

144,000—Who and Why

Making Life Count Ministries

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Will there only be 144,000 who enter the kingdom of heaven? The Bible doesn't teach this and has nothing to do with the number of people who will be saved.

The 144,000 are mentioned in two places in the book of Revelation. In Revelation 7:1-8, they are sealed by God for protection during the Tribulation. Rev. 14:1-5 is a prophetic vision of them standing triumphantly with the Lamb on Mount Zion in Jerusalem at the beginning of the millennial reign. If Rev. 14:1-5 were speaking of the number of people saved (which it isn't), it would exclude all women and anyone who has had sex because they "have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste" (Rev. 14:4).

Who are the 144,000?

Revelation 7:4-8 tells us exactly who they are. They are 144,000 Jews—12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Although some have taught the tribes have been lost, God knows where they are. As a matter of fact, long after the tribes were supposedly lost, James wrote a letter to them. James 1:1 says, "James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad, greetings."

The 144,000 Jews who will be converted to Jesus after the Rapture of the Church. The apostle Paul tells us "a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved..." (Rom. 11:25-26). After the Rapture, the ministry of the gospel will be handed back to believing Israel, those Jewish people who receive Jesus as their Messiah just prior to the Second Coming.

Why are they important?

Jesus told His disciples, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28).

- The "regeneration" is the Millennium, when Jesus rules on earth from Jerusalem (Zion) and the earth is repopulated. (See our studies, "Who Will Populate the Millennium?" and "The Millennium")
- "His glorious throne"(Matt. 19:28, 25:31) always refers to the reign of Jesus on earth in the Millennium. This is not to be confused with "the great white throne" mentioned in Rev. 20:11, which occurs after the Millennium.
- The "twelve thrones" are reserved for the twelve apostles (minus Judas), replaced by either Matthias (Acts 1:26) or Paul.
- But where do the "twelve tribes" come from? They are the 144,000 who are protected throughout the Tribulation until Jesus returns to earth. God sets them apart for two reasons:
 1. To inherit the land promised to them
 2. To help repopulate the earth. Could it be they are virgins as Rev. 14:4 says because God wants to start with sexually pure people to repopulate the earth?

Israel will inherit the land

Israel has never received all the land promised to them (See Ex. 23:31, Numbers 34:3-12, Deut. 11:24, Joshua 1:4). However, after Jesus returns to earth and sets up His kingdom, Israel will

inherit the entire Promised Land (Ezek. 47-48). The 144,000 will then be allotted their portions, each tribe of 12,000 receiving the land promised to them.

The Millennial Kingdom will look like this:

- Jesus rules in Jerusalem from Mount Zion (Ps. 2:6-9, Zech. 14:9, 16).
- The 12 apostles sit on 12 thrones. A throne, or some kind of governmental office, will be established over each tribe. Each apostle, in his resurrected body, will rule in that office over a tribe.
- Each tribe, which begins the Millennium with 12,000 people, will have an apostle administrating it.
- The nations on the earth will be subject to the ruling that comes from Israel. The earth will be repopulated and the families of the earth will have to go to Jerusalem each year to worship the King (Zech. 14:17).

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