

The Lamb and The Redeemed

Revelation 14:1-5

The End Times

In my last post, we examined a **Summary of Revelation Chapters 11-13** and an **Introduction to Revelation Chapters 14-16**. In this post, we move on the **Revelation 14:1-5** to consider **The Lamb and The Redeemed**.

"Then I looked, and there was the Lamb standing on Mount Tziyon; and with him were 144,000 who had His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads. ² I heard a sound from heaven like the sound of rushing waters and like the sound of pealing thunder; the sound I heard was also like that of harpists playing on their harps. ³ They were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living beings and the elders, and no one could learn the song except the 144,000 who have been ransomed from the world. ⁴ These are the ones who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins; they follow the Lamb wherever He goes; they have been ransomed from among humanity as firstfruits for God and the Lamb; ⁵ on their lips no lie was found — they are without defect." ~ Revelation 14:1-5 (CJB)

Yochanan describes seven visions in this chapter. These visions seem to be given here to provide us with **"the big picture,"** and the following chapters give us more of the details. As the details unfold in later chapters, we see that the visions presented here do not necessarily appear in chronological order.

The 144,000

Then I looked, and there was the Lamb standing on Mount Tziyon; and with him were 144,000 who had His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads. The **Lamb** and His faithful followers are set over against **the beast** and his followers of the preceding chapter.

- The **Lamb's** followers have His name on their foreheads (v. 1; 7:3-4), even as **the beast's** followers are marked with his name (13:16-17).
- They do not speak lies (v. 5), in contrast to the lying wonders of **the beast** (13:14).
- They have **not defiled themselves with women** (v. 4), in contrast to the prostitution of **the beast** (17:5).
- They were faithful to **Yeshua** in contrast to the adultery of Babylon, which includes the apostate church.

Who are the **144,000**? They are probably the same as the **144,000** of Revelation 7:4. As discussed earlier, most believe that the 144,000 are the elect of Israel (most likely Jews) sealed by God halfway through the seven-year tribulation period. They are the **firstfruits**, in contrast to the **general harvest** (vv. 15-16). They may be referred to as **firstfruits** because they were the first to be saved during the **Tribulation** period.

At the beginning of this chapter, we see the **Lamb** standing on Mount Tziyon. He is with the **144,000** on the earth. **Mount Tziyon** is another name for Jerusalem. There are many passages in the Bible, especially in Psalms, which tell us that Tziyon is God's chosen place on the earth: **"For Adonai has chosen Tziyon, He has wanted it as His home. This is My resting-place forever, I will live here because I so much want to."** ~ Psalm 132:13-14 (CJB) Although this is the only reference to **Tziyon** in Revelation, it seems to confirm several Tanakh passages that suggest that Jerusalem will be the center of **Yeshua's** earthly kingdom when He returns (see Isaiah 2:3-4; Psalm 48:2).

I heard a sound from heaven like the sound of rushing waters and like the sound of pealing thunder; the sound I heard was also like that of harpists playing on their harps. ³ They were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living beings and the elders, and no one could learn the song except the 144,000 who have been ransomed from the world. In the vision

Yochanan is having, this particular scene is taking place in heaven as **144,000 have been ransomed from the world**. The ministry work of the **144,000** has been completed. We cannot be sure, but we can assume that many of them died throughout this seven year period. Maybe the majority of them perished in the last 3 1/2 years. Whatever one may think as to what happened on earth, this scene in heaven is one of great comfort. We see them all, **144,000** strong, not one missing; they are now safe with Yeshua. What they lived through during their days on earth cannot be fully comprehended at this time, but this much is known, they lived during a time when the worst of hell was unleashed in the land. The world's reasoning ability is entirely lost regarding the miracle working **beast**, except those who have come to salvation in Yeshua. Gary Cohen and Salem Kirban relate: ¹

Here we see that these 144,000 who were "redeemed" from the earth are admitted to special heavenly privileges. They alone are here seen able to learn the new song which proceeds from the heavenly harpers. Why are these so privileged, and not others? We are not given the answer. It is God's sovereign will, we know this, and that is enough. This is a heavenly scene for the four beasts, the twenty-four elders, and the throne belong to the celestial chambers and not the earthly (chapters 4-5). This is part of the Heavenly Mount Tziyon and the Heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22). The words, "redeemed from the earth" (v. 3), also fit this being a heavenly picture.

Verses four and five tell why the **144,000** were so honored in heaven and so privileged: **These are the ones who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins; they follow the Lamb wherever He goes; they have been ransomed from among humanity as firstfruits for God and the Lamb; ⁵ on their lips no lie was found — they are without defect.** The **144,000** in this passage stand in sharp contrast to the followers of **the beast**. Falsehood and deceit will abound everywhere, but the **144,000** keep undefiled. They will live in a time of hell's greatest lies. Many Jews will identify themselves with the man of sin and idolatry, but the **144,000** follow **the Lamb** and live according to God's Word.

The use of the term **virgin** in verse four carries a deeper meaning than just keeping them physically pure. As is seen in 2 Corinthians 11:2, a **virgin** can symbolize one who has a sincere and pure devotion to **Yeshua**. The **144,000** are separated from the pollutions and conceptions of the earth. They are **virgins** unto God. They keep themselves separated from spiritual fornication and spiritual adultery.

David Stern explains: ²

These are not male celibates, despite the explicit mention of women. Rather, they are people of both sexes who are faithful to God and his Son, as the rest of vv. 4-5 makes clear. Fornication is a common biblical metaphor for idolatry—for several examples from the Tanakh see Ezekiel 16, 23 and Hosea 1-5.

This is a great message for everyone today. God wants all who belong to Him to live holy lives. The most significant witness and the most awesome power comes from living a righteous life. We need to pray that God will make us a godly people. The harvest is about to come (Revelation 15:1). The **144,000** will be **the firstfruits for God and the Lamb**. The **144,000** will be the earnest of a larger group of saved Jews who will also participate in the millennial kingdom. In the remaining verses of this chapter, there is a series of messages from what appears to be seven different angels. The events that are described do not follow a particular chronological order. As has been the case throughout this interval period (chapters 10-14), we are only given pieces of the puzzle. But, with each piece of information, we see the picture becoming clearer.

¹ A Layman's Commentary on Revelation by Don Jones.

² Jewish New Testament Commentary by David Stern

Special Comparative Note on Chapter 14:1-5 ³

Historicist Approach:

Most **Historicists** view the **144,000** as the same as those presented in Chapter 7. Recall they saw them as symbolic of the entire true Christian church down through the ages. Elliott opines that the *new song* is the blessed doctrine of the Reformation. They also concur with David Stern's assessment of the term *virgins*.

Preterist Approach:

Preterists agree the 144,000 are the same as those presented in Chapter 7. Recall they saw them as the Jewish Believers who escaped the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

Futurist Approach:

Tenney sees this chapter as an illustrative parenthesis. Ryrie opines "*this chapter is something like a table of contents of the remainder of the book.*" **Futurists** agree the **144,000** are the same as those presented in Chapter 7. They are divided over the location of **Mount Tizyon** between its earthly or heavenly location.

Idealist Approach:

Idealists appear to agree with the **Futurists** as the purpose of this Chapter and the locale of **Mount Tizyon**. Most, however, seem to favor the heavenly locale as they were *ransomed from the world*. They also concur with David Stern's assessment of the term *virgins*.

In my next post, we will explore a **Revelation 14:6-7** studying **The Everlasting Gospel**.

³ Material in this post is taken from "*Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated*" by Steve Gregg. Notations in brackets, if any, are my comments.