

NOTE TO THOSE SEEING THIS STUDY ON THE WEB SITE:

Our aim is to regularly post a new lesson on the first part of each month. So if you wish to follow this course of study, please check regularly each month. If no new lesson appears at the beginning of a particular month, it indicates that we were unable to get it ready in time. In such a case, please check for it after the first of the following month. Your questions or comments are welcomed and will be responded to as much as possible

PATHWAY OF LIGHT STUDY COURSE

by R. W. Young

“But the path of the just is as a shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov. 4:18)

“Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.” Rev 1:3

Study 14, Chapter 12

In the previous lesson we considered the unfolding of events leading up to the Day of Yahweh as seen under the opening of the first 6 seals of the scroll that appears to be the title deed to this earth. The opening of the last, or 7th seal, will be seen in chapter 8. We now come to the 7th chapter of Revelation, which is a parenthetical chapter telling us of the sealing of Yahweh’s servants before the earth experiences that time called “the Great Tribulation” and “the Time of Jacob’s Trouble” the events of which begin to be seen with the opening of the 7th seal.

VERSES 1-3 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

Here we see the four winds of the earth that bring the Great Tribulation are ready to blow upon the earth. But before they are released Yahweh first seals His servants in their foreheads. This brings to memory two things. One is how Yahweh protected His people when He sent the plagues upon Egypt, including protecting the first born of all who believed His word and, therefore, put the blood of the slain lamb on their doors before Yahweh passed over Egypt to destroy all the first born.

The other thing it brings to mind is how He protected His in the time of the prophet Ezekiel. Yahweh said, “Cause them that have charge over the city

[Jerusalem] to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand". But before He actually told them to, "Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women", Yahweh told another angel to, "Go through the midst of the city ... and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men the sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." Then, He told the destroying messengers to not come near any man upon whom the mark was set. (We read this interesting account in Ezekiel chapter 9.)

So it is that, even though they will often experience much trouble and persecution in this world, in times of direct judgment Yahweh always protects His own servants. Thus in this chapter in Revelation we will see that just before He unleashes the winds of the Great Tribulation on the earth, just as He did in Ezekiel's time, Yahweh will set a mark upon the foreheads of His true servants. In this case the mark is called, "the seal of the living God".

As we will see later on, when we come to the 14th chapter of Revelation, this seal is His name. In fact, we will see that not only those sealed at the time we read of in this part of the 7th chapter, but all His servants, will have His name in their foreheads for all eternity. This is in keeping with Yahshua's promise to overcomer: "I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God". (Rev 3:12)

How wonderful it is to know that Yahweh protects His own servants whenever He sends actual judgment upon the earth. We are told in Proverbs 22:3 that, "A prudent *man* foresees the evil, and hides himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished." The prudent man will store up and otherwise prepare ahead for the evil times or trouble that he sees is coming. It is good to prepare for troublesome times when you see them coming. However, more important than anything else is the preparation of walking with Yahweh in obedience to His commands while trusting in Him to be our ultimate protector and provider, for He indeed cares for His won.

VERSES 4-8 **And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Asher were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasseh were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zebulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.***

There has been much speculation as to who the 144,000 are. There are those who teach that these are men born Jewish who will evangelize the world after the "church" is taken up to meet Yahshua when He comes immediately before the Great Tribulation as invisible to the rest of the world. I have shown before that this idea of a pre-tribulation

rapture at some kind of secrete coming of Yahshua is not in line with the facts of the scripture, but is built upon mere suppositions being read into the scripture.

There are others, such as the “Jehovah’s Witnesses”, who say 144,000 are some special class of leaders who make up that literal number and that they are the only ones that will go to heaven while the rest of the “Witnesses” remain on earth after the none “Jehovah Witnesses” are destroyed. I know of no scriptures used by them to actually prove this. It is just an arbitrary interpretation.

Who, then, are the 144,000? We cannot say with complete definitiveness, but by comparing scripture with scripture, I believe we can be reasonably sure who they are.

Keeping in mind, first of all, that the book of Revelation is highly symbolical in its meaning, we can get a pretty good idea of who the 144,000 are, or what they represent. First, we note that they are seen not in heaven, but upon the earth just before the “four angles, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea” are allowed to do so.

We see them again in Revelation chapter 14. At this time they are seen standing with the Lamb on Mt. Zion. Mt Zion is, of course, Jerusalem, or in Jerusalem. Hebrews 12 indicates that Mt. Zion also stands for the “Church” and the New Jerusalem, which are the same according to Rev chapter 21. Since the Greek kai, generally translated as “and”, often also carries the meaning of “even”, Hebrews 12:22-23 can be read we, “are come unto mount, even unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and congregation of the first born”

As previously noted, certainly the New Jerusalem is seen in Rev 21 to represent the Congregation, “the Bride, the Lamb’s wife”. (Rev 21:9) She is seen with 12 gates each of which has on it the name of one of the 12 tribes of Israel. (Rev 21:12) This indicates clearly that those who make up the Congregation are what Paul calls “the Israel of Yahweh” (Gal. 6:16). They are the true Israel as one new man (Eph 2:15) made up of those who are by natural birth either Jew or Gentile, but who in Messiah are “neither Jew nor Gentile” (“Jew nor Greek”- Eph 3:28), but are the new creation (2 Cor 5:17) just as the Jerusalem seen in Revelation is the New Jerusalem. So, the Bride of Messiah – “the Church” – in Rev 21 is seen to be made up of the 12 tribes of Israel as the true Israel of Yahweh.

In chapter 14 The 144,000 are described further as those who “follow the Lamb where so ever He goes.” This certainly describes true believers in the Messiah as the true Congregation, for to be a disciple of Yahshua nothing we must follow Him. They are also described there as “redeemed from among men - the first fruits unto Yahweh and to the Lamb”. This is certainly a fit description of the true Congregation. (1 Pet 1:18; James 1:18)

All of these things taken together seem to clearly identify the 144,000 – twelve 12,000 from each tribe – as the Congregation on earth. It is the Congregation that will

exit just before the Great Tribulation being sealed to protect it from the plagues that will occur at that time. You might well call it the “Church” militant. In any case, it is a representation of the Great Tribulation Congregation of Yahweh – the Congregation of Yahshua.

Why it is typified as being 144,000? Will there literally be 144,000 – as 12,000 from each tribe? Not likely. More likely is that this number is also figurative.

There were 12 original patriarchs from Seth to Noah and his family. And there were twelve from Shem to Jacob. Also, there were 12 patriarchs as the sons of Jacob (Israel) whose descendents made up the 12 twelve tribes of the nation of Israel. There were twelve original apostles who were told that they would sit on twelve thrones ruling the twelve tribes of Israel. Someone also noted that, “The sun which ‘rules’ the day, and the moon and stars which ‘govern’ the night, do so by their passage through the twelve signs of the Zodiac which completes the great circle of the heavens of 360 (12 x 30) degrees or divisions, and thus govern the year.” In any case, 12 is a perfect number and it is the commonly accepted view among those who study the symbolism of numbers in the Bible that 12 represents perfect government or ruler-ship.

Why exactly 12,000 from each tribe is not entirely clear. But that it symbolizes government is fairly certain. But since the Congregation of Yahshua is to rule or govern all nations along with King Yahshua, and since it is pictured in Rev 21 as having 12 gates each of which has a name of one of the 12 tribes it is not surprising that the number 12 is prominently used here. Perhaps the figure 144,000 is used to emphasize the fullness and completeness of the true Congregation. 144,000 is the perfect number 12 multiplied by the perfect number 12, thus, designating completeness, and then, multiplied by 1000 to give it magnitude. (It is interesting that the number 144,000 is also significant in some New Age religious movements.)

What the exact significance of the number 144,000 is cannot be said. Yet the explanations given above of 12 being a perfect number representative of Yahweh’s government, and this number being multiplied by 12 since that government is made up from the twelve tribes of Israel (which the Congregation is represented as) and then that being multiplied by 1000 (which is a number used in places to indicate magnitude) seems to me to be the best explanation. What is rather clear is that this 144,000 in chapter 7, and further described in chapter 14, are the redeemed from the earth and are those who make up the New Jerusalem or Bride of the Lamb, His Congregation, as it will exist on earth during the Great Tribulation period.

One final note on this section is that the tribe of Dan and Ephraim are not included in the 144,000. The Ephraim’s father’s name - “Joseph” - is found in place of his name. Why Dan is not included is not clear. Some ancient commentators theorized that it was because the Anti-Christ would come out of Dan. Another, more likely, reason is because Dan was one of the first of the tribes to go into idolatry and was small in number, and may have combined with Naphtali. That Dan is not mentioned is clear, but the why is not. So we best just note the omission and leave it at that.

VERSES 9-17 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped Yahweh, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? **14** And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. **15** Therefore are they before the throne of Yahweh, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. **16** They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. **17** For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and Yahweh shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Here we see what at first appears to be another, different group of people. However, on closer examination we may conclude that they are not an entirely different group, but rather a different representation of the same group. Let's consider the matter of who they are.

Reading this section of scripture does not give the impression that this group is symbolical, as those in the section just preceding this seem to be. They are described as "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." Therefore, they would include some from both the many Gentile nations as well as some from the nation of Israel. They also came out of the Great Tribulation. (The KJV mistakenly leaves out the definite article "the".)

In reviewing the matter of the 144,000 from the section just before this, we clearly indentified them with the Congregation. We saw that the Bride the Lamb's wife (which is the Congregation and is called "the Israel of Yahweh" in Gal 6:16") is seen to have the names of the twelve tribes of Israel when represented as the New Jerusalem, just as the 144,000 do as seen in the first part of this chapter. We also saw that the 144,000 have His name ("the seal of the Living God") on their foreheads. The 144,000 are called "the servants of our God" (in verse 3). They are spoken of as "redeemed from the earth -the first fruits to Yahweh and the Lamb", and as following the Lamb where ever He goes. Taken together, and individually, these things clearly identify them as being Yahshua's Congregation. Yet they seem to be the Congregation symbolized. They are spoken of by a number that symbolizes government.

That the 144,000 will be in the Great Tribulation is clear from the fact that they are sealed before the winds of trouble are permitted to blow. Also we read in chapter 9:4

of a command given during that time to hurt, “only those men which have not the seal of Yahweh in their forehead”, showing that the ones thus sealed are still here during this tribulation plague, but protected from it. So, I repeat that, the 144,000 clearly seems clearly to represent the Congregation as she exists on earth during the Great Tribulation.

When we come to consider this great multitude we see they are not here seen to be in the earth during the tribulation, but are seen in Yahweh’s presence. They are “before the throne of Yahweh, and serve Him day and night in His temple.” They are called those “which came out of the Great Tribulation and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” This, of course, identifies them as also being the Congregation. Furthermore, they are His servants just as the 144,000 are. When we come to chapter 22 we will see that as His servants they have the same seal in their foreheads as was said to be put upon the foreheads of the 144,000.

Considering these things, I believe there is much reason to believe they and the 144,000 are the same group. The 144,000 are clearly those who follow Yahshua during the Great Tribulation. They are clearly His Congregation as it exists on earth during that time, but are represented in symbolism as 12,000 out of each of the 12 twelve tribes of Israel. The great multitude is also His Congregation, but now glorified. It is now spoken of in literal terms, being His Congregation after it comes out of the Great Tribulation. So, it is my conclusion that, since both groups are clearly Yahshua’s Congregation, the first section of this chapter is merely representing Yahshua’s Congregation symbolically as she is seen on earth during that time of great trouble and the other is representing her in literal terms as she is seen after having come out of that time of trouble.

I know that those who teach the false theory of pre-tribulation rapture say the 144,000 in this chapter are 144,000 Jewish evangelists that go forth to preach the gospel during the Great Tribulation, after the “Church” has been taken out. They, then, apparently do wonders in bringing to salvation a great multitude which no man can number, even after (what they consider) the restraining power of the Holy Spirit in the “Church” has been taken out. Under that theory the 144,000 are 12,000 literal natural born Jews out of each of the twelve tribes. Their great evangelistic work, under that theory, accounts for the great multitude saved during the great tribulation.

The problems with this are manifold. First, the pre-tribulation rapture theory is plainly false. Second, the scriptures indicate that once Yahshua returns, the door is closed, as, for instance, in the parable of the ten virgins and their lamps. Also, since they teach that the Holy Spirit in the “Church” is the power that now restrains, or keeps back the appearance of the man of sin (the beast of Revelation 13), it makes no sense that after the “Church”, and, thereby, this restraining power is removed there would be so much power that during the short period called the Great Tribulation a great multitude that no man could number would be saved.

If most people reject Messiah now while there is still no beast power commanding their death if they do not take his mark (which we will read about later), how is it that so

many who did not accept Him prior to that time will get saved after the Holy Spirit in the Congregation is taken out? The Bible even says that when the man of sin appears Yahweh will send strong delusion to those who had not a love of the truth that they might believe a lie. How then will they end up becoming saved.

No, even though it would give a nice, fanciful interpretation to this whole chapter, there is absolutely no real scriptural evidence for the theory held by the pre-tribulation rapture teachers, but clear evidence against it. So, again I affirm that both these groups seen in Revelation 7 are the same entity.

In the first case we have the Congregation on earth before she enters the Great Tribulation. There, as being the Israel of Yahweh, she is identified as such. And as being here portrayed as such, as His people a kingly, priestly nation, she is symbolized by the number of 144,000, thereby, portraying her in her governing role, even as later on in Revelation she is seen as the New Jerusalem, the city that will rule the entire earth, and seen with the twelve names of the twelve tribes of Israel on her gates.

In the last case we have the same entity – the Congregation – seen literally as the great multitude that no man could number. But now she is no longer existing on earth before the Great Tribulation, but now in the presence of Yahweh after that time of trouble and great testing is over.

So, I repeat, it is two representations of the same Congregation, one in symbolical representation on earth before the Great Tribulation, and the other in literal representation after the Great Tribulation, thereby, showing two different phases of her existence. This we conclude especially by the fact that both groups have various identifying features that are true only of the true Congregation of Yahshua.