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**144,000 Series -
The 144,000 Were
Not Future Jews,
Part 1 of 7**



By Dan Maines

The 144,000 Were Not Future Jews, Part 1 of 7

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Introduction

† One of the biggest errors in modern prophecy teaching is the claim that the 144,000 in Revelation are future Jews living thousands of years after John wrote the book. Revelation was written to real first century assemblies about events that were already "near" and "at hand." The sealing of the 144,000 was not about modern Israel, it was about the faithful covenant remnant who lived during the final days of the Old Covenant age.

† The 144,000 were sealed before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Their sealing parallels Ezekiel 9 where God marked the righteous before judgment fell upon the city. This was covenant protection through wrath, not a promise that they would never physically die.

† The tribal listing itself proves the number is symbolic. Dan is missing, Ephraim is replaced, and the order is unusual. This was not a literal census of future Jews, it was symbolic covenant language showing the complete remnant preserved by Christ during the end of the age. (Ezekiel 9:4-6; Matthew 24:16-22)

Revelation 1:1-3

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, 2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, everything that he saw. 3 Blessed is the one who reads, and those who hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

† Revelation opens by saying the events "must shortly come to

pass" and "the time is at hand." John did not tell the seven assemblies they were reading about events thousands of years away.

† The entire book was written to first century believers facing the coming judgment upon Jerusalem and the collapse of the Old Covenant world. (Hebrews 8:13)

† The Greek words for "shortly" and "at hand" always refer to things close in time, not events delayed for 2000 years. (Matthew 24:34; Revelation 22:6-10)

Revelation 7:1-3

1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth so that no wind would blow on the earth, or on the sea, or on any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, holding the seal of the living God; and he called out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying, "Do not harm the earth, or the sea, or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads."

† This sealing directly parallels Ezekiel 9 where God marked the righteous in Jerusalem before judgment destroyed the city.

† In both passages the faithful were marked before wrath fell. The mark identified those who belonged to God during covenant judgment. (Ezekiel 9:4-6)

† The protection was spiritual, not necessarily physical. Many believers still died physically during that period, but they were preserved from the covenant wrath coming upon apostate Israel. (Luke 21:20-22)

† This also connects to Christ warning believers to flee Judea when they saw Jerusalem surrounded by armies. The faithful remnant listened and escaped the destruction coming upon the land. (Matthew 24:16-22)

Revelation 7:4-8

4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

5 from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, 6 from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, 7 from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, 8 from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, and from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed.

† The text plainly says these were from the tribes of Israel. This was not describing Gentile Christians living thousands of years later.

† But the tribal listing is highly unusual and proves symbolism is being used. Dan is completely missing from the list.

† Ephraim is also absent and replaced with Joseph. In a literal census this would make no sense. The list is symbolic covenant imagery, not a modern Jewish headcount.

† Levi is included even though Levi was normally excluded from tribal land inheritance. This further proves the list is not meant as a literal tribal registration.

† Twelve is the covenant number throughout scripture. Twelve tribes multiplied by twelve apostles forms symbolic

completeness. The number 144,000 represents the complete covenant remnant preserved through the end of the age. (Matthew 19:28; Ephesians 2:19-22)

† Revelation constantly uses symbolic numbers. The seven heads, ten horns, seven spirits, and twelve stars are not literal objects. The 144,000 follows the same symbolic pattern. (Revelation 1:20; Revelation 12:1-3)

Matthew 24:16-22

16 then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.
17 Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get things out of his house. 18 And whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. 19 But woe to those women who are pregnant, and to those who are nursing babies in those days!
20 Moreover, pray that when you flee, it will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. 21 For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will again. 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

† Jesus was warning first century believers living in Judea. He was not speaking to a distant future generation.

† The elect were protected through obedience to Christ's warnings. They fled Jerusalem before its destruction.

† This matches the sealing of the 144,000 in Revelation 7. Both passages describe God's covenant people being preserved through the coming judgment upon Jerusalem.

† History records that believers escaped to Pella before Jerusalem fell in AD 70. Christ's warnings were fulfilled exactly

as spoken.

Historical References

† Eusebius wrote that the followers of Christ fled Jerusalem before the war and settled in Pella according to the Lord's warning.

† Josephus described the horrors of Jerusalem's destruction exactly as Jesus foretold in Matthew 24.

† Early Christian writers consistently connected Revelation's judgments with the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the Old Covenant age.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We must stop forcing Revelation into modern newspaper headlines and future speculation.

† Revelation was written to real believers facing real covenant judgment in their generation.

† Christ keeps His promises exactly when He says He will. When He said those things were near and at hand, He meant it.

† The sealing of the 144,000 reminds us that God knows those who belong to Him and preserves His people through every covenant transition.

Q & A Appendix

Q Were the 144,000 literal Jews?

A They were described as coming from the tribes of Israel, but the tribal listing itself is symbolic because Dan is missing, Ephraim is replaced, and the order is unusual. This was

symbolic covenant imagery representing the faithful remnant of Israel during the first century judgment. (Revelation 7:4-8)

Q Did the sealing protect them from physical death?

A No. The sealing protected them from covenant wrath and separation from God during Jerusalem's destruction. Many believers still physically died during that period. (Ezekiel 9:4-6; Revelation 9:4)

Q Why does this connect to Ezekiel 9?

A In Ezekiel 9 the righteous were marked before judgment fell upon Jerusalem. Revelation 7 uses the same covenant pattern, showing God's faithful remnant being identified before the destruction of the city. (Ezekiel 9:4-6; Revelation 7:1-3)

Q Was Revelation about our future today?

A No. Revelation repeatedly says the events were "shortly to come to pass" and "at hand." It was written to first century assemblies concerning the end of the Old Covenant age. (Revelation 1:1-3; Revelation 22:6-10)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Revelation 1:1-3; Revelation 7:1-8; Revelation 9:4; Revelation 12:1-3; Revelation 22:6-10; Ezekiel 9:4-6; Matthew 24:16-34; Luke 21:20-22; Hebrews 8:13; Matthew 19:28; Ephesians 2:19-22

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3.5; Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6; Clement of Alexandria, Stromata Book 6

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