

WHO IS THE GREAT MULTITUDE? 2

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This morning we're going to be on the same message as last Sunday. The question is: *who is the great multitude?* [Revelation 7:9] There are a lot of different ideas in the religious world – we would expect that – but even in what we could probably call the Jackson movement, there are people who aren't sure and some who believe other things. It really shouldn't be that way.

Once the Lord has shown something, He gives us a certain time to be able to see it but we shouldn't need 20 ~ 25 years to see it. I would personally say: a couple of months, maybe even a year or two, but if we're praying about it and seeking the Lord, we should be able to see the truth.

Now, until the Lord opens it up, really the best we can do is the best we can do. But over time as the Lord helps us to get closer, there comes a day when the Lord will open it up to the Church.

I know some people may say something like: well, you're talking about things but Brother Jackson preached this. Yes he did. But we have to understand: God does not just reveal all the truths to our minds individually. He has *a ministry in place to do that*. Not that they can reveal anything but God reveals it to His servant, the servant preaches the Word, and then if we have *the same Spirit* that the servant has, we are going to be able *to see the same picture*. Praise the Lord.

Let's go ahead to Revelation 7.

This is a difficult message to just say: well, we stopped here and we're going to continue on. But there were certain points we looked at last time that as I've been studying this and thinking on this throughout the week, more things have come to mind.

So let's just go ahead and read verse 9 to set the picture. He says here:

Revelation 7:9

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

Traditionally and still today, probably the greatest portion of professing Christians or at least a large portion of professing Christians think of this *great multitude* [Revelation 7:9] as *the Bride*.

And as Brother Branham would read what the scholars taught and looking to them as those who *should know*, in the beginning he also thought: this is *the Bride*.

It's clearly a *Gentile people* because it says: *of all nations, people, tribes, and tongues*. So as far as the big picture, it's clearly a *Gentile people*.

Now if somebody was to question: did Brother Branham really look at it that way? Well, I have a couple of slides here.

This was Brother Branham preaching in 1954.

And he said unto me, These are they which have come out of the great tribulation,...(See?)...great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood (not the membership of the church), but in the blood of the Lamb. (See?) Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in the temple:... 202 Now, where does Mrs. Branham serve me at? In the house. That's the Bride. Mrs. Neville, that's where she stays, in the house, serving you. That's where the Bride's at, not the servants, the Bride.

54-0103M - Questions And Answers #1

Rev. William Marrion Branham

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He was reading here. It says: *and he said unto me, these are they which came out of great tribulation. See? Great tribulation. And have washed their robes and made them white in the blood.* Brother Branham says here: not the membership of the church but *in the blood of the Lamb. See? Therefore they are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in the temple.* [Revelation 7:14-15]

He says: now, where does Mrs. Branham serve me? In the house. That's the Bride. Mrs. Neville, that's where she stays, in the house, serving you. That's where the Bride is, not the servants, *the Bride*.

Here's another slide. I'm not going to read it all to save time. This was about 5 months later on Questions and Answers.

32. Last night you spoke of "the great multitude that no man could number, from every tribe, nation," that are—are mentioned in the 7th chapter of Revelation. Did I understand you, correctly, to say that "They are the Bride of Christ"?

Yes, you understood me. They are the Bride.

**54-0515 - Questions And Answers
Rev. William Marrion Branham
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Somebody asked him: *the great multitude* [Revelation 7:9] did I understand you right that this is the Bride? Brother Branham said: yes, you understood me. They are *the Bride*.

Now, I don't say that and I don't show this to criticize Brother Branham but just to show: *at the beginning, that was the way he looked at it.*

But as time went on – and we're going to read some more – God showed him that *this can't be the Bride*. He didn't give Brother Branham the full picture, and as far as I can tell, he then looked at it more as *the foolish virgins*. [Matthew 25:2] However at the end, he knew: *it was not the Bride*.

When we go back to verse 9, there are some very strong clues.

First of all, it was:

Revelation 7:9
a great multitude, which no man could number,

Now that's sort of twofold. First of all, as far as being *able to number*, it's not that we can't count. We know that *today* there are about 8.2 billion people on the earth. So we *can* count that. And we know the great multitude is *not more than that* because there hasn't even been that many people live in the past.

But specifically – and we'll get back to that part about *not being able to number it* – but specifically, *the Bride has never been a great number*. The greatest she probably ever was in number was on the day of Pentecost and the years immediately following that.

We know Jude mentions *ten thousands of the saints coming back*. [Jude 1:14]

And I'm not saying the Bride is exactly ten thousand but it's very interesting that when John saw the 144 000, *he recognized them*. He said: *twelve thousand from this tribe, twelve thousand from that tribe*. [Revelation 7:5-8]

I was thinking this week, as far as any man who is a Bride Saint, *who* of all men – beside of course, the Lord Jesus Christ – but *who* of all men knew or knows the greatest number of Bride Saints? And I would say this morning: it would have to be *John*.

Because, first of all, John was there on the day of Pentecost. And he was there in Acts 6 where we read that *the number got so big, they had to bring in deacons*. [Acts 6:1-3] I think there were somewhere between 6000 and 9000 people in the Church at that time.

But as the Church continued and God moved – we could say – moved His focus from the Jews to the Gentiles, we have to remember that Peter, Paul, and the other apostles were eventually martyred. Peter, Paul, and James, all three of them had been martyred once we get to about 67 ~ 68 AD. So *John* was the only one left.

And we should never think that he said: well, the Gentiles, they're on their own. My calling is to the Jews. I'm going to stay here in Jerusalem. We have to understand: John made every effort to also be a help to the Gentile churches.

When we read the Epistles of John, he mentions certain ones who had Greek names: Demetrius [3John 1:12] and Diotrephes. [3John 1:9] Those are Greek names.

Even as he was on the Isle of Patmos, it was told to him: *write to the angel of the Church of Ephesus, write to the angel of the Church of Thyatira, all the way down to Laodicea, to all seven churches*. [Revelation 2 & 3]

Yes those churches type Ages, but they were *actual churches*. And John didn't say: what is that? Or: who is that? But *he had knowledge of them*.

My point in saying all of this is: *if* John had been presented with *the Bride*, as we see that he was asked the question in verse 13:

Revelation 7:13

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

Revelation 7:14

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest.

In other words: *I don't know*. I'll say it in modern terms: *I don't know. You tell me.* [Laugh]

So if *this multitude* [Revelation 7:9] had been *the Bride*, if anybody could've recognized the Bride Saints, *John* was the man who could've recognized them. But he's basically saying here: *I don't know*.

Again, when we go back, I believe we read this last time but let's go to Revelation 19. We'll start in verse 6. It says here:

Revelation 19:6

And I heard

This is *John hearing this*. He doesn't see here, *he hears*.

He says:

Revelation 19:6

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude,

We could ask: who is *this great multitude*?

We read about a *great multitude* in Revelation 7, right? And now: *he hears the voice of a great multitude*.

Revelation 19:6

as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Revelation 19:7

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come,

He's hearing *the great multitude* saying this.

Revelation 19:7

for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

Revelation 19:8

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

Praise the Lord.

Here we see her *dressed in white* and she is *identified immediately as the Bride*.
[Revelation 19:7-8]

So we would have to ask: why – back here in Revelation 7 – why is there this *mystery: who are these people?* [Revelation 7:9] [Revelation 7:13] if the same group is then introduced again in Revelation 19, and well: *this is the Bride*.

We don't see palms in her hands, nor do we see in any way that she is viewed as a great multitude.

As we were saying: *in time* God showed Brother Branham: *the great multitude is not the Bride*.

This is what he preached in 1963:

**135 Now watch, "After this..." Now here comes another group. Now, the Bride is gone, we know that. But watch this group come up. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations,...kindreds, and people, and tongue, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hand;
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He says: now watch, *after this*, here comes another group. Now the Bride is gone, we know that.

And I have to say: amen. The point when John saw *the great multitude*, that's at *the middle of the Week*.

He says: but watch this group come up. *After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude*.

I'm not going to read the rest, he basically continues to read that verse.

This is another one:

For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe...all tears from their eyes. 141 Now we open the...get to the Seal. Did you notice, they were...First, we start now, Israel. 142 **And then we see the purged church, not the Bride**; the purged church, by Tribulation, see, see, coming up here, great number of real sincere hearts that come up out of—of the great Tribulation. Not the Church; It's gone on, the Bride. There is the church. 143 Now we find out, over a little later, Jesus said that the Throne would set, and how the...they'd stand in the judgment, each one. 144 Now, we find now that these people were sealed with the Seal of the living God (is that right?), these Jews. What is the Seal of the living God? 145 Now, I'm not calling any, hurt to any feelings. I'm just saying, see. Do you know, that, reading after many of scholars who write on this, **claim that this group here, blood-washed, are actually the Bride?**

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Again, I'm not going to read the whole thing. But if we start down on the third line, he says: now when we get to the seal, did you notice? First we start, now Israel, and then we see *the purged church*, not the Bride, *the purged church by tribulation*. See? Coming up here, a great number of real sincere hearts that come up out of the great tribulation. Not the Church, it's gone on, the Bride. There is the Church.

I'm going to jump down to the bottom here. He says: did you know, reading after many scholars who wrote on this, they claim this group right here, blood-washed, are actually the Bride?

So once he got to this point, to him it was even strange that they could think of this group as the Bride. Even though about ten years earlier when he was studying and he saw that they said: *this is the Bride*, he had thought: *okay*. But as God showed him *more light*, he had to conclude: *this is not the Bride*.

Then he said: they came out of *the great tribulation*.

Again, in the English version it says: *they came out of great tribulation*. [Revelation 7:14]

There is nothing Biblically pointing to a specific time that **we** have decided to call *the great tribulation*. And we know the only saints who will be coming out of what **they** call '*the great tribulation*' are going to be *the foolish virgins*. [Matthew 25:2]

To the best of my memory – I could be wrong on this so I don't want to say it firmly, but the best that I can remember – Brother Jackson *in the beginning* thought of this group [Revelation 7:9] as *the foolish virgins* because they are Gentiles and it says that *they came out of great tribulation*. [Revelation 7:14]

But the key – one of the keys – to seeing that *this is not the case* is Matthew 25.

So if we go to Matthew 25 verse 1, it says here:

Matthew 25:1

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins,

When? Well, we would have to read Matthew 24. And Matthew 24 brings us right to the end time. So that's coming into the Laodicean Church Age.

He says here:

Matthew 25:1

which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

Matthew 25:2

And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.



Now we know that we can't apply the setting of *the five wise and the five foolish* to *all* the Church Ages because he said: *then the kingdom of heaven will be likened unto ten virgins.* [Matthew 25:1]

We don't get *foolish virgins* out of the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth Church Ages. But it's something *specific to the time when God would be making His final preparations.*

At that time there would be a group of people who has heard the message – I'm speaking of Brother Branham's message – it still had an effect on their heart, praise the Lord, but they *don't have that spiritual pull* to go into the fullness of truth.

Now I'm *not* talking about people who rejected truth or who spoke against truth, but the *foolish virgins* really have been more in pursuit of – we can say – the visible manifestations of the Spirit, the anointing and the gifts, than seeing the importance of *being led into all truth.*

But notice Jesus said here: *five wise and five foolish*. [Matthew 25:2] He did *not* say: five wise and ten thousand foolish.

As humans, we love friends and family. We would like for every person who is in the Methodist Church, a Message Church, or some other church, and who doesn't see the truth that we see, we would like to say: oh, they're foolish virgins. Well, that's between them and the Lord.

But don't ever think that the entire church world that's not Bride is all foolish virgins. That is absolutely *not the case*. Many of them, really, *do not have salvation*.

Somebody may want to say: oh Brother, how could you say that? Well, look at what they understand, and look how they live. A lot of them just have *a shell of religion to make them feel secure* so that they can say they're saved.

What do we hear today? Oh, the important thing is that you love Jesus. *How can we say that* when, if we have any knowledge of church history, we know that hundreds and thousands of Christians were killed for what they believed? And they believed a lot more than to just say: well, I love Jesus.

Remember the Inquisition: that was the Catholic Church killing Protestants and Jews. If you ask the Catholics: do you love Jesus? They're going to say: yes. So why did they kill the Protestants if they said the same thing, *I also love Jesus*?

We have to understand: *the Protestants believed something beyond that*. Many times they were told: all you have to do is recant. They would say: *no, this is the truth, I'm standing for it*. And many of them were tortured and killed.

But today: oh, as long as I love Jesus.

Again, if we truly love Jesus, then of course we are saved. But I will say this morning: there are millions of people on the earth today *who say they love Jesus*, but they don't really even know who Jesus is.

If he were to come and dwell among us, *they would not recognize him*. They would say: that man is harsh, he says things that hurt my feelings. *That's not Jesus!*

The point is: we can't just choose everybody that we want: well, they're saved. *That's between them and the Lord*.

And just because they go to church, I mean: *we would like that*, but it's just not reality.

So he said: *there were five foolish*. That shows: the number *in the Bride* is about the same as *the foolish virgins*.

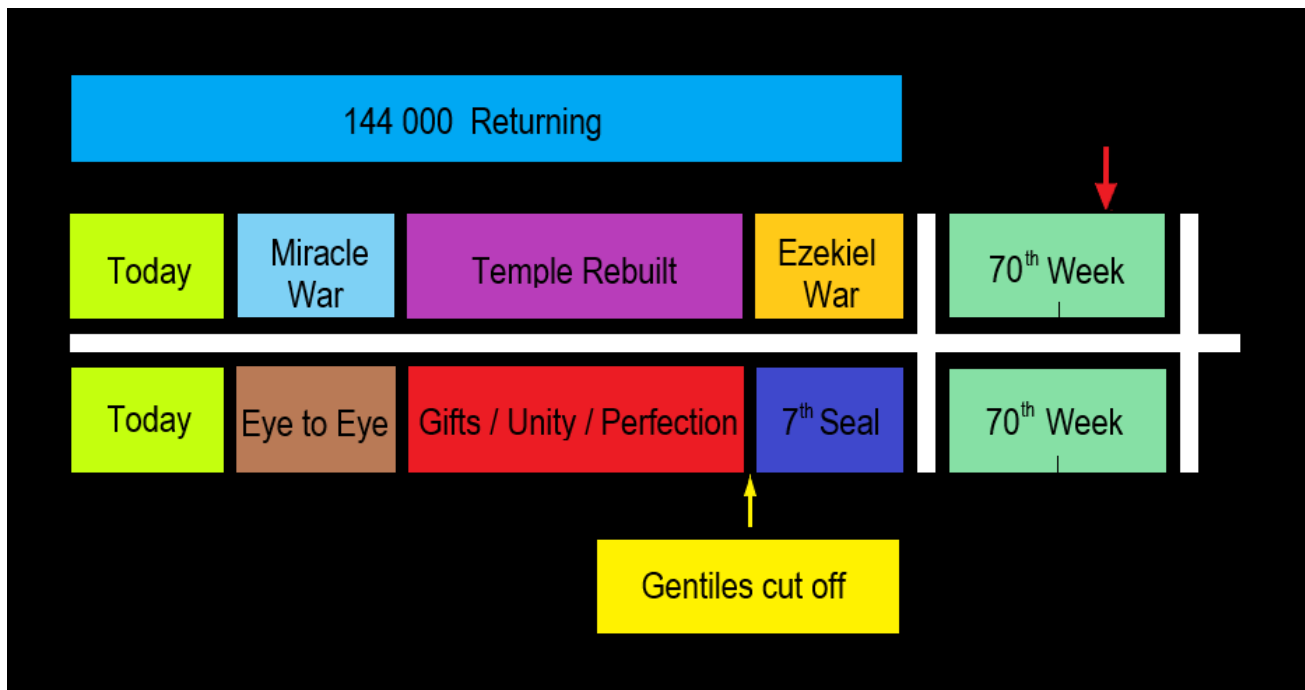
Now, I can't tell how many are in the Bride. Let's say *in this age*, I know in some of Brother Branham meetings, there were tens of thousands of people.

But at the end of the day, as in the parables of Matthew 13, after it was all over it says: *men sat down and they began to cast the bad fish away from the good.* [Matthew 13:48]

So if we were to put a number, I'll just put a number that I think is probably too big but if we say that there are 5000 out of the entire Laodicean Age, maybe even 10 000. Let's say: *10 000 Bride Saints*. I don't think the number is actually that high but I'm just putting that number. So that would be: *10 000 foolish virgins*.

But 10 000 is *not* a great multitude that no man could number. That's a relatively small number. Some churches today, mega-churches, have more than 10 000 in their congregation. And they are very quick to tell you: we have 13 500 members. Well, there's a number they can count. Amen.

Another part of this – when we go to Revelation 15 – this is where we see those who will be killed during what is called: *the great tribulation*. [Revelation 15:2]

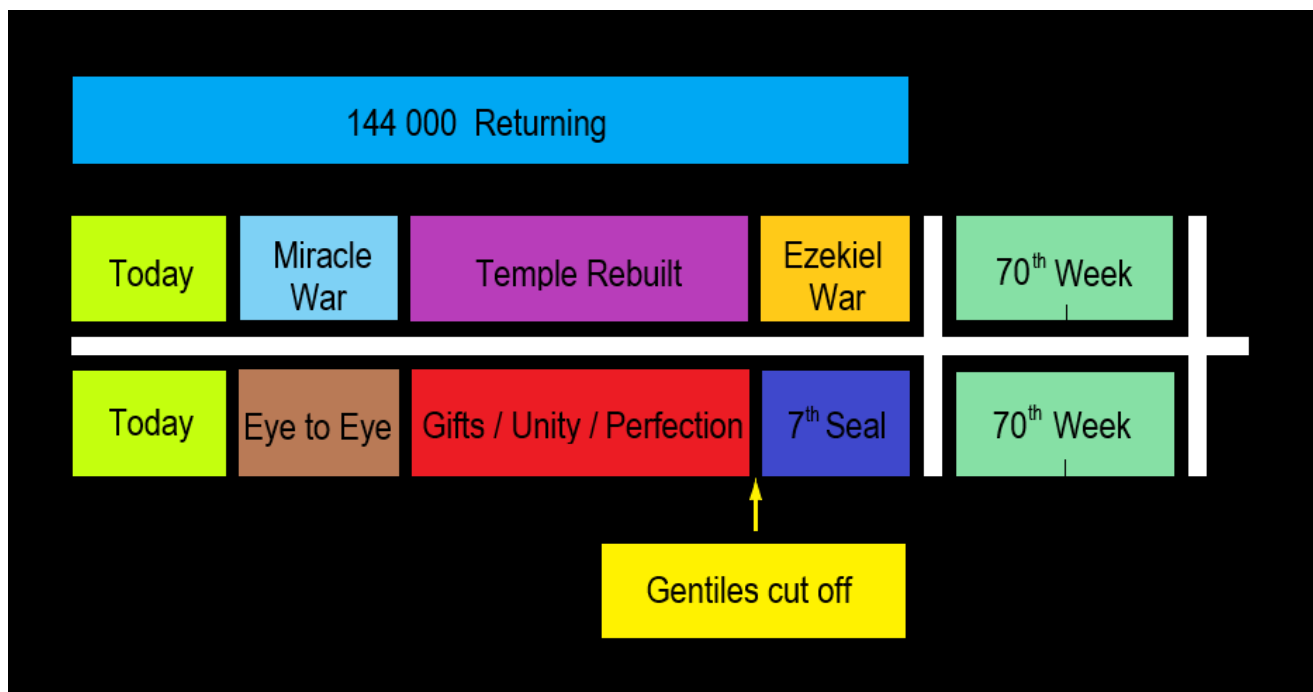


If we look at this slide, in the *last half* of the 70th Week, that's when the Antichrist will be reigning in full force. He's going to be killing Jews and Christians.

We read last time in Romans 11 where Paul speaks of how *the branches were cut-off and the wild olive tree was grafted in*. [Romans 11:17] That's of course *the Gentiles*.

But he says: *God is able to break off those branches – the Gentiles – and to graft in the olive tree which is the natural olive tree, the domesticated olive tree*. [Romans 11:22-23]

He said – I'll say it in our terms – *that would be easier than the first because that's what's natural*. [Romans 11:24]



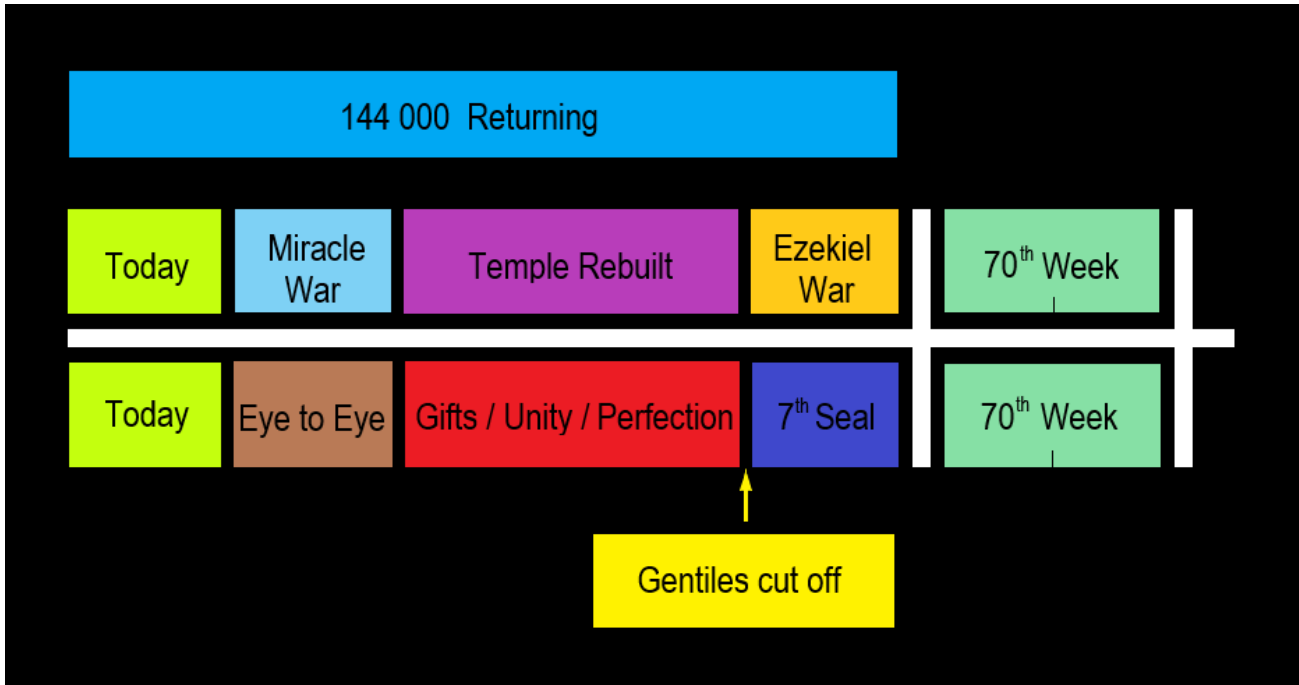
So the Gentiles are going to be *cut-off*, then the *7th Seal will be opened* [Revelation 8:1] and then, of course, time will move into the 70th Week.

There will be *no Gentiles saved* after the point when the Gentiles are cut-off.

Somebody may ask: Brother, don't you think God can save Gentiles? Of course He can. He's been doing it for 2000 years! But He will bring His work with the Gentiles *to an end*. As far as the gospel being preached and accepting the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Gentiles *will not be entering in* after they are cut-off.

Even *all the foolish* will already be saved *before* the time the Gentiles are cut-off. They are saved *today*.

The *foolish* [Matthew 25:2] are *not* going to be saved during the tribulation. They won't be saved in the *first half* of the Week, they won't be saved in the *second half* of the Week. They are saved *today*. They hear the gospel *today*. They hear the message that God gave to Brother Branham *today*.



But *after* the Gentiles are cut-off, *no more will come in: it's over*.

Will there still be – we might say – an avenue of escape? We can say: yes. We read about *the Everlasting Gospel*. [Revelation 14:6-7] Those who will listen to that message and accept it will go into the Millennium.

They won't be saved when they – we can say – when they simply accept that Everlasting Gospel message but – if we can say it like this – God will *spare them* and He will *allow them to enter into the Millennium*. And yes, there will come a day when they will be able to see the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

But let's go ahead and read here in chapter 15. John says:

Revelation 15:1

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

That's going to be in the *second half* of the Week.

Revelation 15:2

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast,

How did they get *victory over the beast*? Did they find a good place to hide? That's not it at all.

He says:

Revelation 15:2

them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

First of all, he saw them *in heaven*. Amen? The only way to get to heaven except by rapture is by death. But *these people were not raptured, they have been killed*.

And the way they got the victory is: *God gave them grace to be able to die standing for what they believed*. That's the only way they can have victory over the beast: they've given their life, they've been willing to die. And God gave them grace for that.

Remember: of our own self, we can't just say: well, I'm willing to die.

Remember Peter. He said: *Lord, I'll go with you to the cross*. [Luke 22:33] If there was any man who had determination, I would have to believe it was *Peter*. Still, when the fear entered and he saw the reality of: I'm going to die, *he got scared and he denied the Lord three times*. [Luke 22:57-60]

But later when he had the Holy Ghost and the time did come for him to die – that was about 34 years later – he didn't go running, screaming, and lying. He said: I'm not worthy to die the same way my Lord died. So he asked to be crucified upside down. And they crucified him upside down. He was *able to give his life at that point*.

So we have to understand: it's the *Spirit of God* that's going to give them *the grace to be able to say: I'm willing to give my life*.

Now verse 3 is the key here. It says:

Revelation 15:3

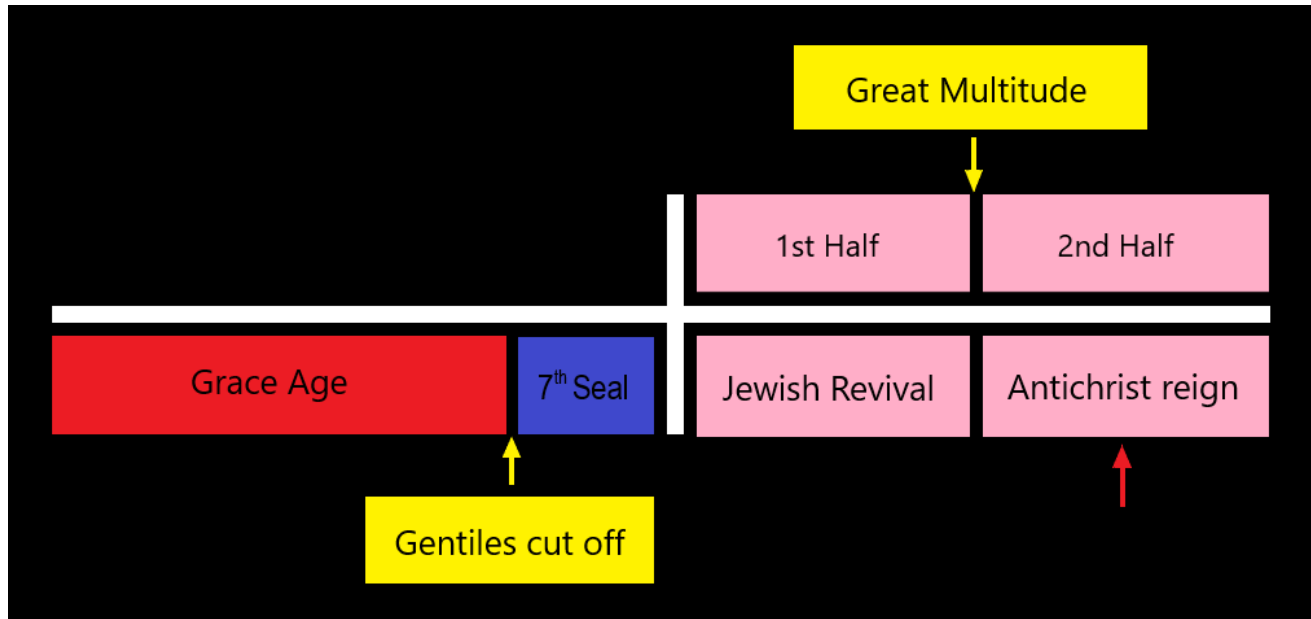
And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God,

Who is that identifying? That's identifying *Jews*. So there's going to be *Jews* in this group.

But then it also says:

Revelation 15:3
and the song of the Lamb,

The song of the Lamb is identifying Christians. They have been covered by the blood of the Lamb. They are Christians.



These are *Christians* who are going to be killed in the *second half* of the Week of Daniel.

Who are they? They're *the foolish virgins*. [Matthew 25:2] That's the only group it could be.

So those Saints, whether Jew or Gentile, will be slain in the second half of the Week under the rule of the Antichrist. [Revelation 15:2]

Revelation 15:3
And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

Praise the Lord.

They're *not* complaining: why did we have to go through that? But *they're all praising God, all of them, on the sea of glass.*

So we have to understand: *the sea of glass* [Revelation 15:2] is the place that holds those who will be killed and those who will die *in the 70th Week* as *foolish virgins* and also as *persecuted Jews*.

Again, if we want to take *the great multitude* [Revelation 7:9] and say that those are the ones who came out of *the great tribulation*, then they would be a part of this group [Revelation 15:2] as well.

But John describes this *completely separate*. He *doesn't say* that it was a great multitude. He just says that there was *a great sign, a sea of glass, and he describes those who stood upon it*. [Revelation 15:1-3]

So we would have to ask? Then *who is this great multitude?*

Well, in part we also have to understand what makes us *Bride Saints*.

We mentioned last time: the day we are saved, *yes* in a potential sense, God who predestinated us could look at us and say: *that's a Bride Saint*, but we really hadn't reached that stature yet.

Let's go to Mark chapter 4. Matthew also recorded this but we'll just read it in Mark.

Verse 20, it says here:

Mark 4:20

And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it,

He didn't say: those who love Jesus. He said: *those who hear the word and receive it*. Amen. Now, will they love Jesus? Of course they will. But it's not just those *who say that they love him*.

Mark 4:20

and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

Jesus uses a natural term: *a tree bearing fruit*.

If you buy a fruit tree, the first year you have it, it may not give any fruit. The second year you have it, there may be flowers on it and they all fall off. First of all, it has to get to a certain size, it has to have a certain strength, and there is *time* before fruit appears. But finally one year, you may get a few fruit. And then the next year you say: wow, there is a lot of fruit this year! It finally came to *maturity*.

Let's go to Second Peter chapter 3 and verse 18.

Actually this is the last verse of Second Peter. This is his final word.

He says here:

2 Peter 3:18

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Praise the Lord.

The last instruction that Peter gives to Bride Saints is: *grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.*

The day that you and I are saved, we are *not* Bride Saints. We are *saved*. Amen. But we have a lot of learning to do, a lot of growing.

And it's twofold. Peter says: *grow in grace*. That would be looking at *our spirit, our attitude toward one another*. He also says: *and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ*. That would be *our understanding of the Word of God*. There are those *two parts* and *we have to grow*.

So what happens if somebody gets a horrible disease and they die two months after they're saved? They never had the chance to go through the trials that you and I have gone through as Christians. And they never grew beyond the basic understanding of Salvation *but they died*.

We can't put them in the Bride. They are *not* Bride Saints. They never achieved *the maturity* that they could be *clothed in fine linen*. But at the same time, we can't say they're not saved, because *they are saved*. *They gave their life to the Lord*.

If we didn't have the second half of Revelation 7, there would be a question in our mind: what about these people? And we really wouldn't have a Biblical answer. The only thing we would be able to say is: well, it's in the Hands of God, which of course is true.

But God has a place for them.

From the beginning, we read about *Stephen being stoned*. [Acts 7:59] Amen.

Now I'm *not* going to say: well Stephen is part of *the great multitude* or he was a *Bride Saint*. The way he spoke [Acts 6:10] [Acts 7] I have to say: it was beautiful. He had *an incredible understanding*. I would *think* he was a Bride Saint.

But my point is: Stephen was not the only one who was killed. James was also killed pretty early on, I mean, before the time when Peter and Paul were killed. So *there was already persecution*.

In fact, before Paul was converted, he was the one who *gave the green light* – if I can say it like that – *to the stoning of Stephen*. And there were other Christians who were killed. *Paul would go and arrest them*. [Acts 8:1-3]

And after he was converted, the Christians said: we don't want anything to do with Paul. [Acts 9:26] They probably thought it was a big trick: he's trying to deceive us, he's trying to gain our confidence and then he's going to take us prisoners.

From the beginning of the Church, there has been *persecution* and there have been *people killed*.

And down through time, there have been *wars*, there have been *persecutions*, and there have been *diseases* whereby *people were not able to come to the stature of a Bride Saint*.

I think of something as simple as antibiotics. I thank God today for antibiotics: if we didn't have those, I'm sure I would be dead right now, a lot of us would be dead.

I got something one time, it just got worse and worse. I said: this thing is killing me. I called the doctor and he told me to go to the pharmacy to pick something up. I thought: how can I go to the pharmacy? I thought: well, it's either that or I die, so I'm going to go. He said: you'll feel better after about an hour. I thought: one hour? This thing has been getting worse and worse for multiple hours and I'm going to feel better in just one hour? I hope he's right! But in just *half an hour* I was feeling better.

If we look down through time, there were times if people lived to be fifty years old, that was pretty amazing.

I have some drawings or paintings here:



In the *second* and *third church age* we had *the persecution of the Christians* when the Romans came against them. They were taken to the Roman Colosseum.

This was how it started: they would pray.



And this was how it ended: Christians dead, dismembered, and it looks like some were burned at the stake. They went through all kinds of torture and death.

Some of them *had* lived long enough: they were Bride Saints. Others had only served the Lord for a week. They were *not* Bride Saints. But God still had a place for them. Where? *In that great multitude.* [Revelation 7:9]

And this was something that hit Europe:

The plague is considered the likely cause of the Black Death that swept through Asia, Europe, and Africa in the 14th century and killed an estimated 50 million people, including about 25% to 60% of the European population

I know it mainly as affecting Europe, but here it also says: Asia and Africa.

It says: the plague is considered the likely cause of the Black Death that swept through Asia, Europe and Africa in the 14th century. It killed an estimated 50 million people.

Now *50 million* isn't as big a number today, but *proportionally*, that would be the equivalent of *one billion people today*.

It says here: including about 25% to 60% of the European population.

If we think COVID was bad, and *it was bad*: out of every 200 people, one died, or maybe out of every 150, one died. That was terrible because we all know more than 150 people. And most of us had loved ones who died.

But during *the plague*: it was one out of three! We're maybe 20 people here this morning, imagine *seven of us die*.

And it was a horrible death: once the symptoms set in, their hands would turn black, their lips turned black, and everybody was afraid to go near them because they knew they would be next. And about a week or two later, they would die. *That's tribulation*. Amen.

Now, not everybody who died was a saint.

And we could talk about *wars*.

So we have *wars*, we have *persecutions*, and we have *diseases*.



This is a depiction of what it was like in Europe at the time of what they call *the Black Death*.

Spanish Inquisition



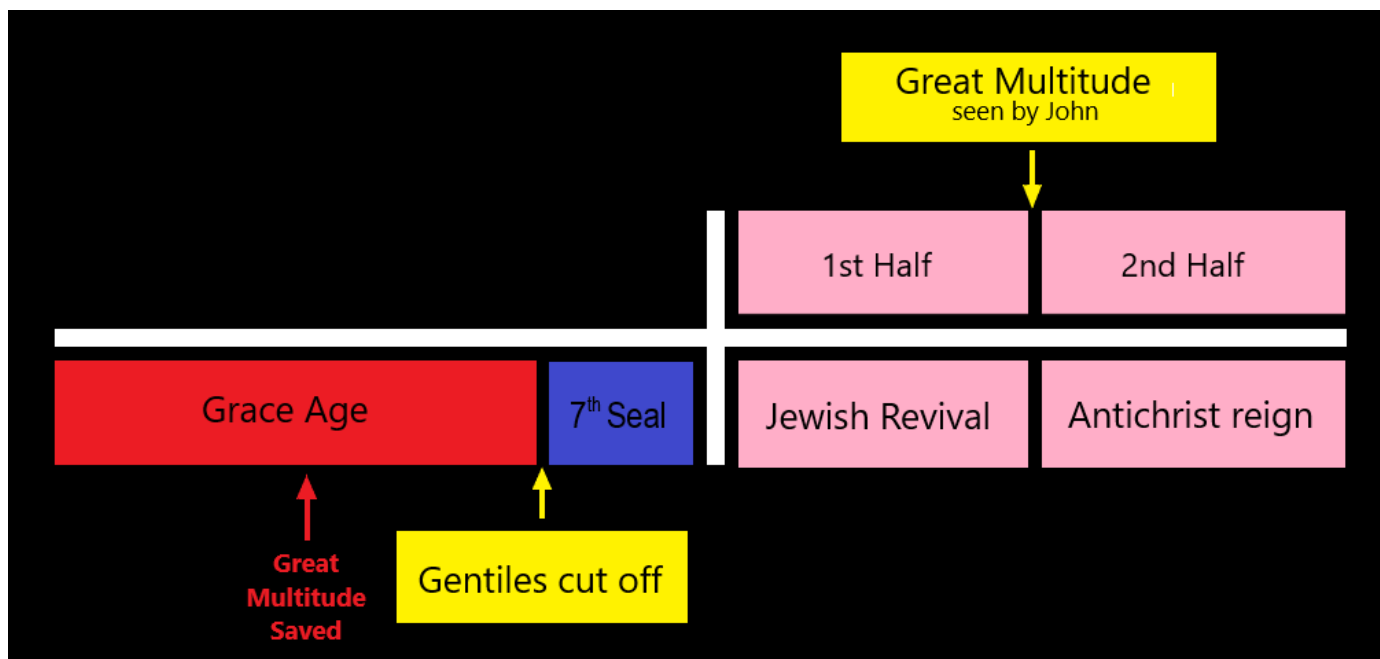
There was the Spanish Inquisition during which about 30 000 Christians were killed. History always said: 30 000. But now *the modern scholars* want to say: ah, it was somewhere between 1000 and 5000.

Those are the same people who want to tell you that Moses didn't write the Book of Deuteronomy, that it was written hundreds of years later.

Those are the same people who will tell you that the Book of Hebrews was maybe written by a woman, and certainly not Paul. *They are full of unbelief.*

Again, 30 000 might not sound like so many today. But I've always said this: if *you* were one of the 30 000, it would be a whole lot, right?

If we compare that number to today's population, it would be about 500 000. And those are the ones who were *killed*. Many more were *tortured* but they weren't killed.



The point is: *the great multitude* [Revelation 7:9] does *not* come out of the Week of Daniel. They come out of the Grace Age. *They die during the Grace Age*. God is going to *stop saving Gentiles* before the 7th Seal is opened.

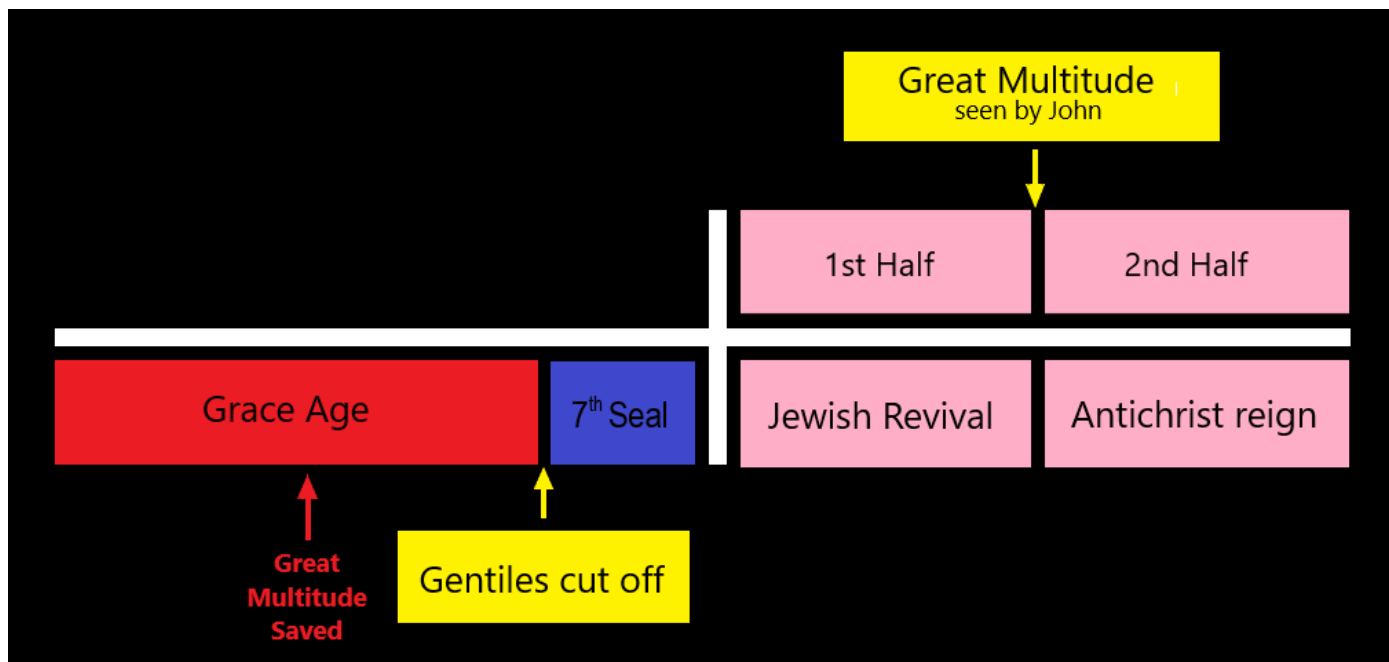
John sees them *after* the Jewish revival, *before* the time that *they call 'the great tribulation'* even begins.

You say: well why did he see them at *the middle of the Week* and not at the end of the Grace Age? Remember: they still had to live a little bit, but as he sees them during the Week, we can be confident: they *all have died* at that point. The number is complete.

And I *can't* say: you need so many months or so many years to be a Bride Saint. That's all in God's Hands. He knows where that *level of maturity* is.

If you pick an orange off a tree, you can say: this one is green or this one is orange. If it's orange, it's *mature*. Can anybody tell me: well you need exactly 39 days? But *the Lord knows for each individual*.

So John actually saw them at *the middle* of the Week, *before* what is called: '*the great tribulation*'.



Again, I want to be clear: *from the very beginning of the Grace Age* including the Jews, all the way down to the time *right before the 7th Seal is opened*, there are people who have accepted the Lord but they die *before they could reach spiritual maturity as Bride Saints*.

The ones who are saved right at the end of the Grace Age can live through *the opening of the 7th Seal and into the first half of the Week* – that won't be very long, the first half of the Week is 3½ years – but they will die *before the middle of the Week* because that's when John saw them, *the whole multitude*. [Revelation 7:9]

If they had come out of that second half, the question is: why didn't he see them at the end of the Week? But he saw them *before* the reign of the Antichrist even happens.

So I think this will give us a good start to understanding *the great multitude*, and also looking at *white robes* and the *last phase of the first resurrection*. We didn't get into that yet, but Lord willing we will also be studying that.

We'll go ahead and close this morning.