

## [NOTES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION: Who are the 144,000 in the book of Revelation?](#)

March, 26, 2009

Who are the 144,000 believers mentioned in the book of Revelation in [Chapter 7](#) and [chapter 14](#)? The subject of the identity of the 144,000 is a complex one but by comparing scripture to scripture we can identify them quite accurately. Consider the following scriptures:

[Revelation 14:1](#) 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. *Mount Sion is a reference to a place on Earth meaning that the 144000 are here on Earth in [chapter 14](#) of the book of Revelation. However it is important to understand that they have descended to Earth after being redeemed from the Earth which happened back in chapter 7.* [Rev. 7:4](#) '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.

The first fact that emerges from scripture is that the 144,000 are all members of the twelve tribes of Israel. In modern times it is difficult if not impossible to determine who exactly is an Israelite much less a member of a particular tribe of Israel, so I do not believe that it is possible for any man to determine the exact identity or present day location of the 144,000. As far as I know all people of modern day Israel identify themselves as Jews which is erroneous unless they belong to the tribe of Judah or Benjamin. Biblically speaking only member of these two tribes were Jews whereas the members of the other ten tribes were identified as Israelites. Biblically speaking all twelve tribes are Israelites but all twelve tribes are not Jews. Though it is abundantly clear that the 144,000 are physical descendants of the patriarch Israel, who they are or where exactly they are on Earth only God knows for sure. So some time after being sealed here on Earth, the 144,000 are found in Heaven as indicated by the following verses that place them before the Throne, and before the four beasts, and before the elders (in Heaven).

[Rev. 14:2](#) 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: 3 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**. 4 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. 5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault **before the throne of God**. References such as **BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD** and **REDEEMED FROM AMONG MEN** clearly indicate that the 144,000 are now in

Heaven. The question is how did they get up to Heaven? Did they go there because they were martyred here on Earth, and their souls alone are in Heaven or were they taken up while they are still in their bodies, similar to the experience that the Apostle Paul describes in 2 Corinthians, chapter 12? Or is there a third possibility that we need to consider that they have been both martyred and are yet in their bodies? In order to understand this we need to understand what it means when the Bible states that they were '**Redeemed**' from the Earth.

Redemption in the Bible is a process that begins with an individual coming to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ which is the act that makes it possible for that individual to obtain the citizenship of Heaven. Citizenship of Heaven means having eternal or everlasting life. We know that everlasting life in this present body that we inhabit is not possible. This body is corrupt and will cease to function one day. In order to understand the full meaning of redemption it is important to understand what happens when a believer dies. It is also important to understand what constitutes a person, biblically speaking. The bible defines a person or man (including both genders) as a soul that inhabits a body. The soul itself has a spirit that gives it a personality and that which makes that person an individual. Individual means someone or something that cannot be divided and therefore the literal meaning of individual is someone that is indivisible or unique. Like no two snowflakes are ever identical, neither are no two men or women ever identical in soul, though they may be in body. This is why the homogenization of society, particularly youth, through 'education' (indoctrination in reality), and 'television' is such an anathema to God. So what does all this have to do with the identity of the 144,000?

Since the 144,000 are redeemed from among men, and since they are identified as 'firstfruits' it is impossible to determine their identity without understanding what these terms mean. When a believer dies his soul goes to Heaven and his body returns to dust. In [Rev. 6:9](#) we read: 'And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar **the souls of them** that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.' This is a perfect picture of departed believers whose souls are in Heaven yet whose redemption has not yet been completed unlike that of the 144,000. When does a believer's redemption become complete? The answer is found in Romans 8:23 'And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. In the preceding scripture the apostle Paul tells us as he does in I Corinthians, chapter 15 that our redemption will be completed when our souls are given a new incorruptible body. This is that moment when the eternal life promised by God becomes a reality.

For majority of the believers the completion of their redemption will occur just prior to the return of Jesus Christ to Earth. It is an event that will occur between Heaven and Earth which is symbolic of the union of flesh (Earth – Adam) and Spirit (Heaven – God). This synthesis was first completed in the God-man Jesus Christ, who is God in the flesh, the first begotten. Since He is the first begotten there has to be a second begotten and a third begotten and so on and so forth. All the begotten of God are sons who are Spirit-flesh not just Spirit and not just flesh. The very purpose of all creation is for the invisible, immaterial God to become visible and material, Spirit dwelling in a body. This

purpose was accomplished two thousand years ago when Jesus arose from the dead and became the first immortal Man. In the near future all believers, living or dead will also become immortal when their redemption is completed at the very moment that they are given their imperishable, immortal bodies. However, there is a group of people whose redemption will be completed prior to the return of Jesus Christ to Earth, and that group is the 144,000. As an aside Hollywood that borrows heavily from the Bible without acknowledging its veracity puts our movies with titles like The Return of The Jedi, or the Return of The King that give us pseudo messiahs in whom they suggest we put our faith, either mystical spirit beings like those of Star Wars, or super human men like those of Lord of the Rings. Well I must tell you that the real King of kings, and the real Lord of lords will soon indeed be returning and you better get redeemed by putting your faith in him before he returns or there will no completion of your redemption upon His return, only a fearful looking for of judgment.

*The 144,000 follow the lamb both on Earth and in Heaven, they have been redeemed from among men and they are before the throne of God.* So this is my conclusion: The 144,000 are physical Israelites (not only Jews), they are the first of all believers to be redeemed, in other words they are the first from amongst all believers to be made perfect, to be given their new bodies which makes it possible for them to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, which is why they are called **THE FIRSTFRUITS** unto God and to the Lamb. I believe the 144,000 are the firstfruits because of God's promise to Abraham, and that they precede all other believers to perfection of immortality as God's way of honoring Abraham by honoring his physical lineage through Israel not just the 'spiritual Israel' believers that followed later. I believe [in Rev. 7](#) these believers were chosen from amongst all men on Earth and soon thereafter they are martyred or they are taken up to Heaven like Elijah, most likely they are martyred. Rev. 7 seems to indicate that right after the SEALING of the 144,000 a large number of believers are martyred, the 144,000 among them which explains the references to them being before the throne of God yet they are not restricted to staying in Heaven because they can also descend to Mount Zion with the Lamb, Jesus Christ as Rev. 14:1 indicates. **Firstfruits** in the Bible were a small representation of a full harvest; so the 144,000 are the first of the full promised harvest of believers. This is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:4 'And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall **come forth out of thine own bowels** shall be thine heir. As promised to Abraham the very first group of believers to inherit the promised Kingdom is the group that came out of Abraham's own bowels which is why it is significant that they are identified as the children of Israel, Abraham's grandson out of who came forth the original twelve tribes. Like the original twelve tribes inherited the promised physical land of Israel; it is also fitting that the twelve tribes first inherit the spiritual land of Israel, the promised Kingdom of Heaven.

Beyond this understanding of the identity of the 144,000 I have heard and read many fanciful explanations none of which make any scriptural sense. One of the common explanations used is that since the 144,000 are physical descendants of Israel, it proves that the book of Revelation is meant only for the nation of Israel since the so-called gentile church will have been raptured out of here before the events described in the

book occur. Wrong! There will be more non – physical Israelites (or gentiles) who will be believers in the days of the apocalypse than there will be Israelite or Jewish believers. Though the 144,000 are indeed from the bloodlines of the twelve tribes it no way proves that God deals only with physical Israelites in the book of Revelation as many 'fundamentalists' erroneously teach. The book of Revelation itself was written to seven gentile churches not to the Jewish church in Jerusalem. So those who attempt to use the Israelite identity of the 144,000 as proof for the rapture are misleading their followers and I hope readers of this article will study for themselves and come to the same conclusions that I have and prepare themselves to endure to the end rather than look for a fanciful escape from those things that must shortly come to pass. Amen.