



## LESSON #22 - THE 144,000

### The Textual Framework

A series on the three angels' message would not be complete without a study on the **144,000**. This **enigmatic group** is mentioned in **three strategic places** in the book of Revelation.

### Sealing for Protection

- **Revelation 6:14-17:** The great day of **God's wrath** ends with a question: **Who** shall be able to stand?
- **Revelation 7:1-8:** Comes before in time to **Revelation 6:14-17:** The **sealing** of the 144,000 so that they can stand

### Their sterling character

- **Revelation 13:11-18:** The **final crisis** over the **beast**, his **image** and his **mark**
- **Revelation 14:1-5** (is the **climax** of **Revelation 13:11-18**): Those who received the **seal of God** in contrast with those who **received the mark** of the beast

### Received the three angels' message

- **Revelation 14:6-12:** **Three angels' message** warns about the beast, his image and his mark
- World separated into **two groups** (**Revelation 14:14-17**)
- **Revelation 14:18-20:** The great day of God's wrath
- **Revelation 15:2-4:** The 144,000 **victorious** over the **beast, his image and his mark**. We know that they also accepted the **first angel's message** because we are told that when they sing the song they **fear the Lord, give glory to His name and worship Him**. These are the **three imperatives** in the first angel's message. So they accepted all three messages.
- **Revelation 15:2-3:** *"And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.<sup>3</sup> They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and*

*marvelous are Your works Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways O King of the saints!"*

In all three passages the sense is clear: The 144,000 **lived during the period of dominion of the beast and his image and they refused his mark**. They were alive during the **final outpouring** of the wrath of God and were able to stand.

### **Sequence of events**

#### **Preaching the gospel:**

**Revelation 14:6, 7: Preaching** the three angels' messages separates the world into **two groups**

#### **Holding the winds:**

**Revelation 7:1-3:** Angels are **holding the winds while** the three angels' message is being preached. The **tribulation** comes when the **winds are released**

#### **Sanctuary open while the winds are being held:**

Jesus is now interceding for those who **repent, confess** their sins and **trust in Jesus**. **We can enter** the sanctuary by **faith** and claim the merits of Christ's sacrifice now but the day is coming when the **sanctuary will close**.

**When the three angels finish their work, the world will be divided into two groups**

**Revelation 14:14-20:** The **harvest** and the **grapes**, those who have the **seal of God** and the **mark of the beast**

#### **The sanctuary service closes: The close of human probation**

**Revelation 22:11, 12:** *"He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."* <sup>12</sup> *"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work."*

All year the **sins entered** the sanctuary but once a year at the **end of the year** the Sanctuary closed down and the sins were **cleansed from the sanctuary**—similar to the closing of the door in **Noah's day**

**Revelation 15:5-8:** *"After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. <sup>6</sup> And **out of the temple came** the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. <sup>7</sup> Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of*

God who lives forever and ever.<sup>8</sup> The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and **no one was able to enter the temple** till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.”

### **The tribulation and the seven last plagues**

**Revelation 16:1-21:** Seven devastating plagues fall upon those who have the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. The earth will **return to the condition** it was in before creation week

- **Sores** all over the body
- **Tongues dissolve** in the mouths of the enemies of the people of God
- **Sea** turned into blood
- **Fountains of waters** turned into blood
- Sun scorches all the vegetation
- **Darkness** covers the entire earth
- Human beings begin to **slay** one another
- A **global earthquake** that splits open the planet
- **Islands and mountain** ranges disappear
- Hail up to **50 pounds** in weight falls upon the earth

### **The greatest time of trouble in the history of the world**

**Matthew 24:21-22:** “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, **nor ever shall be.** <sup>22</sup> And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.”

**Daniel 12:1:** “At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble **such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time.** And at that time **your people shall be delivered** [from those who want to destroy them in chapter 11], everyone who is found written in the book [of life].”

### **The culmination of this terrible period is the second coming**

**Revelation 6:14-17:** “Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.<sup>15</sup> And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,<sup>16</sup> and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!<sup>17</sup> For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

## Who is able to stand when Jesus comes?

The critical question: The second coming of Jesus is graphically portrayed and then the question is asked: **Who shall be able to stand** in the devastating outpouring of the wrath of God without mixture of mercy?

The answer of who shall be able to stand is given in the very next chapter (**Revelation 7:1-3**). There will be a group that has been sealed and will be protected in the midst of the cataclysm that will afflict the earth—the 144,000.

## By stamping His seal upon them, God is saying:

*“These are **mine** and I will **protect them** from the devastating events of the tribulation.”*

**Ezekiel 9** shows that it is a **protective seal** that identifies who belong to the Lord and deserve **His protection** from the destruction of Jerusalem. They do **not practice the abominations** of the **harlot or her daughters** of which the worst is **sun worship**.

**Revelation 7:1-3:** *“After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. <sup>2</sup> Then 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 granted to harm the earth and the sea, <sup>3</sup> saying: “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”*

## Are they literal Jews?

The message of the sealing goes to the whole world and the three evil spirits go to the whole world so the sealing must involve people from every nation on earth so they cannot be literal Israelites.

We have shown in our previous lecture that Israel is composed of those who have truly received Jesus as Savior and Lord.

**Dave Hunt** believes they are literal Israelites but that Babylon is symbolic of Rome. In other words, Babylon represents a worldwide spiritual system of apostasy against God but Israel is literal Israel

*“Some suggest that the Vatican will move to Babylon in Iraq when it is rebuilt. But why should it? The Vatican has been fulfilling John’s vision from its location in Rome for the past 15 centuries. Moreover, we have shown the connection to ancient Babylon which the Vatican has maintained down through history in the paganized Christianity it has promulgated. As for ancient Babylon itself, it wasn’t even in existence during the past 2300 years ‘to reign over the*

*kings of the earth.' Babylon lay in ruins while pagan Rome and later **Catholic Rome, the new Babylon**, was indeed reigning over kings."*

*"God is foretelling His final judgment upon a great evil which began at the Tower of Babel and which has only grown as politics, religion, and science have become more sophisticated--until finally the **whole world** is united in the pursuit of Satan's ancient lie. This is the Babylon, revived and headquartered in **Rome**, that will be destroyed, never to be inhabited again."*

### **God's People Marked for Death**

But God's people will not need to be protected from the calamities in nature that will afflict the earth. A death decree will be given against all who **do not worship** the beast and his **image** and receive his mark

**Revelation 13:15:** *"He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed."*

God's faithful people will be under the sentence of death

**Daniel 3** is in the background where Babylon attempted to slay God's faithful remnant which kept the commandments of God and refused to practice false worship to the sun god whose number is 666.

The furnace heated seven times hotter is the time of trouble. These young men went through the tribulation but they were not touched by the fire. Their faith was tested but they came forth as pure gold. These three young men foreshadow the 144,000.

Describe how terrible will be the period of the seven last plagues and what it will do to the earth. The wicked will no longer be restrained and Satan will be given free rein to come forth from the abyss to do his work.

The most fertile imagination cannot even begin to comprehend what it will be like for those who worshiped the beast and his image and received the mark on their forehead.

If you receive the **mark of the beast** you will be protected from the wrath of the beast but if you receive the **seal of God** you will be protected from the wrath of God. Which wrath would you rather be protected from?

**Culmination of the tribulation period**—Jesus will come to rescue His people from annihilation

**Revelation 19:11-16:** *"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war."<sup>12</sup> His*

*eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.<sup>13</sup> He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.<sup>14</sup> And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.<sup>15</sup> Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.<sup>16</sup> And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”*

**What are the 144,000 like? Are they just your run of mill Christians?**

**Revelation 14:1-5:** *“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.<sup>2</sup> And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps.<sup>3</sup> They sang as it were a new song before the throne, [the song that is sung by those who have gained the victory over the beast, his image and his mark in **Revelation 15:2-4**] before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.<sup>4</sup> These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being first-fruits to God and to the Lamb.<sup>5</sup> And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.”*

**Malachi 3:2:** *“But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderers' (NIV this word only) soap.”*

**Isaiah 33:14-16:** *“Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?”<sup>15</sup> He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil.<sup>16</sup> He will dwell on high; his place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; bread will be given him, his water will be sure.”*

**Psalms 15:1-5** *“Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?<sup>2</sup> He who walks uprightly and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart;<sup>3</sup> He who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;<sup>4</sup> In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change;<sup>5</sup> He who does not put out his money at usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.”*

**Psalms 24:3-6:** *“Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place?<sup>4</sup> He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.<sup>5</sup> He shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.<sup>6</sup> This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face.”*



## Superficial view and the rapture

Christians have a very **superficial view of Christianity**—they have all the **forms** but do not have **the power**. Paul said that many would have the **form of godliness** but not the power.

The **rapture idea** is setting up the Christian world for an **overwhelming surprise**—they will find themselves in the midst of the tribulation **without the necessary preparation** because they **expected to go to heaven** in the rapture before the tribulation.

They teach that **Revelation 14 has no relevance** now because it applies to **literal Jews** after the church is in heaven. So why should we even **do this series**?

**Matthew 5:8:** *“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”*

**Hebrews 12:14:** *“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.”*

**I John 3:1-3:** *“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.<sup>2</sup> Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.<sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”*

**Revelation 22:11-13:** *“He who is unjust, let him be unjust [**act unjustly**] still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy [**act filthily**] still; he who is righteous [**act righteously**], let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy [**act in a holy manner**] still.”<sup>12</sup> “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work.<sup>13</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”*

**Joel 2:10-11:** *“The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark and the stars diminish their brightness.<sup>11</sup> The Lord gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; for strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; who can endure it?”*

**Joel 2:12-17:** *“Now, therefore,” says the Lord, “Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.”<sup>13</sup> So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm.<sup>14</sup> Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him—a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord your God?<sup>15</sup> Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly;<sup>16</sup> Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and nursing babes; let the bridegroom go out from his chamber and the bride from her dressing room.<sup>17</sup> Let the priests, who minister to the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar; let them say: “Spare Your people, O Lord,*

*and do not give Your heritage to reproach that the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples: 'Where is their God?'*

**Ephesians 5:25-27:** *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,<sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,<sup>27</sup> that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”*

#### **The Transfiguration (a mini kingdom)**

**Matthew 16:27, 28:** *“For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.<sup>28</sup> Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here [Peter, James and John] who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”*

**Matthew 17:1-3:** *“Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother and led them up on a high mountain by themselves;<sup>2</sup> and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.<sup>3</sup> And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them talking with Him.”*