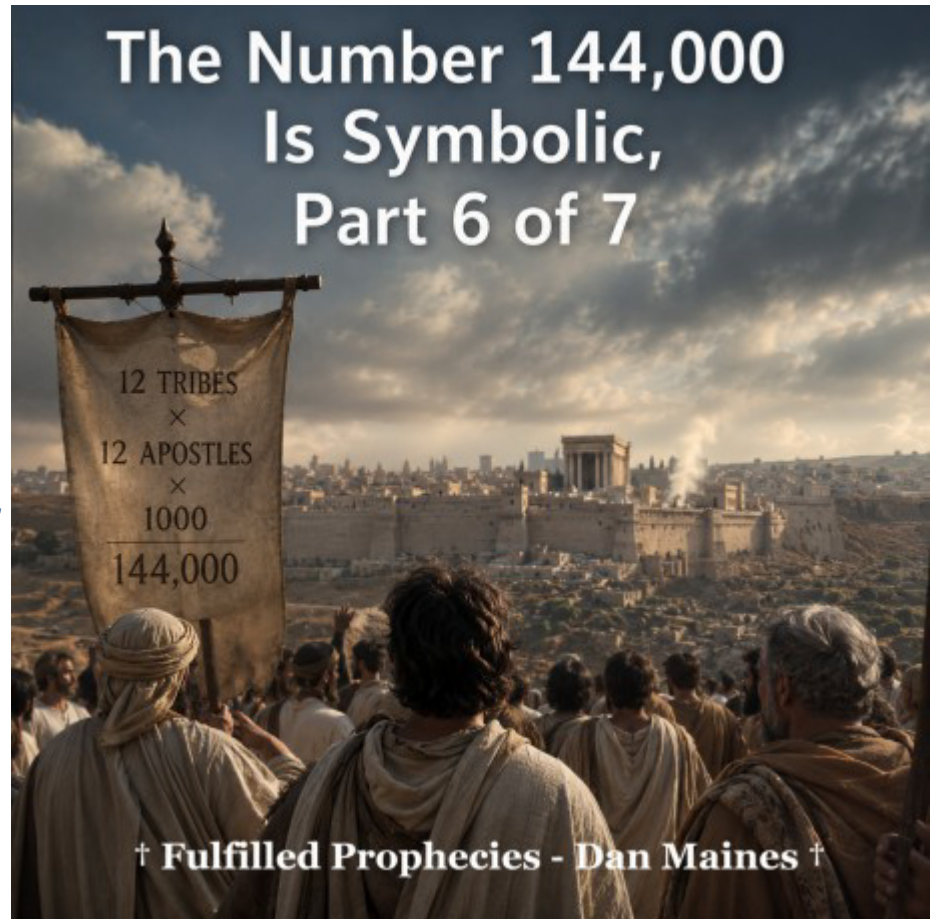


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**144,000 Series -
The Number
144,000 Is
Symbolic, Part 6 of
7**



By Dan Maines

The Number 144,000 Is Symbolic, Part 6 of 7

Part 1 of 7 - <https://fulfilledprophecies.com/topics/1431.html>

Part 2 of 7 - <https://fulfilledprophecies.com/topics/1432.html>

Part 3 of 7 - <https://fulfilledprophecies.com/topics/1433.html>

Part 4 of 7 - <https://fulfilledprophecies.com/topics/1434.html>

Part 5 of 7 - <https://fulfilledprophecies.com/topics/1435.html>

Part 6 of 7 - <https://fulfilledprophecies.com/topics/1436.html>

Part 7 of 7 - <https://fulfilledprophecies.com/topics/1437.html>

Introduction

† Many people assume the 144,000 in Revelation is a literal future number of ethnic Jews. But Revelation is filled with signs, symbols, pictures, and symbolic numbers from beginning to end. The number 144,000 is not random, and it was never meant to be taken literally.

† The number itself reveals the meaning. Revelation constantly uses symbolic numbers to communicate covenant truths, judgment, completeness, authority, and fulfillment. The 144,000 represents the complete redeemed covenant remnant sealed and protected in Christ before the destruction of Jerusalem.

† Once we understand how symbolic numbers work throughout Revelation, the literal future interpretation falls apart completely. The book interprets itself.

Revelation 7:4

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

† John did not say he counted literal Jews one by one. He heard the symbolic number of the sealed covenant remnant. (Revelation 1:1)

† The number is built from symbolic covenant numbers. Twelve tribes multiplied by twelve apostles multiplied by one thousand, representing fullness and completion.

† The New Testament church is repeatedly built upon both the tribes and apostles together as one covenant people in Christ. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

† The number one thousand throughout scripture commonly represents fullness, greatness, and completion rather than a

strict mathematical total. (Psalm 50:10)

† Revelation uses symbolic imagery constantly, beasts, horns, heads, lamps, stars, dragons, harlots, swords from mouths, and symbolic numbers. The 144,000 belongs to that same symbolic language.

Revelation 14:1

1 Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000 who had His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

† The 144,000 are shown standing victoriously with Christ on Mount Zion. This is covenant imagery showing redemption and victory in the kingdom.

† The forehead seal matches the covenant protection language found earlier in Revelation. It is the opposite of the mark of the beast. (Revelation 13:16-17)

† God marked His people symbolically throughout scripture. The forehead language points to ownership, identity, and covenant belonging. (Ezekiel 9:4)

† This was not about a future global population count. It was about God's complete covenant people preserved through the judgment coming upon Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:12-14

12 It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on the gates, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.

13 There were three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on

them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

† The New Jerusalem itself is built upon symbolic twelves. Twelve tribes and twelve apostles are united together in one covenant city.

† This matches the structure of the 144,000 perfectly. The number represents covenant fullness and completeness in Christ.

† Nobody interprets the New Jerusalem literally with giant pearl gates and streets of transparent gold floating in outer space. The imagery is symbolic covenant language.

† The church is the New Jerusalem, the bride, and the holy city. (Hebrews 12:22-24; Galatians 4:26)

Revelation 1:4

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before His throne,

† Revelation speaks of seven Spirits before God's throne. This is symbolic fullness of the Holy Spirit, not seven literal Holy Spirits.

† The number seven throughout Revelation represents fullness, completion, and perfection.

† If seven Spirits is symbolic, then consistency demands we allow other numbers in Revelation to function symbolically too.

Revelation 13:1

1 And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore.

Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten crowns, and on his heads were blasphemous names.

† The beast does not literally have seven physical heads and ten literal horns. These numbers symbolize power, kingdoms, and authority.

† Revelation itself explains that heads and horns represent kings and kingdoms. (Revelation 17:9-12)

† Literalism collapses quickly in Revelation because the book openly communicates through signs and symbols.

Revelation 7:1

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.

† The earth does not literally have four corners. The number four symbolizes universality and the whole land.

† This symbolic style appears throughout apocalyptic literature. The language communicates scope and completeness.

† The same symbolic approach applies to the 144,000.

Revelation 11:2-3

2 Leave out the courtyard which is outside the temple and do not measure it, because it has been given to the nations; and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. 3 And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for

1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”

† Forty two months and 1260 days are the same time period expressed symbolically in different ways.

† Revelation constantly uses symbolic prophetic time periods tied to covenant judgment and persecution.

† These numbers connect directly to Daniel's prophetic language concerning the destruction coming upon the old covenant system. (Daniel 7:25)

† The entire structure of Revelation depends upon symbolic apocalyptic language.

Historical References

† Irenaeus connected Revelation heavily with symbolic imagery and apocalyptic patterns in Against Heresies Book 5.

† Eusebius recorded that the early church understood Revelation as dealing primarily with the persecution surrounding the Roman Empire and Jerusalem's fall in Ecclesiastical History Book 3.

† Josephus described the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 with catastrophic imagery matching Revelation's judgment language in Wars of the Jews Book 6.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We don't need to fear missing out on being part of a literal 144,000 group because the number represents the complete redeemed people of God in Christ.

† Christ fulfilled and completed the old covenant age exactly as He promised within that generation. (Matthew 24:34)

† The symbolic nature of Revelation protects us from modern prophecy speculation and newspaper theology.

† The church today lives in the fulfilled kingdom Christ established after the old covenant system passed away.

Q & A Appendix

Q If the 144,000 is symbolic, why give a specific number?

A God often used symbolic numbers throughout scripture to communicate completeness, authority, fullness, or covenant structure. The 144,000 combines twelve tribes, twelve apostles, and one thousand to picture the complete covenant people of God. (Revelation 21:12-14)

Q Does symbolic mean unreal?

A No. Symbolic language points to real truths. The 144,000 symbolized real redeemed believers protected in Christ during the judgment of Jerusalem. Symbols communicate reality through imagery. (Revelation 1:1)

Q Why do futurists insist the number must be literal?

A Because futurism often mixes literal interpretation with symbolic interpretation inconsistently. But Revelation itself constantly interprets its own symbols and numbers symbolically. (Revelation 17:9-12)

Q Are the twelve tribes in Revelation 7 literal tribes?

A No. The tribal listing itself is symbolic and unusual. Dan is missing, Ephraim is omitted, and Joseph appears separately. This shows the list is theological and symbolic rather than a

literal census record.

Q What does the 144,000 ultimately represent?

A The complete covenant remnant redeemed in Christ, sealed and preserved through the transition from the old covenant world into the fully established kingdom of God. (Hebrews 12:22-28)

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

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Source Index

† Revelation 1:1, 4; Revelation 7:1, 4; Revelation 11:2-3; Revelation 13:1, 16-17; Revelation 14:1; Revelation 17:9-12; Revelation 21:12-14; Psalm 50:10; Ezekiel 9:4; Ephesians 2:19-22; Hebrews 12:22-28; Galatians 4:26; Daniel 7:25; Matthew 24:34

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book 5; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3; Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6

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