

**Sorted extracts of comments on Rev 7:1-17 from
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SUMMARY

The question that concludes Rev 6 provides an introduction to 7:1-17, for it deals with the problem of how the “servants of God” (7:3) will fare during the catastrophes unleashed by the sixth seal. To answer this question, John inserts 7:1-17, which accomplishes two things.

First, in vv 1-8 the effect of the plagues on Christians is temporarily held in abeyance while 144,000 “servants of God,” 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, are sealed on their foreheads by the signet ring of the living God, an act symbolizing both ownership and protection. While the number of those sealed is mentioned, the sealing itself is not narrated. Although the reference to the twelve tribes of Israel may have been understood literally in the source or tradition underlying this text, it *now* refers to a particular group of Christians who have been specialy protected by God from both divine plagues and human persecution just prior to the beginning of the eschatological tribulation and who will consequently survive that tribulation and the great eschatological conflict with which it culminates.

The particular list of tribes used in vv 4-8 has no exact parallel in other early Jewish or early Christian sources, and its form probably reflects the author’s inclinations. The unusual placement of the tribe of Judah at the head of the list occurs because the Messiah belongs to that tribe. The omission of Dan has no particular theological significance, and both Joseph and Manasseh are probably included because of an early error. (“Joseph” may have been occasionally substituted for “Ephraim”).

The sealing, which cannot refer to Christian baptism, protects them against the plagues unleashed upon the unbelieving world as well as against those Romans and Anatolians who would kill them.

This conception of immunity from the plagues is ultimately derived from the tradition that the plagues harmed Egyptians only, not Israelites (Exod 8:22; 9:4-7, 26; 10:23). Although the Last Judgment appears to be inaugurated by the opening of the sixth seal, the eschatological scenario of Revelation yet requires the plagues unleashed by the seven trumpets and the seven bowls. This suggests either that the seven seals were derived from a source that John prefixed to his narratives of the seven trumpets and seven bowls or (more likely) that the seven trumpets and seven bowls are derived from two Jewish sources that consolidated the ten plagues of Exod 7-12 into seven eschatological plagues.

Rev 7:9-17 consists of two related units of text, both of which focus on the eschatological heavenly worship of God.

The first section (vv 9-12) consists of a great hymn of salvation sung to God by the innumerable multitude (vv 9-10) and is matched by an antiphonal response sung by the angels surrounding the throne, the twenty-four elders, and the four cherubim (vv 11-12).

The second section (vv 13-17) consists of an explanation volunteered by one of the elders in which he interprets the foregoing scenes.

It is clear that the “innumerable multitude” (v 9), which suggests the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, consists of the large number Christians who have died or suffered martyrdom during the period of eschatological tribulation, during the same period that the 144,000 have been divinely protected from defeat and death.

The deliberate contrast of the innumerable multitude with the 144,000 (the former is drawn from every nation) indicates that the groups are not identical.¹

LITERARY ANALYSIS OF REV 7:1-17

Rev 7:1-17 consists of two main scenes, arranged in a “before” and “after” pattern:

- (1) 7:1-8 is introduced with the stereotyped phrase “After this I saw” (v 1), and it apparently takes place on earth.

¹ Aune, pages 479-480

(2) 7:9-17 is introduced with a similar phrase, “After this I looked, and behold” (v 9), but the vantage point of the seer is apparently heaven (where the throne of God is located, vv 9-12, and where the heavenly temple is found, v 15).

(1) The three textual units in the first scene in 7:1-8 are:

- (a) a vision of the four angels restraining the winds (7:1);
- (b) a vision of another angel with the seal of God, who tells the first four angels not to harm the earth, the sea, or the trees until the servants of God have been sealed (7:2-3); and
- (c) a census list of the number and tribal affiliation of those sealed, which is overheard (not seen) by John (vv 4-8). ...

(2) The second scene in 7:9-17 consists of two units:

- (a) John sees a vision of a great multitude and hears their hymn of salvation to God and the liturgy of the angels, elders, and four cherubim surrounding the throne (7:9-12).
- (b) An elder voluntarily interprets the scene for John (7:13-17).²

“After this I saw” (Rev 7:1a)

The formulaic phrase, “after this I saw,” is used here to signal a change in subject and to introduce a new unit of text (the same formula is used in 4:1; 7:9; 15:5; 18:1).³

INTERPRETIVE COMMENTS

Interpretive problems of Rev 7:1-17

Both scenes (at Rev 7:1-17) present similar interpretive problems: Who are the 144,000 sealed in 7:4-8? Who constitute the innumerable multitude described in 7:9-17? What is the temporal setting of each of these scenes, the present or the future? Does the Feast of Tabernacles provide the salient imagery for interpreting 7:9-17? This passage has proven to be one of the most difficult to interpret in Revelation, and each of the questions posed above has been answered in a variety of ways, often with few, if any, supporting arguments.⁴

WHY ARE THEY SEALED?

The 144,000 are the specially protected

In my view, the 144,000 of Rev 7:4-8 represent that particular group of Christians (including all ages and both genders) who have been specially protected by God from both divine plagues and human persecution just before the final eschatological tribulation begins and who consequently survive that tribulation and the great eschatological battle that is the culmination of that tribulation.⁵

The seal provides protection

The seal of God explicitly provides special protection for the wrath of God that is coming upon the world (9:4).⁶

The cosmic events of the sixth seal are not judgments

The literary context of Rev 7 is provided by the narrative framework of the opening of the sixth seal in Rev 6:12-17, the effects of which are not actual judgments but rather a series of cosmic signs of impending disaster that throw fear and consternation into the hearts of people everywhere.⁷

² Aune, page 434

³ Aune, page 450

⁴ Aune, pages 439-440

⁵ Aune, page 443

⁶ Aune, page 440

⁷ Aune, page 439

These all speak with one voice in v 17, “The great day of their [i.e., God’s and the Lamb’s] wrath has come, and who can stand before it?” The answer to this rhetorical question is implied in 7:1-8, i.e., “No one except those protected by God.”⁸

Demonic Scorpions at Rev 9:4

In Rev 9:4, the demonic scorpions are told only to harm those who do not have the seal of God upon their foreheads, suggesting that all Christians have such a seal.⁹

(My Comment: *When the cosmic events occur, only 144,000 Israelites will be protected.*)

Protection, as at Rev 9:4

Sealing is used [at Rev 7:2a] as a symbol of divine protection, as Rev 9:4 makes clear: the demonic locusts are told to harm “only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads”.¹⁰

Eze 9:4; protection and ownership, “little ones”

“Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until after we have sealed the slaves of our God in their foreheads.” And I heard the number of those who were sealed, 144,000.¹¹

[Rev 7:3] alludes to LXX Ezek 9:4, where those who mourned the pollution of the temple are marked on the forehead to protect them from the angels about to destroy Jerusalem: “Place a sign on the foreheads of the men.” The significance of this marking is that it indicates both divine protection and divine ownership. In CD (MS B) 19:10-12, Ezek 9:4 is referred to in connection with the protection of the faithful members of the covenant community, called the “little ones” and “the poor of the flock”.¹²

Rev 9:4 shows that the sealing is for the purpose of protecting

That this sealing is for the purpose of protecting the 144,000 is clear from [Rev] 9:4, which explicitly states that only people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads are to be harmed by the plague unleashed by the fifth trumpet.¹³

“Do not harm until we seal” (Rev 9:4)

“Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we seal the servants of our God upon their foreheads.” The first-person plural form of the verb “we seal,” is enigmatic since it is not clear who in addition to the angel bearing the signet of God could be part of the subject of this verb. This sealing is a sign of divine protection, which is explicitly said to protect those sealed from the fifth trumpet plague in 9:4: “But they were instructed not to harm the grass of the earth nor any plant nor any tree, with the exception of people who do not have the seal of God upon their foreheads.”¹⁴

WHEN ARE THEY SEALED?

Opening of the seals

The opening of the first four seals sends out four horsemen (imagery adapted from Zech 1:8-11; 6:1-8), each inflicting a particular kind of judgment on humanity: irresistible conquest, war and bloodshed, famine, disease, and death. With the opening of the fifth seal, John sees the souls of martyrs beneath the altar (symbolizing nearness to God), crying out for vengeance, who are told to wait until their number is completed. They are given white robes.¹⁵

The opening of the sixth seal is followed by a series of cosmic disturbances. ... These terrible catastrophes ... move the powerful people of the world to fear the judgment of God and the Lamb.

⁸ Aune, page 439

⁹ Aune, page 442

¹⁰ Aune, page 452

¹¹ Rev 7:3-4 (NWT, 2013)

¹² Aune, page 455

¹³ Aune, page 456

¹⁴ Aune, page 455

¹⁵ Aune, page 424

For, they say, “Who can stand before the day of his wrath?” (v 17). This question is answered in Rev 7.¹⁶

(My comments: *This means that the protective sealing, which action is not described, occurs prior to the opening of the Sixth Seal.*

Although the “Day of Wrath” (according to the powerful people), this is not the Day of Judgment or of the Parousia.)

No narrative of the tribulation or of the wrath of the ungodly

There is no narrative of the great tribulation and the wrath of the ungodly inflicted on Christians from which those in 7:1-8 have been protectively sealed and out of which those in 7:9-17 have been delivered.¹⁷

WHAT IS THE SEAL?

The signet of the living God

The signet or seal is not further described (though it is assumed that it is an object, like a signet ring or a cylinder seal, that can make an impression on something), nor is that which is sealed on the foreheads of the servants of God explained (v 3). Not until 14:1 is it made clear that the name of the Lamb and the name of his Father are written (the term “to seal” is not used) on the foreheads of the faithful. The seal is understood, at least in the final revision of Revelation, as the name of the Lamb and of his Father, mentioned explicitly in 14:1 (see 3:12; 22:4).¹⁸

Sphragis refers both to the seal and to the impression made by it

The terms *sphragis* and *sphragizein* refer to the impression of a seal in clay or wax; since seals could be attached to people, they can be confused with tattoos or brands. The term *sphragis* refers both to the seal and to the impression made by it; the term also represents the power and authority of its owner. The instruments used in sealing (e.g., cylinders, rings), often made of precious stones, were important as symbols of power. Individuals, temples, and cities frequently had seals. ... Seals in wax or clay were attached to many types of objects to guarantee their authenticity (e.g., weights and measures). The mode of sealing is of interest particularly when it is used in connection with people.¹⁹

Ownership, confirmation (including circumcision)

In this metaphorical use of sealing in 2 Cor 1:21-22, it is God who does the sealing (“God, who also seals us”). There are at least two ways of understanding the metaphor of sealing in this passage:

- (a) as a mark of ownership or
- (b) as confirmation of something with a seal.

Not baptism nor reception of the Holy Spirit

While the notion of “sealing” in 7:2-8 certainly is a metaphor for ownership, it is unlikely that it is a metaphor for either Christian baptism or the reception of the Holy Spirit.²⁰

Circumcision is a seal

The term “seal” is sometimes used of the rite of circumcision (Rom 4:11).²¹

Paul also referred to circumcision as a sealing (Rom 4:11).²²

¹⁶ Aune, page 424

¹⁷ Aune, page 434

¹⁸ Aune, page 452

¹⁹ Aune, page 457

²⁰ Aune, page 455

²¹ Aune, page 441

²² Aune, page 459

TWO GROUPS

“Tribulation” shows that the 144,000 are not identical with the innumerable multitude

If the 144,000 of 7:4-8 are protected from this tribulation, then they cannot be identical with the innumerable multitude of 7:9-17, whose members have come out of the great tribulation.²³

The two groups are not identical, but one contains the other

The emphasis on the innumerable multitude intentionally sets up a contrast with the specific number 144,000 mentioned above in v 4, suggesting that the two groups are not identical, though the larger group in v 10 probably contains the smaller group enumerated in vv 4-8.²⁴

The 144,000 are not identical with the innumerable multitude of 7:9-17, who must be identified as the greater number of Christians from whom the 144,000 have been drawn and who have borne witness to their faith and laid down their lives achieving victory through death just as Jesus did.²⁵

Part of a larger group

It is important to note that those who are sealed are only part of a larger group, a factor that has an important bearing on identifying the 144,000.²⁶

Two Groups or One Group in Rev 7:1-17?

Some have argued that *two different* groups are in view, the prevailing opinion when Bousset wrote the second edition of his commentary in 1906. ... Most scholars now contend, however, that a single group is described from two different perspectives.²⁷

WHO ARE THE 144,000?

Identifying the 144,000 (Rev 7:1-8)

There are striking differences between the two groups described in Rev 7:4-8 and 7:9-17 that must be borne in mind:

- (1) There is a clear contrast between the specific enumeration of the 144,000 (7:4-8) and the vast size of the great multitude, which “no one was able to number” (7:9); the latter is obviously a much larger group than the former and therefore very probably a different group.
- (2) The 144,000 are composed of 12,000 drawn from each of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel, while the members of the great multitude in explicit contrast, according to 7:9, are drawn from “every nation and tribe and people and language group”.
- (3) The 144,000 are apparently located on earth while the innumerable multitude is in heaven before the throne of God (7:11).
- (4) In 7:4-8, the 144,000 are in a situation of imminent peril that requires protective sealing (see Rev 9:4), while the innumerable multitude in 7:9-17 has passed victoriously through the great tribulation and has received a heavenly reward.²⁸

The 144,000 are not martyrs

[The 144,000] are not martyrs, for they have received divine immunity from all forms of suffering and death. There is no allusion to martyrdom in Rev 7:4-8, and only one phrase in 14:3 (“redeemed from the earth”) has been wrongly construed to mean martyrdom in 14:1-5.²⁹

²³ Aune, page 474

²⁴ Aune, page 466

²⁵ Aune, pages 444-445

²⁶ Aune, page 460

²⁷ Aune, page 447

²⁸ Aune, page 440

²⁹ Aune, pages 444-445

The Relationship between Rev 7:1-8 and Rev 14:1-5

Despite the differences between the two passages, and despite the fact that the mention of the 144,000 does not have the anaphoric definite article referring back to 7:4, it appears that the author intends to equate the 144,000 in 7:4-8 and 14:1-5.³⁰

Widely assumed that the 144,000 at Rev 7 and 14 are the same group

The 144,000 are also mentioned in 14:1-5, and since the number does not occur elsewhere in early Jewish or early Christian literature, it is widely assumed that in both places the number refers to the same group. However, there is wide disagreement over whom the 144,000 represent.³¹

WHERE ARE THE 144,000?

John does not see the 144,000 until Rev 14

John does not see the 144,000 until 14:1-5. It is also clear that [Rev 7:]4-8 constitutes an audition rather than a vision (the visionary section is limited to vv 1-3), for this section does not narrate the sealing of the 144,000; rather it consists of a list that John claims to have heard.³²

WHO ARE THE GREAT CROWD?

The Identity of the Innumerable Host (Rev 7:9-17)

In my view, the innumerable multitude represents all Christians who have died, whether naturally or by martyrdom, before the completion of eschatological events, which conclude with the victory of the Lamb and his faithful followers (Rev 17:14). However, this group cannot represent all Christians for the simple reason that the 144,000 are still living on the earth under divine protection. The temporal setting of this vision is the future; emphasizing the heavenly reward enjoyed by those who were faithful to the point of death.³³

When does this scene of the multitude take place?

Several views regarding the temporal orientation of this scene have been proposed by scholars.³⁴

The huge crowd of Rev 7:9a

“After this I looked, and behold, a huge crowd which no one could even begin to number.” This represents an intentional contrast with 7:4, where the author hears that the number of those sealed from the tribes of the sons of Israel is 144,000. In seeking to equate the 144,000 of 7:4-8 with the innumerable host of 7:9-17, some have argued unpersuasively that 144,000 would have appeared innumerable had the seer not been told their number. However, 7:4-8 is not a vision but an audition; that is, the seer does not claim to see those who were sealed but simply reports that he heard their number. This crowd is identified in 7:14 as those who have come through the great tribulation.³⁵

The promises made to Abraham

This innumerable multitude suggests the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, which had two distinct traditional aspects:

- (1) The promise of innumerable descendants ...
- (2) Abraham would be the father of many nations.³⁶

³⁰ Aune, page 448

³¹ Aune, page 460

³² Aune, page 459

³³ Aune, page 447

³⁴ Aune, page 447

³⁵ Aune, page 466

³⁶ Aune, page 466

The promise to Abraham took two forms, the promise of innumerable descendants and the promise that Abraham would be the father of many nations [Rev 7:]9a alludes to the former, while v 9b refers to the latter.³⁷

The innumerable host

“Who are these dressed in white robes and where did they come from?” [(Rev 7:13b)] ... These questions serve to focus the interest in the preceding scene on the identity, the clothing, and the origin of the innumerable host. ... “These are those who have emerged from the great tribulation.”³⁸

“Those who have emerged from the great tribulation” is translated in a past tense because it represents action simultaneous with the two main verbs “washed” and “made white” both of which are aorists. It is therefore grammatically improbable to translate the present substantival participle of *erchomenoi* as “those who are coming”, as if the scene in 7:9-17 were occurring precisely when it was narrated by the author, and to regard the martyrdom of Christians as a process that will not be completed as long as the eschatological consummation remains in the future.

The articular phrase “the great tribulation,” is anaphoric and assumes that the readers know the final tribulation or period of woes that will introduce the eschaton, first mentioned in Dan 12:1.³⁹

(Anaphoric: the use of an expression the interpretation of which depends upon another expression in context (its antecedent or postcedent).)

WHERE ARE THE GREAT CROWD?

Revelation 7:9-17 appears to take place in heaven

One of the problematic features of 7:9-17 in the present text of Revelation is that it appears to take place in heaven. The members of the innumerable multitude are gathered before the throne and the Lamb singing praises to God and to the Lamb and are accompanied by the elders and the four cherubim.

The innumerable multitude consists of those who have died (v 14) and who now act as priests before the throne of God, serving him in his temple (v15). Since the New Jerusalem contains no temple (21:22), the setting appears to be heaven. Yet it would be most unusual in Jewish apocalyptic to place the final consummation in heaven rather than on earth.⁴⁰

The Eschatological Heavenly Worship of God as an Apocalyptic Type Scene in 7:9-17

The motifs of this [throne vision] scene can clearly be seen in Heb 12:22-24 (RSV):

But you have come to Mount Zion
and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,
and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,
and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven,
and to a judge who is God of all,
and to the spirits of just men made perfect,
and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant,
and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel.

The sprinkled blood (implying the figurative presence of the ark).⁴¹

Standing before the throne

“Standing before the throne and before the Lamb.” [(Rev 7:9c)] Here “the throne” functions as a circumlocution for the name of God (see also 4:10; 8:3).⁴²

³⁷ Aune, page 467

³⁸ Aune, page 472

³⁹ Aune, page 473

⁴⁰ Aune, page 439

⁴¹ Aune, pages 436-437

Those who are 'before the throne'

“Fell prostrate before the throne and worshiped God.” [(Rev 7:11b)] The motif of the adoration of heavenly beings who fall prostrate before the throne of God is normally limited to the twenty-four elders (4:10; 5:14; 11:16; 19:4). Here they are joined by the angels encircling the throne and the four living creatures, while in 5:8 the twenty-four elders are joined by the four living creatures (though in 5:8 the object of worship is the Lamb rather than God).⁴³

The cleansing blood of Christ; multitude is in heaven

Lev 14:52 speaks of “cleansing the house with blood”. In the OT, blood derived from sacrificial animals both removes sin and consecrates only the persons or objects to which it is *physically* applied for purposes of purification (Exod 29:12, 16, 20-21). This is a striking metaphor for atonement. In Heb 9:14 the blood of Christ is said to “purify” the conscience, and 9:22 says that “under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.” In 1 John 1:7, the blood of Jesus is said to “cleanse” from all sin (the metaphor of “cleansing” from sin, which is analogous to dirt, occurs with some frequency: Acts 15:9; 2 Cor 7:1; Heb 9:13; 2 Pet 1:9; 1 John 1:9). This suggests that the innumerable multitude is made up largely of martyrs who are in heaven (see 12:11; 15:2).⁴⁴

Multitude before the throne

“For this reason they are before the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple.” [(Rev 7:15a)] The martyrs are able to stand before God only because of their purity, based on the atoning death of Christ. The worship of God in the heavenly temple by heavenly beings continues unendingly (4:8), and the righteous will eventually become full participants in this unceasing worship (3:12).⁴⁵

“Salvation” is not exclusively a religious term (Rev 7:10)

“They cried with a loud voice, ‘Victory belongs to our God who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb.’” [(Rev 7:10)] This short cry of victory is a proleptic celebration of the eschatological triumph of God. ... The term *soteria*, usually translated “salvation,” is not exclusively a religious term but is closely associated with eschatological victory in Revelation and refers here to salvation in the sense of “deliverance” or “victory” over persecution.⁴⁶

Here “salvation” refers to deliverance from tribulation, which belongs to God, who has sealed his servants on their foreheads and thus protected them.⁴⁷

WHEN DOES THE GREAT CROWD APPEAR?

White robes

“Dressed in white robes and with palm fronds in their hands.” [(Rev 7:9d)] White robes are mentioned in 6:11; 7:13; in 3:4 the phrase “in white [garments]” is a reward for those in Sardis who have not soiled their garments, a reward reiterated in 3:5. In Revelation, white robes appear to symbolize heavenly existence or worthiness of heaven. White was worn during festive occasions and was also the typical color of garments thought to be worn by supernatural revealers or other heavenly figures, including God himself.⁴⁸

“Palm” means victory

The palm frond was used by metonymy to mean “victory”.⁴⁹

⁴² Aune, page 467

⁴³ Aune, page 471

⁴⁴ Aune, page 475

⁴⁵ Aune, page 475

⁴⁶ Aune, page 470

⁴⁷ Aune, page 470

⁴⁸ Aune, page 468

⁴⁹ Aune, page 468

(Metonymy: a figure of speech that replaces the name of a thing with the name of something else that is closely associated with it).

Washed their robes

“They washed their robes and made them [i.e., ‘robes’] white by the blood of the Lamb.” The first phrase has an extremely close parallel in 22:14. ... Probably this is an allusion to Dan 11:35, understood by the author as a testing and purifying process: “and some of those who are wise shall fall, to refine and to cleanse them and to make them white, until the time of the end, for it is yet for the time appointed” (RSV). It is possible that the washing of clothes referred to here is part of the ritual purification required after the shedding of blood ... In the context of the “time of distress” mentioned in Dan 12:1, the “wise” who fall victims to sword and fire, captivity and pillage (Dan 11:35), are said to have been “tested, refined, and made shining white” (Dan 11:35; cf. 12:10); John interprets the purification mentioned in Dan 11:35; 12:10 to be that of the martyrs who purify themselves through martyrdom. The phrase “made them white by the blood of the Lamb” is a paradoxical metaphor. The phrase “the blood of the Lamb” occurs elsewhere in Revelation only in 12:11, where the notion of atonement is absent, though the idea of martyrdom is very much present as it is here.⁵⁰

THE 12-TRIBE NATION

Restoration of the 12 tribe nation

The author’s insistence on an equal number (12,000) from each of *twelve* tribes indicates his interest in the eschatological restoration of the twelve-tribe nation of Israel. (Luke 22:30; 24:21; Acts 1:6)⁵¹

The twelve disciples will judge the twelve tribes of Israel

According to a widespread Jewish tradition, the Gentiles will be judged in the eschaton by the twelve tribes of Israel. The Synoptic tradition that the twelve disciples will judge the twelve tribes of Israel, found in the Q saying in Matt 19:28 (= Luke 22:30), is related to this tradition: “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (RSV).

The existence of the twelve tribes of Israel is referred to in other early Christian texts as well. In Acts 26:6-7, Paul speaks of “the promise made by God to our ancestors, a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain.”⁵²

THE LAMB

The elect and faithful (Rev 17)

Those who accompany the Lamb are called and elect and faithful (Rev 17:14).⁵³

Those with [the Lamb] who are called and chosen and faithful.⁵⁴

The Lamb will shepherd them (Great Crowd - Rev 7:17a; 144,000 - 14:1-5)

“Because the Lamb in the midst of the throne will shepherd them.” [(Rev 7:17a)] The author has interrupted his allusion to Isa 49:10 to insert this statement regarding the role of the Lamb, which may be an allusion to Ezek 34:23. There is a close relationship between this passage and Rev 14:1-5, where the Lamb is described as standing on Mount Zion (v 1), but the throne is also mentioned (v 3), and the 144,000 are said to “follow the Lamb wherever he leads” (v 4), which appears to conflate both discipleship and shepherd/sheep imagery (see John 10:4).⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Aune, pages 474-475

⁵¹ Aune, page 436

⁵² Aune, page 461

⁵³ Aune, page 445

⁵⁴ Rev. 17:14 (NWT, 2013)

⁵⁵ Aune, page 477