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144,000

FROM ALL THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

by Rachel Cory-Kuehl, May 15, 2022

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Scripture quoted from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

Revelation 6:17 “For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

Answer: The 144,000. The question (“Who is able to stand?”) is followed immediately with the sealing of the 144,000 (Revelation 7:1-8). Let’s dig deeper.

Revelation 14:1-4 “And I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.”

2 “And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. 3 And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.

4 These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.” (NAS)

The 144,000 are:

1. Standing on Mount Zion with Messiah
2. Sealed
3. Purchased from the earth
4. Not defiled with women
5. Called Firstfruits
6. Blameless

STANDING ON MOUNT ZION

The 144,000 are obviously human beings because they “were purchased from among men” (Rev 14:5). They were “purchased” - meaning “redeemed.” A “redemption price” was paid for them. They are called “the servants of our God” (Rev 7:3).

They are described as “standing” with Christ on Mount Zion. They have come to the New Jerusalem.

Question: According to the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews, all believers have “come to Mount Zion.” What then separates the 144,000 from the rest of the redeemed? We will address that question a little later.

Hebrews 12:22-24 “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven , to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling [the blood of Christ] that speaks better things than that of Abel.”

THE FIRSTBORN

Exodus 4:22 “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Israel is My son, My first-born.”’” (NAS)

“The Congregation of the Firstborn” are “registered in Heaven.” We know that names are “registered” *in* the Book of Life.

NOTE: Non-Hebrews are “grafted in” TO Israel, by faith in Messiah. Unbelieving Hebrews are “broken off” - “cut off,” FROM Israel (but can be grafted in again, if they come to faith). Yeshua very clearly said, “No one comes to the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6). Redeemed Israel is therefore made up of both believing Hebrews and believing non-Hebrews.

Romans 11:26 “And thus all Israel will be saved.”

I do not believe that exactly 144,000 “virgin” males all descended from Jacob, will “stand” with Christ at the last day. **The number is symbolic.**

Consider the number of definitions in the Strong's, for the Greek word "**histemi**" (#2476), translated as "stand." At least 33 by my count. Let me note just 4 of those definitions.

1b3) to establish a thing, cause it to stand 1b31) to uphold or sustain the authority or force of anything 2a1) **to stand immovable, stand firm** 2b2) to be of a steadfast mind

Those who "stand" at the last day, will be those who remain firm in their "stand" for the truth. They are the culmination of Christ's work. They have taken their "stand" on the foundation laid down by the 12 Apostles, and have *spiritually* "entered" through the gates named for the 12 Tribes of Israel. They are counted as citizens of the New Jerusalem. Their names are recorded and retained in the Book of Life.

They "stand" *figuratively*. They are counted as citizens of redeemed Israel (the firstborn). They are not literally "standing" on the Temple Mount, in the State of Israel.

The 144,000 are those still *left* standing, after the "rebels in Zion" have been "cut off" or "sifted out."

NOT DEFILED WITH WOMEN

Revelation 14:4-5 "These are the ones **who have not been defiled with women**, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless." (NAS)

The "**women**" with whom they have "not been defiled," are the great Harlot, and her "daughters" (*Rev 17:5*). The Harlot with her "daughters" are the great system of religious and spiritual falsehood. Her "wine" (*teaching*) is tainted with poison (*falsehoods*). The 144,000 have refused "her wine," therefore "no lie" (no deception) is "found in their mouths." They speak the truth. They have a "pure" (or chaste) faith, founded solely upon the Word of God.

WITHOUT FAULT

"They are without fault" before the Throne of God, *because* their sins have been washed away by the blood of the Lamb. They "keep the commandments of God" - all Ten of them, including the Sabbath of the 7th Day.

NOTE: When the 7th Trumpet is sounded, Heaven will be opened, and the Ark of His Covenant will be seen (Rev 11:19). The two stone tablets given to Moses, were a copy of the Tables in Heaven. The Ten Commands of that Covenant will be the standard for the judgment.

THE FIRSTFRUITS

The “**firstfruits**” (#01061 *bikkuwr*) was an offering presented at the Temple, of the very first fruits or grains to be harvested.

The 144,000 are called “**first fruits**,” implying they are part of a larger harvest to follow. That harvest is described as a “**great multitude**” from all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues, standing before the throne of God and the Lamb, clothed with white robes and waving palm branches of victory (*Rev 7:9-17*).

There were three main “harvests” in the ancient land of Israel, coinciding with the three great Feasts. At each Feast, a “firstfruits offering” was presented.

Early Spring: flax

Spring following Passover: barley

Summer - wheat and several fruits including figs and almonds, and the first grapes

Fall: grapes, olives, walnuts and late figs

The Feast of Firstfruits that followed Passover, celebrated the barley harvest. Christ risen was the “Firstfruits” offering, who fulfilled that prophecy (*1Cor 15:23*). The “saints” whom He resurrected just after He himself was raised, made up the bulk of that harvest (*Matt 27:52-53*).

*NOTE: The “saints” who were resurrected by Christ just after He was himself raised by His Father, constituted **the Spring “harvest.”** Those saints ascended with Yeshua, who presented them to His Father. We are not told the names of those saints. It is probable that many from the Old Testament era were raised, and now serve as “the twenty four elders” before God’s throne.*

King David divided the priesthood of his day, into twenty-four “courses” (1Chr Chapt 24). They came up by rotation to serve at the Temple. It is likely there are far more than just 24 resurrected saints now serving in the Father’s House.

The 144,000 are the “firstfruits” of the Summer harvest - the wheat harvest. All of those resurrected at the Glorious Return will make up the bulk of that harvest. Christ himself will call millions from the dust (*Dan 12:2-3*).

The Great Multitude are said to have “come out of the great tribulation.” “The great tribulation” may refer to the period of the Beast’s rule. It’s possible. But it’s difficult to see how a multitude “without number” could come out of that short time period.

“The great tribulation” may refer to the entire 6000 years of Satan’s domination. I’m sure the angels of God regard what has happened here as one long “tribulation.” The faithful down through the millennia, have endured persecution and hardship. All have been “tested.” Paul said, “the whole creation travails in pain, longing to be delivered” (*Romans 8:2*).

The “great multitude” is composed of those who “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Perhaps the “great tribulation” should be understood as **the period from the Cross to the Glorious Return.** Two thousand years could certainly produce a great multitude. They are **dressed in white robes.** Such were the garb of the Tabernacle priests. We learn from Revelation 20:6, that all those from “the first resurrection” will become “priests of God and of Christ,” to rule with Him over “the nations” who are raised at the 8th millennium (*Rev 20:5*). See our study: “[A Kingdom of Priests.](#)”

The Fall harvest - the third and final harvest, will come from “the nations” who are resurrected at the 8th millennium. The Gospel will be sown, and a harvest gathered from “the rest of the dead” (*Rev 20:5*). See our study: “[The 8th Day.](#)”

NOTE: Some argue that the Matthew 27:51-53 resurrection, was “the first resurrection.” I disagree. From John’s perspective at the time of his writing, the next great resurrection would take place at the Glorious Return. The “resurrection” at the Glorious Return, is called “first” because it is contrasted with a second and final resurrection 1000 years later, at the 8th millennium - the resurrection of “the rest of the dead” (Revelation 20:5).

THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL

Revelation 12:17 “So the dragon [Satan] became enraged at the woman and went away to make war on **the rest** of her children, those who keep God's commandments and hold to the testimony about Jesus.” (NET)

The “woman” who gave birth to Messiah, was Israel - the congregation of the LORD. The “rest of her children” are “**the remnant**” of Israel. The last ones remaining.

The Israel of God is today made up of Hebrews and non-Hebrews who believe in Yeshua as the Christ, and Son of God. **Gentile believers are “grafted in” to Israel,** through their faith in Yeshua Messiah. Unbelieving Hebrews are “broken off” from Israel - from the Olive Tree (*Jer 11:16 and Rom Chapt Eleven*). Though they can be “grafted in again” IF they come to belief in Yeshua as Messiah and Son of God.

Jesus said plainly, “No one comes to the Father, but by me” (*Jn 14:6*). See our studies: “[Who are Israel?](#)” and “[The Only Way.](#)”

THE SEALED OF ISRAEL

Revelation Chapter 14 pictures the 144,000 standing with Christ at the very last day. Verse 14 is the Glorious Return. Earth's "harvest" is reaped, and then the bowls of wrath are unleashed to destroy the earth.

Let's go back 7 Chapters, to the first mention of the 144,000. In context, the sixth seal on the scroll, has just been broken by the Lamb. The scroll has not yet unrolled.

Revelation 6:12 "I looked **when He opened the sixth seal**, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. 13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'"

Notice:

*The wicked THINK it is the final "great day of His wrath."
They will hide because of the great earthquake and the signs in the sky.
They scream out the question, "Who is able to stand?"
They do not realize there are 6 warning Trumpets yet to go.*

NOTE: This may actually be the counterfeit "return" that Satan will orchestrate, to "deceive if possible, the very elect."

WHO IS ABLE TO STAND?

Answer: **The 144,000 will stand.**

BEFORE THEY CAN STAND - THEY MUST BE SEALED

The scroll was sealed with 7 seals. When the 7th seal is broken by the Lamb, the scroll will unroll (Rev 5:1-7). It will be time for the first warning Trumpet to sound. Just before the 7th seal is broken, the 144,000 are sealed. See our study: "[Prelude to the Trumpets.](#)"

Revelation 7:1 [When the 6th seal is broken - Rev 6:12] "After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth so no wind could blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.

2 Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, who had the seal of the living God. He shouted out with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given permission to damage the earth and the sea:

3 'Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees until we have put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God!'

4 Now I heard the number of those who were marked with the seal, one hundred and forty-four thousand, sealed from all the tribes of the people of Israel:

Revelation 7:1-8 [continued] 5 "From the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben, twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad, twelve thousand, 6 from the tribe of Asher, twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali, twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh, twelve thousand, 7 from the tribe of Simeon, twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi, twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar, twelve thousand, 8 from the tribe of Zebulun, twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph, twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed." (NET)

Just the other day, I heard a popular televangelist say that 144,000 Jews will serve the LORD during the 7 years between the rapture of the church, and the Glorious Return of Christ for judgment. What??? The term "Jew" referred to persons from the Tribe of Judah. Revelation lists eleven other tribes, including the "Tribe of Joseph" (rather than Ephraim).

*The tribes of Dan and Ephraim are not listed in **Revelation Chapter 7**, while the tribe of Manasseh is listed, in addition to "the tribe of Joseph." (Ephraim was the younger son of Joseph. Manasseh was the older son.) The list of tribes in **Ezekiel Chapter 48**, includes Joseph, but leaves out both Ephraim and Manasseh, as well as Dan. The tribe of Dan very early set up an idol for worship, and looked to a "priest" captured from an idol worshipping people (Judges Chapter 18).*

SEALED AND PREPARED for “war with the saints”

Revelation 13:4-5 [The Beast’s deadly wound was healed and after that] “So they worshiped the dragon [Satan] who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?’ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and **he** [the Beast] was given authority to continue for **forty-two months**” (v. 7-8).

“And it was granted to him to **make war with the saints** and **to overcome them**. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. And all who dwell on the earth will worship (serve) him, whose names are NOT written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

Daniel 7:25-27 “He [the Little Horn] shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change time law. Then the saints will be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.”

See our study: “[War with the Saints.](#)”

THE CONTEXT

The context for the Revelation, is the Beast’s 1260 day rule. This is Satan’s last push to steal human beings from Christ. This is his last struggle to retain control over the earth. He is desperate. He is vicious. The 144,000 will stand with Christ during this time of worldwide persecution. They will stand on Mount Zion in a spiritual sense.

The Beast is given authority (by Satan the Dragon) “over every tribe, tongue and nation” (Rev 13:7). His rule is worldwide. His persecution is worldwide.

The Beast is allowed to continue this rule for 1260 days (3.5 years), until he (along with the False Prophet) is thrown into the Lake of Fire by Christ Himself, at His Glorious Return (Rev 19:20).

NOTE: The Beast and the False Prophet are not two individuals. They are systems of domination and deception. They are composed of thousands, perhaps millions, of who serve the Evil One.

During this period, the Two Witnesses will give a final warning message, and the seven Trumpet events will confirm that message. At the end of this period, the Two Witnesses will be killed.

During this period, the 144,000 will “stand” with Messiah.

According to Hebrews 12:22-24, all believers “have come to Mount Zion” - “the heavenly Jerusalem,” to God the Father, and to Christ. They are “registered in heaven” in the Book of Life.

Question: What then separates the 144,000 from the total body of the redeemed?

Answer: The timing.

THE TIMING

The 144,000 are sealed

after the 6th seal is broken,
and **before** the 7th seal is broken.

The Scroll has not unrolled.

The first Trumpet has not sounded.

Revelation 7:1 “After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.

2 Then I saw **another angel** ascending from the east, **having the 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, 3 saying, ‘**Do not harm** the earth, the sea, or the trees **till** we have **sealed the servants of our God** on their foreheads.’

4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of **all the tribes of the children of Israel** were sealed:”

The four angels “harm the earth and sea” by letting go “the four winds” of destruction. Up to this point they have been exercising powerful restraint.

The angels of God fight with the evil ones, who seek to control the rulers of nations. The angel who spoke with Daniel said, “the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days” (*Dan 10:13*). In verse 20, he mentions “the prince of Persia” and “the prince of Greece.” These were powerful evil spirit beings, who sought to manipulate those human kings, to bring about the annihilation of the Hebrew people. Satan is the destroyer, not the angels of God (*Rev 9:11*). See Revelation 9:4. See our study: “[The Wrath of God - a Different View](#).”

SEALED with THE NAMES

Revelation 14:1 “And I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.” (NAS)

NOTE: *The King James Version omits the name of Christ from the seal. Revelation 3:12 includes both names.*

Revelation 3:12 [Christ speaking] “And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.”

Revelation 9:4 “They [the “locusts” released from the bottomless pit by the “star fallen from heaven”] were told not to damage the grass of the earth, or any green plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their forehead.” (NET)

Obviously these “locusts” have been restrained by the “four angels” of 7:1.

The seal may be visible to angels, or the evil ones may simply find the sealed people of God heavily guarded by the angels under Christ’s command.

SEALED WITH HIS SPIRIT

Ephesians 1:13 “Having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.”

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.” (NAS)

Ephesians 4:30 “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” (NAS)

God seals, with His spirit. **The SEAL of GOD is the Holy Spirit.**
The Spirit is given to us from God the Father, through Christ. (*See Mat 3:11, Mk 1:8, Lk3:16.*)

NOTE: The word “sealed,” when used in reference to New Covenant believers, is always in the Greek **aorist tense**, UNTIL Revelation 7:4. IMPORTANT: Revelation 7:4 is the very first passage, where the word “sealed” is in the perfect tense.

Something absolutely changes at Revelation 7:4.

The aorist tense (*a tense foreign to the English*) indicates that a process has begun, which will ultimately achieve a final effect. It is similar to our English phrase, “It’s a done deal.” We mean that it’s “as good as done.” Those who are sealed (aorist tense) will be fully or perfectly sealed (perfect tense), as they remain “in Christ.” One might say that we are sealing to be sealed. When the word appears in the perfect tense, it means the sealing process is complete.

The 144,000 are perfectly “sealed.”

The SEAL of Revelation 7:2
is a special, powerful Spirit anointing
FOR the final period of persecution.

THE MESSENGER - with THE SEAL

Revelation 7:2 “Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, who had the seal of the living God.” (NET)

I contend this messenger is Christ.

1. **The SEAL of GOD is the Holy Spirit.** The Spirit is given to us through Christ. John the Baptist prophesied concerning Christ, “**He will baptize you with the holy Spirit, and fire**” (*Matt 3:11, Luke 3:16, Mark 1:8, John 1:33*).

2. Some may object to Christ being called an “angel.” But the word “angel” simply means “messenger.” And who is the Father’s chief messenger? Answer: His Son. He is “the Angel of the LORD” - “the Messenger of the Covenant,” who led Israel through the wilderness and spoke from the fiery pillar. Compare 1Thessalonians 4:16, with John 5:25.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, **with the voice of the archangel**, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:”

John 5:25 “Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when **the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God**; and those who hear will live.”

Conclusion: *Christ IS the Archangel who raises the dead, and He is the Messenger from the East, who commands the destroying angels to wait until “we” (He and the Father) have sealed the remnant. See our study: [“The Mediator.”](#)*

A SPECIAL PEOPLE - FOR A TERRIBLE TIME

The 144,000 will be a special people, called for a time of great persecution and great deception. The Beast will seek to silence them by every means. They will stand for Christ, against the Beast, his Harlot, and his False Prophet. **To strengthen them for this time, they will receive a special anointing with the Spirit.** As God the Father “sealed” His Son at the start of His ministry (*John 6:27*), so Christ will seal the 144,000 prior to the sounding of Revelation’s First Trumpet.

I believe the 144,000 will include all believers who live during the period of the Beast’s rule. I believe this because the demons are commanded NOT to harm anyone with the Seal of God. I do not believe that Jesus would leave any servant believer without His protection during the Trumpet judgments. We have a TYPE - the story of His protection of Israel from the last seven plagues which struck Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

Such protection does not mean that all believers will be exempted from suffering or prison, or even death. It means that believers cannot be controlled or tormented *by* fallen angels.

No one is looking forward to that time. We are looking beyond that time, to the Kingdom of God. We have the assurance of our Savior, that He will be with us to strengthen and preserve us. And we have the example of others who stood firm, even unto death.

*We pray this study will prove a blessing.
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