

House of Wisdom

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The 144,000

Various opinions exist as to whom is the group called the 144,000. The fact that there are several opinions indicates that the group is not well understood, even though some have settled on a certain belief. For this writer, the best example of how to uncover the hidden things (mysteries in KJ) of God is the parable of the sower in Mark 4 (parallels in Mt 13 & Lk 8). After giving the parable, the disciples asked Jesus: **Lk 8:9-10: 9. ...saying, What might this parable be? 10. And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries [hidden things] of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.** Why are the “hidden things” only given to the disciples? A disciple of Christ is one who listens to his heart. Those who do not listen have hardened their hearts (Mt 13:10-16).

Revelation chapter 7 discusses two groups of people, the first being the “144,000” (Rev 7:4) and the second the “great multitude” (Rev 7:9). Two groups - the first is made up of 12,000 from 12 tribes of Israel, a group that can be numbered; the other is out of *all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues*, which cannot be numbered, the first group is sealed, but there is no mention of the second group being sealed. Chapter 7 is a parenthetical insertion between the sixth (Rev 6:12) and seventh seals (Rev 8:1), indicating their formation in the time of the end. To help know why the 144,000 are special, we will examine their character. So, there is a need to understand the figure of speech - “sealed in the forehead.”

The 144,000: Rev 7:3: ...Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed^(G4972) the servants of our God in their foreheads. The proper meaning of the Greek word *sphragizo*^(G4972) is *to set a seal upon, mark with a seal, to seal*. Some of the ideas derived from this word are *to secure, to hide or keep secret*. To put a seal on something is to *confirm, authenticate, place beyond doubt, complete*, the seal representing an authority of some kind, as in ancient times - a king. *Sphragizo*^(G4972), in the Septuagint, is used for the Hebrew word *chatham*^(H2856), which has approximately the same meaning and use.

In ancient times, a common way to confirm, or authenticate a document, such as an important letter or a law, was by using a ring with a specific image. The document would be rolled up and soft clay used to seal it. While the clay was still soft the image of the king’s ring would be pressed into the clay. **Est 8:8: Write ye also to the Jews, as it pleases you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring; for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.** The word is used figuratively in regard to correcting understanding: **Isa 8:16: Bind⁽⁶⁸⁸⁷⁾ up the testimony, seal⁽²⁸⁵⁶⁾ the law among my disciples.** The New Jerusalem Bible interpreted the figure: *Bind up the testimony, seal the instruction (law) in the heart of my disciples.* The proper meaning of the Hebrew word *tsarar*⁽⁶⁸⁸⁷⁾ is *to impress, to compress*. It is the Spirit of God that impresses Bible understanding on the heart. I could say a gold ring is Christ’s faith, the Father’s seal.

Application to the mind of the Hebrew word *chatham*⁽²⁸⁵⁶⁾ is also shown in **Job 33:16-17: 16. Then he opens the ears of men, and seals⁽²⁸⁵⁶⁾ their instruction, 17. That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.** God gives a dream, and then opens the spiritual ears and “impresses” His instruction upon the minds of those who have ears to hear. To continue to receive God’s instructions and live by them is how one becomes sealed in the forehead. Our initial condition and opportunity is mentioned in **Col 1:21, 23: 21. And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, 22. yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death (reconciled by the cross), to present you holy and without blemish and irreproachable before him: 23. if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard... (ASV)**

Rev 14:1: *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.* The Hebrew concept of name is that of Character. "Written in the forehead" is indicative of having the Father's character in the mind, which are His thoughts and ways. Notice what Paul says as to how and with what we are sealed: **Eph 4:30:** *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.* (cp 2 Cor 1:22)

Did you know that there is a difference in having Christ's Spirit and the Father's Spirit? **Rom 8:9-11:** *9. But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. 11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwells in you.* Here, God is the Father (see verse 3). Each person starts with the Spirit of Christ, and He shows us the Father. Moreover, it is the Spirit of the Father which completes us - i.e. sets the seal of the truth in our hearts, or, impresses us with His image or character, even as He sealed His only begotten Son (Jn 6:27).

Herein lays the greatest difference between the two groups in Revelation 7. The great multitude is not spiritually complete. They are saved, but their completion will be after the return of Jesus the second time. The 144,000 is complete, they are *not defiled with women* (Rev 14:4), which is a reference to the harlots in Revelation 17:5. The great multitude is still carrying some defilement from their religious organizations and a man's understanding of God. The 144,000 *sung as it were a new song before the throne, ... no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand* (Rev 14:3). A song is a figure of their experience (cf Ex 15:1-20) which those outside this group have yet to go through.

Are the 144,000 literal Jews? Paul makes a distinction between literal Jews and spiritual Jews (Rom 2:28-29). Read and study Romans, chapters 9-11 where Paul compares literal and spiritual Israel. **Rom 9:6:** *...For they are not all (spiritual) Israel, which are of (literal) Israel:* Paul is concerned for his fellow countrymen, and God has shown him that they will be saved: **Rom 11:25-26:** (ASV) *25. For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen (literal) Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in; 26. and so all (spiritual) Israel shall be saved: even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob* (a type for those having not wrestled with the angel & received the truth that Jesus is, and always has been a real Son of God): A Gentile is not a literal Jew, but a literal Jew can become a spiritual Jew.

Notice that "a Deliverer" comes out of Zion. **Rev 14:1:** *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand...* How do we know these are not literal Jews who have accepted the Messiah? **Rom 11:12:** *Now if the fall of them (Jews) be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness?* Because the majority of the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah, Paul turned and gave the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 18:6). Near the end of time, the Gentiles will give back the "riches" to the literal Jews. Paul applies an Old Testament type to the literal Jews which is used in Revelation.

Rom 11:2-4: *2. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 3. "Lord, they have killed thy prophets, they have demolished thy altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life." 4. But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."* (RSV) The two witnesses in Revelation 11 represent the truth of Jesus as the son in the O.T. and N.T., which is given by the 144,000 who have a full and correct understanding of the Son and the cross. They are said to be measuring the temple (verse 1), which is in old Jerusalem. It is likened to

Sodom and Egypt (verse 8), or Babylon - a figure of great confusion about God. **Rev 11:** *And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.* The 7000 ties this verse to the literal Jew. An “earthquake” is a figure of a spiritual shaking of a person’s thinking. So, deliverance of the literal Jew comes via the 144,000 when literal Israel receives the truth about their Messiah.

Great Multitude: Rev 7:9-10: *9. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10. And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God who sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.* This group is clothed with white robes, a symbol of having a righteous character (Rev 19:7-8), they have an understanding of the Father and Son, but have their robes been washed in the blood of the lamb, as mentioned in the messenger’s explanation to John in verse 14?

Here is the definition of a person who is cleansed by the blood of Jesus: **1 Jn 1:7:** *But if we walk in the light, as he (the Father) is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.* Above it was mentioned that there is a difference in the Father’s and Son’s Spirits. We are cleansed by the “water of the word” (Eph 5:26). Therefore, to be cleansed by the blood is to receive the Father’s explanation of the cross - i.e. how it shows His unconditional love for humanity.

One key to the great multitude is that they have palms in their hands. In previous studies it has been shown that the city of Jericho, the first city to fall upon entering the promised land, is a figure of the law. To enter the promise land is when a person realizes that they have been living according to a man’s interpretation of the law. Jericho was known as “the city of the moon,” a symbol for the law, and also as the “city of palms.” The great multitude have “palms” in their hands (works of law), a symbol indicative of sincere people living up to the light they have, but they are still being governed by a man’s understanding of the Bible. Therefore they are not at this point in time, cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. So, the group of people being described in Revelation 7:7-13 are the 144,000, who are not literal Jews, and whose character has been completed. When this is accomplished, God will send them to start the last movements, which will be rapid ones, in order to bring evil to an end.

To the church of “brotherly love” (Philadelphia), Jesus said: **Rev 3:10:** *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* The 144,000 will manifest the same love as did Jesus Christ when he gave his life for the world - forgive them Father, they don’t know what they are doing. The “hour of temptation” is the inward “great tribulation” (Mt 24:21) when people will be faced with the choice between the works of man (mark of the beast) or the works (seal) of God. **1 Jn 4:1:** *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

Isa 64:8: *But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.* Please - listen to your conscience and let God impress the image of His love on your heart. Amen!