**(BSPro033a)**  **WHO ARE THE 144,000 ISRAELITE VIRGINS?** **(Revelation 7)**

**I. THE CONTEXT (BACKGROUND) FOR THE 144000 ISRAELITE VIRGINS**

Revelation 7:1 - **"And after these things"** (the signs of the 6th Seal) - These words introduce a new vision.

- The 6 Seals explained the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Satan’s wicked influence on

 mankind has been exposed.

- This new explanatory vision shows God's dealing with His own people under the 6th Seal in

 preparation for the final worldwide crises and Jesus’ 2nd Coming on the clouds of heaven. (See

 Rev. 6:16, 17 / BSPro032-Breaking of the 7 Seals).

Hebrews 1:7,13,14 - **Four Angels** - Angels are ever present agents of God in the affairs of the earth. They are God’s

 spiritual (unseen) workers on the Earth in the battle against Evil. They are also God’s servants to

 minister unto those who believe in God unto salvation - those who will inherit the eternal kingdom.

 - These 4 angels keep the destructive powers of Satan in check. Once they stop their protective work

 the world will be thrown into utter chaos. (Dan 10:13-20)

Ezekiel 7:2,14-16 - **Four Corners of the Earth** – In Ezekiel’s vision the whole of Israel and everything in it would be

 destroyed by the enemy – nothing would escape God’s wrath over wickedness.

 These four angels in Rev 7 have therefore charge of the whole earth (North, East, South & West).

 (See Job 1:19; Revelation 20:8)

Jeremiah 4:11-13 - **Four Winds** - Wind in Bible Prophecy denotes war / strife. By these 4 angels God keeps Satan’s

 destructive forces over the world in check not to destroy mankind. (Jeremiah 49:35-37; Job 1 & 2).

Revelation 7:2-3 - **Angel from the East** - This is the Cosmic East, the direction from which Jesus will come toward the

 earth at His 2nd Coming. (See Matt 24:7)

- With the help of other angels, he first needs to seal (mark) God’s people to protect them from the

 Strife and destruction that Satan is to unleash on the world. (See Ezekiel 9:4-6;

- God’s wrath is also to be is poured out on the wicked in the form of the 7 last plagues and this

 sealing by God’s angels is to protect them from the disastrous plagues. (Rev 15, 16)

**II. DESCRIPTION OF GOD’S SERVANTS THAT ARE TO BE SEALED**

**A. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 144,000 THAT WERE SEALED IN REV. 7**

Revelation 7:4-8 – Three Characteristics are given about the 144000 in this vision:

**(1)** **Heard**, John did not see or count the people who were to be sealed but only heard the number.

**(2) 12 Tribes of Israel** - They seem to be from certain specified tribes of Israel and not all the tribes.

- Dan and Efraim that received land in Canaan are excluded from this group.

 - Levi is included while not allowed to have shared in the distribution of land in Canaan.

 - Joseph is included as a separate tribe, along with Manasseh (his son).

 - Since Revelation is a NT book, not an OT book, this incongruity with literal Israel should therefore

 be interpreted in the light of Christ and the New Covenant and not OT literal Israel. (See (BSPro-

 025-The Israel of God in the NT and Spiritual Discernment; BSPro-027-Israel, Babylon and

 Armageddon)

**(3)** **144000 and 12000** – Each tribe has an equal number of sealed persons, irrespective of their size

 and descendants in the OT.

 - **Number 12 in Bible = Meaning (1) government / leadership** - 12 Tribes; 12 Rulers (Ishmael);

 12 Disciples; 12 Thrones; 12 District Governors (Solomon); 12 Spies.

 **= Meaning (2) complete / perfection** - 12 Springs (Elim); Ezekiel’s Altar 12

X 12 Cubits; 12 baskets of broken pieces of bread; 12 years of bleeding.

 12 Gates, 12 Foundations; 12 crops of Fruits from Tree of Life.

 - **Number 12000 in Bible = perfect army battalion size ready for battle** – 12000 soldiers from

 each tribe: 12000 men to pursue David; 12000 Edomites killed in battle;

 12000 horses; 12 legions of angels (to support Jesus).

 - **Number 144000** - Only used in Revelation for a specific group of people to be sealed before the

 winds of strife are let loose.

- They represent God’s perfect army / government on earth that are made ready

 (sealed) for battle under the banner of Jesus and His truth against the spiritual

 evil forces of Satan spreading falsehood among the nations.

**B. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 144,000 THAT WERE SEALED IN REV. 14**

Revelation 14:1-5 - Seven Characteristics are given about the 144,000:

**(1) They come out of the 12 Tribes of Israel** -

 - **Revelation 2:9; 3:9** - According to Jesus there are people who claim to be Jews, but they are

 not. The 144,000 are considered to be the True Israel. What qualifies a true Israelite?

 - **Romans 9:6-8** - A fleshly descendant of Abraham is not necessarily a true Israelite in God's eyes.

 - **Galatians 3:27-29** - Those baptized in Christ are the true descendants of Abraham and heirs to

 the promise – they are true Israelites.

 - **Galatians 6:15,16** - All who share in the New Creation (new birth) whether Jew or Gentile is a

 true Israelite.

**(BSPro033a - continue) WHO ARE THE 144,000 ISRAELITE VIRGINS? (Revelation 7)**

 - **Romans 9:24-26** - God's People are both out of the Jewish nation as well as from the Gentiles.

 Together they form true (Spiritual) Israel.

**(2) They are Virgins** - Salvation is based on Faith in Jesus alone, not being a literal Virgin. What is a

Spiritual Virgin?

 - **2 Corinthians 11:2** - Those accepting Christ as Saviour are considered virgins betrothed to

 Christ the Bridegroom.

 - **Revelation 19:7,8** - The Virgin Bride (Church) prepares for the Wedding - Meeting her Husband

 Jesus at 2nd Coming.

 **(3) They are Servants of God -**

 - **1 Peter 2:9** - All who have accepted Jesus by faith from the Gentiles is part of God's True Israel.

 Their duties are to be kings and priests, spreading the gospel - telling others of their salvation

 from sin.

 - **Romans 6:8-18** - Everyone who have been baptized into Christ has become a servant of

 righteousness for God.

**(4) They are Redeemed from the Earth and follow the Lamb wherever He goes** –

 - **Rev 14:6-12** – They did not worship the Beast or its Image and did not receive its mark on their

 forehead or hands. They are God’s last day people battling against the Beast and his image.

 - **Revelation 5:9** - The 24 Elders also sang a new song of Redemption saying the Lamb

 redeemed people from all tribes, languages, peoples and nations by His blood.

 - No other beings in the universe were redeemed, but only those belonging to this earth where

 Jesus was crucified.

**(5) They are First Fruits for God and the Lam** -

 - **James 1:18** - Everyone born of the Spirit through the Word of Truth, are considered part of the

 First Fruits. Among the beings of the universe, only those who were redeemed by the blood of

 Jesus and believe in Him as their Saviour are God's special people, not only the 144,000.

 - **Romans 8:19-23** - Everyone reborn from the Spirit considered part of the First Fruit among the

 universe's humans. Creation (Nature) itself will benefit from the redemption of Man from sin.

**(6) They are Sealed on their foreheads with the Name of God and the Lamb** -

 - **Ephesians 1:13** - Once we have accepted the Gospel of Christ we are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

 - **Isaiah 8:16** - It is the work of the Holy Spirit to seal the Law of God in the hearts of His followers.

 - **Revelation 2:17** - To him who overcomes (listen / obey the Spirit) will receive a new name.

 - **Revelation 3:10-13** - To him who overcomes (obeying the voice of the Spirit), he will receive

 God's Name, the Lamb's Name, and the Holy City's name on his forehead. This reward is to all,

 not just the 144,000.

**(7) They are perfect and without guile** -

 - **1 Peter 2:11-16** - God's people should be without deception. Our conduct before others should

 reflect the character of God as a testimony for truth and a testimony against evil.

- **Ephesians 4:25-32** - People belonging to Jesus Christ will put away all evil whether spoken or

 acted, but do and say only what is edifying, reflecting God's character of truth loving and

 forgiveness.

**III. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE 144000 AND THE GREAT MULTITUDE**

**Revelation 7:9,10** - A next vision is introduced, and John sees a great multitude before God's throne, giving praise to

God and the Lamb for their salvation. They are more than 144000, unnumberable.

**Revelation 7:11,12** - All the angels, 4 Living creatures and 24 Elders worship God acknowledging that His plan of

 saving mankind from sin on the earth has been a success.

 - They praise Him saying: "Blessing and Glory and Wisdom, Thanksgiving and Honour and Power

 and Might be to God forever and ever."

**Revelation 7:13,14** - One of the Elders asked John who the people in white robes represent and where do they come

 from? He did not know. The elder answered - they were saved by the Lamb's blood. (Rev 3:4,5; 6:11)

**Revelation 7:15-17** - Therefore (because of what the Lamb has done), they will always be very close to their Saviour.

 - The Lamb was their Saviour from Sin and the power of Satan, which was death.

- Now He gives them eternal peace and rest (eternal life in His presence). (Rev 21:3; 22:3,4)

 - They will never suffer heart ache again - He will shepherd them forever. (Rev 21:4)

**IV. SUMMARY**

(1) The 144000 share much in common with the great multitude – especially redemption through the blood of Jesus.

(2) Although part of the great multitude, the 144000 are distinct since they receive God’s seal of protection before

 entering the final conflict between good and evil on the earth. They live during the latter part of the 6th seal, just

 before the 7th Seal is broken. (Silence in Heaven – gathering of God’s saints from the earth)

(3) They resist the mark and or the number of the Beast and its image on their forehead and hands. (Rev 20:4)

(4) They will be the living righteous who will see Jesus come with all His holy angels at His 2nd Coming to gather His

 saints. (See Hebrews 11:39,40; Matthew 24:29-31; 1 Corinthians 15:50-56; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).