

Interestingly, this mystery-group only appears in one other place in the Bible – in the fourteenth chapter of the book of Revelation to be exact. Chapter fourteen is one of the “mini-visions” that further explain the last half of Daniel’s seventieth week. The chapter shows this group standing together with Jesus before God’s throne and singing a new song that only they can learn. Not only that, the context of the previous chapter shows them in Heaven just as the final 3 ½ years of the Antichrist begin.

The purpose of this mini-vision is to affirm that these “servants of God” are already in Heaven before mankind is warned not to take the mark of the Beast. As to their identity, we are told that they are undefiled, without deceit, and without fault before the throne of God. We are also told that they were redeemed from among men, that they are “first-fruits” to both God and the Lamb, and that they follow the Lamb wherever He goes. It is noteworthy that after Paul described the rapture, he wrote, “And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

Their virginity is another important aspect of their spiritual identity. Therefore, Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth, “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy; for I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” Unlike those who are of this world, they sought none of the other “gods and goddesses” that the world has worshipped.

As to their number, the Greek text uses the word chiliades, meaning “thousands,” instead of chilioi, the singular for thousand. The plural form is used in every instance, including 12 thousands (chiliades) from each of the twelve tribes. So if the 144 thousands (chiliades) were meant to mean a specific number, the Spirit would have used the same Greek word used when Jesus fed the five thousand (chilioi).

The fact that there are 144 thousands (an indefinite number), and not 144,000 (a definite number), symbolizes an innumerable multitude. So even though this multitude is without number, they do have a number. Twelve is the number of God’s people (twelve tribes). It is also the number associated with delegated authority (twelve apostles). When multiplied, we get 144, symbolizing those from among God’s people who will have authority to reign with Christ in that Day.

Therefore, the 144 thousands is the official numerical designation of the Bride of Christ. This symbolic number was not meant to confuse us, but to enlighten us. It speaks to the mystery of Christ, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, male or female, bond or free, but a new creation in Christ. The apostle Paul affirmed this new covenant truth when he wrote, "For they are not all Israel who are of Israel." The Amplified Version reads, "For it is not everybody who is a descendant of Jacob [Israel] who belongs to [the true] Israel."

The flip side is also true. There are those who are not the physical descendants of Jacob who belong to the true Israel of God. In the light of new covenant realities, the true "Israel of God" consists of those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, the Israel of God is a "faith thing," not a "natural thing." It has nothing to do with biological descent. Instead, it has everything to do with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This does not diminish the promises made to the natural descendants of Abraham. The nation of Israel will stand at the head of the natural nations in that Day. But by then, they will have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ just as His Bride did prior to that Day. The truth that the Bride of Christ is represented by this symbolic number is further confirmed by the following passages of Scripture:

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb...Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits. (Rev. 21:9-12, 14 and 17)

In John 14:1-3, Jesus told His disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it

were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”