

WHO ARE THE 144,000?

(Excerpt from my book, "The Book of Revelation Decoded", pages 245-250)

In Revelation 7:4-8, we read:

Verses 4-8: *"⁴And I heard the number of the sealed: 144,000 were sealed out of every tribe of the sons of Israel: ⁵Out of the tribe of Judah, 12,000 sealed. Out of the tribe of Reuben, 12,000 sealed. Out of the tribe of Gad, 12,000 sealed. ⁶Out of the tribe of Asher, 12,000 sealed. Out of the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 sealed. Out of the tribe of Manasseh, 12,000 sealed. ⁷Out of the tribe of Simeon, 12,000 sealed. Out of the tribe of Levi, 12,000 sealed. Out of the tribe of Issachar, 12,000 sealed. ⁸Out of the tribe of Zebulun, 12,000 sealed. Out of the tribe of Joseph, 12,000 sealed. Out of the tribe of Benjamin, 12,000 sealed."* (AT)

Explanation of verses 4-8

Do the above verses say that only 144,000 people will be saved out of the fore mentioned tribes of Israel?

The answer is a resounding "No!" If that were the case, then, the gospel of salvation which Jesus preached in John 3:16 would not be accurate! There, we read:

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever believeth in him** should not perish, but have everlasting life."* (KJV)

The above statement, **"whosoever believes in Him"**, tells us that **all, everyone** who will believe in Jesus, even if they are millions of Israelites, will be saved and sealed!

Then, why did verses 4-8 mention a specific number?

The specific number shows us that this is a **special group** among all those who will be saved and consequently sealed throughout the Christian era out of the literal fore mentioned tribes of Israel! This special group is a **“firstfruit”** to God and to Christ from among the people of Israel. The word **“firstfruit”** refers to **the first and the best** of the fruits of the land that were offered to God (Exodus 23:11). This conclusion is supported by Revelation 14:4. Let us read this verse:

“These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones following the Lamb wherever He may go. These were redeemed from among men as a firstfruit to God and to the Lamb.”

This special group of Jewish believers will be elevated by God into the highest position in His kingdom. They will receive great authority and they, together with Jesus, will make up the core, the central part of God’s kingdom!

How do we know that some believers will be elevated, by God, to higher positions of authority than others?

Let us read a few scriptures:

Matthew 11:11

“Truly I say to you, There has not arisen among those born of a woman any greater than John the Baptist. But the least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he is.”

Luke 19:16-19

“¹⁶And the first came, saying, Lord, your mina has gained ten minas. ¹⁷And he said to him, Well done, good slave! Because you were faithful in a least thing, have authority

over ten cities. ¹⁸And the second came, saying, Lord, your mina has made five minas. ¹⁹And he said to this one also, And you be over five cities.

2 Corinthians 5:10

“For we all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive the things done through the body, according to what he did, whether good or bad.”

How can we tell that the 144,000 believers will, together with Jesus, make up the core, the central authority of God’s kingdom?

In order to give a complete answer to the above question, I must present to you one more symbolic term: The *“mountain”*.

What does a *“mountain”* symbolize?

A *“mountain”* pictures a **“kingdom”** or **“government”**, whether it is political or religious. This explanation, is supported by the following:

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had a dream. In that dream, he saw a stone which struck an image and broke it into pieces. Then, that stone became *“a great mountain”* and filled the whole earth. The prophet Daniel explained the dream to the king saying:

“You O king were seeing ... until a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them into pieces ... and the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” (Daniel 2:31-35).

Daniel explained that **this “great mountain” symbolized God’s kingdom.** He said,

“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” (Daniel 2:44).

Another place that mentions the symbolic term **“mountains”**, is Revelation 17:9,10. There, the angel explained to John that **“mountains”** refer to **“kings”** --- to world empires which will rule on the planet before the coming of the kingdom of God. Let us read these verses:

“This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while.” (ESV)

The third place where we meet the symbolic term **“mountain”** is Isaiah 2:2. There, the prophet said,

“And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it.”

According to the foregoing understanding of the symbolic term **“mountain”**, the prophet simply said that in the last days, **the kingdom of the house of Jehovah will be exalted above all other kingdoms, whether these kingdoms are big (like mountains) or smaller (like hills).**

Please keep the above information in mind because, in a few moments, we will combine it with the words of three “*witnesses*”. These “*witnesses*” are three scriptures which bear testimony to the fact that,

- **The rod** of Christ’s strength (His rulership),
- **His law** and
- **His word**

will go forth **out of Zion**. Let us pay attention to their testimony:

Psalms 110:2

“Jehovah shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion to rule in the midst of Your enemies.”

Isaiah 2:3

“And many people shall go and say, Come and let us go up to the mount of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob. And He will teach from His ways, and we will walk in His paths. For out of Zion the Law will go forth, and the Word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.”

Micah 4:2

“And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob. And He will teach us from His ways, and we will walk in His paths. For the Law shall go forth out of Zion, and the Word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.”

Now that we know that the term “*mountain*” refers to a “*kingdom*” and as we have learned that **the rod of Christ’s strength, His law and His word will go forth out of Zion**, it is easy to understand Revelation 14:1. There it says,

“And I saw, and look, the Lamb standing on mount Zion and with Him 144,000, having His Name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.”

As we do not see all the believers ***“standing on mount Zion”*** with Christ but the 144,000 only, we realize that the foregoing symbolism denotes that **Jesus and the 144,000 Jewish believers who are *“the Firstfruit to God and to the Lamb”***, will make up the core, the central authority of God’s kingdom!

Does this mean that only the 144,000 will reign with Christ?

The answer is **“No!”** In Revelation 5:9,10 we read,

“⁹And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy are You to receive the scroll, and to open its seals, because You were slain, and by Your blood purchased us to God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, ¹⁰and made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign over the earth.”

Thank You Lord Jesus!