

The Book of Revelation
Revelation 14:1-5 (NIV)
“The Lamb and the 144,000”

Introduction

Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.

In **Chapter 14 of Revelation**, we are re-acquainted with the 144,000 Jewish evangelist from **Chapter 7**. They are assembled with Christ. Their mission is completed, and they are being honored by the Lord, as they give honor to Him. These last-day preachers of the gospel have endured the most unimaginable hardships in order to rescue as many as possible from the coming wrath and judgment of God. They are assembled with Christ (The Lamb - **vs. 1**) on Mount Zion. Many *Bible* scholars have speculated as to whether this is the literal Mount Zion in Jerusalem or the “Heavenly Zion” mentioned in **Hebrews 12:22**. If it is the literal Zion, then the 144,000 have lived through the tribulation period and are gathered when Christ returns to stand on Mt. Zion as foretold in **Psalms 2:6-9**.

Many *Bible* scholars believe that when the 144,000 were sealed by God in **Chapter 7**, it was not only to save them and call them to preach, but to keep them from death during the reign of the Anti-Christ. There are many people who will endure the tribulation period and be alive when Jesus comes to reign on earth (**Isaiah 65:20-23**; **Matt. 25:31-36**), and it could very well be that these powerful men of God are among them.

Others, however, believe since they are singing before the throne and the elders, that they are gathered to Christ in heaven, which would mean that once their appointed task has been completed, they too will be martyred by the antichrist. Either way, the Lord Jesus Christ will see to it that they receive their great reward. Let us look once again at these sealed evangelists of the Lamb, sealed for purchase, protection, purpose, praise, purity, and priesthood.

Sealed for Purchase, Protection, and Purpose

When the Lord sealed the 144,000, He purchased them from among men (**vs. 4**) as first fruits to God and the Lamb. These redeemed Jews are bought with the same price as every other child of God throughout the history of the world. The precious blood of Jesus. The *Bible* says in **Hebrews 9:22**, **“without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.”** *Old Testament* saints were saved by grace, through faith, because Jesus would one day come to die for them. *New Testament* saints are saved by grace, through faith, because Jesus *came* to die for us. We must never forget that the blood of Jesus is the only hope for redeeming fallen man. Self-help groups, therapy, great preaching, religion, the power of positive thinking, or any other well intentioned “home remedy” invented by man will not cure his sinful nature. Thank God that the blood of Jesus will never lose its power.

When God sealed the 144,000 for purchase, he also sealed them for protection. God supernaturally kept them alive until their task was completed. They will be able to reach those whom God has purposed them to reach in spite of tremendous persecution by the Anti-Christ. It has been said that **“the man of God is immortal until he has accomplished what God has appointed him to do.”** I believe this to be true with all my heart. The Christian will die *only* when his work is done. **Acts 13:36** bears this truth out by saying:

“For when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep.”

Whether the 144,000 are alive when Christ returns or whether they are martyred by Anti-Christ, one thing is certain; they will be sealed and protected until they accomplished God's purpose for their lives. The purpose they were given was to evangelize the world, and we know that they were successful by the multitude who will be saved (**Revelation 7:9-17**).

How happy is the Christian who realizes early on that when Jesus purchased us with His own blood, He sealed us in the Holy Spirit, so we then can go out and serve our purpose under the full protection of Almighty God. This knowledge should embolden all of us to fight the good fight, as it were. We have all been sealed for purchase, protection and purpose. So let us serve with boldness. Listen to the words of The Apostle Paul as he encourages Timothy to serve boldly in the faith.

For The Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. So do not be ashamed of the testimony of our LORD or of me His prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God."

2 Timothy 1:7-8

Sealed for Praise

The 144,000 are given their own special song of worship that no one else can sing (**vs. 3**). Theirs is such a unique calling, for such a difficult time, that no one else can fully identify with all that they have endured. Their song comes from a totally different perspective. I believe that this song of praise will be so spectacular that all of God's creation will fall silent in awe as the 144,000 member choir stands and sings their song to the Lamb. They were willing to risk everything for Him. It is hard to imagine just how powerful this love song will be. I am grateful that as a child of God, I will be able to hear it first hand. It will truly be the kind of worship that our Lord deserves.

Those of us who have been redeemed should follow the example of the 144,000 every time we are given a chance to praise our Lord. Each of us has a song to give. We all came from different places to come together on this road to Glory. All of us have been changed. All of us should be grateful. The world cannot sing our song, but the world would be changed, if we would sing so they could hear. Never underestimate the power of praise. Hear the words of King David as he describes his salvation song, and its power to reach those who are lost.

He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.

Many will see and fear the Lord, and put their trust in Him.

Psalms 40:3

So sing Christian! Your praise might just save somebody's life!

Sealed for Purity

These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins (for they kept themselves pure) (vs. 4). Many interpret this verse to mean that these men are all unmarried virgins, who are completely dedicated to the Lord. While this could be true that they are such, much like the apostle Paul, who was not married (**1 Corinthians 7:8-9**), it could also be a reference to holiness and spiritual purity. These men are unwilling to take any part in the worship of the Anti-Christ or in the immorality that is running rampant in the world. Sex within the bounds of marriage is not defilement. For marriage itself was instituted by a holy God, and therefore, normal marital relations cannot be considered as evil (**Hebrews 13:4**).

Many passages in scripture liken the worship of false gods to adultery (**Exodus 34:15-16; Judges 2:17**). And the word used for "virgin" in the Greek can also mean "a man who abstains from all sexual impurity". But it would also stand to reason that these men are unmarried. For during the tribulation period, settling down and starting a family would seem rather out of place. And since the 144,000 are set apart by God to evangelize during this horrific period in time, it makes sense that this mission would be the sole focus of their lives. Having a family would only hinder them from their true

calling. Either way, the text is stating unequivocally that these men are wholly dedicated to the Lamb of God. They are undefiled and holy, having been sealed and set apart to be used for His purpose. This is why they “follow the Lamb wherever He goes” (**vs. 4**). We have all been called to give in such purity and devotion.

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see The LORD. **Hebrews 12:14**

Sealed for Priesthood

When these men are first sealed in **Revelation 7**, they are called “servants of our God” (**7:3**). The Greek word used here for servant is “*doulos*”. This word means bond-slave. These men are “marked” as slaves (*doulos*) of our God. In *Old Testament* times, if someone owed a debt that they could not pay, they could be forced into slavery to repay what was owed. After 6 years, it was mandatory that they be released and any remaining debt would be forgiven. If the slave wanted to remain a slave to his master, he could voluntarily offer himself to the master that he loved as a “slave for life” (**Exodus 21:1-5**). Upon making this decision, the slave would be taken to the doorpost of the house and his/her ear would be pierced, thus marking that person as the property of his master. This is what Paul is referring to in **Galatians 6:17** when he boldly proclaims:

From now on, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

The 144,000 are marked as slaves to God, but later in **Chapter 7** all who come out of the great tribulation serve God day and night in His temple (**7:15**). The word used here for “serve” does not refer to slave labor. The word is *latreuo* in the Greek, and it means “*to serve as a priest*”. There is a spiritual truth here that we should not miss. God’s priests are always promoted from the slave ranks. In other words, you can never become a priest of God without first becoming a slave of God. God only uses those people who are willing to surrender their lives completely to Him. He doesn’t want rock stars. He wants priests who love Him so much that they are willing to surrender themselves as bond-slaves to do His will. This is what Jesus meant when He said,

“...Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me will find it.” **Matthew 16:24b-25**

John tells us that the 144,000 will be set apart as “first-fruits” to God (**vs.4**). This simply means that they are the first portion of the great harvest of Believers that will come out of the Great Tribulation. The preaching of these “sealed” men of God will cause many to come to faith. Their truthful presentation of the gospel during those perilous days will have an eternal impact on the lives of many. They will speak absolute truth to a world enslaved by deception (**vs.5**). This is the reality of being a “sold out” witness for Jesus Christ. Many will be saved as a result of the Believer’s faithful testimony. Jesus expects His followers to be willing to forsake everything to follow Him.

You see, everyone is enslaved to something. The question is: **Whose slave are you?**

Truth!!!