

Who Are The 144,000?

In vision, John saw a huge throng of 144,000 “of all the tribes of the children of Israel” who are said to be “before the throne of God.” Who are these people? Are they in Heaven? Are they a church on earth? Here, in plain language, is the truth about the 144,000.

by Garner Ted Armstrong [printer-friendly] [pdf format]

From time to time, one or another church organization lays claim to the “144,000” of the book of Revelation, chapter 7. Of course, it is inspiring indeed to believe one has found oneself actually mentioned in the Bible — especially in the context of standing right before the throne of God, having been saved!

But are the 144,000 people John saw in vision the members of a Christian professing organization here on this earth? Are they already in heaven? Just who are they, and how do they fit in the scheme of things in Bible prophecy?

It is indeed strange that people should be puzzled about a scripture so plain as Revelation the 7th chapter! Here is what John said he saw: “And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

“And 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 given to hurt the earth and the sea,

“Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

“And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

“Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

“Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve

thousand.

“Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

“Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand” (Revelation 7:1-8).

There is nothing mysterious about who these people are at all, then, is there? You have just read with your own eyes exactly who they are. They are twelve thousand people from each tribe of Israel except Dan who are depicted as having survived the Great Tribulation; having “washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” and having received salvation.

Where Are The Twelve Tribes?

The confusion comes from the ignorance of the vast majority of professing Christians who know nothing of the identity and location of the tribes, such as Zebulon, Issachar, Naphtali, Reuben, Manassah, and the like.

Of course, any professing Christian church which makes the claim THEY are the “144,000” of prophecy are making an utterly ludicrous claim, for not a one of them has, among their membership, 36,000 Jews! Why 36,000? Because the tribes of Judah, Levi and Simeon were part of the “House of Judah,” with their capital at Jerusalem, when the northern ten tribes split off, forming the “House of Israel.”

Today, few people recognize ANY of the tribes of Israel except that of Levi, which are generally called “Jewish.” Many of them retain the names, albeit in many different forms, of their eponymous ancestor, Levi. Who has not heard of “Levis,” the copper-studded jeans? Names such as “Levi, Levine, Levy, Levinson, Yvel [Levi spelled backward], Levit, Levitt, Levitson, and the like are all Levites. The Hebrew name for priest is “Cohen.” Many forms of this name are found among “Jewish” people today. George M. Cohan, the famous American composer, was Jewish, probably from the tribe of Levi. Names such as Cohane, Kahane, Cohen, Khune, Khuin, and Cantor (Eddie Cantor was a well-known Jewish singer/actor) are also from the tribe of Levi.

Names such as Gold, Golda, Gelt, Goldson, Golden, Silver, Silverman, da Silva

(Portuguese), Perlmutter, Gottlieb (God loves), Liebermann, and the like are also Jewish. But there are hundreds of other names from many countries in Europe, especially Poland and Germany, and from Britain, and also among the Arab countries, which are also Jewish, but which are not easily recognizable because of etymological evolution over the centuries.

During the time of Christ, the northern Ten Tribes of Israel did not live in Palestine. Instead, they were called the “dispersed” (diaspora), or the “scattered” ones. One church, completely misunderstanding Christ’s words concerning the “lost sheep of the House of Israel,” assumed those lost sheep to be in the continental United States.

Christ said, “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10:16). When a Samaritan woman begged Christ for a healing, Christ insisted, “...I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24). This carried a dual connotation. Not only were the Ten Tribes “lost” to history — scattered among many different nations — they were also “lost” spiritually.

Clearly, Jesus Christ said the Jews were the FIRST to be invited to receive Him as their Messiah; their Savior! John wrote, “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

“He came unto his own [the Jews. Jesus was a Jew], and his own received him not.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:10-12).

Christ told His disciples, “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

“As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10:14-16). In this prophecy lies a major clue to understanding the puzzle of the 144,000! It will not be until the time of the Day of the Lord and the Second

Coming of Christ until ALL of the “lost sheep of the House of Israel” will be “found” both physically and spiritually!

Notice Isaiah’s prophecy: “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse [Christ], which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest [His millennial kingdom] shall be glorious.

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time [the first time was from Egypt under Moses] to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands [coastlands] of the sea.

“And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah [two different “houses” or groupings of tribes] from the four corners of the earth.

“The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim” (Isaiah 11:10-13).

This prophecy shows that the House of Israel and the House of Judah will not be reunited until Christ once again stands on this earth! And that reunification is what the seventh chapter of Revelation is all about!

The Ten “Lost” Tribes

Millions of professing, church-going Christians are completely ignorant of the identity of the “House of Israel.” Many who have gone to church all their lives do not have the faintest idea that there are four whole books of the Bible which detail the separate national histories of the House of Israel and the House of Judah.

Following the death of Solomon, Jereboam rent the northern tribes away from Rehoboam, Solomon’s son. Rehoboam had promised the people nothing but brutal autocracy, and the people rebelled, and turned to Jereboam “And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only” (1 Kings 12:20).

Thus it was that all those who came to be called “Jews” remained centered around Jerusalem, and the people who were NEVER called Jews; those of Ephraim, Manasseh, Dan, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Reuben and many more, formed the “Kingdom of Israel,” with a capital at Samaria.

The first place in the Bible where the term “Jew” is ever used is found in 2 Kings 16:6. Notice it, in context: “In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign.

“Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father.

“But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel [who had long before gone into idolatry], yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel.

“And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

“Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him.

“At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians [allies with Israel!] came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day” (2 Kings 16:1-6).

It would ASTONISH millions of “Christians” to learn that “The JEWS WERE AT WAR AGAINST ISRAEL!” They simply could not comprehend it, for they have never understood that the two terms are not the same!

By analogy, all Texans (natural born, legal citizens, of course) are AMERICANS, but NOT all Americans are TEXANS! All Jews are ISRAELITES, but not all Israelites are JEWS!

Jacob is the ancestor of all twelve tribes (thirteen in all, for Joseph had two sons; Ephraim and Manasseh). His name was changed to “Israel,” meaning “One who overcomes; one who prevails with God.”

For the startling truth about the real identity of the United States, Britain, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland and other countries, call or write immediately for your copy of my important book Europe and America In Prophecy. The entire text is also published on our web site at "<http://www.garnertedarmstrong.org/>."

Once you understand that Britain is the "Ephraim" of the "Lost Ten Tribes," you will come to understand why Isaiah's prophecy that Judah (modern-day "Israel" in Palestine; the Jews) and Ephraim will no longer "vex" one another when Christ returns.

Why No Christian Church Can Be The 144,000

While Simeon and Levi had no inheritance in the land, and were scattered among all the other tribes, those who remained in the province of Judaea, under the "House of Judah" with capital in Jerusalem, were always called "Jews." "Shimon Peres," a current political figure in Israel is very likely a Simeonite, for he has that family name.

There is no "Christian" church which can claim to have baptized, or taken into their membership THIRTY-SIX THOUSAND JEWS! And 12,000 from Judah, 12,000 from Levi, and 12,000 from Simeon adds up to 36,000 Jews!

Read again the first eight verses of Revelation 7. Now, notice what follows: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations [which INCLUDES all the nations of Israel and Judah], and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

"And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

"And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

"Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are

arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

“And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:9-14).

When the archangel asked John who they were, John didn't know. He said, “Sir, thou knowest.” The archangel then told John precisely who they were!

So where is the puzzle? Where is the problem? The answer is plainly before us. ALL of these people; the 144,000 from the tribes of Israel, and the vast, countless multitude, are SURVIVORS OF THE TRIBULATION! They were not murdered. They have not been dead, and then resurrected. They are alive because they were “sealed of God”; given God's supernatural protection. Yet, they did not escape all hardship. They had to endure the horrors of the Tribulation.

It is because of their sufferings during the tribulation that their stiff necks and hard hearts have finally been softened; they have finally repented of all their sins, and turned to God with all their hearts!

Because of that fact; that they have “washed their robes” (metaphor for repentance and baptism) and “made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (seemingly a contradiction in terms, but metaphor for spiritual cleanliness) they are therefore “...before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

“For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Revelation 7:15-17).

Now, turn to and read the prophecy of Ezekiel about the “valley of dried bones.”

“The `Dry Bones' and the `Two Sticks'”

Millions of professing church-going Christians know NOTHING about the resurrection of the dead! Their pastors, who are either ignorant, deceived, or both, do not preach the truth about the resurrection. They will studiously avoid

reading and expounding the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians during a funeral service.

Therefore, millions of church-going people believe, NOT in the resurrection of the body at the coming of Christ, but in the “immortality of the soul.” They suppose they will go immediately to heaven in a disembodied “soul,” like a “wraith” of some sort. But that is pure fiction, borrowed from pagan Greek philosophers, and is never taught in scripture.

There are no phrases in the Bible such as “immortal soul,” or “immortality of the soul.” Nor is there a single phrase such as “We will go to heaven when we die.” Instead, Paul wrote, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

“But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming” (1 Corinthians 15:19-23). For a thorough study of the Biblical TRUTH about the resurrection, call or write for my booklet, *When I Die, What Happens Next?*

Now, notice Ezekiel’s vision: “The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,

“And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.

“And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

“Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD [one is reminded here of the old “Negro spiritual” of decades ago; “Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones”].

“Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

“And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

“So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

“And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.

“Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

“So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

“Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

“Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

“And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,

“And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD” (Ezekiel 37:1-14).

Obviously, then, this prophecy concerns the second resurrection of the dead! Why? For the simple reason that this entire passage is describing bones, sinew, skin and FLESH; it is describing the “whole House of Israel” being brought back to life PHYSICALLY.

If you have not yet heard my sermon tapes called "Resurrection I and II," please write or call for them. Briefly, notice that there is the FIRST resurrection of the "dead IN CHRIST" at the moment of the return of Jesus Christ to this earth "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Corinthians 15:23). Paul also wrote, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:50-52). He told the Thessalonians "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [continually, the Bible speaks of death as a profound sleep!], that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [Greek: "precede"] them which are asleep.

"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" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-16).

Now, notice that the vast majority of the dead, who were unconverted, and who were NOT among the "dead in Christ" do not come out of their graves until AFTER the millennial reign of Christ: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished..." (Revelation 20:5). This statement, inserted parenthetically in a discussion of the "first" resurrection, introduces the subject of the "resurrection to JUDGEMENT" which is covered in the latter part of Revelation 20. It is THEN that the "valley of dry bones" prophecy comes to pass; when the "whole House of Israel" is brought back from the dead.

These are the millions of dead from Hitler's concentration camps. They are the dead from Warsaw, from Buchenwald, Maidenak, Belsen, Auschwitz, and dozens

of others. They are the dead of Norway, Finland, Denmark, Britain, France, Belgium, Australia; the dead from the United States during the American revolution, the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Spanish American War, and World Wars I and II! They are the dead from Korea and Vietnam!

This mighty host represents ALL THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL who have died down through all history, not knowing the truth of God; never having been called of God; never having received Christ as Savior! There are MILLIONS and MILLIONS of them — as the prophecy says, “a mighty army.”

Now, notice how the prophecy in Ezekiel also deals with the LIVING survivors of Israel: “The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions:

“And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.

“And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these?

“Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.

“And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes.

“And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen [NOT out of their graves — these are the LIVING survivors], whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:

“And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all:

“Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of

all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.

“And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

“And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

“Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them [note that well: there are no more children to be born during the “Great White Throne Judgement” period (Isaiah 65:20)], and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

“My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

“And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore” (Ezekiel 37:15-28).

When the first resurrection occurs, DAVID will be raised from his grave to become the KING OVER THE TWELVE TRIBES!

Jeremiah’s prophecy concerning David’s resurrection ties in perfectly with the prophecy of the 144,000, for it is speaking of the regathering of the living refugees; the SURVIVORS OF THE TRIBULATION from all over the world. Here, the Great Tribulation prophesied by Christ (Matthew 24:21, 22) is called the “time of Jacob’s trouble.”

“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it [they must go THROUGH it. They are not saved FROM the tribulation, but saved “out of it”],

“For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds [physical Israel is pictured as being IN CAPTIVITY during the Tribulation], and strangers shall no more serve

themselves of him:

“But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

“Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.

“For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished” (Jeremiah 30:7-11).

Zephaniah prophesied also of Israel’s regathering: “Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame.

“At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD” (Zephaniah 3:19, 20). They have been captives; slaves for several years, brutally trodden down by heartless conquerors! These are the living survivors of the Tribulation to come upon all the modern nations of Israel. This does NOT mean solely the nation in Palestine mistakenly called “Israel,” but it means ALL the tribes.

When Are The 144,000 “Sealed”?

The time setting of the sealing, or the divine protection of the 144,000 is obvious from the prophecies of Jesus Christ and His Revelation to John.

Notice the sequence of events Christ said would take place leading to the Great Tribulation: “Take heed that no man deceive you.

“For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ [they say “Jesus is the Christ”]; and shall deceive many.

“And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for

all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

“All these are the beginning of sorrows [troubles; tribulation]” (Matthew 24:4-8).

Now, notice the sequence of events revealed by the famous “four horsemen of the apocalypse” in Revelation 6:1-17 “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

“And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow [Christ is never depicted with a bow; this is a symbol of the false Christ, not of the real Jesus Christ]; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer”

“And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

“And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth [meaning WAR!], and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

“And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

“And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine [obviously referring to terrible FAMINE].

“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

“And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth [“Pestilence,” the result of famine; disease, starvation, and death by attacks from wild or rabid animals].

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls [Greek: Psuche meaning “lives”] of them that were slain [“Souls” are not “slain.” Humans are] for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held [these are martyrs for Christ]:

“And they cried with a loud voice [As Abel’s blood `cried out from the ground,’ Genesis 4:10], saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

“And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

“And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

“And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

“And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

“For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Revelation 6:1-17).

Notice how the sequence of events Christ described are in the same order as the “seals” of Revelation 6:

1st SEAL

Matthew 24:4, 5 – False Christs and false prophets

Revelation 6:2 – A White Horse, symbolizing the AntiChrist masquerading as Christ.

2nd SEAL

Matthew 24:6, 7 - Wars and rumors of wars

Revelation 6:4 - A Red Horse, symbolizing war!

3rd SEAL

Matthew 24:7 - Famines

Revelation 6:5, 6 - A Black Horse; tiny amounts of staples measured, symbolizing famine.

4th SEAL

Matthew 24:7 - Pestilence

Revelation 6:8 - A Pale Horse, signifying disease, starvation and death.

5th SEAL

Matthew 24:9 - Martyrdom of Saints.

Revelation 6:9-11 - Fifth seal: murdered people crying out for justice and vengeance.

The fifth seal reveals God's murdered saints crying out for justice. They are told they must "rest yet a little season" until their fellowservants should be killed as they were! This is the religious persecution phase of the Great Tribulation. The book of Revelation is divided up into seven SEALS, of which the seventh is comprised of seven "Trumpet Plagues," the last three of which are called the "three woes," the last one of which is divided up into the "seven last plagues."

THREE groups of sevens. The final group of seven comprises the "Day of the Lord," called "God's WRATH" which is to come on this earth just prior to the second coming of Christ!

Notice that there are saints; God's converted people who are members of His true church STILL ON THIS EARTH at the time of the opening of the fifth seal! But the opening of the FIRST SEAL is the beginning of the Great Tribulation!

Will True Christians Be Martyred Again?

Jesus Christ said that BEFORE the worst part of the Tribulation, there would be an end-time martyrdom of saints! After detailing all the "wars and commotions," the famines, pestilences and earthquakes, Christ said, "But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the

synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.

“And it shall turn to you for a testimony [they will be given an opportunity to TESTIFY about WHY they believe what they do; about the WORK they have been doing].

“Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:

“For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

“And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

“But there shall not an hair of your head perish” (Luke 21:12-18). Obviously, SOME of Christ's true servants WILL BE KILLED BEFORE THE WORST OF THE TRIBULATION!

Christ Himself said so!

Now, think! What does this do to the concept of “spiritual escapism”? Sadly, there are many who believe in the false doctrine of the “rapture,” the concept based upon the “immortality of the soul” that Christians will be “snatched up” from the earth BEFORE the Tribulation, and taken to heaven.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Notice the many proofs: “I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;

“Until the Ancient of days came [this condition; the martyrdom of SAINTS; God's true servants, is to prevail right up UNTIL the second coming of Christ!], and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom” (Daniel 7:21, 22).

Notice again, “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb [he masquerades as Christ], and he spake as a dragon [but he speaks as Satan!].

“And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him [he is able to use

the power of the STATE; the MILITARY power of the Beast!), and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed [STATE worship; just as the Nazi's adored and worshiped Adolf Hitler during and before World War II!].

“And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

“And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

“And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (Revelation 13:11-15). There it is again! This is the MARTYRDOM OF SAINTS, which is to occur as a PART of the GREAT TRIBULATION, which occurs BEFORE the heavenly signs

Remember, it is DURING the “heavenly signs” that the 144,000 are SEALED!

It is the awesome, shocking, frightening SIGNS which STOP the horrible wars and murder; which HALT all human activity before man would utterly obliterate himself from this planet! It is BECAUSE OF THOSE SIGNS which these 144,000, and the great countless multitude see with their own eyes, that they suddenly REALIZE, to the depths of their souls, that GOD IS REAL! He is UP THERE! He is INTERVENING in human affairs!

It is only when they SEE with their own startled eyes this great truth, that they fall to their knees, and cry out to God in heartbroken repentance! They have been IN the Great Tribulation!

They have been taken captive, as SLAVES! They have LOST EVERYTHING of their physical possessions! Just like the millions of captive Jews herded into the slaughter camps, these people have seen mothers and fathers, sons and daughters murdered and raped! They have somehow survived the hideous torments of utter privation and degradation! Many are starving! Many are disease-ridden!

It is only when the great HEAVENLY SIGNS occur that they are sealed of God; given His Divine PROTECTION so that they SURVIVE THE TRIBULATION ALIVE!!

Now, notice the time sequence, and never forget it!

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:29, 30).

WHEN do the heavenly signs appear? IMMEDIATELY AFTER the tribulation! Christ SAID so!

And WHEN are the 144,000 given God’s spirit, and supernaturally protected? WHEN THE HEAVENLY SIGNS APPEAR!

Now, notice further: “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come” (Joel 2:31). Any seventh grader can understand these simple words! BEFORE and AFTER!!

It is AFTER the Tribulation, but BEFORE the Day of the Lord that the great heavenly signs appear! And it is the heavenly signs themselves which SHOCK into repentance the 144,000, and which cause the warring nations to HALT their insane wars before all mankind would disappear in a nuclear, chemical and biological holocaust!

Now, WHO ARE the 144,000? They are 12,000 living, human beings from each of the twelve tribes of Israel except Dan! They will have been subject to the horrors of WORLD WAR III; will have seen their nations DEFEATED in a horrible war! They will have become refugees, captives, slaves! They will have suffered terrible hunger, sickness, privation, and almost unendurable hardship! They will have seen loved ones and relatives KILLED!

But they will have HEARD A WITNESS! For years and years, they heard; they read, they viewed on television the TRUTH OF GOD! But they ignored it. They did not repent! They just weren’t interested. Now, suddenly, the very things they had

heard so many times are HAPPENING, right before their startled eyes! They are a part of the ultimate FRUIT of God's work of witness and warning; the "Work of the WATCHMAN" which will not be born UNTIL THE HEAVENLY SIGNS!

Notice, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

"And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

"And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

"And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Revelation 14:1-5).

Notice they are called the "FIRSTFRUITS" unto God! Thus, they are in the same category of those who are to be changed instantaneously at the second coming of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:50-52)!

The metaphor of not being "defiled with women" and being "virgins" is speaking SPIRITUALLY. It certainly does not imply a host of 13 or 15-year-old girls! Notice it goes on to say "these were redeemed from among men" Because they have RESISTED the great false whore of Revelation 17; because they have not committed spiritual fornication with the great harlot churches of this world, they are called spiritual virgins!

This beautiful prophecy shows the 144,000 standing on that translucent "sea of glass" before the very throne of God, having been BORN OF GOD; CHANGED from human to spirit! They are SAVED! They are redeemed from the earth! They have "come OUT OF" the Great Tribulation and been instantaneously changed at the time of the second coming of Christ!

God gives them His supernatural protection from the impending trumpet plagues

and the seven last plagues which are to fall upon the sinning, warring nations of this earth!

Now you know the TRUTH about the 144,000!

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