master that song but the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been bought from the earth. ([Revelation 14:3](#))
- It thus seems clear that the 144,000 sealed ones are of Spiritual Israel, not fleshly Israel hence include both Jewish and Gentile Christians.
- And all those who will walk orderly by this rule of conduct, upon them be peace and mercy, even upon the Israel of God. ([Galatians 6:16](#))

·· Their Identification

- The key to the identification of the **great crowd** is found within the description of them in ([Revelation Chapter 7](#)) and in obviously parallel passages.
- That is why they are before the throne of God, and they are rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple, and the One seated on the throne will spread his tent over them.

(Revelation 7:15)

- They will hunger no more nor thirst anymore, neither will the sun beat down upon them nor any scorching heat. **(Revelation 7:16)**
- Because the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life. And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes. **(Revelation 7:17)**
- Speaks of God as spreading his tent over them, of their being guided to fountains of waters of life, and of God's wiping every tear from their eyes.
- I saw also the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **(Revelation 21:2)**
- With that I heard a loud voice from the throne say; Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them. **(Revelation 21:3)**
- And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away. **(Revelation 21:4)**
- We find parallel expressions, God's tent being with mankind, his wiping every tear from their eyes, and death being no more. The vision there presented is concerning persons in heaven who are being protected from events here on earth of the Great Tribulation.
- After these things I saw, and, look! A **great** crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes, and there were palm branches in their hands. **(Revelation 7:9) AT**
- The position of standing is sometimes used in the Bible to indicate the holding of a favored or approved position in the eyes of the one in whose presence the individual or group stands.
- That is why the wicked ones will not stand up in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of righteous ones. **(Psalms 1:5)**

- **No boasters may take their stand in front of your eyes. You do hate all those practicing what is hurtful. ([Psalms 5:5](#))**
- **Have you beheld a man skillful in his work? Before kings is where he will station himself. He will not station himself before commonplace men. ([Proverbs 22:29](#))**
- **In reply the angel said to him; I am Gabriel, who stands near before God, and I was sent forth to speak with you and declare the Good News of these things to you. ([Luke 1:19](#))**
- **In fact, in the previous chapter of Revelation, the kings of the earth and the top-ranking ones and the military commanders and the rich and the strong ones and every slave and every free person are depicted as seeking to hide themselves from the face of the One seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, because the **great** day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?**
- **And the kings of the earth and the top-ranking ones and the military commanders and the rich and the strong ones and every slave and every free person hid themselves in the caves and in the rock-masses of the mountains. ([Revelation 6:15](#))**
- **And they keep saying to the mountains and to the rock-masses. Fall over us and hide us from the face of the One seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. ([Revelation 6:16](#))**
- **Because the **great** day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand? ([Revelation 6:17](#))**
- **Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man. ([Luke 21:36](#))**
- **It thus appears that the **great** crowd is formed of those persons who have been preserved during that time of wrath and who have been able to stand as approved by God and the Lamb.**
- **The Lambs guiding them to fountains of waters of life finds a parallel at;**
- **And the spirit and the bride keep on saying; Come! And let anyone hearing say; Come! And let anyone thirsting come, let**

anyone that wishes take lifes water free. ([Revelation 22:17](#))

- The bride is clearly identified in the Scriptures as the anointed Christian congregation, espoused to the heavenly Bridegroom, Christ Jesus.
- Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it. ([Ephesians 5:25](#))
- That he might sanctify it, cleansing it with the bath of water by means of the word. ([Ephesians 5:26](#))
- That he might present the congregation to himself in its splendor, not having a spot or a wrinkle or any of such things, but that it should be holy and without blemish. ([Ephesians 5:27](#))
- For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I personally promised you in marriage to one husband that I might present you as a chaste virgin to the Christ. ([2 Corinthians 11:2](#))
- Let us rejoice and be overjoyed, and let us give him the glory, because the marriage of the Lamb has arrived and his wife has prepared herself. ([Revelation 19:7](#))
- Yes, it has been granted to her to be arrayed in bright, clean, fine linen, for the fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the holy ones. ([Revelation 19:8](#))
- And he tells me; Write! Happy are those invited to the evening meal of the Lambs marriage. Also, he tells me; These are the true sayings of God. ([Revelation 19:9](#))
- And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls which were full of the seven last plagues, and he spoke with me and said; Come here, I will show you the bride, the Lambs wife. ([Revelation 21:9](#))
- So he carried me away in the power of the spirit to a **great** and lofty mountain, and he showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God ([Revelation 21:10](#))
- And having the glory of God. Its radiance was like a most precious stone, as a jasper stone shining crystal-clear.

(Revelation 21:11)

- The invitation to take life's water free presented by the heavenly bride class is obviously open to an unlimited number of persons, anyone that wishes. Likewise unnumbered are the **great crowd**, the vision at;
- After these things I saw, and, look! A **great crowd**, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes, and there were palm branches in their hands. (**Revelation 7:9**)
- Thereby harmonizing with that at;
- And the spirit and the bride keep on saying; Come! And let anyone hearing say; Come! And let anyone thirsting come, let anyone that wishes take life's water free. (**Revelation 22:17**)
- The sum of the evidence, therefore, points to the **great crowd** as representing all those persons who are not of the heavenly bride class, or 144,000 sealed ones, but who stand approved at the time of the great tribulation and are preserved alive for later life on earth.

See Also CONGREGATION (The Christian Congregation of God)

See Also EARTH (Purpose)

See Also HEAVEN