

# The 144,000

## The Most Astonishing Prophecy in Revelation

by  
Jim Sayles

(My thanks to Sue Patterson of Christian Media Network for introducing the prophetic truth concerning the 144,000 in her book, "The 144,000 and the Multitude", and to Don Harris of thinkredink.com for "The Last Exodus.")

I remember discussing with pastor Wayne Smith, who was my supervisor in the church where we were both serving at the time, the probability that the prophetic truth of Revelation (and all end times prophetic passages) would not be thoroughly understood until God opened it up (unsealed it) to those in the church who would be subject to, and participants in, those specific events.

At that time I did not know why or how the revelatory truth of the Lord's letter, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," written primarily for the end times church, was hidden from us, but, having been delivered from the spiritual stronghold of dispensational teaching, I do now understand.

In the past few years, to my amazement and joy, the cataracts of heretical dispensational theology, and its corresponding school of constantly morphing non-revelatory eschatological presumption, have been progressively removed from the eyes of an emerging consensus of believers who are coming to the truth independently as they are led by the Spirit of truth.

But, as it is in all areas of revelatory knowledge, we are blinded to the Truth (deliberate capital "T") by the false doctrines we have assumed, taught, promoted and popularly believed, especially those doctrines introduced into the church through demonic influence.

Two mysterious groups, metaphorically identified with Israel, appear in Revelation. These are the 144,000 Jewish male virgins from the twelve tribes and the woman clothed with the sun.

Most modern eschatologists have assumed the dispensational and Zionist dual covenant position that these are 144,000 literal Jewish male virgins from twelve literal tribes, and these spiritually blind "eschatologists," totally ignoring the Spirit's metaphorical use of types and shadows throughout scripture, also assume that the woman clothed with the sun is national, ethnic Israel during the tribulation after the revealing of Antichrist.

Jehovah's Witnesses are actually closer to the truth, though their version is erroneous as well. And the commonly accepted identification of the 144,000 as being literal Jewish male virgins from twelve literal tribes who have attained spiritual perfection, does not fit with the metaphorical nature of the many other

prophetic passages in the Revelation of Jesus Christ or with our revelatory understanding that it has always been God's plan to redeem mankind through only one eternal covenant written in the blood of Jesus Christ, the mediator and High Priest of that covenant. (See "**The Blood Covenant**")

The Revelation of Jesus Christ coordinated with the Olivet prophecy (Matthew 24 and 25, Mark 13, and Luke 21) and the Book of Daniel are the most important sources of prophecy in scripture concerning the future of the end times church.

It should be obvious to all that the Revelation of Jesus Christ was given to John in metaphorical and parabolic language, and those who proclaim a strict literal approach to the interpretation of this book, and to all prophetic scripture, will only be able to "see" what the intellect can perceive apart from the revelatory light of the Spirit of truth.

One glaring error promoted by literalists who have ignored even the obvious intellectual truth is their claim that the Revelation of Jesus Christ only applies to the church through Chapter 3.

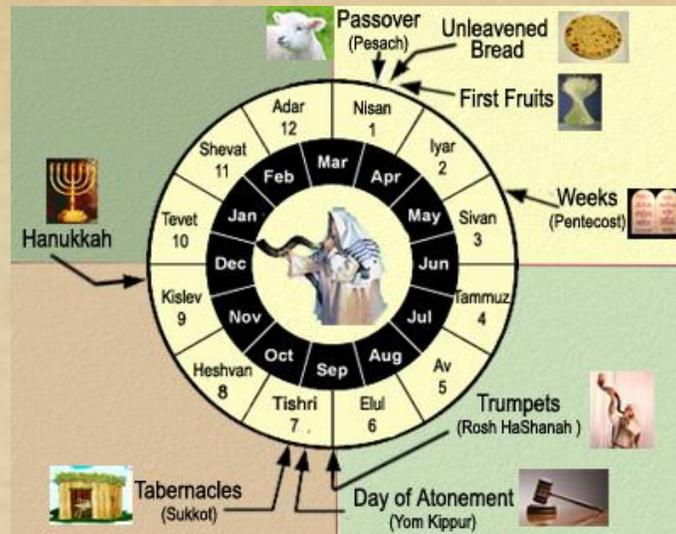
But examine these obvious, intellectually perceived facts: 1) Revelation 1:1 announces that the Revelation of Jesus Christ was given to His bond servant, John, an apostle of the church; 2) it was given to be written down and sent to the churches; and 3) it was to be written down, included in the New Testament of the Bible, to be read and heeded by the church.

Then in the final chapter the Lord makes certain that He has made Himself clear, and He tells us that the revelation given to John is FOR the churches, not for national, ethnic Israel.

***I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches.*** Revelation 22:16 ESV (emphasis is the author's)

What is revealed in this book given to John "for the churches" concerning the 144,000 and the woman clothed with the sun, is the most significant and amazing prophetic event of the entire end times.

The Spirit-revealed truth concerning the prophetic future of the church in the end times is so characteristic of **GOD** that only a powerful deception could have prevented us from "seeing" it, and only a fresh anointing of the Spirit of truth can reveal it to the generation of believers for whom it has always been intended.



Feasts Calendar by Carol Brooks

The prophetic end time events are patterned in Old Testament events, and the primary interpretational key is found in the “appointed times” of the feasts of the Lord given to Israel. These appointed times of annual Sabbaths and feasts are a literal blueprint and time chart for the unfolding of every prophetic event related to the redemption of mankind from the crucifixion of Jesus Christ to the millennial Davidic kingdom.

Thus any prophetic interpretation of the redemptive events in scripture that does not fit within this God-given pattern is false, and the revelatory truth must come forth from, and conform with, this pattern as revealed by the Spirit of truth.

After the events of the first through the sixth seals, which include the ride of the four horsemen and the intense world-wide persecution of the church, we are introduced to an event that takes place immediately before the seventh and last seal is opened.

*After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel...*

Revelation 7:1-4 ESV

So who is this mysterious group? Are they 12,000 literal Jewish male virgins from each of twelve tribes of Israel?

Because the entirety of Revelation is given to us in metaphorical language for the express purpose of concealing the truth from all but those for whom the prophecy is intended, we must assume that these are NOT 144,000 literal Jewish male virgins from twelve tribes.

In "**The Blood Covenant**" I clearly demonstrated that the covenant promise given to Abraham, was intended only for his "seed," Jesus Christ, and those who are joint heirs in Him. It was never, even from before the foundations of the world, intended for national, ethnic Israel apart from individual Israelites who have remained in the olive tree, Christ, on whatever basis of faith God has sovereignly required of them.

Therefore, at the resurrection of Jesus Christ, upon His fulfillment of the Law, the Old Covenant, two millennia ago, God cut a New Covenant with Israel in Christ, who is the mediator of that covenant, written in His blood shed on the cross for the remission of sin and sprinkled on the heavenly mercy seat of God.

From that point forward God's covenant with Israel and His promises to Israel, which is now spiritual Israel, the Israel of God, containing both Jew and Gentile in one body, would only be fulfilled in Christ.

***For as many as are the...(covenant)... promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. 2 Corinthians 1:20 NASB***  
(insert is the author's)

***Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was their Husband, says the Lord.***

***But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel...(spiritual Israel, the Israel of God in Christ)...: After those days, says the Lord, I will put My law within them, and on their hearts will I write it; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. Jeremiah 31:31-33***

Because this prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when the baptism of the Holy Spirit came upon the 120 upper room believers, incorporating those believers into the body of Christ as the Law was written on their hearts through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, we can clearly see that the "house of Israel" and the "house of Judah" has been applied through Jeremiah to the church.

It is, therefore, the church, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles, to whom the promise, "I will be their God, and they will be My people," applies, and it will continue to apply without interruption until the last trump of God on the last day.

As we examine the prophecies related to the 144,000, the number itself, 144,000, is obviously metaphorical, and it represents the perfection of spiritual Israel, the Israel of God. But the literal number of this group could be in the MILLIONS.

That each is from one of the twelve tribes is also metaphorical and a spiritual assignment by God, rather than a natural designation. And we are given a distinct clue in this regard by the fact that the twelve tribes listed in Revelation 7 differs from the original twelve tribes.

The twelve sons of Israel (Jacob) were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher and Joseph. These were the ancestors of the original twelve tribes. However, Reuben lost his rights as firstborn by defiling Jacob's bed. In Reuben's and Joseph's place, Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, became tribes of Israel.

As a result, the twelve tribes became Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Ephraim and Manasseh.

However, Revelation 7 lists the 12 tribes as Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin. This is interesting. For the first time Joseph is listed as a tribe along with his son Manasseh. Why isn't Ephraim listed? Why is Reuben listed, but not Dan?

In Genesis 49:17 we read: "Dan will be a serpent by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider tumbles backward." And, though I find no scriptural proof, it is possible that Judas Iscariot belonged to the tribe of Dan while Matthias, who was chosen by lot to replace him, belonged to the tribe of Reuben.

Whatever the specific answer is as it relates to the final list of the twelve tribes, the assignment is spiritual as is the metaphorical number of spiritual Israel, the Israel of God, being 144,000.

Otherwise God IS a respecter of persons, and the selection of this group IS based on merit as Jehovah's Witnesses presumptively imagine, but God is not a respecter of persons. Thus this metaphorical group will not be a select group of "top performers."

***So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality..." Acts 10:34 ESV***

Yet, there is a selection process, and that process is defined in His prophetic parable of another group of "virgins," the ten virgins who make up the entire corporate body of Christ at a specific point in time. (See [The Parable of the Ten Virgins Unveiled](#))

The most important thing we need to notice about the sealing of the 144,000 is that they are sealed for protection IN the final three and a half years of tribulation, not removal FROM the tribulation.

This has HUGE implications.

One of the so-called “proof texts” given by dispensationalists as an Old Testament precursor for the pre-trib “rapture” of the church is Noah and his ark. But they miss the singular fact that Noah was not removed from the flood. He was protected in the flood.

At the same time the wicked unbelievers were “taken away” by the flood. Thus those “left behind” were the righteous.

***For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark,...(his protection IN the flood) ...and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.***  
Matthew 24:38,39 ESV (emphasis and inserts are the author's)

We also notice that the sealing of the 144,000 takes place at approximately the same time that the “wise virgins” are separated from the “foolish virgins,” with the sealing of the 144,000 seeming to correspond with the “wise virgins” who have trimmed their wicks (in response to the repentance demanded in Revelation 2 and 3) and maintained oil in their lamps while the great apostasy appears to correspond with the “foolish virgins” running out of oil who did not repent in the manner demanded by the Lord in Revelation 2 and 3.

Thus potentially the 144,000 include all of the “wise virgins” who have responded to the Lord's demands for repentance in Revelation 2 and 3 and His encouragement to endure the hardships, trials, and persecution of the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> seals of Revelation.

But there is another astonishing aspect of this sealing of the 144,000 that is unique. We see that they have not only been protected at the time of their sealing, but they are fully redeemed and they are a firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb.

We have read this before, but, because we believed that this mysterious group had something to do with national, ethnic Israel during the tribulation, we ignored the implication as it relates to the church.

Immediately after all four horsemen (the first four seals of Revelation 6) appear, the first three of which I identified in “**The Four Horsemen**” as already being on the scene, we are given John's vision of an event that takes place after

the fourth horseman (the Antichrist) has become dominant and after the death of 25% of the world's population by nuclear war, famine, and disease.

***Now when these things...***(all of the prior events described in Luke 21)...  
***begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.*** " Luke 21:28 (insert and emphasis are the author's)

In Luke 21:26 we have a description of the powers of heaven being shaken, which corresponds with Matthew 24:29:

***Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened and the moon will not shed her light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.*** (emphasis is the author's)

Thus the message to the church, as given to us in the Lord's prophecy (related to numerous Old Testament prophecies) is that the church will still be present AFTER the tribulation of those days, and in the Olivet prophecy the Lord is saying that the church at this point is looking forward to the fulfillment of their redemption.

But the sealing and redemption of the metaphorical 144,000 takes place PRIOR to these events, and some, desperately clinging to the pre-trib "rapture" of the church, will imagine that the 144,000 are those that are raptured. But a closer examination reveals that it has nothing to do with a "rapture."

Revelation 7:1-4 indicates that the 144,000 are sealed immediately prior to the opening of the seventh seal. Therefore, this group did not have this seal of protection during the first four seals (the four horsemen), or during the persecution of the church and judgment events of the fifth and sixth seals.

The sealing and their full and complete redemption as "***firstfruits unto God and the Lamb,***" though, does not cause them to be removed from the earth. They are definitely still on earth from the time of their sealing through the six trumpet judgments (Revelation 8 – Revelation 11:14) as indicated in Revelation 9:4.

***They...***(the locusts from hell)... ***were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads...***(the 144,000). Revelation 9:4 ESV (inserts and emphasis are the author's)

Revelation 6:1-8	Revelation 6:9-17	Revelation 7	Revelation 8-9:11
1 <sup>st</sup> Seal – 4 <sup>th</sup> Seal	5 <sup>th</sup> Seal - 6 <sup>th</sup> Seal	Last part of 6 <sup>th</sup> Seal	7 <sup>th</sup> Seal
Four Horsemen	Persecution – Earthquake; Sun dark; Moon to blood	144,000 sealed; A separate group of saints are martyred afterwards	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Woes 1-6 Trumpets 144,000 still present and a multitude of tribulation saints are saved

So, at this point we see that the 144,000 were not sealed until the end of the sixth seal, which includes the persecution of the church and the 6<sup>th</sup> seal shaking of all that can be shaken, including an earthquake off the Richter scale, the sun turning to darkness, and the moon turning to blood. (i.e. “signs in the heavens” - Isaiah 13; Ezekiel 32:7; Joel 2; Matthew 24:29)

Therefore, it appears that the 144,000 are present but not sealed during “tribulation” (Matthew 24:9-14) and present but sealed during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Woes of “great tribulation” (Matthew 24:15-31).

Therefore the metaphorical 144,000 are those who emerge from the testing and trials of the first six seals, those who have endured and persevered in the spiritual battles that take place during the 3<sup>rd</sup> through the 6<sup>th</sup> seals, which includes the Gog-Magog war, famine, disease, anarchy, the rise of the Antichrist to power, and the worldwide persecution of the church.

Thus the purpose of the Lord’s specific address to the seven types of the church in Revelation 2 and 3 is to **WARN** us to repent, to endure, and to persevere in the trials to come so that we can be included in the metaphorical 144,000 and not included in those who become apostate from the faith because of tribulation.

***Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent. Revelation 2:5*** (emphasis is the author’s)

***Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them ... (those who do not repent)... with the sword of My mouth. Revelation 2:16*** (inserts are the author’s)

***Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief... Revelation 3:3*** (the warning to the sleeping virgins in the parable of the ten virgins – Matthew 25:1-13)

***Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.*** Revelation 3:19 (the Lord's specific warning to the Laodicean type of church)

***See, I have warned you beforehand.*** Matthew 24:25 Amplified (emphasis is the author's)

The implications of the Lord's warning to the church as revealed in the Olivet prophecy and in the Revelation of Jesus Christ is unmistakable. The end times church is in for a time of serious testing, and, unless we wake up, repent, and endure, things will go badly for us.

This IS the difference between the experience of the "wise virgins" and the "foolish virgins." The wise virgins wake up from their spiritual slumber, repent as directed, and, with the help of the fullness of the restored former and latter rains, endure the trials and tribulations through the sixth seal of Revelation. The foolish virgins "wake up," but, like the foolish young ruler, they fail to repent as directed, and, during the trials and tribulations that follow, they not only become apostate, but they become those who betray and persecute the wise virgins of the true church just as the Pharisees and Scribes persecuted our Lord, Jesus Christ in His earthly ministry.

Many of the "wise" will be martyred before the sealing of the metaphorical 144,000, but their martyrdom will be a glorious witness and a victory, not a defeat.

***And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*** (Revelation 12:11 KJV)

I have covered this elsewhere, but "the word of their testimony," is not their testimony about how they were saved. The word of their testimony will be the word of faith about who they are in Jesus Christ spoken against the Antichrist and the spiritual forces of wickedness in the last days.

Another unusual appearance takes place during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Woe (Revelation 9:12-11:13). This is the appearance of two witnesses, which is not a subject of this article. What we need to notice, though, is that we do not hear about the two witnesses until the 2<sup>nd</sup> Woe, but the 144,000 are sealed prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Woe of the 7<sup>th</sup> seal.

The two witnesses walk the streets of Jerusalem after the Antichrist has declared himself to be "god" and "Messiah" and Jerusalem becomes the epicenter of Mystery Babylon and the fourth beast kingdom. Therefore, their witness is not

one of repentance unto salvation but a witness of coming judgment upon the Antichrist and all who are in covenant with him, which, unfortunately, includes most of the religious Jews who are participants in the revived temple worship and sacrifice system.

We do not see the 144,000 again until we see them in Chapter 14, which is a heavenly scene that gives details not given in Chapter 7 or Chapter 9.

***Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless. Revelation 14:1-5 ESV (inserts and emphasis are the author's)***

Revelation, like the prophetic aspects of the book of Daniel and much of the Old Testament, is given to us in parabolic language with types and shadows for the express purpose of “sealing” (not revealing) the specific truth of those passages to the church except as the Father allows the Spirit of truth to reveal it for His purposes. (Daniel 12:9,10)

Literalist speculations, then, made prior to the specific revelations of the Spirit of truth, are not only erroneous, but “strongholds” of error that assault the true knowledge of God. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

Note the following:

1. The “seal” (described in Chapter 7 as giving them an identification for protection) is the name of Jesus and the name of the Father written spiritually on their foreheads;
2. They have been “redeemed” as a “firstfruits unto God and the Lamb.” Their spiritual “virginity” and sinless perfection, then, is the result of their completed redemption, just as it will be for all the saints, living and dead, who are resurrected on the last day, and it has nothing to do with their natural condition at the time of the sealing.

All born again, regenerated believers in Jesus Christ are sealed by the Holy Spirit, but our sealing at the moment of saving faith is different from this sealing in the foreheads of the 144,000 for protection, and for the completion of their redemption.

Notice that an angel is carrying the seal, which is one obvious difference between this seal and the sealing of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of regeneration. The sealing is also visual, being on their foreheads, whereas the sealing of the Holy Spirit for regeneration is invisible.

If we compare the passages that describe our “sealing” by the Holy Spirit at the moment of saving faith with this “sealing” upon the foreheads of the 144,000 we will clearly note the difference.

***Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*** 2 Corinthians 1:22 KJV (emphasis is the author’s)

This passage uses the preposition transliterated from the Greek as *en* (Strong’s G1722), meaning “in,” and notice that the sealing takes place in the heart.

***Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."*** Revelation 7:2,3 ESV (emphasis is the author’s)

This passage uses the preposition transliterated from the Greek as *epi* (Strong’s G1909), meaning upon, and notice that the sealing is upon the forehead. The difference in the two prepositions and the location where the sealing takes place are conclusive evidence that the nature of the two sealings is different.

We also note the Lord’s own words concerning the fact that ALL the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem (From Adam through the last millennial saint) will have His name written on their foreheads. It is, therefore, a symbol of completed redemption in Christ.

***No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.*** Revelation 22:3,4 ESV (emphasis is the author’s)

Initial Sealing of our Hearts	Subsequent Sealing of our Foreheads
A deposit or guarantee of final and complete redemption.	The symbol of complete and final redemption.

Being sealed or spiritually marked in the forehead is similar to the marking of the door frames of the Israelites in Egypt with the blood of a sacrificial lamb. It is a sealing or marking for protection against the judgments of God.

This is also seen in Ezekiel’s vision during the Babylonian captivity concerning a future judgment against the inhabitants of Jerusalem because of idolatry, with emphasis on the idolatry of the priests.

*And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem... (which we should receive as a type of the church)..., and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry... (in an attitude of repentance)... for all the abominations that be done in the midst... (of the church)... thereof... (which is the response of the “wise virgins”).*

*And to the others... (those “foolish virgins” who are unrepentant concerning the same abominations)... he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite... (kill)...: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and BEGIN... (this act of judgment)... AT MY SANCTUARY. Ezekiel 9:4-6 KJV (inserts and emphasis are the author’s)*

It should be of particular interest to us that the judgment of God is to begin at His sanctuary, and my mind jumps immediately to the parable of the ten virgins.

It is the ten virgins (ten is the number of corporate completion) who are awakened from their spiritual stupor by some universally recognizable event, presented metaphorically in the parable as the groomsman’s (Holy Spirit) announcement: “*Behold! The bridegroom is coming.*”

The ten virgins all wake up and begin to trim their wicks (their response of repentance to the Lord’s letter to the churches) by cutting away the false doctrines and false practices, and the “doctrines of demons” that have been introduced into the church, which is idolatry, idolatry that has been introduced by “the cunning and cleverness of unscrupulous men,” men and women under the demonic influence of “The Jezebel Spirit” for the purpose of dividing and emasculating the church (Ephesians 4:14).

The “wise” virgins respond in repentance during a time of great difficulty and persecution. The “foolish” virgins fail the testing of their faith and not only become apostate, but become persecutors of the wise virgins.

It is of interest, too, that there is an opposite marking of the forehead noticeable in the Old Testament. Leprosy in the forehead, for example, was a physical sign of spiritual uncleanness, and in Revelation we see that the whore of Babylon, the apostate church (to which the “foolish virgins” become attached), is marked in the forehead with her name, “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

Likewise, those who submit to the Antichrist are marked with a seal in the forehead, and this seal is permanent. They cannot change their minds and experience faith in Christ once they have taken the seal of Antichrist. This seal is, therefore, not just a means of submitting to the one world system of economics. It is a spiritual covenant action in which the ones receiving the mark of the beast confess allegiance to the Antichrist after he is declared by the false prophet to be the true “Messiah.”

Therefore, we see the vivid contrast between the “wise virgins” receiving the seal of God in their foreheads and the “foolish virgins” receiving the seal (mark) of the Antichrist in their foreheads.

But the most interesting and confirming information that we are given in Revelation 14:5 is that the 144,000 are a “firstfruits” of redemption unto God and the Lamb. Some who are still deceived by the dispensational deception of a pre-tribulation “rapture” will instantly conclude that these firstfruits of redemption are those who are raptured out of the tribulation.

There are two distinct reasons why this is not true. First, the 144,000 are not “raptured.” They are redeemed, but they continue to be present in the world. Second, Paul gives the order of the resurrection-“rapture” on the last day as the dead in Christ first, then the living, in order.

***For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...1 Thessalonians 4:16,17 ESV*** (emphasis is the author’s)

Therefore, the 144,000 who are sealed as “firstfruits unto God and the Lamb” are a group who are sealed in the forehead, indicating the completion of their redemption, but not removed from the world. Thus this group is not merely protected during the trumpet judgments of the seventh seal, they are a completely redeemed group still interactive with the rest of the inhabitants of the world

during the trumpet judgments, which take place in the final three and a half years of “great tribulation.”

While we were still under the dispensational delusion that this event and this group was unrelated to the church, it had no impact on us. Now, we are stunned by this amazing prophecy.

We must also presume that Satan is aware of this prophecy and that he has been planning and scheming for two millennia to conceal this prophetic truth and prevent it from happening.

The grievous truth is that he will be successful in preventing the “foolish virgins” from realizing and experiencing this glorious prophetic event, but he will not be able to stop the “wise virgins.”

Paul told us that the things that happened to the Israelites were written down for the instruction of those upon whom the fulfillment of the ages has come, and we find two unusual events in Daniel that represent the truth concerning both the “wise virgins” and the 144,000.

Daniel’s refusal to eat the king of Babylon’s meat caused him to be thrown into the lion’s den, but God supernaturally inhibited the lions (representative of demonic forces) from killing Daniel. This represents the individual “virgin’s” obedience to the revelation of God’s will at a time when the Antichrist will be persecuting Christians who do not submit to his will, and the Lord’s corresponding protection.

Similarly the Hebrew children were thrown into the fiery furnace for refusing to worship the king of Babylon as “god.” This is representative of the “wise virgins” who refuse to take the mark of the beast and are sealed and redeemed to protect them from the Antichrist’s wrath. The presence of the Lord with them in the fiery furnace is specifically representative of the Lord’s presence in and with the metaphorical 144,000 during the three and a half years of “great tribulation.” (See “[The Bozrah Deliverance](#)”)

I made the claim at the beginning of this commentary that all the major events of God’s redemptive plan in Christ fit into the prophetic blueprint of God’s appointed times, Sabbaths (national, not weekly), and feasts. So, where is this mysterious firstfruits redemption of Christian believers found in the pattern of the appointed times and feasts given to Israel?

The Hebrews were instructed in the Torah to observe the “appointed times,” with special emphasis on three “solemn assemblies,” also known as Sabbaths, on three occasions each year.

The three times of the year were Passover (which includes the Feast of

Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Firstfruits), Pentecost, and Tabernacles or Booths (which includes the Feast of Trumpets and the Feast of Atonement).

In Israel fall is the seed time, and spring and early summer is the harvest. Thus on the Hebrew calendar the first three spring feasts take place in the month of Nisan.

These first three appointed times or feasts all occur in succession on 14, 15, and 17 Nisan, and all three have been fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

On 14 Nisan Passover was fulfilled when Jesus was crucified on the day of preparation for the Passover, and He fulfilled Passover at the very same hour that the *pesach* lambs were being slaughtered all over Israel for the Passover meal that evening. On 15 Nisan Unleavened Bread was fulfilled by His sinless perfection. And on 17 Nisan Firstfruits was fulfilled by His resurrection exactly three days after His crucifixion, which is an amazing confirmation of how the Holy Spirit provided Israel with the exact pattern and timing of the most important prophetic event in all history.

Yet, all but a few completely missed it.

Those events were foreshadowed by the historic events related to God's rescue of Israel (the inheritors of God's covenant promises to Abraham at that time) out of bondage in Egypt (a type of the world under Satan's influence). Then the historic events were memorialized in the appointed times and feasts given to the Israelites afterwards, which would ultimately be fulfilled as prophetic events in the future.

And, yet, the fulfillment of Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits went totally unrecognized by the Pharisees and scribes, the intellectual giants of Israel, just as this prophecy concerning the 144,000 has gone undetected by the intellectual giants of the church who are blinded by the demonic strongholds of Dispensationalism, Christian Zionism, Preterism, Historicism, and a number of other "isms."

It is also interesting to note that Caiaphas, the high priest, likely waved the firstfruits grain offering of a barley sheaf in the temple on 17 Nisan, not knowing that Jesus, the Messiah, was being resurrected at that very time.

Yet, Caiaphas must have been a little rattled by the massive earthquake and solar eclipse that had taken place on 14 Nisan immediately prior to the 6 pm start of 15 Nisan. And it must have disturbed him to find that the heavy curtain separating the holy place in the temple from the holy of holies, had been torn from top to bottom as if slashed by a giant sword.

From Passover on 14 Nisan (which is followed by Unleavened Bread on 15 Nisan and Firstfruits on 17 Nisan) is the counting of Omer (49 days) to the Feast of Weeks, which is to be celebrated beginning the fiftieth day ("Pentecost" or

fifty). Thus Passover (fulfilled by the Lord's crucifixion) is directly linked to the Feast of Weeks (Harvest) which begins on Pentecost.

***You shall observe the Feast of Weeks, the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end. Exodus 34:22 Amplified (emphasis is the author's)***

***Also you shall keep the Feast of Harvest...(a.k.a. Feast of Weeks)... [Pentecost], [acknowledging] the firstfruits of your toil, of what you sow in the field. And [third] you shall keep the Feast of Ingathering [Booths or Tabernacles] at the end of the year, when you gather in the fruit of your labors from the field. Exodus 23:16 Amplified (inserts and emphasis are the author's)***

The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) was observed after the Israelites settled in the Promised Land. On this day, no work was permitted. The people gathered at the Tabernacle to thank God for the harvest. It marked the time when the firstfruits of the wheat harvest were gathered and offered to the Lord. It also commemorated the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.

The firstfruits of the wheat harvest was presented by the high priest as an elevated or wave offering of two wheat loaves containing leaven. Though they did not know it at that time, the two loaves were a metaphoric representation of Jews and Gentiles who are now both "wheat" in Christ.

**Note** the difference. The firstfruits offering of the barley sheaf representing Jesus Christ as the "firstfruits" of the entire harvest on 17 Nisan, the "firstfruits" of redemption, contained no leaven (sin). But the "firstfruits" offering of the two wheat loaves on Pentecost (6 Sivan,) during the Feast of Weeks, specifically contained leaven (sin), indicating the firstfruits harvest of sinful but redeemed mankind, including both Jew and Gentile in Christ.

Following the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ the disciples were commanded to tarry at Jerusalem until the Spirit came (Acts 1:4), and they knew exactly how long they would have to wait. The disciples waited as they were commanded, and on Pentecost (Feast of Weeks), 6 Sivan, the Holy Spirit descended on those 120 believers just as it had always been prophesied through the appointed times and feast days given to the Israelites.

Thus we have presumed that the Feast of Weeks was completely fulfilled spiritually by the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, uniting Jews and Gentiles into one new spiritual body.

**BUT wait.** The coming of the Holy Spirit was not the fulfillment of a “firstfruits” offering of the wheat harvest. None, other than Jesus Christ have been “harvested,” yet. The “harvest” does not take place until the resurrection on the last day.

REGENERATION is not the fulfillment of REDEMPTION. It is the initiation of what will ultimately be redeemed (harvested) at the resurrection on the last day.

The Feast of Weeks is also a celebration of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, and the coming of the Holy Spirit IS the fulfillment of that event on Mount Sinai with the New Covenant fulfillment being the Law written on our hearts by the presence of the indwelling Spirit.

The coming of the Holy Spirit was a promise or guarantee of a future redemptive harvest, but it was not the harvest itself.

***And not only the creation, but we ourselves too, who have and enjoy the firstfruits of the [Holy] Spirit [a foretaste of the blissful things to come] groan inwardly as we wait for the redemption of our bodies [from sensuality and the grave, which will reveal] our adoption (our manifestation as God's sons). Romans 8:23 Amplified***

The coming of the Holy Spirit is the sealing of our hearts as a deposit or title-deed to the sealing of our foreheads upon the completion of our redemption, which is the “harvest.”

Thus the coming of the Holy Spirit is an initiatory event, not a harvest event. The resurrection of all the saints, living and dead, on the last day is the “harvest.” And that event is the fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets. Therefore, we can expect that last day event to occur on some future 1 Tishrei (Rosh HaShanah).

Thus the “harvest” does not take place at the moment of saving faith and regeneration. It takes place when our redemption is complete at the resurrection on the last day. Thus a “firstfruits” offering of the entire harvest has already taken place on 17 Nisan two millennia ago when Jesus was resurrected, but the “firstfruits” offering of the Feast of Weeks, the wheat harvest, must take place before the wheat harvest is complete (i.e. before the last day resurrection).

This is an amazing mystery, and most who are reading this will assume that there is some way to explain this mystery away. But I have learned that all the mysteries in scripture are a Holy Spirit signpost indicating the presence of a significant revelation that we will only receive at the time in which it is intended to be revealed, and to the people for whom it was intended.

Even that intellectual giant of Dispensationalism, Chuck Missler, whose favorite retort to those who do not believe in a pre-trib “rapture,” is, “We’ll explain it on the way up,” confesses that some future Pentecost is the likely timing of the “rapture,” with the last day resurrection being for all the saints not included in the church.

He is, of course, incorrect in his presumption, because the 144,000, who are the “firstfruits unto God and the Lamb,” are not “raptured.” They are sealed for protection from the wrath of both God and Satan during the 7<sup>th</sup> seal events and redeemed as “firstfruits” at that time, but they remain in the earth until the resurrection on the last day.

Review the order demonstrated in the appointed times of the feast days:

1. Feast of Passover – originally pictured in the first Passover in Egypt - fulfilled by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ;
2. Feast of Unleavened Bread – fulfilled by the sinless perfection of Jesus of Nazareth;
3. Feast of Firstfruits – fulfilled by the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the “firstfruits” of the entire harvest (Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 15:20);
4. Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) a.k.a. Feast of Harvest – **initiated** by the coming of the Holy Spirit, but yet to be fulfilled by a “firstfruits” offering of the wheat harvest (the wave offering of two loaves of wheat representing Jews and Gentiles), the 144,000, unto God and the Lamb;
5. Feast of Trumpets – to be fulfilled at the final trump of God (the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet) on the last day, the resurrection of all the saints of all time, living and dead;
6. Feast of Atonement – to be fulfilled and witnessed by the entirety of the elect remnant of mankind from Adam forward after the last day resurrection of the living and dead saints of all time;
7. Feast of Tabernacles – to be fulfilled when the Lord Jesus Christ establishes the millennial Davidic kingdom.

As born again, regenerated believers in Christ we have the Holy Spirit’s presence with us as a “firstfruits” promise of the experience to come, received as a “sealing” of our spirits (hearts) by the Holy Spirit.

*That [Spirit] is the guarantee of our inheritance [the firstfruits, the pledge and foretaste, the down payment on our heritage], in anticipation of its full redemption and our acquiring [complete] possession of it--to the praise of His glory. Ephesians 1:14 Amplified (emphasis is the author’s)*

Thus the sealing of the Holy Spirit experienced as the baptism of the Spirit when we are baptized into the spiritual body of Christ is not the final inheritance and completion of our redemption as adopted sons of God, but a promise or title-deed guaranteeing that final inheritance and the completion of our redemption.

Jesus of Nazareth is the **firstfruits** of that final inheritance, but we, and those who are dead in Christ, from Adam forward, are yet to receive the completion of our redemption.

***But the fact is that Christ (the Messiah) has been raised from the dead, and He became the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep [in death].***

***But each in his own rank and turn: Christ (the Messiah) [is] the firstfruits, then those who are Christ's [own will be resurrected] at His coming. 1 Corinthians 15:20,23 Amplified (emphasis is the author's)***

But the 144,000 will have been redeemed as a “firstfruits” unto God and the Lamb prior to the last day resurrection, and that event will take place on some future 6 Sivan. This is not the “promise” of redemption, but the actual fulfillment of redemption.

***These are they who have not defiled themselves by relations with women, for they are [pure as] virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These are they who have been ransomed (purchased, redeemed) from among men as the firstfruits for God and the Lamb. Revelation 14:4 Amplified (emphasis is the author's)***

The 144,000 are not, yet, sealed in the foreheads through the opening of the first six seals of the scroll, which means that they are present during the ride of the four horsemen and the initial persecution of the Antichrist. Therefore, these metaphorical 144,000 will have been tested by tribulation prior to their sealing, but we do not know why some believers are allowed to be martyred prior to this time while the metaphorical 144,000 are not.

***When the Lamb broke open the fifth seal, I saw at the foot of the altar the souls of those whose lives had been sacrificed for [adhering to] the Word of God and for the testimony they had borne.***

***They cried in a loud voice, O [Sovereign] Lord, holy and true, how long now before You will sit in judgment and avenge our blood upon those who dwell on the earth?***

***Then they were each given a long and flowing and festive white robe and told to rest and wait patiently a little while longer, until the number***

***should be complete of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed as they themselves had been.*** Revelation 6:9-11 Amplified

The seals are opened progressively, and it is not until immediately prior to the opening of the seventh seal, which I believe to be the beginning of the three and a half years of “great tribulation” when the Antichrist is “revealed,” that the 144,000 are sealed for protection and redeemed as firstfruits unto God and the Lamb.

The heavenly scene of Revelation 14 takes place after the Antichrist has waged war on the saints. But it is the multitude that the Antichrist is allowed to wage war against in the final three and half years, not the 144,000.

It has always been God’s purpose to reveal His love and express His victory over Satan through an elect remnant of mankind in Christ, and not only to reveal it, but to rub it in the enemy’s face like a fourth quarter, last minute, game winning touchdown.

***...to bring to light for everyone what is the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, ... (Why?)...so that through the church... (not through national, ethnic Israel, but through the “Israel of God”)... the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known... (to whom?)... to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.*** (i.e. Satan and all the fallen angels with him) Ephesians 3:8-10 ESV (inserts and emphasis are the author’s)

Thus the purpose of the firstfruits sealing and redemption of the metaphorical 144,000, who represent and minister the fullness of Christ in the final three and half years of “great tribulation,” is to manifest God’s eternal purpose for the “Israel of God” in Christ in the face of the enemy’s own fully manifested presence in the earth.

Immediately after the sealing of the 144,000 we notice an emerging “multitude” or a “vast host” of uncountable numbers from every nation, tribe, and tongue. These appear later in heaven before the throne of God, and they are identified as the saints who have come from the tribulation.

***And they have overcome (conquered) him by means of the blood of the Lamb and by the utterance of their testimony...*** (about who they are in Christ)..., ***for they did not love and cling to life even when faced with death [holding their lives cheap till they had to die for their witnessing].*** Revelation 12:11 Amplified (insert is the author’s)

***He...(the Antichrist)... was further permitted to wage war on God's holy people (the saints) and to overcome them. And power was given him to extend his authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation...Revelation 13:7 Amplified*** (insert is the author's)

Here we see a paradox. We see that the Antichrist is permitted to wage war on God's holy people (the saints who have been sealed in their hearts with the pledge of their future redemption, but have not, yet, been redeemed) from every tribe and people and tongue and nation. And, at the same time, we see an uncountable number from every tribe and people and tongue and nation being saved.

So who is it that is preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ with wisdom and power to this uncountable number of tribulation saints from every nation, tribe, and tongue without themselves being hurt or martyred by the Antichrist who is now possessed by Satan himself?

It is the metaphorical 144,000 who have been "sealed" for protection and redeemed as a firstfruits unto God and the Lamb, who then minister the truth of the gospel to the multitudes from every nation, tribe, and tongue in the midst of the Antichrist's reign.

If this was the only revelation we had concerning the glorious future of the "wise virgins" of the church, it should be enough to blow the roof off of any church fellowship that receives it. But there is MORE as we examine another mysterious group, the woman clothed with the sun, whom dispensationalists and Zionists have erroneously identified as national, ethnic Israel.

Among the prophecies related to the 144,000 are the promise to the Philadelphian church of protection in the tribulation, the "wise virgins," the 144,000, the woman clothed with the sun, the Bozrah sheepfold (Micah 2:12,13), and the last exodus (Jeremiah 23:1-8).

There are also a multitude of types and shadows related to this astonishing end times group.

May He grant you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you study and meditate on what has been written here, because everything fits together perfectly in the prophetic scheme, just as the One who knows the end from the beginning has intended.

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