

The Hundred and Forty Four Thousand

This subject has been a point of discussion in various circle's for some time. There has been many different conclusions. There is one guideline we must follow in all interpretations of scripture. We must allow the scriptures to explain themselves. This is what we will endeavor to do as we search for the answers to this subject.

1. **The 144,000 first mentioned.** Revelation 7:4

Beginning with the first verse of this chapter, we get the setting for the answer that John (the writer of Revelation) was referring to. Wars, in prophecy refers to war and strife Daniel 7:2, Jeremiah 25:32. So to fulfill these scriptures, war and strife were withheld during this time.

History reveals to us, at the time of Christ and shortly following, even though Israel was under bondage to the Roman Empire, Israel enjoyed a goodly amount of freedom. War and strife was nonexistent in this area.

Secondly, notice in verse four, the 144,000 were to come from the twelve tribes of Israel. In other words the 144,000 were to be from the Jewish race. No way, could the Gentile be a part of the 144,000.

This is not a matter of interpretation, but fact, for this is what the scripture says. So we have to begin our investigation before the Gentiles came into the picture as far as the gospel is concerned.

2. **The reaping of the harvest of the land.** Leviticus 19:9-10

In this reference, a certain race was to harvest the first fruits. God was talking to Israel. The Israelites were given the privilege of harvesting the firstfruits of the harvest. They were instructed not to harvest the corners, nor that which was left in the field. That was left for the "*poor and stranger.*" The poor and stranger is the Gentile. Ephesians 2:12

The harvest here is from the seed that was sown in the ground. Just as the natural harvest is a type of the spiritual harvest, the seed that was sown is a type of the word. (See Luke 8:4-8, 11)

3. **Israel was to be first.** Matthew 10:5-6

Jesus gave a command, "*Go not to the Gentile.*" There was a reason for this, for it was foretold by God that Israel was to be first. Again see Leviticus 19:9-10. The word has to be fulfilled. This was the plan of God.

4. **Israel was first.** Luke 24:47

The gospel was going to be for the world, but the apostles were to begin at Jerusalem. This was God's plan.

5. Paul speaks of the order that was given. Romans 1:16

Israel was to receive the gospel first, then the Gentile.

6. Paul speaks of the prophecy. Acts 13:46

Paul says it was “necessary” the gospel first be preached to Israel: Why? Because it was foreordained in the scriptures that Israel would be the first to receive the gospel.

7. Confirmation of his covenant. Daniel 9:27

“And he (the Messiah) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease...”

The week here is a prophetical week, one day for a year or seven years. Jesus preached for three and half years, died (caused the sacrificial system to come to an end) then his apostles preached for another three and half years. Paul knew the time was up and that is why he turned to the Gentiles.

8. Jesus was concerned that the prophecy be fulfilled. Mark 7:27

Jesus wanted the children, the natural children (Israel) to be fed first. The Gentiles are not the natural children We have been grafted (adopted) onto the natural family (See Romans 11:7-11.

9. James understands the order of the gospel. James 1:1, 18

Notice James is writing to the twelve tribes and he uses the pronoun “us & we” in verse 18 and he says “...we should be a kind of fristfruits of his creatures.”

The firstfruits were to show what kind of harvest God wanted to receive. Those who where so bold and strong in the faith, who paved the way, showing what kind of followers we are to be. James knew they were fulfilling the prophecy of the “*frist fruits*” of the gospel.

10. After the hundred and forty-four thousand. Revelation 7:9

After the 144,000 were sealed (from Israel), John saw a great multitude out of all nations being harvested from the gospel. These were the Gentiles. Israel (as a nation) rejected the Messiah, so the gospel then went to the Gentiles, just as it was prophesied.

THE SEAL

11. The hundred and forty-four thousand were sealed. Revelation 7:4

The number was sealed. If they were sealed, then we too need to receive the same seal,

for they were an example for those who would follow.

WHAT WAS THE SEAL?

12. **Was it the Sabbath?** Exodus 31:16-17

The Sabbath was to be a sign, but a sign is not a seal.

13. **Was it the Holy Spirit.?** Ephesians 1:13

There is no doubt, that we are to be sealed by the holy spirit. This is true and important. But the holy spirit does not seem to fit the scripture which we are to be sealed with.

Back to Revelation 7 verses 2 and 3.

From this, the scripture says an angel brought the seal. Now Angels do not bring the holy spirit. Then in verse 3, it says the 144,000 were sealed in their foreheads. So let us go on to the next reference and see what the seal in their foreheads was.

Refer to Revelation 14:1

This says the 144,000 had the Fathers name written in their foreheads. Is this referring to some proper name? One of the meanings of the Greek word that the word “*name*” is taken from, is “character.” In other words they were sealed in their foreheads with God’s character or they understood and practiced the character of God in their lives. Lets see what the name of God meant to Israel in olden time.

16. **Turn to Exodus 34:5-7.**

Notice how it describes the character of God. He is longsuffering, abundant in mercy and truth, merciful, etc. This is the kind of God we serve. If we have been sealed by the name of God in our foreheads, we too, will show the same kind of godly character.

17. **One last thought in Revelation 14:4.**

In the first verse, it is referring to the 144,000. Then in verse 4, it says, “*These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins...*”

Does this mean they were not married? No, nothing like that. Marriage was ordained and blessed by God in the very beginning. So marriage is honorable in his sight.

A woman in prophecy refers to a church. Since this is talking about being defiled, means the 144,000 had not been defiled with false religions or false doctrines, but had been faithful followers of God. “*...These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth...*” verse 4.

SUMMARY

The 144,000 were the first fruits of the Gospel, from the day of Pentecost until about three and half years later. On the day of Pentecost, only the Jews were gathered there and 3,000 were saved that very day, 5,000 another time, then again a great multitude.

But sorry to say, as a nation they rejected Christ, were broken off, then the Gentile took up the work and took it to the rest of the world. We have been entrusted with a sacred trust. I hope we will never fail the Lord.