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## **Study #6 TAKE PLACE LATER**

### **– The 144,000 & The Tribulation Saints –**

## **OPENING**

In the book of Revelation we read of the seven year period coming upon planet earth that Jesus calls The Tribulation. It will be a time as never before where God pours out His wrath upon sinful, God-hating humanity. We began to read about these judgements last week – specifically the opening of the seven seals on the scroll, and then the seven trumpet blasts. There is still to come a final series of judgements that is even more fearful than all the other before it – the seven bowls of God’s wrath – and these will come near the end of the seven years.

However, throughout the book is intermingled several other stories, events and key people that help the reader to understand the book better...and specifically, that God is not all about wrath and judgement. During this intense and horrible time of judgement, we still see God’s mercy, faithfulness, grace and the proclamation of the Gospel.

This study will look at two key groups of people known as:

**(1) The 144,000 and (2) The Tribulation Saints.**

**Revelation 6:17** .....Who can survive this great time of Tribulation?

We discover who in chapter 7.

## **DISCOVER – The 144,000 - Read Revelation 7:1-8**

1. What two things occur after the sixth seal judgement occurs?

(1) Judgement is suspended for a period of time...

(2) A specific number of Jews is numbered and sealed. 12,000 x 12 tribes = 144,000. These are a specific number of Jewish people who have a specific purpose. This is not the church replacing Israel!

2. What is significant about being sealed?

**Read Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 1 Peter 1:5.**

A seal is symbolic of protection and it's something that God does. God takes 144,000 of these Jews and protects them from the wrath and judgement that is to come.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe in error that 144,000 is the number of people who will reign with Christ in heaven (they call this 'the heavenly hope')... the rest will live in paradise on earth ruled by Christ and the 144,000 ('the earthly hope'). They teach 'dual class' doctrine.

3. What is the purpose of these 144,000 Jews?

God has a specific purpose set for these particular Jews. In the Old Testament, remember reading about the Jebusites, the Edomites, the Moabites, the Babylonians and other ancient people? Where are they today? You cannot find them. Can you find an Israelite? Of course you can. Why??? This is because the Jews will play a prominent role in the end times. God is preserving Israel for a special purpose.

**Read Romans 11:1, 11-12, 25** – Right now God is primarily giving His message to the Gentiles, but when the full number have come into the kingdom and the church is raptured up, then Israel is going to be His focus again.

**Read Romans 14:1-5** – This is the next time they appear in the book, however now they are in heaven. Chapter 7 they are being sealed, and chapter 14 they are in heaven with the Lamb. We see that they were so zealous for God they never were married.

**Read Revelation 7:9** – So who were they and what is their purpose? As a result of their ministry, a large number of people will come to faith in Christ. Imagine 144,000 apostle Pauls going around this world preaching. You've seen what one Paul could do... multiply that by 144,000, and we see these Jews going around preaching during the time of Tribulation. The Gospel will still be preached!!!

## **DISCOVER – The Tribulation Saints - Read Rev. 7:9-16**

### **4. Who is this group of people?**

These appear to be those who will believe the preaching of the 144,000 Jews and also from the two witnesses in chapter 11 - and they are called Tribulation Saints. They are not the church...but rather are Gentiles who are saved during the Tribulation although they will die terrible martyr's deaths because of their belief in Jesus Christ.

### **5. What happens to them during the Tribulation period?**

**Read Revelation 13:7** – The Antichrist given authority to conquer them

**Read Revelation 20:4** – They were beheaded

**Read Revelation 6:9-11** – They had been slain

This scene is in heaven that John is witnessing. On earth they are being killed, butchered and martyred by the Antichrist for their faith in Christ and are coming into heaven.

The amazing truth however is that in their death, they actually overcome the enemy. **Read Revelation 12:11.**

### **6. After all they've been through for their new found faith in Christ, they now receive 3 things:**

- **Protection....** Now, finally, they are protected by God forevermore.
  
- **Refreshment...** Eternal refreshment in heaven.
  
- **Comfort...** God will wipe away every tear that they wept on earth.

## **The Difference Between the 24 Elders (the church) and the Tribulation Saints**

Some believe that the church will be raptured during the middle of the Tribulation, and they see these saints in chapter 7 as the church. But I don't think that is correct. There are differences that are good to understand here. The 24 Elders is a picture of us – the church.

1. **The Church is kept out of the Tribulation.**  
These saints come out of the middle of it.
2. **The Elders are dressed in white.**  
These saints literally have a throw around robe.
3. **The Elders are seated on thrones around the Lamb.**  
These saints are standing.
4. **The Elders are wearing crowns – of life, of glory, of suffering.**  
These saints do not wear crowns.
5. **The Elders each had a harp.**  
These saints hold palms.
6. **The Elders sang a new song.**  
These saints are not singing but shouting aloud.
7. **The Elders are pictured as kings and priests, who reign and rule with Christ.**  
These saints are pictured as servants of God.

### **CLOSING THOUGHT:**

If anything motivates you to live for Christ, it ought to be this: You do not want to be left behind. The first Sunday after Jesus raptures the church, church buildings are going to be packed because there will be many people who will then realise they were counterfeit Christians and never were saved. They now have been left behind and what a terrible, terrible time it's going to be. This is why we ought to be ready today and trust in the Saviour now before it all begins.

**Next study....**

**Study #7 – WHAT WILL TAKE PLACE LATER**

– The Two Witnesses –