

# THE 144 000

WHO WILL BE MEMBERS  
OF THAT ILLUSTRIOUS COMPANY?

2019 Edition

Also includes a series on "The Great Multitude"

**Source:**

The 144000  
June 1988 Printing  
with some revisions by F. T. Wright  
The Great Multitude  
The Messenger of Living Righteousness  
September to December, 1970

**Cover:**

1988 Printing

**Illustrations:**

Some: 1988 Printing  
Others: Heinrich Halmen,  
Sabbath Rest Advent Church

**Fonts:**

Dutch 801 XBd BT  
Swiss 721 BdRnd BT  
Dutch 801 RmHd BT  
Liberation Sans  
Liberation Sans Narrow  
Linux Biolinum  
Linux Libertine



October 2020

[www.srac.info](http://www.srac.info)

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## Cover Picture

**T**HE One Hundred and Forty Four Thousand will rise to the highest levels of mental and spiritual perfection ever experienced by mortals other than Jesus Christ.

As gold and silver emerge from the refiner's fire gleaming in spotless purity and perfection, so the members of this illustrious company will be purified in the furnace of affliction. They will know:

- The anguish of utter rejection by those to whom they brought salvation,
- The bitterness of human hatred,
- The shattering impact of betrayal by the very ones they felt they could trust,
- The unspeakable agony of feeling utterly cut off and forgotten of God, and
- The unutterable despair which will all but overwhelm them as the Lord's work appears to fail.
- They will have to endure weariness, hunger and delay.

The test will seem to hard for them to bear, but the Lord's eye will be upon His people and He will bring them off more than conquerors to shine forever in His kingdom.



THE  
144000

WHO WILL BE MEMBERS  
OF THAT ILLUSTRIOUS COMPANY?



# 1. The Specifications

THE subject of the one hundred and forty-four thousand has been of special interest to Bible students ever since the emergence of Adventism.

This is understandable since the one hundred and forty-four thousand are the ones who live right up until Jesus' return and actually make His return possible. Since Adventism is very concerned about finishing the gospel work on earth, it is essential that the purpose and identity of the one hundred and forty-four thousand be made plain.

However, as is the case with so many Bible themes, this topic is also the subject of various theories and misconceptions in circulation today. Some of these will be dealt with in this publication and be examined by evidences from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. The main question that will be dealt with is,

“Who will belong to this group of the one hundred and forty-four thousand?”

One view says that the one hundred and forty-four thousand will consist of two groups: of all those who died in the faith of the third angel's message together with those who live right through the time of Jacob's trouble to the end and never die.

The second view states that those alone who live right through the time of Jacob's trouble to the end will compose that final company.

In *The Great Controversy* is a description of the experiences of the one hundred and forty-four thousand. The most logical approach is to list these experiences first. Then, if we want to know whether or not any particular group of people will be part of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, we have only to compare their experience with that of God's final

company. If the two sets of experiences match, then the group in question will definitely be a part of that final people. If the experiences do not line up, then the two groups of people must be different and distinct from each other.

Let us now read and see what the standard is in determining who the one hundred and forty-four thousand are:

**The Great Controversy, p. 648-649:**

Upon the crystal sea before the throne, that sea of glass as it were mingled with fire,—so resplendent is it with the glory of God,—are gathered the company that have...

**Revelation 15**

<sup>2</sup> ...gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.

With the Lamb upon Mount Zion, “having the harps of God,” they stand, the hundred and forty and four thousand that were redeemed from among men; and there is heard, as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of a great thunder,

**Revelation 14**

<sup>2</sup> ...the voice of harpers harping with their harps.

And they sing “a new song” before the throne, a song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb—a song of deliverance. None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience—an experience such as no other company have ever had.

<sup>4</sup> These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes.

These, having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as...

<sup>4</sup> ...the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

**Revelation 7**

<sup>14</sup> These are they which came out of great tribulation.

They have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob’s trouble; they have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God’s

judgments. But they have been delivered, for they have...

<sup>14</sup> ...washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

**Revelation 14**

<sup>5</sup> In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before...God.

**Revelation 7**

<sup>15</sup> Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them.

They have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat, and they themselves have endured suffering, hunger, and thirst.

This is the information. Now we will list eight specifications used to identify who these people are.

1. They are those who will have “gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.”
2. They will have had “an experience such as no other company have ever had.”
3. They will have been “translated from the earth, from among the living.”
4. They will be “counted as the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.”
5. They will “have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation.”
6. They will “have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob’s trouble.”
7. They will “have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God’s judgments.”
8. They will “have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat...” This means that they have actually seen the plagues fall and witnessed their effect upon the

earth.

So, here we have eight specifications just as they are listed in the paragraph from *The Great Controversy*. Let us now examine them one at a time.

## 1. The Victory over the Beast

The one hundred and forty-four thousand will be those who have...

**The Great Controversy, p. 648:**

...gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.

The question is:

“Can those who have died in the faith of the third angel’s message fulfill this specification?”

It must be immediately evident that they cannot. How could they have gotten the victory over the beast, his image, his mark, and his number when these things did not even exist in their day? Here are the evidences to support this conclusion.

The beast is the Papacy.<sup>1</sup> One of the most outstanding characteristics of the Papacy is to seek the support of the state in the enforcement of her dogmas:

**The Great Controversy, p. 443:**

In order to control the consciences of the people, she [the early church] sought the support of the secular power. The result was the papacy, a church that controlled the power of the state and employed it to further her own ends, especially for the punishment of “heresy.”

The word *image* means likeness.

**The Great Controversy, p. 445:**

When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in com-

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Great Controversy*, p. 439, 443, 445.

mon, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image [likeness] of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result.

The above paragraph explains that the image is a future event. Even today the Protestant churches do not have the complete backing of the United States government. When the third angel's message began, the papacy was not and still is not a world power with the full backing of the governments of the world. So, those who died in the third angel's message never had the opportunity to get the victory over the beast and his image.

The mark of the beast has not yet been set up:

**The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 977:**

The Sabbath question is to be the issue in the great final conflict, in which all the world will act a part (ST March 22, 1910).

Sunday-keeping is not yet the mark of the beast, and will not be until the decree goes forth causing men to worship this idol sabbath. The time will come when this day will be the test, but that time has not come yet (MS 118, 1899).

These statements (written in 1910 and 1899), show that those who died in the third angel's message up till that time could not have gotten the victory over a mark that had not yet been put into operation. Even up till the present time, a Sunday law that is enforced on a worldwide basis does not exist. So, those who died in the faith of the third angel's message never had the opportunity to get the victory over the mark of the beast.

A discussion of the number 666—the number of his name—requires a separate study of its own, but something can be said on this point. In the pamphlet, *A Word to the Little Flock*, there is a brief description of the sequence of events during the time of trouble. In this sequence it is not until after the

buy and sell decree that:

**A Word to the Little Flock, p. 19:**

...the number of the Image Beast was made up...

This leaves us with no doubt that the number 666 is still future.

In order to be a part of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, one must have gotten the victory over the beast, his image, his mark, and his number. The facts indicate that no one, living or dead, has done that yet. Therefore, those who died in the third angel's message cannot be a part of the one hundred and forty-four thousand.



The image of the beast will not be formed until worship on Sunday is enforced by law.

Then will come the battle with the beast and his image, and the victory will be gained over them, their mark, and the number of their name.

No one can engage in that battle or gain that victory till these developments take place.

Therefore, no one who has died in the third angel's message can be among the one hundred and forty-four thousand.

At this point we should consider the subject of the special resurrection which takes place just before Christ's second coming. At a glance it might appear that these risen saints, those who died in the third angel's message, take part in winning the battle against the beast. The statement concerning this resurrection is found here:

**The Great Controversy, p. 637:**

All who have died in the faith of the third angel's message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God's covenant of peace with those who have kept His law.

In order to determine whether or not these risen saints have anything to do with the actual gaining of the victory over the beast, we must first discover when the victory is gained and then whether these saints were raised before or after that point of time.

The point where the victory is gained is described here:

**The Great Controversy, p. 635-637:**

When the protection of human laws shall be withdrawn from those who honor the law of God, there will be, in different lands, a simultaneous movement for their destruction. As the time appointed in the decree draws near, the people will conspire to root out the hated sect. It will be determined to strike in one night a decisive blow, which shall utterly silence the voice of dissent and reproof.

The people of God—some in prison cells, some hidden in solitary retreats in the forests and the mountains—still plead for divine protection, while in every quarter companies of armed men, urged on by hosts of evil angels, are preparing for the work of death. It is now, in the hour of utmost extremity, that the God of Israel will interpose for the deliverance of His chosen....

With shouts of triumph, jeering, and imprecation, throngs of evil men are about to rush upon their prey, when, lo, a dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night, falls upon the earth. Then a rainbow, shining with the glory from the throne of God, spans the heavens and seems to encircle each praying company. The angry multitudes are suddenly arrested. Their mocking cries die away. The objects of their murderous rage are forgotten. With fearful forebodings they gaze upon the symbol of God's covenant and long to be shielded from its overpowering brightness.

By the people of God a voice, clear and melodious, is heard, saying, "Look up," and lifting their eyes to the heavens, they behold the bow of promise....and the pale, quivering lips of those who have held fast their faith utter a shout of victory.

It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people....The wicked look with terror and

amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance.

While all of God's people receive the tokens of their deliverance at the same time, those in prisons must wait a little more before actually becoming physically released from their cells. The sequence of events is as follows:

1. The saints give a shout of victory.
2. The wicked are terrorized.
3. God says, "It is done."
4. The mightiest earthquake of all history begins.
5. Great hailstones fall.
6. The cities and rich dwellings are laid low, and then
7. The "prison walls are rent asunder, and God's people, who have been held in bondage for their faith, are set free." *The Great Controversy*, p. 637.

Now the question is,

"Will those who died in the faith of the third angel's message participate in the scenes just described?"

The answer is, they will not. They will still be in their graves when the wicked are arrested in their mad course and the righteous utter a shout of victory. It is not until after the victory that they are raised. The description of their resurrection is found in the next paragraph, and comes after the prison walls are rent asunder and God's people are set free:

**The Great Controversy, p. 637:**

Graves are opened, and "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth...awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." *Daniel 12:2*. All who have died in the faith of the third angel's message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God's covenant of peace with those who have kept His law.

## 2. A Unique Experience

The one hundred and forty-four thousand have...

### **The Great Controversy, p. 649:**

...an experience such as no other company have ever had.

This is not to say that there are no similarities between the experience of this company and others, for there are. All of God's various companies of people in every age have had victory over known sin, deliverance from life-threatening danger, providential guidance, the sanctifying influence of trials, and more.

But the one hundred and forty-four thousand have an experience marked by greater intensity and purity than any former generation. In addition, they will maintain this experience while living without a mediator.<sup>2</sup> We are not talking about individuals, but companies of people. Obviously Jesus has had an intensity and purity of experience unparalleled by any individual or group. But the statement in *The Great Controversy* is comparing the one hundred and forty-four thousand with other companies, not individuals.

Let us consider the difference between the experience of God's final company and the experience of all other generations, in the light of the following statement:

### **Christ's Object Lessons, p. 69:**

#### **Mark 4**

<sup>29</sup> When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own....

Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be

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<sup>2</sup> See *The Great Controversy*, p. 425.

ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain.

We are all aware that Christ has not yet returned. This statement tells us why. It says that Christ is waiting for a people to perfectly manifest His character before He can return. To have Christ's perfect character is to have perfect sinlessness in thought and action.

The fact that we are all still on this sinful earth is evidence enough that no company in history has had the level of spiritual experience that will mark the one hundred and forty-four thousand who are alive when Christ does return. If any other company had had Christ's character perfectly reproduced in them, then Christ would have come for them.

Another statement indicating an unsurpassed level of Christian experience for the one hundred and forty-four thousand in found here:

**Our High Calling, p. 321:**

The time of trouble is the crucible that is to bring out Christlike characters. It is designed to lead the people of God to renounce Satan and his temptations. The last conflict will reveal Satan to them in his true character, that of a cruel tyrant, and it will do for them what nothing else could do, uproot him entirely from their affections.

Since the time of trouble will do for them what nothing else could do, uproot Satan entirely from their affections, and since that time only occurs once in this world's history, then it is the only time when God's people can receive a sanctifying influence above and beyond what any other group in history has received.

### **3. Translation**

The one hundred and forty-four thousand are translated...

**The Great Controversy, p. 649:**

...from among the living.

Therefore, some people have concluded that those who come up in the special resurrection and are alive when Christ returns, are translated into heaven.

The word *translate*, as defined in the Bible, means to be taken from this earth to heaven without passing through the grave first. This definition is found here:

### Hebrews 11

<sup>5</sup> By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him.

So, if a person dies, is next raised, and is then taken to heaven, it cannot be said that he has been translated. Even though those who come up in the special resurrection live for a very short time on this sinful earth before being taken up, it cannot be said that they are translated, since the biblical definition of this word does not allow for any period of time in the grave.



Only those who will not come under the power of death, but will be translated directly to heaven as were Enoch and Elijah, will be numbered among the one hundred and forty-four thousand.

## 4. The First Fruits

The one hundred and forty-four thousand are...

**The Great Controversy, p. 649:**

...counted as the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

This specification not only provides excellent identification as to who the one hundred and forty-four thousand are, it also unlocks some knowledge concerning their role in God's cause.

According to the law of first fruits, during Old Testament times a field could only be harvested after the first heads of ripened grain had been brought before the Lord as a thank offering. Likewise, Christ cannot come back for the harvest of this earth before the one hundred and forty-four thousand have done their work, that is, before Christ has been able to give a clear demonstration of God's character to the world through them.<sup>3</sup>

## 5. Through the Trouble

**The Great Controversy, p. 649:**

...they [the one hundred and forty-four thousand] have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation...

In this specification, the key word is *through*. It simply means to enter at the beginning, pass along the entire extent of the matter, and emerge at the conclusion. The word *through* allows for no shortcuts or bypasses.

Now, do those who come up in the special resurrection bypass any part of the time of trouble? The answer is a definite, Yes! In fact, they bypass almost all of it. Their resurrection occurs way down at the end, even after the last plague begins, and if they were raised much later, they would miss the whole time of trouble completely.

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<sup>3</sup> For further study, see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 785-786 and Chapters 14-17 in the book *The Seven Angels*.

A further line of reasoning tells us that since this time of trouble is one “...such as never was since there was a nation...,” then there has never been a duplicate time of trouble as bad as this one. If there had been and if it had occurred since the third angel’s message began, then we would have one argument to prove that those who died in the third angel’s message did go through “...the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation...”

But there are not two times of trouble such as never were. There is only one which is still future and only that group of people who live through the entire event can meet this specification.

## 6. Jacob’s Trouble

### **The Great Controversy, p. 649:**

...they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob’s trouble...

To understand this specification, it is necessary to understand the distinction between the great time of trouble and the time of Jacob’s trouble. The righteous feel the time of trouble. They must...

### **The Great Controversy, p. 621, 649:**

...endure weariness, delay, and hunger...suffering,...and thirst.

This is painful, for sure, but they certainly do not suffer the terrible plagues as the wicked must.

### **The Great Controversy, p. 654:**

The world see the very class whom they have mocked and derided, and desired to exterminate, pass unharmed through pestilence, tempest, and earthquake. He who is to the transgressors of His law a devouring fire, is to His people a safe pavilion.

However, while the wicked are suffering the general time of trouble, the righteous are suffering the time of Jacob’s trouble.

During the time of Jacob's trouble, Satan, with the full support and cooperation of the world, mounts an all-out assault on God's people. It is an experience which induces the greatest mental and spiritual agony on the part of the true ones. They fear that within them is yet some unconfessed and unforsaken sin.

The wicked at this time are certainly not sharing in this kind of suffering and trial since they are very confident that Babylon is true and right and consider it a service to destroy the dissenting minority.

Even though these two times of trouble are different, they do occur simultaneously. However, they do not last the same length of time. They both begin together but the general time of trouble lasts longer than Jacob's time of trouble. Let us first look at some statements which establish the starting point for these two times of trouble.

The general time of trouble begins when probation closes; that is, when Christ ceases His ministrations in the sanctuary above:

**Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, p. 191:**

When Jesus ceases to plead for man, the cases of all are forever decided....Probation closes; Christ's intercessions cease in heaven.

**Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, p. 691:**

When Jesus rises up in the most holy place, and lays off His mediatorial garments, and clothes Himself with the garments of vengeance in place of the priestly attire, the work for sinners will be done....The probation of all closes when the pleading for sinners is ended and the garments of vengeance are put on.

**The Great Controversy, p. 614:**

When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth....The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has

been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble.

So, these statements make it plain that the general time of trouble begins when Christ leaves the sanctuary and probation closes for all. Now we need to determine when Jacob's time of trouble begins for the people of God, and the following statement gives us the answer:

**Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 201:**

Jacob's experience during that night of wrestling and anguish represents the trial through which the people of God must pass just before Christ's second coming. The prophet Jeremiah, in holy vision looking down to this time, said,

**Jeremiah 30**

<sup>5</sup> We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.

<sup>6</sup> ...all faces are turned into paleness.

<sup>7</sup> Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

When Christ shall cease His work as mediator in man's behalf, then this time of trouble will begin.

This statement makes it clear that the time of Jacob's trouble begins with the ending of Christ's ministry in the sanctuary in heaven, which is exactly the same moment when the general time of trouble begins.

Concerning the ending times, Jacob's trouble ends before the general time of trouble. When God's people are delivered, their time of trouble ends and they utter a shout of victory as described in *The Great Controversy*, p. 636. The next two paragraphs from p. 636-637, describe the continuing trouble that the wicked will suffer in the form of the seventh plague. During this plague the special resurrection takes place.

So, the time of Jacob's trouble is over when those who died in the third angel's message are raised, and therefore they do

not pass through the time of Jacob's trouble at all. This means that they cannot be part of the one hundred and forty-four thousand who endure...

**The Great Controversy, p. 649:**

...the anguish of the time of Jacob's trouble...

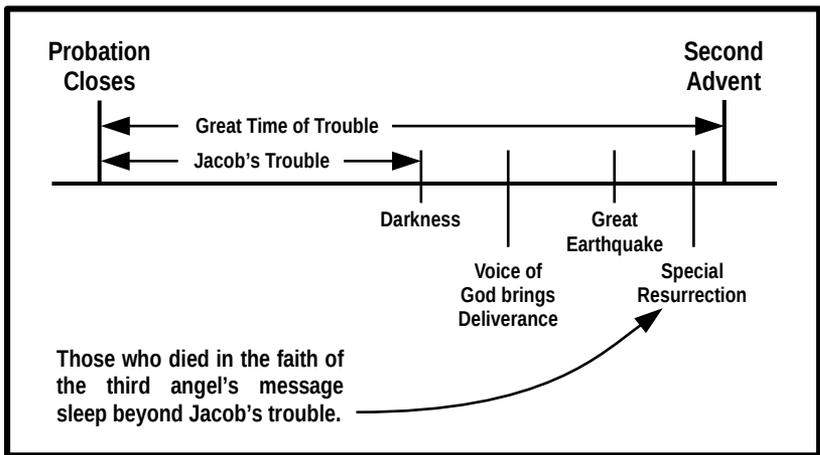
In *Early Writings* there is a statement which makes it appear that those who come up in the special resurrection gain the victory over the beast and his image. On page 285 is a description of the deliverance of God's people after which is described the special resurrection. On page 286 is the following sentence.

**Early Writings, p. 286:**

And when the never-ending blessing was pronounced on those who had honored God in keeping His Sabbath holy, there was a mighty shout of victory over the beast and over his image.

The blessing described in this paragraph is pronounced on those "...who had honored God in keeping His Sabbath holy." Who had kept God's Sabbath holy? Those who had died in the third angel's message and were raised in the special resurrection, and those who had not experienced death. Both of these groups were alive to hear this blessing pronounced upon them.

Now, the question is, How can those who come up in the special resurrection experience victory over the beast and his image? They experience it as a gift, for they certainly do not take part in the final battle. During their lives they felt the threat of the beast and there were times when it looked as if they would be the ones who would enter into the actual battle with this mighty foe. But they died instead.



And even though they died in faith, believing that they would be raised up, they knew that they would have to wait in their graves until some future people obtained the victory for them and would give this victory to them as a gift. And when they are raised and receive this gift, how natural it will be for them to utter a mighty shout of victory over the beast and his image.

## 7. Without an Intercessor

The one hundred and forty-four thousand not only stand without an intercessor but they do this...

### **The Great Controversy, p. 649:**

...through the final outpouring of God's judgments.

As we studied earlier, those who come up in the special resurrection do not live through the final outpouring of God's judgments. They rise during the seventh and last plague.

SPECIFICATIONS WHICH MUST BE FULFILLED BY THOSE WHO WILL BE THE ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND	Those who rise in the Special Resurrection	Those who never die
1. They will have “gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.”	NO	YES
2. They will have had “an experience such as no other company have ever had.”	NO	YES
3. They will have been “translated from the earth, from among the living.”	NO	YES
4. They will be “counted as the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.”	NO	YES
5. They will “have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation.”	NO	YES
6. They will “have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob’s trouble.”	NO	YES
7. They will “have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God’s judgments.”	NO	YES
8. They will “have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat....”	NO	YES

Even though they live on this earth for a short period of time without an intercessor, they do not live through all the plagues without an intercessor, and this is that for which the specification calls.

## 8. Witnesses of the Final Judgments

The last specification states that the one hundred and forty-four thousand will...

### **The Great Controversy, p. 649:**

...have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat.

While it is true that the ones to come up in the special res-

urrection will see an earth which has been wasted by the seven last plagues, they will not see the actual wasting process. They will not see the plagues fall one after the other and steadily reduce the earth from reasonable productivity down to barrenness. Only the one hundred and forty-four thousand who live through the plagues will witness this.



## 2. Apparent Contradictions

SO FAR in this publication there is ample evidence identifying the one hundred and forty-four thousand as only those who live through the time of Jacob's trouble and the general time of trouble without seeing death.

But there are some statements which seem to contradict this evidence. They seem to say that those who died in the third angel's message will be part of the one hundred and forty-four thousand. We will now examine these statements.

### **“With” or “One of”**

One of the most commonly quoted references to support the view that those who died in the third angel's message will be part of the one hundred and forty-four thousand is this:

#### **Early Writings, p. 40:**

I could not bear the thought of coming back to this dark world again. Then the angel said, “You must go back, and if you are faithful, you, with the 144,000, shall have the privilege of visiting all the worlds and viewing the handiwork of God.”

At first glance, this statement seems to say that Ellen White will be part of the one hundred and forty-four thousand. It is safe to say that she died in the faith of the third angel's message. If she will be part of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, some people carry the idea farther and say that all the others who died in the third angel's message will also be a part of that final group of God's people.

However, a closer look at the statement will reveal something different. The angel said, “...you, *with* the 144,000...” He did not say that you, *as one of* the 144,000. This makes all the difference in the correct understanding of what the angel really said.

The following story illustrates the point. There was an occasion when two visitors from overseas were standing in the Capitol building in Washington DC. This building is one containing many interesting items of historical note. These two people desired to view these items, but they did not know just where to go and needed a guide to describe the points of interest.

As they were standing there in uncertainty, a group of high school students with their guide entered the place. No one minded as these two visitors stood by and listened to the guide, and no one minded as they followed along with the students for the entire tour.



Relating this experience to their friends later, they said,

“We, with the high school students, toured the Capitol building.”

No one took this to mean that they were one of the high school students. They went through the building with the students without being one of them.

So the statement only says that Ellen White, if faithful, will be with the one hundred and forty-four thousand but not one of them.

Another statement is found in *Early Writings*, where there is a description of some scenes she saw in vision. She viewed the Holy City and some places around it. She, with others, began to climb Mount Zion on top of which was a temple.

**Early Writings, p. 19:**

And as we were about to enter the holy temple, Jesus raised His lovely voice and said, "Only the 144,000 enter this place," and we shouted, "Alleluia."

From this statement it is not conclusive that Ellen White will or will not be a part of the one hundred and forty-four thousand. But the next few sentences could leave you with the impression that she will be.

This temple was supported by seven pillars, all of transparent gold, set with pearls most glorious. The wonderful things I there saw I cannot describe. Oh, that I could talk in the language of Canaan, then could I tell a little of the glory of the better world. I saw there tables of stone in which the names of the 144,000 were engraved in letters of gold. After we beheld the glory of the temple, we went out...

We could get the impression that Ellen White will be one of the one hundred and forty-four thousand because she describes what is happening as if she is a part of that group. But the question is, Will she physically experience everything she sees in a vision when that vision comes to pass? And the answer is, No.

If seeing something in vision means that she takes physical part in it when it comes to pass, then, based on another vision she had, we must conclude that she will be a physical part of God's people during the time of trouble even though the special resurrection, in which she will be raised, will occur only at the very end of this time of trouble.

This vision comes from *A Word to the Little Flock*, p. 18-20. She describes some of the scenes during the time of trouble as if she were there physically:

**A Word to the Little Flock, p. 18-19:**

And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully....They [the wicked] rose up and took

counsel to rid the earth of us....And all we were required to do, was to give up God's Sabbath, and keep the Pope's....

In the time of trouble, we all fled from the cities and villages, but were pursued by the wicked...They raised the sword to kill us, but it broke...Then we all cried day and night for deliverance...

Since Ellen White is in her grave and awaiting the special resurrection which occurs after the events just described, it is safe to say that she will not herself be a physical part of those events. So the point is, just because she sees something in vision and describes it as if she were there, does not necessarily mean that she will be there physically when those events actually take place.

But what do we do when she describes some of the scenes in heaven? Can we conclude that she will not be physically in heaven? No. So, how do we determine which visions are the ones she will one day physically experience and which ones are not? The answer is found by asking whether or not she will be physically alive when these events take place and whether or not she will meet the specifications which qualify her to be a physical part of that vision.

If Ellen White has a vision in which she describes things from the viewpoint of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, then we can safely say that this is something she experienced only in vision and will not experience physically when the vision comes to pass because she does not meet the specifications.

But, if she has a vision and describes herself as being somewhere, and if her being there does not violate any principles or qualifying factors as outlined in God's word, then it is safe to conclude that she will one day physically experience what she is seeing in vision.

## **A Sealed Sister**

Another statement which has caused problems in the minds

of some is this one:

**Selected Messages, vol. 2, p. 263:**

I saw that she was sealed and would come up at the voice of God and stand upon the earth, and would be with the 144,000. I saw we need not mourn for her; she would rest in the time of trouble, and all that we could mourn for was our loss in being deprived of her company.

This statement says that this lady will be with the one hundred and forty-four thousand, but it does not say that she will be one of them. It also says that she will rest during the time of trouble, whereas the one hundred and forty-four thousand will be alive during that time. The part of this statement that generates the problem in some minds is the reference to the sealing.

## **The Two Seals**

The misunderstanding arises when it is believed that the one hundred and forty-four thousand receive a different seal from that which the rest of God's people receive. All of God's righteous servants receive the same seals, but there are actually two seals.

The first seal is one that all of God's people in all ages must receive while living. The second seal is likewise one that all of the righteous must receive. The only difference is that the one hundred and forty-four thousand receive the second seal while living, whereas the rest of God's faithful people receive it while still in their graves.

In studying this subject, we will look at various statements which talk about seals. At first there will appear to be no difference between the seals. The statements do not call the seals "first" or "second." But a closer look will show that these seals, though similar, are really different and occur at different times.

There are a number of places in the Inspired word where we

must deal with two things that are different but called by the same name. For instance, the Bible talks about the coming of Christ to this earth:

- Some verses say He comes to be persecuted and killed.
- Others say He comes to reign on a throne as King.

These comings, though similar, are different, and yet they are called by the same name. None of the verses describe each coming as “first” or “second.” But it becomes reasonably obvious that the Scriptures about Christ’s coming can be divided into two sets because they are talking about two different events that occur at two different times.

This same principle applies when reading statements about the seals. They might seem to be talking about one seal, when they are really talking about two different seals, but the words “first” and “second” are not used.

To help us distinguish between the two sets of statements, we will look at two basic guidelines:

1. The first is found within the statements themselves. One set of statements talks about a present seal while the other set talks about a future seal.
2. The second guideline is found in the two cleansing phases of the sanctuary services. The first cleansing is the cleansing of the sinner. The second cleansing is the cleansing of the sanctuary. The first seal and the cleansing of the sinner are the same thing. The second seal and the cleansing of the sanctuary are the same thing.

To start with, we should look at the various statements about the seals. The first three statements to be listed will talk about that seal which any Christian may have at any present moment in his life.

**Sons and Daughters of God, p. 51:**

The law of God, which is perfect holiness, is the only true standard of character. Love is expressed in obedience, and

perfect love casts out all fear. Those who love God, have the seal of God in their foreheads, and work the works of God. Would that all who profess Christianity knew what it means to love God practically...

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>13</sup> In Him [Christ] you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

### **Revelation 9**

<sup>4</sup> They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

The first statement is talking about a present experience with God. Every time a sin is thoroughly overcome, it is sealed out of the Christian's life, just as unwanted elements are removed from a jar of preserves first, after which the seal is put into place to seal out those elements.

The seal also keeps the pure food in the jar, just as God's seal keeps righteousness in the life. Provided the Christian keeps his faith in that seal and does not tamper with it, then he is secure against temptation and will not commit that sin again.

This is the first seal. It is designed to seal out all known sin from a person's life and seal in and preserve the level of righteousness that he has attained. It is a seal that is to be experienced on a daily basis, for God's people are daily to be growing in grace.

And even if a person has no sin to confess at any given time, this seal must still be maintained and his righteousness within must be growing every day through watchfulness, prayer, the exercise of faith, study of God's word, selfless service to others, and an ever deepening repentance of sin.

This concept of growth and the preservation of that growth

is set forth in the following statement:

**The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1161:**

Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God’s people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming.

The word “settling” implies time. It takes time and effort and much grace for God’s people to settle into the truth both intellectually and spiritually.

**The Great Controversy, p. 425:**

Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil.

**Proverbs 4**

<sup>23</sup> Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.

And when God’s people receive that level of Christian experience which enables them to withstand the shaking, then they will receive the seal which preserves them through the trial.

At this point it would be good to sound a note of caution about a misconception that can arise from the above statement about the seal. Even though this particular statement is talking about a sealing work being done at a certain point of time just before the shaking, that does not mean that this is the only time a seal is ever going to be applied to God’s people.

Without a continual, moment by moment sealing out of sin and sealing in of righteousness, how could the Christian ever stay pure long enough to do any growing? If he is required to strive to reach a certain level of righteousness before he is qualified to receive the above mentioned seal, and if, during

that struggle, the doors of his soul were constantly left open because a moment by moment seal was lacking, then it would be impossible for him to reach a level of preparation for anything, let alone the shaking.

Therefore, it is essential from the very beginning of his experience and every instant thereafter that the Christian realizes the sealing work of God in his life. Without it he is completely unprotected and has no hope of growth and final victory.

In *Ephesians* 1:13 we have a reference to the seal of the Holy Spirit. It was a seal that could be obtained way back in Paul's day, and for those believers, it was a present seal that they received in their daily experience. The fact that it is called the seal of the Holy Spirit instead of the seal of God might make it appear to be a different seal from the one we have been studying so far.

But this expression, "the seal of the Holy Spirit", only serves to broaden our understanding of the first seal. It tells us that the Holy Spirit has a work to do in applying and maintaining this seal. The following statement helps to explain this:

**The Desire of Ages, p. 311:**

Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.

So the Holy Spirit keeps the repentant Christian from sinning. He seals out sin and seals in righteousness.

If it still seems strange that the seal of the Holy Spirit is the same as the seal of God, think of the fact that God is the One who sends the Holy Spirit.

**Luke 11**

<sup>13</sup> If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the

Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!

Wherever the Holy Spirit is seen to be working, it is certain that the Father has sent Him. The expression, “seal of the Holy Spirit”, serves to tell us of the cooperative effort being put forth by the Godhead to effect mankind’s salvation from sin within and without.

In still another sense, the seal of the Holy Spirit is the seal of God, because the Holy Spirit is God.



The purpose of the seal is to seal goodness in and keep corruption out. This is true in the preservation of summer fruits for consumption during the winter which is a symbol of the work of grace in our hearts to seal righteousness in and sinfulness out.

The next reference from *Revelation* 9:4 refers to a period in history involving over five centuries of time before 1844. This fact is verified in *The Great Controversy*, p. 334-335. During this time there were people with the seal of God on their foreheads.

They, like those of Paul's time and every true Christian of every age, were obtaining an experience through the power of the Holy Spirit whereby sin was being sealed out of their lives and righteousness was being sealed in. They were settling into the truth intellectually and spiritually. They were experiencing growth and the sealing of that growth.

### **Intellectual and Spiritual Education**

Before leaving the subject of the first seal, it would be good to consider a common error into which human nature naturally tends to fall. This error is the tendency to overemphasize one aspect of a subject and underestimate another instead of treating all aspects alike. In the case of the first seal, the two aspects of the subject are the intellectual and the spiritual. Both of these are presented in the statement quoted earlier, from *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1161.

In brief, the first seal is both the intellectual and spiritual shutting out of sin. This means that, if a person emphasizes the spiritual aspect above the intellectual, or the intellectual above the spiritual, then he will not be able to repent of sin as deeply as he might and shut it out as fully as he ought.

Those who have learned true gospel procedures and have been delivered from the bondage of sin, can testify to the fact that intellectual persuasion alone is insufficient to make one secure from sin. They know the experience described in *Romans* 7:

#### **Romans 7**

<sup>23</sup> But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of

sin which is in my members.

This verse describes that time in their experience when they tried to cease from sin by educating their minds as to its bad results, but they found the power of sin in them to be too great, and they were continually being overcome.

On the other hand, after a person does learn and experience God's true way of deliverance from the bondage of sin, there is still the need to diligently educate the mind against transgression by studying its results.

At this point, some might think that they are settling into the truth intellectually by simply using their minds to study spiritual things. It is true that the study of spiritual truth does involve the mind, and the more one studies the messages God sends, the more intellectually convinced he becomes as to the certainty of those truths. This is one type of intellectual settling, and it is essential, but it is not the only type.

## **Studying the Results of Sin**

There also needs to be the study of the results of sin for the purpose of seeing sin's nature. The necessity of this is brought out in the following statement:

### **Education, p. 25-27:**

Adam and Eve had chosen the knowledge of evil, and if they ever regained the position they had lost they must regain it under the unfavorable conditions they had brought upon themselves. No longer were they to dwell in Eden, for in its perfection it could not teach them the lessons which it was now essential for them to learn. In unutterable sadness they bade farewell to their beautiful surroundings and went forth to dwell upon the earth, where rested the curse of sin....

Although the earth was blighted with the curse, nature was still to be man's lesson book. It could not now represent goodness only; for evil was everywhere present, marring earth and sea and air with its defiling touch. Where once

was written only the character of God, the knowledge of good, was now written also the character of Satan, the knowledge of evil. From nature, which now revealed the knowledge of good and evil, man was continually to receive warning as to the results of sin....

The spirit of rebellion, to which he himself [Adam] had given entrance, extended throughout the animal creation. Thus not only the life of man, but the nature of the beasts, the trees of the forest, the grass of the field, the very air he breathed, all told the sad lesson of the knowledge of evil....

As far as evil extends, the voice of our Father is heard, bidding His children see in its results the nature of sin, warning them to forsake the evil, and inviting them to receive the good.

This statement tells us that Eden in its perfection could not and still cannot teach man all the lessons he needs to learn in order to be delivered from sin. Ever since the fall, he must be brought to understand the nature of sin by studying its results as displayed in the lives of people and all the rest of creation, animate and inanimate. These lessons, when studied by one with a true Christian experience, and in the light of God's infinite goodness as the solution to the sin-problem, will produce a depth of repentance not possible without them.

At this point the question might arise as to how to study the nature of sin and its results. Does this mean that we must experience iniquity within ourselves in order to learn to abhor it? Definitely not! Sin is a destroying power, and that power directly blunts the intellectual and moral senses. If carried on long enough, it destroys both the body and the life. No, the actual power of sin does not need to be in us in order for us to intellectually realize its deadly nature and results. It is quite sufficient for it to remain outside of us while we observe its effect upon whomever and whatever it touches.

Some might feel that the idea of studying the nature of sin and its results poses an apparent contradiction in the light of Inspired counsel telling us not to behold sin. However, a dis-

inction must be made. The Christian will only entice himself by studying or beholding the alluring pleasures of sin. But it is a different matter to study the devastating results of those pleasures. Also, the enlightened student will not be deceived by apparently good short-term results. His knowledge of God's word, history, and nature will lead him to look to the long-term results, even beyond his own lifetime.

It must also be remembered that...

### **Romans 2**

<sup>4</sup> ...the goodness of God leads you to repentance.

It is safe to say that the goodness of God is the only thing that will lead to repentance of sin itself. The intellectual study of the results of sin cannot, by itself, produce this kind of repentance. A person can study the results of sin and repent of behavior patterns that hurt him. But this is not repentance for sin itself. It is essential to study sin's results, but this study must be coupled with a knowledge of God's goodness. When the two occur together, the nature of sin will be revealed as it could not be otherwise.

Let us look at a practical application of this divinely-ordered plan for overcoming sin. Before sin entered, a personal knowledge of God's goodness was sufficient to prevent the entrance of sin. The fact that it did arise is inexplicable. It is a mystery.

### **The Great Controversy, p. 492-493:**

It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence....Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin.

But the facts are that sin did enter, and when it did, one third of the angels chose to divorce themselves from God's goodness, and marry the nature of sin. This was problem enough, but the other difficulty was that the loyal angels found that within their minds had been placed questions

about God's character that could not be answered by the knowledge of that character as far as they then saw and understood it. Even though they refused to marry sin, it still stood before them as a formidable challenger to God's nature and ways.

Sin is both delusive and attractive. Even the evil results, as far as they were seen at that time, were charged upon God, and the loyal angels could not see completely through Satan's arguments. In order to remove the mask and reveal the real nature of sin, another procedure had to be added to the study of God's character, and that was the study of the results of sin. The addition of this procedure came soon after Satan's irrevocable decision to remain in sin.

### **Patriarchs and Prophets, 41-43:**

God permitted Satan to carry forward his work until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. It was necessary for his plans to be fully developed, that their true nature and tendency might be seen by all....By disguising himself in a cloak of falsehood, he had gained an advantage. All his acts were so clothed with mystery that it was difficult to disclose to the angels the true nature of his work. Until fully developed, it could not be made to appear the evil thing it was...Even the loyal angels could not fully discern his character or see to what his work was leading....

The true character of the usurper and his real object must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works....

His own work must condemn him....

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages—a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He had made.

The wisdom of God's plan is seen in the results. After four



After four thousand years of sin's wasting curse on both man and nature, the angels expected God to rise up and wipe out the offensive thing. Instead, He sent His Son to die for the perishing and, by so doing, gave such a revelation of His goodness and an exposure of the true nature of sin as would forever seal out any doubts about the love of God and the righteousness of His ways. The cross is the mighty agency which will maintain this seal eternally.

thousand years of sin,

**The Desire of Ages, p. 37:**

...it was demonstrated before the universe that, apart from God, humanity could not be uplifted.

So the angels and those beings inhabiting the unfallen worlds were seeing more and more that they had made the correct decision in remaining loyal to God. However, the level of their understanding of God's character was not sufficient to enable them to see fully through Satan's lies.

With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth.

The statement does not say that they watched to see if He would arise. It says that they watched to see Him arise. They expected Him to blot the earth out of existence because of its rebellion against the divine government.

## **Studying God's Goodness in the Cross**

This shows that the study of the results of sin alone will not enable created beings to see the nature of sin to the point where they lose all sympathy with it. But, combine this study with a sufficient demonstration of God's goodness in dealing with the sin problem, and all sympathy with sin will cease.

This fact is revealed at the cross. There, the results of sin were displayed at their worst, and the goodness of God was demonstrated at its best. When sin's power rises to the point that it results in the murder of the Son of God, the very giver of life to those who killed Him, then no worse sin could be committed. This is the ultimate outworking of evil.

But even this did not cause the unfallen worlds to see the truth about God's character. It was the manifestation of infinite patience and self-sacrificing love as God's response to all of this abuse, that opened the eyes of the heavenly intelli-

gences. It was this demonstration of infinite love that revealed sin for what it really is as well as revealing God's character for what it really is. The result was a complete loss of sympathy for Satan and sin on the part of the heavenly intelligences. The thoughts and ideas that once found some reception in their minds, were now sealed out forever, while the truth was sealed in.

A concise but graphic sketch of the conflict between Christ and Satan on this earth, as viewed by the heavenly universe, is recorded in *The Desire of Ages*. It shows how Christ met the results of sin with the character of His heavenly Father, and what the outcome was in the minds of the angels. A few excerpts will be drawn from those pages.

**The Desire of Ages, p. 759-761:**

Time was given for the working of Satan's principles, that they might be seen by the heavenly universe.

Satan led men into sin, and the plan of redemption was put in operation. For four thousand years, Christ was working for man's uplifting, and Satan for his ruin and degradation. And the heavenly universe beheld it all.

When Jesus came into the world, Satan's power was turned against Him....All the efforts of Satan to oppress and overcome Him only brought out in a purer light His spotless character.

All heaven and the unfallen worlds had been witnesses to the controversy....

Heaven viewed with grief and amazement Christ hanging upon the cross...All heaven was filled with wonder when the prayer of Christ was offered in the midst of His terrible suffering,—“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”...

Could one sin have been found in Christ, had He in one particular yielded to Satan to escape the terrible torture, the enemy of God and man would have triumphed....

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer.

By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings....The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.

It must be remembered that the study of the results of sin alone cannot reveal sin's nature for what it really is. Only when the results of sin are placed side by side with a demonstration of God's goodness as a response to the sin problem, will the nature of sin be seen and rejected. If the problem is not realized as it can be, then the solution will not be appreciated as it should be.

The truth that the study of sin's results alone cannot reveal the true nature of sin as it really is, is confirmed by the outworking of the studies made by some sociologists, law enforcers, psychologists, and others into the results of disobedience and law breaking. These men have not learned to appreciate the goodness of God, but have rather developed pride and self-confidence in their supposed ability to be the problem solvers. Lacking the light that shines through the gospel, they cannot see things as they really are. Therefore, their approach to the difficulties does more harm than good. Only in the light of the plan of salvation as the solution to the sin problem can the results of sin be clearly seen.

Finally, let us refer again to the statement in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1161, which emphasizes the need to settle into the truth both intellectually and spiritually. Much as we would desire an instant work of grace to elevate us from sin's degradation to the heights of glory, we have to face and live with the fact that it takes time to settle into the truth.

In other words, the study of the results of sin and the study of God's character are not to be undertaken on only one or two occasions, but are to engage our attention continually. The study of these two subjects must be pursued with that unrelenting determination and close application which will ex-

pand and deepen our comprehension of the incredible goodness of God as the perfect and complete answer to the sin problem. The blessed outcome will be an ever extending repentance which will lead to a cleansing from sin and a restoration to the likeness of God which will seal us both intellectually and spiritually against the entrance of sin. Thus will come fitness for participation in the final battle, subsequent translation, and a part in the eternal kingdom.

Such a work requires the expenditure of great effort for, as the following statement shows, diligent effort must be added to divine grace:

**The Great Controversy, p. 425:**

Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil.

Satan knows every possible means whereby he can divert minds from the very themes essential for the present and eternal welfare of every candidate for the kingdom, and he uses these with relentless determination and persistence. When temptations call the Christian away from the study of God's character and the results of sin, it takes effort to maintain that daily, essential program that results in sanctification.

Often the seeker for repentance will begin well by sacrificing unnecessary, time-consuming pursuits in order to make spiritual growth his first priority. But the continual battle with self and the unseen powers will test the sincerity of all who set their feet in the right path. And the battle becomes more intense as the flesh, which is so often unused to hardships, cries out for relief.

With Moses, the process of sanctification was so strenuous that he had to...

**Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 248:**

...struggle as for life to renounce error and accept truth.

But God will not impart to men divine light while they are

content to remain in darkness. In order to receive God's help, man must realize his weakness and deficiency; he must apply his own mind to the great change to be wrought in himself; he must be aroused to earnest and persevering prayer and effort. Wrong habits and customs must be shaken off; and it is only by determined endeavor to correct these errors and to conform to right principles that the victory can be gained.

Many never attain to the position that they might occupy, because they wait for God to do for them that which He has given them power to do for themselves. All who are fitted for usefulness must be trained by the severest mental and moral discipline, and God will assist them by uniting divine power with human effort.

The one hundred and forty-four thousand will be a people who will see the nature of sin by studying its results and contrasting it with God's character. They will perseveringly take the time and put forth the effort necessary to make an end of sin in their lives. For them will be fulfilled the promise which says,

**The Great Controversy, p. 621:**

All who will lay hold of God's promises, as he [Jacob] did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded.

They will be fully and permanently settled into every truth, and will therefore be a totally sealed people to whom the tempter will find no points of entry whatsoever, and over whom he will have no power.

It will be because they have received the fullness of this, the first seal, that they will be eligible to receive the second seal while still alive upon the earth, and will remain so until the Saviour returns.

The nature of the second seal will be dealt with in the next chapter.



### 3. The Seal and the Sanctuary

**A** CORRECT understanding of the sealing work is necessary in order to know who will qualify to be a member of the one hundred and forty-four thousand. These people must receive the fullness of the first seal beyond that which any former generations have possessed.

It is now time to consider the connection between the first seal and the sanctuary services, for a clear understanding of these services is essential, not only in explaining the first and second seals, but in experiencing them fully as a living reality.

#### **The Daily Ministration**

Since the first seal involves the removal of sins from the individual, it is necessary to know what happens to those sins, and this is revealed in the daily ministration of the sanctuary.

##### **The Great Controversy, p. 421:**

As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary.

What happened in figure in the earthly sanctuary, happens in fact in the heavenly sanctuary. As the Christian becomes aware of sin in his life and by faith grasps God's cleansing power, that sin, which is like a separate element dwelling in human nature, is literally removed and placed in the heavenly sanctuary.

This problem of sin and what to do with it can be illustrated in the following way. The Christian can be likened unto a fortress:

##### **The Desire of Ages, p. 324:**

When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought

which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan.



Now let us make natural use of this illustration of a fortress to explain the problem sin poses. Think of a fortress against which an enemy of considerable power and might is approaching. The master of the castle is preparing to meet the foe by closing every possible avenue of entry. The doors are locked, the windows are barred, and everything is secure.

But the enemy approaches with confidence, knowing that a secret agent is within the castle and will open the doors at the right moment. Thus the fortress is penetrated. It is not sealed against the enemy. The personal and physical power of that one man within (and it only takes one) is far less than the power of the army without, yet because of his position within he can do far more to overthrow the entire fortress than all the army outside can do.

The secret agent is an illustration of sin within the Christian. Even though the master of the fortress tried to shut all of the doors, he failed to see to it that the secret agent was apprehended and imprisoned. Likewise, the Christian who fails to make sure that every sin is removed from his life will also be overcome by temptation.

This matter of becoming sinless within is vital, and God has not yet been able to bring the great controversy to an end because He has lacked a sinless people through whom He could work. In fact, the one hundred and forty-four thousand will have to be as sinless as Christ was when He was on earth in order to successfully stand through the time of trouble. This is brought out in the following statement.

**The Great Controversy, p. 623:**

Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself:

**John 14**

<sup>30</sup> The prince of this world comes, and has nothing in me.

Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.

The truth of God is best understood when it is experienced. So, to make the sealing work really clear, reference will now be made to a sinful desire and practice against which most of our readers will have a complete seal.

Those who are not now smokers have either never been one, or have ceased from this sinful and destructive habit. Those who smoked in the past, but have now wholly given it up, have achieved this deliverance by the power of a saving God, who has so totally cleansed them of the desire to smoke that they are as if they had never smoked at all.

Those of you who read these words but have never adopted the smoking habit, together with those who have been delivered from it, know that there is nothing within you which responds to the temptation to smoke. You have no desire, craving, taste, sense of need, or propensity of any kind in this direction. Furthermore, you are aware of a solemn responsibility before God to preserve your body and mind in the best state of health and efficiency, and this becomes a powerful factor in sealing against any possibility of yielding to temptation.

At the same time, you have been educated intellectually to loathe and reject this noxious weed. There is no argument which can be advanced, no alluring picture that can be portrayed before you that will weaken or break down your resolve never to smoke.

In short, you are sealed against that particular temptation both intellectually and spiritually. In the case of this particular sin, even the physical craving has been removed.

But, being sealed in this one area of temptation, does not mean that you are sealed against every possible propensity to evil. However, it does mean that, just as you already know by experience the power of the seal against smoking, so you can likewise know by experience the sealing power God offers against every possible area where you are tempted or could be

tempted. You can have and know the seal against hatred, pride, malice, bitterness, appetites, affections, lusts, and so on.

Entering into this seal is the work of a lifetime and requires that hard, stern battles be fought with self in order to achieve the sealing at every advancing step. The one hundred and forty-four thousand will have received the ultimate fullness of this seal while living. They will have achieved this...

**The Great Controversy, p. 425:**

...by the grace of God and their own diligent effort.

### **Not Yet Entirely Released**

So far in this study we have only considered the removal of sin from the sinner and its placement in the sanctuary. But what eventually happens to those sins? And do they in the meantime pose any threat to God's people? Is there any possibility that those sins could come back upon their original owners? Yes! There certainly is! For, unless Christ offers the final atonement, they will return to the sinner again.

Even after sins are placed in the sanctuary, the Christian is still not completely released from the condemnation of the law. The following statement reveals this fact:

**The Great Controversy, p. 420:**

Important truths concerning the atonement are taught by the typical service. A substitute was accepted in the sinner's stead; but the sin was not canceled by the blood of the victim. A means was thus provided by which it was transferred to the sanctuary. By the offering of blood the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed his guilt in transgression, and expressed his desire for pardon through faith in a Redeemer to come; but he was not yet entirely released from the condemnation of the law.

This statement tells us that a person's sins are transferred to the sanctuary, but not canceled. They still exist. That is why the forgiven one is not yet entirely released from the condemnation of the law. The problem that these sins pose to their

former owners can be stated in the following way.

**Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 63:**

The broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner.

So, even though a person's sins are not in him but in the sanctuary, they still threaten him with death. This threat is real, and if ever those sins got back into him, they would destroy him.

## **The Day of Atonement**

Now this real problem requires a real solution, which is found in the cleansing of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement.

**Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 356:**

On the Day of Atonement the high priest, having taken an offering for the congregation, went into the most holy place with the blood and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, above the tables of the law. Thus the claims of the law, which demanded the life of the sinner, were satisfied.

This atonement does satisfy the claims of the broken law. In practical terms this means that the final atonement provides the Christian with a barrier or seal which his former sins cannot penetrate, thus making him eternally safe and secure from their threatened destruction.

Lest confusion arise from the interchangeable use of the word "sin" and the expression "broken law," it should be explained that they are the same thing. Sin is the transgression, or breaking, of the law. See *1 John* 3:4. Also in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 431, it talks about "the fatal effects of sin..." In other words, sin is a destroyer. It reduces and finally extinguishes the life of whatever living thing it touches.

Let us now have a look at the statements which tell us about this second seal.

**The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 976:**

The Lord has shown me clearly that the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes; for it is to be the great test for the people of God, by which their eternal destiny will be decided....

This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed. All who prove their loyalty to God by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious Sabbath, will rank under the banner of the Lord God Jehovah, and will receive the seal of the living God. Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin and accept the Sunday Sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast.

**The Great Controversy, p. 613-614:**

When the third angel's message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. The people of God have accomplished their work. They have received "the latter rain," "the refreshing from the presence of the Lord," and they are prepared for the trying hour before them. Angels are hastening to and fro in heaven.

An angel returning from the earth announces that his work is done; the final test has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received "the seal of the living God." Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands and with a loud voice says, "It is done."...Christ has made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins.

**Early Writings, p. 48:**

Jesus is in His holy temple and will now accept our sacrifices, our prayers, and our confessions of faults and sins and will pardon all the transgressions of Israel, that they may be blotted out before He leaves the sanctuary. When Jesus leaves the sanctuary, then they who are holy and righteous will be holy and righteous still; for all their sins will then be blotted out, and they will be sealed with the seal of the living God.

In the last chapter we looked at some statements which tell us about a seal that can be applied at any present moment in a

Christian's experience. The statements just listed talk about a seal to be applied at a specific time in the future. *The Great Controversy* says that this seal is applied after...

“...the third angel's message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth...”

and

“...the final test has been brought upon the world...”

These expressions tell us that probation has closed. That means that the daily ministration has ceased. Without this ministration there can be no transfer of sin to the sanctuary, and without that there can be no new applications of the first seal. But, after the first seal ends, what do we read that God's people receive? A seal. Of necessity, this must be the second seal.

According to *The Great Controversy*, the second seal is applied after the daily ministration ends and before...

**The Great Controversy, p. 613:**

...Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above.

There is only one sanctuary service that takes place in this time slot, and that is the atonement in the most holy place. Therefore, this atonement is the second seal. It satisfies the claims of the broken law and the sins of God's people are then forever sealed out of them. They are eternally secure. At this point, full provision has been made for their sins to be placed upon the scapegoat and destroyed with him forever.

There might be a tendency to think of the placement of the sins upon the scapegoat as being part of the second seal. The scapegoat transaction is really a result of the second seal, rather than a part of it.

Furthermore, this event takes place upon the earth and not

in the heavenly sanctuary.<sup>4</sup> The second seal is applied before Christ ceases His intercession above.

The sequence is as follows:

1. The daily ministration ends and the first seal can no longer be applied.
2. The atonement in the most holy is made and the second seal applied.
3. Christ ceases His intercession above.
4. He comes to this earth and, in the presence of God's people, places their sins upon Satan.

This is all according to the earthly pattern. The high priest did not place the sins upon the scapegoat while he was in either apartment of the sanctuary where the people could not see him. He did this in the courtyard in full view of the people.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, the saints on earth cannot see Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. To be consistent with the earthly pattern, He must come to where they can see Him, which at that time will be on the earth, and there place the sins upon Satan.

To further emphasize the need for a second seal to seal sin out of the Christian and make him completely safe, let us hypothetically suppose that Jesus refused to make the final atonement. If He were to take this course and the Christian's sins were returned to him, would the power of the first seal then be sufficient to protect him from death? The answer is, No, because:

**Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 63:**

The broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner.

Even after probation closes and the complete fullness of the first seal is applied to God's people and they are cleansed of every sin with none remaining, they are still not yet entirely released from the condemnation of the broken law which de-

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<sup>4</sup> See *The Great Controversy*, p. 658.

<sup>5</sup> See *The Great Controversy*, p. 658.

mands the life of the sinner. Even at this point, if Jesus did not perform the final atonement to satisfy the claims of the law, but were to let those sins return to His people, then the first seal would not be able to withstand the demands of the broken law.

While the thought of Jesus not performing the final atonement is only hypothetical, it serves to emphasize the reality of the problem the Christian faces and the need for a solution. The simple facts are that the first seal does not entirely release the Christian from the condemnation of the law. It is insufficient of itself to do so and therefore another work, that of the final atonement, is required to effect a complete release from this condemnation.

But when and by whom is this condemnation to be experienced? Must the Christian be daily burdened with a sense of guilt and condemnation or can he be free in Christ? Yes, the Christian can be free from the weight of condemnation in his daily experience. The condemnation which comes from the sins in the sanctuary is not to be experienced until a specific, future time. In addition, it will be experienced only by those professed Christians who have been unfaithful.

In other words, the problem of present condemnation is solved by the first seal. The problem of the condemnation to be activated in the future, is solved by the second seal. The first seal is sufficient to release a person from present condemnation. Daily he may have a clear conscience, power to obey God, and freedom from feelings of guilt.

But the investigative judgment is going on at the moment. It is a judgment to see who has or has not maintained the power of the first seal in his life. For those who have been faithful, the future final atonement which is the second seal, will place their condemning sins even farther away from them, even onto the scapegoat, where those sins will eventually perish altogether. For those who have not been faithful, the final

atonement will result in their condemning sins being rolled back upon them. The actual power of this condemnation will be felt by them at the end of the millennium.

To show how important and effective the second seal is in sealing sin out of the Christian, consider the fact that the sanctuary is the only channel through which sin can and must pass. No sin passes directly from the Christian to the scapegoat or from the scapegoat to the Christian. All must pass through the sanctuary.

When sins enter the sanctuary, they are still in the channel and could therefore go either way; that is, back to the Christian, or on to the scapegoat. But, Christ's act in making the final atonement for those who have maintained the first seal, is so effective that, once it is administered, there is not the remotest possibility that the sins of those for whom this atonement is made could ever return to the sanctuary or to the believers again. Once the transgressions have been placed on the scapegoat by virtue of the atonement in the most holy place, then they cannot return to the sealed ones again, for they would have to pass through the channel of the sanctuary to reach them and the Saviour would never permit this.

Remember that no sin can pass from the sinner to the scapegoat, nor from the scapegoat to the believer except through the sanctuary. The final atonement cleanses the sanctuary and thus the saved are rendered eternally sealed against their sins ever being upon them again. The second seal is a work done for the believer, not in him. The ministry in him is effected by the first seal, on the satisfactory acquirement and maintenance of which he receives the second sealing.

So, in *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 263, where we read about the sealed sister who died, it is saying that this sister had received the first seal. She will receive the second seal when the final atonement in the most holy place is complete.

## Clarifying a Point

When it comes to the subject of the second seal, there could arise a question as to why such a seal is needed if Christ has paid the price for man's sins. Why does this payment not release the penitent one from all condemnation of the law immediately after he confesses and is cleansed of his sins?

When the Saviour takes sins away from an individual, He holds those sins in trust in order to allow the person the option to take them back to himself if he should so choose at some future time. The fact is that man owns sin. This is proved by the way he treats sin. He nurtures it and clings to it as one of his most cherished possessions. If anyone or anything tries to take it from him, he will fight to keep it. He will even die to keep it.

And Christ Himself honors man's ownership of sin by waiting until man willingly and voluntarily gives it up. Only then will Christ take it and place it in the sanctuary. After that, He allows people the freedom to receive the first seal partially and only for a time if that is what they eventually decide to do.

The fact that a person can be forgiven, and later receive all of his former sins back again, is shown in the parable of the unforgiving servant:

### **Matthew 18**

<sup>23</sup> Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

<sup>24</sup> And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.

<sup>25</sup> But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made.

<sup>26</sup> The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.

<sup>27</sup> Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

<sup>28</sup> But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred pence; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me what you owe!

<sup>29</sup> So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.

<sup>30</sup> And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.

<sup>31</sup> So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.

<sup>32</sup> Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.

<sup>33</sup> Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?

<sup>34</sup> And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

<sup>35</sup> So my heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.

This parable shows that, even though a person is forgiven at some point in his life, if he fails to maintain and develop his Christian experience, then he will find his debt rolling back onto him as if it had never been paid at all.

While the parable says that it was an unforgiving spirit that caused the return of the man's debt, do not make the mistake of thinking that this is the only sin that causes the return of former debts. Any cherished sin will bring the same results, for if you break one command of God, then you break them all:

## **James 2**

<sup>10</sup> For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

Further comment on this parable is found in *Christ's Object Lessons*:

**Christ's Object Lessons, p. 251:**

It is true that he may once have received forgiveness; but his unmerciful spirit shows that he now rejects God's pardoning love. He has separated himself from God, and is in the same condition as before he was forgiven. He has denied his repentance, and his sins are upon him as if he had not repented.



So completely did the king forgive the servant who embezzled his money that it was as if he had never owed a cent. But this did not seal him so that he could never be punished for his sin. When he did not forgive as he had been forgiven, the debt was laid on him again so totally, that it was as if he had never been forgiven. In the same way God deals with us. Only when we receive the second seal are we eternally secure.

## 4. The Sealing Angel

### Revelation 7

<sup>1</sup> After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.

<sup>2</sup> Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God.

<sup>3</sup> And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.

<sup>4</sup> And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.

**F**ROM these verses we learn that the abandonment of the earth and the wicked to cataclysmic destruction, does not take place until the one hundred and forty-four thousand have been sealed. This is the truth, but unfortunately, wrong conclusions have been deduced from this.

The problem arises from a misunderstanding of the statement which says:

#### **The Great Controversy, p. 640:**

...the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God.

The conclusion drawn from this statement is that the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand could not take place before 1844, around which time the truth of the seventh-day Sabbath began to be revived.

The argument so far is true, for the one hundred and forty-four thousand will come behind in no truth whatsoever. They certainly will understand that the seventh day is the Sabbath of God and will faithfully keep that day despite enormous pressure by the world to discard it in favor of Sunday-keep-

ing.

But the second phase of the argument is untrue in which the conclusion is drawn that everyone since 1844 who has understood and accepted that the seventh day is the Sabbath, has the seal of the living God and will be a member of the one hundred and forty-four thousand.

There is a deeper meaning than this in regard to the Sabbath being the seal of God. It ignores the fact that there is a life and death difference between being a Sabbath keeper and a seventh-day observer. This point is made very clear in the following statement:

**The Desire of Ages, p. 283:**

No other institution which was committed to the Jews tended so fully to distinguish them from surrounding nations as did the Sabbath. God designed that its observance should designate them as His worshipers. It was to be a token of their separation from idolatry, and their connection with the true God.

But in order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy. Through faith they must become partakers of the righteousness of Christ. When the command was given to Israel,

**Exodus 20**

<sup>8</sup> Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,  
—the Lord said also to them,

**Exodus 22**

<sup>31</sup> You shall be holy men unto me.

Only thus could the Sabbath distinguish Israel as the worshipers of God.

When this principle is understood, it will be seen that anyone can be a seventh-day observer, while only a truly born-again Christian can be a true Sabbath-keeper. He who has in his heart the pure and holy life of Christ is sealed with the Sabbath seal. He has within him the spirit of true Sabbath keeping even though he might observe the first day of the

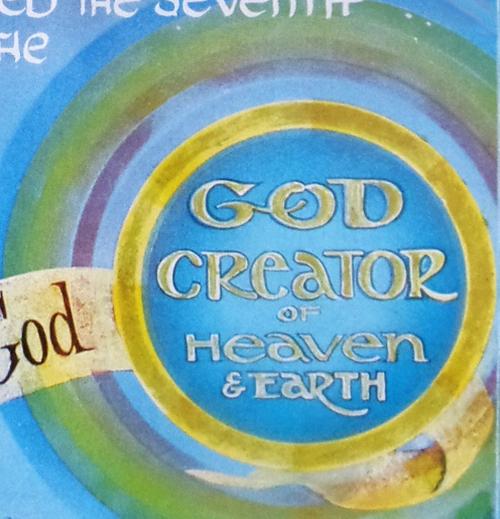


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EMEMBER the SABBATH DAY to keep it HOLY. SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOUR and DO ALL THY WORK: BUT THE SEVENTH DAY is the SABBATH of the LORD THY GOD: in it THOU SHALT NOT DO ANY WORK, THOU NOR THY SON, NOR THY DAUGHTER, THY MAN SERVANT NOR THY MAID SERVANT NOR THY CATTLE, NOR THY STRANGER THAT is WITHIN THY GATES; FOR in SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA AND ALL THAT in THEM is AND BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY: WHEREFORE THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY and HALLOWED it:~

*Exodus 20:8-11*

*The Seal of the Living God*



GOD  
CREATOR  
OF  
HEAVEN  
& EARTH

While anyone can be a seventh-day observer, only a truly born-again Christian can be a true Sabbath-keeper.

He who has in his heart the pure and holy life of Christ is sealed with the Sabbath seal.

week.

In practical terms, the seal is a provision by which the soul is protected from the invasion of spiritual corruption, and the righteousness within is prevented from escaping. This is accomplished by the power of God alone. Why then is it called the Sabbath seal? It is because the Sabbath of God is found everywhere that the sealing power of God is found, but nowhere else.<sup>6</sup>

Thus the holy men and women who lived and served the Lord before 1844 but who believed that Sunday was the Sabbath, were sealed with the Sabbath seal just as truly as were those who came after 1844. Therefore, the Sabbath seal did not commence shortly after 1844 but began with the ministry of salvation which began as soon as there was a sinner needing redemption.

To fully appreciate this fact, it needs to be understood that there is a difference between the Sabbath day and the Sabbath principle. The Sabbath day is a certain twenty-four hour period in the week. The Sabbath principle is in the heart and life seven days a week.

As we learned earlier, Inspiration often uses the same word to describe two things which are similar but really quite different. The single word Sabbath is sometimes used to mean the day and sometimes the principle. For instance, when it says that the Sabbath is the seal of God, it is really saying that the Sabbath principle is the seal of God.

What then is the Sabbath day? It is God's designated symbol or sign of the principle. There are circumstances wherein it is possible to have the principle without having the day. This was the case with most of God's people during the Dark Ages. The Sabbath day was little known, but God was still able

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<sup>6</sup> For a detailed presentation of this truth, see *Living Righteousness and the Sabbath of God*.

to bring His sealing work to many people during that time. Though there was more light to be revealed, there were those who, by God's grace and their own diligent effort, were able to perfectly live up to all the light they had.

Before going farther, we should establish what the principle of the Sabbath is. This has already been extensively dealt with in the book *God's Sabbath Rest*. But briefly the principle of the Sabbath is this:

It is living by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. This involves a recognition of God as the Source of everything, both material and spiritual, Christ as the Connector, and man as the helpless, dependent receiver.

When Christ stepped down from His heavenly position to live as man must live, a helpless, dependent receiver, He demonstrated His grasp of this principle when He was tempted by Satan in the wilderness. Of this encounter we read:

**The Desire of Ages, p. 123:**

By what means did He overcome in the conflict with Satan? By the word of God. Only by the word could He resist temptation. "It is written," He said.

The statement continues by applying this same principle to mankind:

Every promise in God's word is ours. "By every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" are we to live.

So the first seal that the one hundred and forty-four thousand receive is the same as the first seal that anyone has ever received right back to Adam. The only difference is one of degree. The one hundred and forty-four thousand receive the fullness of the first seal. In other words, whereas other believers became aware of some of their sins and were saved from them, the one hundred and forty-four thousand have become aware of, and are delivered from, all their sins.



There have been some outstanding Christians down through history. Against some of them, such as Daniel, no sin has ever been recorded, and it is possible that some might have received the fullness of the first seal. But, before the Lord can bestow the second seal on the faithful who are living down at the end of time, not one here and there, but every believer in Jesus must have the fullness of the first seal at the same time. Once this has been accomplished, there follows the judgment of the living, the second seal, the time of trouble, and the second coming of Christ.

While there might be individuals down through history who have received the fullness of the first seal while still living, there never has been a situation when every living member of God's church throughout the entire world has attained to the spotless perfection which attends those who have received the fullness of the first seal.

Never was this more true than since 1844. The performance of God's church during that period of time could never be described as flawless and spotless. It would be impossible to claim that the entire church at any time between 1844 and the present have collectively attained to the fullness of the first seal, and therefore as certainly have not received the second seal while still living.

The fact that the four angels are still holding back the four winds of strife is proof that neither the fullness of the first seal nor the second seal has been received by the church. The angels hold the winds of strife only until the one hundred and forty-four thousand are sealed with both seals. So, we can be very sure that, while we see the storm of coming destruction still being held in check, the servants of God have not yet been finally and fully sealed.

The time is fast approaching when the entire living membership of the church will be the one hundred and forty-four thousand, every single member of which company will have received the fullness of the first seal, and the final security of the second seal. Only those who are still alive at that time, and who have both seals while still living, will be numbered among the one hundred and forty-four thousand.

No one can claim this status for himself yet, and certainly there is no company, church, or movement in history which can claim this achievement. But the time is soon coming when such a church shall be developed, and, when it is, the angels will release their control over deranged nature, and a storm of unprecedented ferocity will sweep the earth and all that is

therein into total destruction.

## The Living Saints

In *Early Writings*, appears this statement:

### **Early Writings, p. 15:**

Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming. The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake.

This statement would not call for special attention except for the fact that the saints who are alive at this time—the time when the day and hour of Jesus' coming are announced—are composed of two groups, those who lived through the time of trouble up till that point without dying, and those who were raised in the special resurrection.

This is verified by the sequence of events as described in *The Great Controversy*, p. 636-640. On page 636, God's people are delivered from the fury of the wicked. On page 637, the special resurrection takes place. And on page 640, the day and hour of Christ's coming are announced.

It appears from these facts that we must discard all of what we have learned so far in preference for what these statements seem to be saying. But this would require some hefty rationalizing and twisting of God's word and we must not do that.

We must look at the statement in *Early Writings* again and this time we need to ask whether or not we understand it as God intended it to be understood. God does not contradict Himself. It is our misunderstanding that causes the contradictions.

We are safe only as we let God unravel the problem, and He has done this by providing His own definition of the expression, "living saints." We naturally tend to define this expression as meaning all those who are alive at that point of time.

God defines the expression differently.

At the time of the statement in *Early Writings*, p. 15, there are three groups of saints who are living. They consist of:

1. Those who live through the time of trouble without dying;
2. Those who are raised first in the special resurrection; and
3. Those who are raised second and last in the general resurrection.

These three groups are discussed in *Early Writings*, p. 285, 287. After establishing that there are three groups of saints who are living and waiting to ascend and be with their Lord, the following statement appears:

**Early Writings, p. 287:**

The living saints are changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and caught up with the risen ones, and together they meet their Lord in the air.

All three groups are living when we read this statement. So who are the living saints and who are the risen ones according to God's way of thinking? God will not describe all three groups as living saints. If He did, then who would be the risen ones?

At this point, we should remind ourselves of the counsel given in:

**Isaiah 55**

<sup>8</sup> For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

<sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

According to man's way of thinking, those who come up in the general resurrection would be described as both living and risen. Likewise, those who come up in the special resurrection

would also be described as living and risen. But God's ways are not man's ways, and His descriptions and definitions are different from those of man.

To be consistent with all of the information we have considered so far, we would have to conclude that God describes those who come up in the general resurrection as "risen saints". Likewise, those who come up in the special resurrection would have to be called "risen saints". And only those who never died could be called:

**Early Writings, p. 15:**

...the living saints, 144,000 in number.

## 5. A Literal or Symbolic Number

WHEN the statements or verses about the one hundred and forty-four thousand are read, it is easy to get the impression that there will be exactly that many individuals in this special group of God's people.

On the surface this appears to be a natural and proper conclusion. However, further investigation will reveal that this number is not intended to be understood as a numerical amount, but as a symbol.

But the way the references are worded seems to add weight to the idea of quantity rather than symbolism. For instance:

### **Revelation 7**

<sup>4</sup> And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand...

### **Early Writings, p. 15:**

The living saints, 144,000 in number...

In these references it is the use of the word, *number*, that gives the impression of quantity. A closer examination, however, shows that this is not a sound conclusion at all, as the following example will demonstrate.

The ten virgins in the parable of *Matthew 25* represent two classes of professed Christians who live in the last days right up to and after the close of probation. Evidence of this will be given a little later. The parable states that five were wise and five were foolish. The five wise virgins are a symbol of those who will successfully pass the great final test, receive the second seal, and become the last people of God before the great controversy ends.

Now, it is obvious that the number "five" cannot be a literal number. And yet the Bible gives this number to this group of people. The only conclusion is that the number must be a designation or model number and symbolic in meaning.

Firstly, let us quote the parable, so we can get a clearer picture of it:

**Matthew 25**

<sup>1</sup> Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the Bridegroom.

<sup>2</sup> Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

<sup>3</sup> Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,

<sup>4</sup> But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

<sup>5</sup> But while the Bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

<sup>6</sup> And at midnight a cry was heard: Behold, the Bridegroom is coming; go out to meet Him!

<sup>7</sup> Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

<sup>8</sup> And the foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.

<sup>9</sup> But the wise answered, saying, No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.

<sup>10</sup> And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with Him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

<sup>11</sup> Afterwards the other virgins came also, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us!

<sup>12</sup> But He answered and said, Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.

<sup>13</sup> Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

In the book, *Christ's Object Lessons*, there is confirmation that the ten virgins represent the church of God just before Christ's return:

**Christ's Object Lessons, p. 406, 412:**

As Christ sat looking upon the party that waited for the bridegroom, He told His disciples the story of the ten virgins, by their experience illustrating the experience of the church that shall live just before His second coming.

The two classes of watchers represent the two classes who

profess to be waiting for their Lord....

It is in a crisis that character is revealed. When the earnest voice proclaimed at midnight, "Behold, the bridegroom comes; go you out to meet him," and the sleeping virgins were roused from their slumbers, it was seen who had made preparation for the event. Both parties were taken unawares; but one was prepared for the emergency, and the other was found without preparation.

So now, a sudden and unlooked-for calamity, something that brings the soul face to face with death, will show whether there is any real faith in the promises of God. It will show whether the soul is sustained by grace. The great final test comes at the close of human probation, when it will be too late for the soul's need to be supplied.

The ten virgins are watching in the evening of this earth's history. All claim to be Christians. All have a call, a name, a lamp, and all profess to be doing God's service. All apparently wait for Christ's appearing. But five are unready. Five will be found surprised, dismayed, outside the banquet hall.

From this statement we can see that the virgins live just before Christ's return. The length of this period of time is unstated. But the experience of the virgins is definitely connected with the "great final test" which "comes at the close of human probation." All ten virgins will face this final test, but only five will pass. The other five will fail. Those who pass will receive the second seal and then become the last people.

Further evidence that the parable of the ten virgins applies to God's people at the close of probation is found here:

**The Great Controversy, p. 428:**

When the work of investigation shall be ended, when the cases of those who in all ages have professed to be followers of Christ have been examined and decided, then, and not till then, probation will close, and the door of mercy will be shut. Thus in the one short sentence, "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut," we are carried down through the Savior's final ministration, to the time when the great work for man's salvation shall be com-

pleted.

From these two statements it is clear that the five wise virgins represent the true church of God after probation closes.

# Consider the Facts

# 144,000=5

# *and*

# 5=144,000

**Therefore, they are symbolic numbers.**



Why are there five persons in the symbol? By the number ten the whole visible church of God on this earth is signified. The fact that only five of them pass the final test signifies that

on the one hand there is ample opportunity to pass, but on the other hand there is the absolute necessity of diligent cooperation on man's part.

If the symbolic number used were only one or even no wise virgins, then we all would have to despair because the goal would be discouragingly difficult to reach or even unreachable. If Jesus on the other hand would have talked of ten wise virgins, then there would be no necessity of diligent cooperation on the part of man because everyone would pass the test anyway.

Since the one hundred and forty-four thousand also represent that same church at the same time, then this number cannot be taken to mean quantity. It must be a designation number with a symbolic meaning.

At least one symbolic meaning to the number one hundred and forty-four thousand is found in the fact that it is made up of twelve equal parts, each part designated by the number twelve thousand. See *Revelation 7:5-8*. In the parable of the wise and foolish virgins the idea of equality is also brought out.

However, before discussing the subject of equality among the members of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, we first need to look at the principle of equality as it pertains to mankind in general. After establishing a few basic ideas, we can take a closer look at the one hundred and forty-four thousand in particular.

First of all, we could start by asking the question, In what sense are all men equal? There are undeniable inequalities among humans and God is not telling us that He intends to force an equality in these areas. For instance, God is not saying that all people are equal in terms of talent. The parable of the talents teaches plainly that some have more natural abilities than others. While people's abilities can increase or decrease, we do not all start off equal in ability and there is no

reason to believe that we end that way. Even the angels in heaven have varying degrees of talent, and it looks as if it will always be like that.

There is also an inequality in terms of opportunity for growth and development both intellectually and spiritually. This is made quite clear by simply observing Christians who lived in different times in the history of the church. Those faithful Christians who lived during the Dark Ages did not have the same opportunity for advancement as other generations have had. And not all generations have had the same opportunity to finish the gospel work on earth. Time has had to tarry until God could find a people who would perform His will in His way.

But there is an equality in terms of God's love. He loves all people with the same impartial love and compassion. He does not arbitrarily favor one person above another. This thought is verified in the following statements.

**Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, p. 225:**

Christ came to this earth with a message of mercy and forgiveness. He laid the foundation for a religion by which Jew and Gentile, black and white, free and bond, are linked together in one common brotherhood, recognized as equal in the sight of God. The Saviour has a boundless love for every human being.

**The Desire of Ages, p. 639:**

The angels of heaven are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. We know not now who they are; it is not yet made manifest who shall overcome, and share the inheritance of the saints in light; but angels of heaven are passing throughout the length and breadth of the earth, seeking to comfort the sorrowing, to protect the imperiled, to win the hearts of men to Christ. Not one is neglected or passed by. God is no respecter of persons, and He has an equal care for all the souls He has created.

## **Acts 10**

<sup>34</sup> ...God shows no partiality.

<sup>35</sup> But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

In addition to God's impartial interest in the well-being of everyone, His love, as expressed in the gospel, makes it possible for people to have an equal opportunity to obtain salvation from sin and a place in the kingdom of heaven. No one can say that, because he is more sinful than others, he therefore has less of a chance to be saved from his sins.

In the area of personal victory over sin, the gospel is an equalizer. This fact is brought out in *Romans 5*, where it says:

## **Romans 5**

<sup>20</sup> But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.

While it is true that some people carry a greater load of sin than others, the gospel equalizes these situations by adding more overcoming power to those who are more needy.

The story of the demoniac whom Jesus healed in the synagogue of Capernaum further illustrates the point that some are more sinful than others and that God's saving power is dispensed in greater measure as man's sinfulness increases. Let us look at this story:

### **The Ministry of Healing, p. 92-93:**

There are multitudes today as truly under the power of evil spirits as was the demoniac of Capernaum. All who willfully depart from God's commandments are placing themselves under the control of Satan. Many a man tampers with evil, thinking that he can break away at pleasure; but he is lured on and on, until he finds himself controlled by a will stronger than his own. He cannot escape its mysterious power. Secret sin or master passion may hold him a captive as helpless as was the demoniac of Capernaum.

Yet his condition is not hopeless. God does not control our minds without our consent; but every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen

so low, none are so vile, but that they may find deliverance in Christ.

This is a marvelous description of God's love. Not only does He give more grace to those who are more sinful, but He does so for those who have willfully made themselves more sinful.

But not all people are responsible for their particularly sinful condition. The sin's of others often put people in deplorable conditions. But even for them there is an equal opportunity available to receive heaven's approval.

**Gospel Workers, p. 332:**

The unlearned, the outcast, the slave, if he has made the most of his opportunities and privileges, if he has cherished the light given him of God, has done all that is required. The world may call him ignorant, but God calls him wise and good, and thus his name stands registered in the books of heaven. God will fit him up to do Him honor, not only in heaven, but on the earth.

Now let us apply these ideas to the one hundred and forty-four thousand. These people come from the twelve tribes of Israel, and each of these tribes began with one of Jacob's sons. These sons were noted for various character traits which naturally means that their offspring would possess different virtues as well as vices. Some were better off character wise, while others carried a load of sin and weakness not to be envied.

This is telling us that the one hundred and forty-four thousand are made up of people with many combinations of character traits, both good and bad. It also tells us that some of the members of God's last people will come from more sinful backgrounds than others.

But, the fact that an equal number are taken from each of the twelve tribes is God's way of telling us about the great equalizing power of the gospel in the area of overcoming sin. When the time to make up the one hundred and forty-four

thousand arrives, no one will be able to excuse himself because of his particularly sinful background. The more sinful a person is, the more grace he may receive to give him the same victory that his more virtuous brethren obtain.



The fact that there will be an equal number from each tribe making up the one hundred and forty-four thousand assures us that no matter how lost our condition might be or how disadvantaged we might feel ourselves to be, the gospel is so infinitely powerful that it gives everyone who will accept its provisions, and who will be living at the right time, an equal opportunity to be among that illustrious company.

However, when the time to make up the one hundred and forty-four thousand arrives, some will not be able to qualify because of certain inequalities that God does not equalize. But

this does not mean that they are still living in known sin and are not worthy of eternal life. The following statements tell us something about their situation.

**Selected Messages, vol. 2, p. 259:**

The Lord has often instructed me that many little ones are to be laid away before the time of trouble. We shall see our children again. We shall meet them and know them in the heavenly courts.

**Counsels on Health, p. 375:**

But it is not always safe to ask for unconditional healing...

He knows whether or not those for whom petitions are offered would be able to endure the trial and test that would come upon them if they lived. He knows the end from the beginning. Many will be laid away to sleep before the fiery ordeal of the time of trouble shall come upon our world. This is another reason why we should say after our earnest petition:

**Luke 22**

<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless not my will, but yours, be done.

Such a petition will never be registered in heaven as a faithless prayer. The apostle was bidden to write,

**Revelation 14**

<sup>13</sup> Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.

From this we can see that all are not to be raised up; and if they are not raised to health they should not be judged as unworthy of eternal life.

So, the death of God's people before the time of trouble does not necessarily mean that they are unworthy of eternal life. But, based on the view that God is no respecter of persons and that He is not arbitrary, then there must be certain inequalities among brethren that God does not equalize. For example, in the cases of little children and very old people, they do not have an equal opportunity to develop the same high level of Christian experience as do others with more

strength and more time. There is an inequality of time and strength.

This particular situation is portrayed in the life of the thief on the cross. He heard the same message of salvation that the disciples and others around him had heard. But, while his faith was able to grasp salvation and the ability to suffer death on the cross, he did not have the time nor the strength to develop the same level of experience that others had. His life of sin ending on the cross in an untimely death, had taken away both his time and his strength. Therefore, he could not qualify to receive the early rain even though others living right around him would qualify shortly after his death.

Likewise, many who hear the message of salvation during the loud cry will grasp it and remain faithful till death, but not all of them will have the same opportunity to qualify to become part of the one hundred and forty-four thousand.

No doubt there are other inequalities among men that enter into the picture and certainly there are more symbolic meanings to these numbers yet to be revealed, but our main concern is the need to recognize that the number one hundred and forty-four thousand and the number five are symbolic and descriptive rather than numeric.



## 6. In Conclusion

**I**N THE process of trying to explain spiritual truth, whether it be the subject presented in this publication or any other Bible topic, there is always the danger of becoming so engrossed in technical arguments that the weightier matter of making an end of sin and bringing in everlasting righteousness diminishes in importance.

It is hoped that this publication will not only prove who can and cannot be part of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, but will also inspire each reader with an awareness of the level of righteousness required in God's people before they can be instrumental in bringing the great controversy to a close. To be a part of that final group of God's people requires much more than merely a correct understanding of all the arguments.

The one hundred and forty-four thousand are brought to the highest level of Christian living that has ever been attained by any group of people. To them, righteousness is pure delight, and sin is sheer torture. They reach this condition because they not only receive the seed of Christ within themselves after Satan's life is removed, but they learn the lesson of diligence and persevering effort. They will succeed where past generations have failed.

During their development:

- Every obstacle will be seen as an opportunity for growth;
- Every failure, a call to come up higher;
- Every power, a means to bless;
- Every hardship, a chance to become firmer.
- Riches and power will not corrupt them.
- Poverty and oppression will not discourage them.

Until finally and at last there will be a people through

whom God can bring an end to the great controversy.

Today is another day of opportunity for God's people to make an end of sin and bring in everlasting righteousness. May all who believe this persevere in prayer and action until they realize His promised blessings.

THE  
Great  
Multitude

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN  
THE 144000  
AND  
THE GREAT MULTITUDE

From:

*The Messenger of Living Righteousness*  
September to December, 1970



# 1. The First Fruits and Harvest

ONE cannot leave the study of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, without taking up the subject of the great multitude.

Among the theories in circulation in regard to the one hundred and forty-four thousand was the one which holds that the one hundred and forty-four thousand will be selected from the Adventist church, will be judged and sealed and then in turn go out and during the loud cry win the great multitude to the truth.

Really, it is quite surprising the number of groups and individuals within other groups who hold to this view in one modified form or the other. However, a careful and honest searching through the evidences in the word of the living God shows that this position is not scriptural.

The principal argument used to support this view is based on:

## **Revelation 14**

<sup>4</sup> These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

This clearly states that the one hundred and forty-four thousand will be the first fruits of the earth's harvest. In the fifteenth verse of the same chapter, as Christ is descending in the clouds of heaven, the angel coming out of the temple says to Him who is sitting on the cloud with the sickle in His hands:

<sup>15</sup> Thrust in your sickle and reap: for the time is come for You to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

From this it is assumed that the harvest is the gathering of the saved in the last days when the latter rain falls and ripens the harvest of the earth for the coming of the Son of Man. In the type of the harvest there are first fruits, which are reaped

first, after which the main body of the harvest is garnered. So it is reasoned that the one hundred and forty-four thousand are reaped first and then after that the great multitude as the second fruits.

Analyzing this reasoning shows that the expression “first,” here is in the light of a point of time. That is, the special group come to full maturity and perfection at a point of time ahead of the rest of the harvest which matures a little later and will also be harvested a little later.

Such is the theory which not only does *not* find support in the Word of God, but is also at variance with the symbolism from nature.

While it is true that in some crops such as citrus and even some kinds of grapes there is a small proportion of choice fruit which ripens ahead of the rest and can be harvested ahead of the rest, this is not true in the wheat and barley fields which are used as the symbols here.

You do not go out and take off a sheaf or two of ripened first fruits before the latter rain as the above theory suggests, and then at the end of the latter rain go out and harvest the rest. Instead, the farmer waits till the latter rain has done its full work and the whole field is a golden harvest brown then he takes a first fruit sheaf from the rest which is also ready for the harvest. The very fact that he can reap the first fruits is at the same time the indication that the rest is also ready.

## **Not the Point of Time**

The real meaning of the word “first fruit” is a spiritual one which has no connection with a point of time whatsoever. Keep in mind that the Bible has its own language and is its own interpreter of that language. When the Bible uses the word “first fruits,” it is seeking to give to us a certain message through that symbolism. There is the very real danger that the reader will fail to comprehend the intended message, so, to

leave us with no excuse, the word is used elsewhere within a context which leaves no doubt whatsoever as to what the word is intended to mean. In this way the Bible is its own interpreter.

Once we have found what the Bible means when it uses a certain word, that meaning and use is consistent throughout the inspired word. The meaning of “first fruits,” cannot be one thing in one place and then something else in another. Let us then go elsewhere in the word to see how the word “first fruits,” is used apart from the one hundred and forty-four thousand.

There is a truly plain and clear-cut example, the fact that Jesus Christ is stated to be the first fruits of those who had died and needed to be resurrected to eternal life. There are three scriptures in particular which speak of this.

#### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>20</sup> But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become *the first fruits* of them that slept.

#### **Revelation 1**

<sup>5</sup> And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and *the first begotten of the dead*, and the prince of the kings of the earth.

#### **Colossians 1**

<sup>18</sup> And He is the Head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, *the firstborn from the dead*; that in all things He might the pre-eminence.

A moment's reflection will show at once that the Bible does not intend that we understand that His being the first fruits, the first born or the first-begotten from the dead, means that He was the first One to be raised, and that after His resurrection all the rest follow, for He was by no means the first to be raised from the dead, so far as first in point of time is concerned.

Before He came forth from the dusty tomb there were seven others who had raised before Him. Moses was the first in point of time, so that if time was a factor, then Moses and not Christ should have been designated as the first fruits of them that slept. After Moses the others in their order who were raised from the dead are as follows:

- The son of the widow of Zarephath, as raised through the prayer and faith of Elijah, *1 Kings* 17:17-24;
- The Shunammite's son of Elisha's day, *2 Kings* 4:34-37;
- The man who was raised when he touched the bones of Elisha, *2 Kings* 13:21;
- Jairus' daughter, *Mark* 5:23-43;
- The widow of Nain's son, *Luke* 7:11-18, and
- Lazarus, *John* 11:1-46.

Yet, despite the fact that Jesus was actually the eighth to be raised from the dead, He is designated as being the first fruits of them that slept, the first begotten of the dead and the first born from the dead. The contradiction is between what we think that the word "first fruits" means, and what the Bible is actually saying; between our concepts and the Bible truth, to which the former must bow. It is not the mind of man, but the mind of God which matters, and it is His thought which we have to learn, not that of the product of the unaided human mind.

In what sense then was Jesus in actual fact the first fruits of them that slept, the first begotten from the dead, and the first born from the dead? It is not in respect to a point in time. Is He then the first fruit in point of quality and excellence? This is true, but still fails to really convey the message contained in this symbolism.

Let us return again to the symbol as it is found in nature in the field of grain which has come to the point where it is ready for the harvest. In the land of Israel, God had ordained a

symbolic service called the “Feast of First Fruits” in which the people were required to bring an offering of the field before they could reap the rest of the harvest.

**The Desire of Ages, p. 786:**

From the harvest fields the first heads of ripened grain were gathered, and when the people went to Jerusalem to the Passover, the sheaf of first fruits was waved as a thank offering before the Lord. Not until this was presented could the sickle be put to the grain, and it be gathered into sheaves.

Likewise, until Jesus had died and been raised from the dead, the remainder of the harvest could never be reaped, there could be no resurrection for anyone. The evidence for this is given in:

**1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>13</sup> But if there be no resurrection from the dead then is not Christ risen:

<sup>14</sup> And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

<sup>15</sup> Yea and we be found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

<sup>16</sup> For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

<sup>17</sup> And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.

<sup>18</sup> Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

Thus in the clearest possible terms Paul has stated to the Corinthians, to us, and to all men, the truth that without the resurrection of Jesus there could be no resurrection for anyone. More than this there could not even be deliverance from sin.

But how can this be? Was not the sacrifice for sins upon the cross full, ample and complete? There is not the least question but that it is, and there is nothing which needs to be added to

it in order to bring us salvation, but what Jesus won on the cross, He alone is the Custodian and the Administrator of. On the cross by His blood,

### **Hebrews 9**

<sup>12</sup> [He] obtained eternal redemption for us.

But what He obtained there, He took with Him, as in the very nature of the situation He had to do, right down into the tomb with Him. There was no one else who could take charge of it for Him. He alone could do that, just as He is the One and only One who could pay the supreme price for the salvation of mankind.

Therefore, if the devil could have held the Saviour in the tomb, then all that Jesus was and is the Custodian of, would have been held there in the tomb with Him, where it could not do the slightest amount of good for anyone in the whole world. In other words, all would have been lost,—the plan of salvation would have been made of none effect and we would indeed be without God and hope in the world, or, to put in the words of Holy Writ,

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>17</sup> And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.

Therefore any “gospel” which preaches only the death of Christ as being the full message falls far short of that which is the real and the full gospel. A dead Saviour cannot save us at all. He had to come forth from the tomb and ascend into the sanctuary above by virtue of which ministry, served at the right hand of the Father,

### **Hebrews 7**

<sup>25</sup> [He] is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.

From thence He ministers to His waiting people that which

He secured on the cross, even their eternal redemption, which in turn went down with Him into the tomb but which He brought forth with Him when He arose as the Conqueror of death and the grave, announcing over the rent sepulcher:

**John 11**

<sup>25</sup> I am the Resurrection and the Life.

When He opened the grave on the resurrection morning, He opened it for all of the redeemed of all time. That resurrection was the key to all the rest just as the sheaf of first fruits was the key to the rest of the harvest. It is in this sense that Jesus was the first fruits of them that slept.

It had nothing to do with time, for He was by no means the first to come forth from the tomb. He was the first fruits because His resurrection had to take place before the bars of death could be broken and the rest of the children of men who have availed themselves of salvation, could be delivered from death.

Then how is it that some did come forth from the prison house before Jesus had gone into it and actually broken its bars? Jesus Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and while He did not actually die until the cross, yet His life was so completely committed to it that to all intents and purposes it was already done. Those resurrections therefore were accomplished on the certainty of Jesus gaining the victory in actual fact when the battle was finally fought out.

But, should He have failed in His human nature, as in the Garden of Gethsemane He feared that He would, then God would have had to deliver even those who had been raised back to the tomb for Satan could and would claim them as his lawful captives.

With what intense interest then must Enoch and Elijah, have followed the scenes upon this earth as the Saviour con-

tended with Satan until He was finally laid in the sepulcher! They were a part of the harvest and their being gathered permanently into the heavenly garner depended upon the successful bringing in of the first fruits.

Thus the Word of God makes very clear and plain just what is meant by the expression, "The first fruits." Having thus established so clearly the meaning of the word through this illustration and situation, then the Bible, being totally consistent with itself, will use the word "first fruits," elsewhere with the same meaning exactly as in this place at which we have just looked. The one is the key to the understanding of the other, the moving from the known to the unknown.

### **Applying the Principle**

Equipped as we now are with the understanding of the type of the first fruits and of the fulfillment of that type in the case of Jesus as the first fruits of them that slept, we are able to travel a stage further to the point where we can understand how it will be that the one hundred and forty-four thousand will be the first fruits.

In the very first case we have seen that the point of time has nothing to do with their being the first fruits. We have seen that if the point of time was the deciding factor with Jesus being the first fruits then He never could have been, the honor instead would have passed to Moses who was the first in point of time to be raised from the dead.

Likewise, if the point of time is to be the deciding factor with the one hundred and forty-four thousand, then they could never be the first fruits for they will not be the first ones in time to receive the seal of the living God. In referring to the seal here, we mean the second and final seal by which the righteous one is designated as ready for the harvest. The one hundred and forty-four thousand are not the first ones in point of time to receive this seal but in fact are the very last in

point of time.

In 1844, the sealing work began in which the righteous dead received the second and final seal while they rested in their dusty beds and were thus designated as being certified for the great harvest on the resurrection day. That sealing work began right back with the very first believer to die in the days of Adam and progressed till it was taking care of each of those who died in the faith of the third angel's message as fast as each one ended his or her earthly sojourn.

Yet to say that the sealing work began in 1844, while it is true in the general sense, is to overlook the fact that all those who already are in heaven, such as Moses, Enoch and Elijah, together with the martyrs of the Old Testament who were raised with Jesus and went back to heaven with Him, must have received the second and final seal before they could enter the heavenly courts.

There is coming a time when the very last of the dead will have been judged and sealed and the sealing work will pass to the righteous living, those who are to be the one hundred and forty four thousand. And when that time comes they will be the only ones left who are to be sealed at all. So then, when it comes to a point of time they will not be the first to be sealed at all but the very last.

If then, in order to qualify as the first fruits they would have to be the first to be sealed, then they could never qualify. One might argue that of those who are living they will be the first, but even this is not true, for Enoch and Elijah both received the seal while living and were translated to heaven as a result.

For those who will be alive to see Jesus return, the second and final seal is only given after they have faced and passed the great final test which comes at the very end of probationary time just before the beginning of the time of Jacob's trouble. This fact immediately puts an end to the idea that a certain class will receive the seal at the beginning of the latter

rain to go out and gather the rest of the harvest, who will, in turn, make up the great multitude. Such an idea is far from the truth and is a denial of the very principle involved in the question of what the first fruits mean. Furthermore it is to be noted that in nature the first fruits do not go out and gather the rest of the harvest anyway.

Therefore in the very nature of the case, just as it was in the experience of Christ as the first fruits, the hundred and forty-four thousand will never qualify as the first fruits if it is to be a matter of precedence in time.

Nor can it be a matter of first excellence in quality of character development. As in the case of the Master, so with them it will be true that they will have achieved a higher level of character development than those who will be raised from the dead, by virtue of the experience through which they will have passed, and in turn will thus enjoy special privileges in the kingdom. But as it was not this which made Christ the first fruits, so likewise it will not be that which will make them the first fruits.

What then will make them the first fruits if it is not either of these two other possibilities? That which will make them the first fruits will be exactly that which made Christ to be the first fruits. Any other interpretation would be to give to the first fruits a different meaning in the one place from the other and thus destroy the consistency of the word of God.

Christ had to accomplish a certain work and gain a certain victory before any of the rest of the ransomed could be resurrected for eternity. So it will be that Christ as the great Captain of the Lord's armies will have to accomplish through them a work which must be done before the work of God can be consummated and the general harvest of the ages reaped.

To understand this requires that we look into the very nature of the legal arguments involved in the great controversy and this will be the subject of our next chapter.

## 2. Settling the Great Controversy

**I**N THE last chapter we saw that the one hundred and forty-four thousand cannot be the first fruits because of any precedence in point of time or in development of character, but because through them Christ will have accomplished a work that is essential before the harvest of the rest.

To understand this we need to be clear on the legal issues at stake in the great controversy itself, so that we shall comprehend what the devil is seeking to accomplish and what the Lord must accomplish before the closing of the great controversy.

That there is something very much at stake in the matter of the perfecting of the one hundred and forty-four thousand while still living, and that upon that work hinges the fate of all the righteous in all ages as well as the security and the prosperity of the universe, is made clear from the following statement.

The context shows that it is speaking of that time when the devil has gained control of the whole world and only a tiny remnant remain in defiance of his determination to rule the world and break the plan of salvation.

The setting is the closing scenes of the great day of atonement when only the one hundred and forty-four thousand are left alive of all who are the faithful of God. The statement then says:

**Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 472-473:**

Satan numbers the world as his subjects, he has gained control of the apostate churches; but here is a little company that are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete.

The only hope he has of being able to blot them from the earth is to break their faith in the saving power of God and

thus lead them into sin at a time when the sanctuary is closed and the ministry for sin is ended. If he could do this, then he could and would destroy them out of existence and if he could do that then his triumph would be complete. In other words he would be the victor in the great controversy of the ages; he would have proved his point and thus would have proved God to be the liar in the situation.

From the beginning of the great controversy, Satan has declared that the laws of God are unjust, oppressive, and self-serving so far as God is concerned, and therefore cannot be obeyed by any created being. He made this “discovery” when he stood in the very light of God’s presence and, beginning to look upon his own brightness and talent, and seeing himself as being worthy of a position far better and higher than that which had been assigned to him, naturally thought at first that the Lord would see him as he saw himself and would elevate him to a position of equality with Christ.

He anticipated this on the basis of his then correct understanding that the Lord gave to each created being a position equal to his talents and abilities. But as time went by, he saw no evidence on the part of the Lord that He would give to him the position which, in his own eyes, he felt was worthy of himself. Instead of checking to see if he really was what he thought he was, he then revised his attitude to the law of God and decided that the Lord was keeping him down so that he could preserve a special place and position for Himself and for His Son Jesus Christ.

Thus he “discovered” because of his now warped and self centered view of matters, that the law of God was designed to serve a self-serving God, and was not for the happiness of the creatures at all, but only to bind them in slavish bondage to the supreme power of God and the Son.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For more background, see A. T. Jones’ booklet, *The Spirit of the Papacy*, also titled *Self-Exaltation or Self-Renunciation*.

So it was and then it was, that he purposed in his heart that if the Lord would not give him that which he deemed as being rightfully his, and what he considered was being withheld from him by a selfish and self-serving God, he would rise up and take it by force. He reasoned that his reaction was entirely justified and the only possible course to take once he realized that he had been “deceived” as to the true character of God, whom he now looked upon as being a master imposter.

It therefore became a conviction with him that the law of God could not truly be kept at all and that those who were obeying it were only doing so because they were in the tyranny of a terrible bondage. But let those created beings only be awakened to the great “discovery” he had made, and they with him would end forever their servitude to God and the Son.

That this is so, is not a matter of guesswork or of mind reading on our part, for the devil has come right out and said it. Look at the incident over Job in the Old Testament. There the evil one presented himself at the counsel of the sons of God and was challenged by the Lord over the integrity of Job:

**Job 1**

<sup>8</sup> Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God, and eschews evil?

In his reply Satan did not deny that Job was serving God, but he came right out and said that he was doing it only because he did not realize the true character of God. Job was so deceived that he saw God as Lucifer once saw Him, as a benefactor of His children, but let the Lord show His real character and let Job see that character as One who was an oppressor, and then Job would curse God to His face.

**Job 1**

<sup>9</sup> Then Satan answered, Does Job fear God for nothing?

<sup>10</sup> Have you not made a hedge about him, and about his

house, and about all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

<sup>11</sup> But put forth your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.

Thus Satan declared that rebellion (which is sin according to God's position, outlook and judgment,) is inevitable should the created beings once become aware of the true nature of the situation. With this conviction firmly in his mind, he went to work to assist the unfallen angels to a realization of their situation, and was successful in enlisting one third of the heavenly host over to his side in full and open rebellion against the power of God.

This was a significant victory on his part and gave him a great start in the now long-standing controversy. The gaining of the one third of the angel host was bad enough if that is all that he did gain, but in actual fact the whole of the heavenly host were deceived in part, and until the cross of Calvary followed God with some reservations. Up until that time there was the question in their minds that perhaps, after all, the devil was correct and that the Lord was deceiving them to a certain extent at least.

That this is so is made clear in these statements:

**The Desire of Ages, p. 758:**

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The arch-apostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion.

**The Desire of Ages, p. 761:**

Satan saw his disguise torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his

work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came forth from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.

This statement clearly states that the last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken by his murdering Christ upon the cross of Calvary. Now there is a decided difference between having a sympathy with and having a sympathy for another party.

For there to exist a sympathy with or between two parties, there must be a sharing of the same attitudes and thoughts, or, at the very least, a conceding that when the other man believes and does, has a measure of justification, while on the other hand you can have sympathy for a person because of the very unfortunate situation in which he finds himself without in the least degree sympathizing with his ideology and way of life.

Thus today we can and should feel very sorry even for the devil by which we show sympathy for him, but at the same time there must not be the least sympathy between him and ourselves over anything which he believes or does.

Right up to the crucifixion when the love of God and the character of God appeared at their very best, while the character of Satan appeared at its very worst, the unfallen beings had not entirely lost their sympathy for the sophistries of Satan, but with that revelation of the two contending parties, Satan lost everything so far as sympathy from the heavenly world was concerned.

Tremendous ground had been gained by the forces of righteousness but the battle was not yet won. Heaven had been secured it is true. Every dweller there had come to see for themselves the true nature of Satan's character and arguments, and

had gladly acknowledged the fact and had taken definite action to give him not the least degree of entertainment at all. Now the same battle must be brought to finality upon this earth so that men both good and evil would wholly see that Satan is the great deceiver and wholeheartedly acknowledge the truth of it.

A certain situation had to be reached before the victory could be gained by which the heavenly host were fully released from Satan's deceptions and it took all of four thousand years to do it. Likewise a certain situation will have to be reached before the end can come with the complete revelation to sinful man as well as to the righteous, of the real character of Satan. Christ was the Champion who gained the victory on Calvary and He will again be the One who will gain the final victory, the instrument in His hands being the one hundred and forty-four thousand.

What had been done in the one great battlefield, the struggle for the allegiance of the unfallen beings, must now be done again in the struggle for the minds of the fallen beings. As Christ fulfilled the role of the first fruits in the first such great battle so He will again have His first fruits in the reproduction of Himself in the one hundred and forty-four thousand. Let us see how this will be done.

## **Human Nature Under Fire**

When Adam sinned in the garden of Eden, Satan exulted, for now he could point to the fact that perfect angelic nature and perfect human nature were not proof against the temptation to sin. It took only one encounter, the work of a few minutes, to overthrow Adam and Eve in their perfect Eden home. He thought that now he had a secure base of operations against the government of heaven until the words were spoken:

### **Genesis 3**

<sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman and be-

tween your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

From that moment on, the effort of Satan has been to abolish righteousness out of the earth by destroying the people of God off the face of it, and many times he has come perilously close to succeeding. Again and again he has led Israel into sin, and thus...

**The Desire of Ages, p. 29:**

He hoped to establish the claim put forth when he rebelled in heaven—that the requirements of God were unjust, and could not be obeyed. Even Israel, he declared, did not keep the law.

Then Jesus came and in that very same human nature which had failed so much before, and now weakened by four thousand years of sin and unrighteousness, demonstrated that the law could be kept in every particular under the most terrible possible pressures and conditions and still be for the betterment and happiness of those who kept it, thus proving that God was not unjust, arbitrary or unkind in making such laws for His creatures.

Satan knew that he now stood to lose all, and that everything depended upon his breaking down the human nature of Jesus and causing Him to sin. Therefore, after losing battle after battle, there came the time when the final battle was to be fought out on the cross.

Satan knew that this was a do or die effort, that he either lost all or won all in this struggle and so, at the cost of the full exposure of his character, he flung all that he had into a mighty effort to destroy the Son of God spiritually and morally,—and lost. The Son of God triumphed over the devil, proving forever the justice and love of God.

Having won that victory, and coming forth from the tomb as proof of the victory, He became the first fruits of them that slept in that He had certified that the devil had no power to

hold the righteous in the tomb.

## Woe to the Earth

No longer able to get any hearing from the angels, the devil then turned his entire attention to the one remaining battle field: this earth. Whereas before the cross, he divided his time and energy between the earth and the angels, now he concentrated it all upon men and women down here, for which reason it is written:

### Revelation 12

<sup>10</sup> And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down which accused them before God day and night.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time.

Satan's whole time, energy and effort is now devoted to the objective of causing those who profess to be the children of the kingdom to sin so that he can destroy them off the face of the earth and thus prove his point that human nature cannot obey the law at all.

Now it is true that Jesus in our human nature did obey the law, but the enemy perverts the truth of this by spreading abroad the teaching that he was not really human as we are, but that He possessed qualities and powers of which the average person knows nothing, and that He could not sin.

“He could do it,” Satan claims, “but not you!”

And down through time the sad picture is that even those who profess to be the children of God have failed Him again and again and thus have given credence to Satan's great lie.

Before the controversy can finally be resolved, before the wicked can be led to voluntarily acknowledge that God is the

Just One and the Holy One, there must be a people living upon this earth without a Mediator in the courts above, who will demonstrate that under the most forbidding circumstances the law can still be kept for the betterment and welfare of the human family.

Again and again the Lord has sought to gather together such a people and each time the devil has succeeded in bringing the great work of revival and reformation to an apparent though never complete end. If the devil could have at any time brought the work to a final, irrecoverable end, then he would have gained the victory, for he would have proved that unrighteousness is stronger than truth and thus would have won his argument.

Finally, the Lord will have a people in whom will be perfectly reproduced the character of Jesus. In desperation Satan sees what this means, and as he did at the cross, he will gather together all his powers and resources in a mighty determination to blot this righteous people from the face of the earth. He knows that he either wins now, or he loses forever, there will never be another opportunity. The two great forces which have been joined in battle so many times before now will enter the lists for the last time in a do or die struggle from which there will be no retreat till the victory is won by the one or the other.

But as it was at the cross, so again, Satan will utterly fail and as it was then, so it will be again, at tremendous cost to himself. Then the price he paid was the complete exposure of himself to the dwellers in the heavenly courts by which he lost any sympathy which had existed between them. Again the price he will pay for the loss will be the complete exposure of himself, not this time before the heavenly host, for that has already been done, but before the dwellers upon this earth.

Briefly here is the development of it as revealed in the sure

word of prophecy. Satan will lead the rulers of this earth to pass the death decree against the true and the holy and then will lead on the hosts of wicked men to destroy the people of God. Things come to the place where the wicked are standing over the righteous with the swords raised to slay them...

**The Great Controversy, p. 635-636:**

...when lo, a dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night, falls upon the earth. Then a rainbow, shining with the glory from the throne of God, spans the heavens and seems to encircle each praying company. The angry multitudes are suddenly arrested. Their mocking cries die away. The objects of their murderous rage are forgotten. With fearful forebodings they gaze upon the symbol of God's covenant, and long to be shielded from its overpowering brightness.

Then the voice of God speaks and delivers His people and it is at this time that...

**The Great Controversy, p. 654-656:**

...there is a terrible awakening of those who have lost all in the great conflict of life...The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping the bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception.

This is the drying up of the great river Euphrates which must be done so that the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared. This is to say that the kings of the East, whom we know from our study of the Battle of Armageddon<sup>8</sup> to be Christ and His armies, cannot come until the way has been prepared for them to come, and that preparation is the drying up of the waters of the symbolic Euphrates which is the total

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<sup>8</sup> See the book *Last Day Events*, Chapter 32 "The Sixth Plague."

withdrawal of the support which the devil will have gained at that time.

### **Daniel 11**

<sup>45</sup> He shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

He will be as divested of human support then as he was of heavenly sympathy at the crucifixion.

And it will have to be that way before the final victory in the great controversy can be gained by the Lord and His armies, for it is of the nature of the law of God that His people serve Him, not because they have to, but because they have a personal conviction that His way is the only right and true way. Conviction is based upon knowledge, and is gained by experience. Therefore, the devil must fully reveal himself before men as well as before angels, before the victory is won and the conviction is truly gained that the Lord is right and true.

To bring matters to this pass; to cause things to develop to this point, is not the work of a moment. It requires a people who will live a life of righteousness as perfectly as Jesus lived it here upon the earth as a standing rebuke to the enemy of all righteousness. The very existence of such a people will call forth from Satan the fiercest possible opposition which will mount in intensity as he seeks by every means to destroy them.

Thus he will be forced to the point where he will overreach himself and will give to the wicked as well as to the righteous such a true picture of himself as to cause all to withdraw their support from him. At the same time the demonstration will be given by the righteous that the law can be kept to advantage by those even who are living in the weakest flesh of all time.

Not until this is done can the righteous of all the ages be called forth from the tomb and the living translated into the kingdom. But when it is done, as the word so plainly says, the

way of the Kings of the East will have been prepared and the end will come.

Just as the death and resurrection of Jesus accomplished something by which alone the door of eternal life could be secured to all the rest, so the victory of the one hundred and forty-four thousand will accomplish something by which alone the end can come and the redeemed of all ages, the great harvest, will be gathered into the heavenly garner. Today they rest in their dusty beds awaiting that harvest, the harvest which depends on that generation which shall be the one hundred and forty-four thousand, being true and faithful all the way to final victory.

It is in this sense that they are the first fruits just as it was in the same sense that Jesus was the first fruits of them that slept.

May God help us each one to see the responsibility of our own generation being that which will rise to all that God expects of His people, so that the work can at last be finished in the gaining of the eternal decision in the last great conflict with the powers of darkness.

### 3. Who Are They?

**T**HUS far in the study of the great multitude we have seen that they are not a company gathered in by the one hundred and forty four thousand at the time of the final harvest. This much is clear.

But it is not enough to be able to say who they are not, we must be able also to say who they are. The question before us now is as to who the great multitude will be.

A second theory has it that they are in fact the one hundred and forty-four thousand themselves which belief is based upon the following arguments. First of all John hears the number of those who are sealed to make up the one hundred and forty-four thousand. Then he says:

#### **Revelation 7**

<sup>9</sup> 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 sits upon the throne and unto the Lamb.

This seems to suggest to the mind that the prophet is now given a view of those about whom he has been hearing, a suggestion which is strengthened as further information is given about this great multitude. Shortly thereafter as John is still gazing in wonder upon this great company, the question is asked,

<sup>13</sup> What are these which are arrayed in white robes and whence came they?

John admitted that he did not know and upon acknowledging that the questioner did know and could tell him, received the following information:

<sup>14</sup> These are they which came out of great tribulation, and

have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup> Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them.

This great multitude will serve God day and night in His temple, where they will stand before His throne. When Sister White was in a vision, wherein she was being shown the glories of the heavenly home, she was about to enter the temple on Mount Zion, when Jesus said:

**Life Sketches, p. 217:**

Only the one hundred and forty-four thousand enter this place.

“Therefore,” it is reasoned by those who hold this theory “the great multitude are the one hundred and forty-four thousand, that inasmuch as the great multitude do serve God in His temple, they must be this special company.”

What is overlooked is that there is more than one temple which will be located in the new earth, and the one into which the one hundred and forty-four thousand alone may go is not the one in which the throne of God is located. Of this we shall learn more later.

Some object to the above theory on the basis of the fact that the great multitude is said to be such as no man could number. They reason therefore they must be an enormous number of people, numerically so plentiful as to be beyond the power of man to count. Such an objection is really invalid even though the conclusion is correct.

The position which is laid out for us in the word of God is that the great multitude represents the saved of all ages. It is to be recognized that they are but the gleanings of the world's population from the gates of Eden to the final closing of probation. The most optimistic assessment of those who would be saved would not produce a figure beyond the power of man to

count in the sense of numbering their numerical totals, for man has shown himself able to count into quite astronomical figures. Therefore a moment's clear thought will show that it is not the largeness of the multitude which makes it impossible for man to count them. The truth of this lies in another sense altogether.

Whenever in all of history has man been able to number the Israel of God? Elijah tried it at a time when there were but seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal and see how far his numbering was out. Even if there were but ten true children of God in the world today and You were told there was just that many, could you number them? Could you declare that this one is to be numbered with the saved and that one not? We know that we could not and never will be able to do that.

It is God who will number His people, designating this one and that one as His according to the decisions of the judgment, first of the dead and then of the living. Out of that numbering will come the great multitude, great not so much in numerical multiplicity, but in character development and moral worth.

Ever and always through time, the people of God have been great, not because they have been many, for this they have never been, but because there was resident in them the greatness of the power of God.

## **The Great Harvest**

It is always of great value to turn to the Spirit of Prophecy to find the understanding contained therein of the Scriptures. The texts dealing with the great multitude are quoted in several places in which the context leaves no doubt as to what the understanding of the Spirit of Prophecy was in regard to this.

Let us turn to each of these references and see what they

say. We shall find that each in their turn speak of the saved of all ages as being the great multitude and never once does it limit them to the ones who will be called in from Babylon in the last great warning. The first statement is:

**Education, p. 309:**

**1 John 3**

<sup>2</sup> It does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

Then in the results of His work, Christ will behold its recompense. *In that great multitude which no man could number*, presented...

**Jude**

<sup>24</sup> ...faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

–He whose blood has redeemed and whose life has taught us,

**Isaiah 53**

<sup>11</sup> ...shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.

Here the great multitude is named as being the results of His work which can by no means be limited to the final phase of His work but to nothing less than all of it. The “all of it” must include all those who have been saved from the beginning of the controversy in this earth to the end of it.

A similar statement is found in:

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 601-602:**

What sustained the Son of God during His life of toil and sacrifice? He saw the results of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. Looking into eternity, He beheld the happiness of those who through His humiliation had received pardon and everlasting life. His ear caught the shout of the redeemed. He heard the ransomed ones singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

We may have a vision of the future, the blessedness of Heaven. In the Bible are revealed visions of future glory, scenes pictured by the hand of God, and these are dear to

His church. By faith we may stand on the threshold of the eternal city, and hear the gracious welcome given to those who in this life cooperate with Christ, regarding it as an honor to suffer for His sake. As the words are spoken, “Come, you blessed of my Father,” they cast their crowns at the feet of the Redeemer, exclaiming,

#### **Revelation 5**

<sup>12</sup> Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing.

<sup>13</sup> ...honor, and glory and power be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.

There the redeemed greet those who led them to the Saviour, and all unite in praising Him who died that human beings might have the life that measures with the life of God. The conflict is over. Tribulation and strife are at an end. Songs of victory fill all heaven as the ransomed ones take up the joyful strain, Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and lives again, a triumphant conqueror.

#### **Revelation 7**

<sup>9</sup> 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;

<sup>10</sup> And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

<sup>14</sup> These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup> Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them.

<sup>16</sup> They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat.

<sup>17</sup> For the Lamb which is in the midst of them shall feed them and shall lead them into living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

#### **Revelation 21**

<sup>4</sup> And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor cry-

ing, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

The entire sense of these statements cover the broad field of the entire history of the work of salvation and its ultimate results. There is not a hint or a suggestion in it anywhere that it is referring only to the people of the last days. In the first paragraph as we are told of that which sustained the Saviour, we learn that:

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 601:**

He beheld the happiness of those who through His humiliation had received pardon and everlasting life. His ear caught the shout of the redeemed. He heard the ransomed ones singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

When He beheld the happiness of those who had received pardon and everlasting life, He was quite evidently seeing the joy of the entire company of the redeemed and not just a final section of them. And so, as it goes on to talk about the redeemed in the city of God, it is evident that all the redeemed are being spoken of and then in the light of all this context, the texts are directly quoted from *Revelation 7:9-17*, which tell about the great multitude, meaning no doubt but that they are the total sum of the redeemed from all ages.

This is so clear and plain that no further comment would seem necessary. Let us then pass on to the next one to be considered. This statement is the clearest of them all. It speaks of that time when the end of the thousand years has come and the righteous are gathered around their Saviour while the wicked encircle the city of God in the last great judgment day.

As the righteous stand there, they are divided into certain easily identifiable classifications. Here is the statement in full:

**The Great Controversy, p. 665:**

Nearest the throne are those who were once zealous in the cause of Satan, but who, plucked as brands from the burning, have followed their Saviour with deep intense devotion.

Next are those who perfected Christian characters in the midst of falsehood and infidelity, those who honored the law of God when the Christian world declared it void, and the millions of all ages who were martyred for their faith. And beyond is the “great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues,... before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.” Their warfare is ended, their victory won. They have run the race and reached the prize. The palm branch in their hands is a symbol of their triumph, the white robe and emblem of the spotless righteousness of Christ which now is theirs.

On this particular occasion those who will stand nearest the throne are those who were once zealous in the cause of Satan but who, having been plucked as brands from the burning, have followed their Saviour with deep, intense devotion. The apostle Paul would surely come under this classification. And there have been others like him down through history.

Next come those who have perfected Christian characters in the midst of infidelity and falsehood, those who honored the law of God when the Christian world declared it void. The one hundred and forty-four thousand must be numbered among this group, for they will have lived in the greatest period of infidelity and falsehood of all time and will most certainly be the ones who will honor the law of God when the Christian world make it void.

Next in line stand the martyrs of all ages, millions of them. They are the ones who have given their life for the Master. It must be evident that some can qualify to stand in more than one category. Paul for instance is an outstanding example of those who will stand in the first category and be the nearest to Christ but at the same time he also was a martyr and thus could also stand in this section too.

Now listed last of all are the great multitude as directly quoted from *Revelation 7:9*. Standing thus, it is evident that

they belong to a category which cannot be included in any of the other groups, thus indicating that they are made up of the righteous of all ages and not of a special group down at the end of time.

In fact, this statement makes it very clear indeed that they are not composed of a company who will be won by the one hundred and forty-four thousand after that company has been blessed with the outpouring of the latter rain. If it was true that the one hundred and forty-four thousand are a company who go out and win the great multitude, then that great multitude would have to honor the law of God at a time when the Christian world will have declared it void. This would mean that the great multitude would stand, not where they are shown to be standing in this paragraph but together with those who will have honored the law of God when the Christian world will have made it void.

But we do not find them standing among that group which proves beyond a doubt that they have not lived during that time, and therefore could not have been any special group won by the one hundred and forty-four thousand.

Thus it is that the witness of the Spirit of Prophecy, that specially promised gift to the remnant of the last days, verifies the fact that the great multitude are not a generation of the last days but the saved of all ages. There are still other references to be read if we should wish to pursue them all but in each case they are of the same nature as the ones already studied and do not tell us any more or less than that which we have already seen.

## **The Great Release**

Having established the role of the one hundred and forty-four thousand as the first fruits, and having seen that the great multitude are from every generation of the saved and not the special harvest of the last days, it is fit that we should

enquire as to why the one hundred and forty-four thousand and the great multitude are shown together in this chapter.

There is a very real reason for it as the arrangement of the messages given in the prophecies are not by accident but by very definite design.

In the chapter, John hears the number of them which are sealed into that glorious and privileged group, the one hundred and forty-four thousand. No sooner is this sealing completed than he is conscious of the visible presence of the great multitude. It is as if the sealing of the former has swung open a great door and released the flood-tide of saved humanity onto the scene. And this is just as it will be and this is the very message of this chapter.

As we have seen before, the very reason as to why the Lord God has permitted the great controversy to go on all these years is so that the real character and motives of Satan will stand revealed. We have studied as to how this will be done and have seen that it will be accomplished by the living in fallen humanity, of the perfect righteousness of the law of God by a remnant of people in these last days as it was by Jesus in the same fallen humanity in His day.

Then, in the face of this unimpeachable and unconquerable righteousness, the evil one will be forced to so reveal himself as to lose even the support of the nearest and dearest to him, the ministry of apostasy. Already, as we have seen, that purpose of the great controversy has been achieved for the un-fallen beings of heaven and the other worlds but it has not yet been accomplished for mankind. But accomplished it must be. If there is one thing we have to understand it is that the Lord is never going to bring the great controversy to an end, until the purpose for which it was allowed to go on is fully and finally accomplished.

Until that objective is reached, even though it should take another thousand years, (which let us pray the Lord it will not

as the sure word of prophecy assures us,) the controversy must and will go on. When and only when the objectives have been reached will it come at last to its end.

Until that time the great multitude will remain in their dusty beds awaiting the final victory and the full revealing to men of the true character and work of Satan. Inasmuch then as that full revelation of the character of Satan to the point where even his followers will withdraw all support from him, is to be accomplished by the full and complete dedication of a remnant to the power and leadership of Christ, then those who are to be that remnant, provide themselves as the key in the hand of Christ to unlock the prison house and set the prisoners free.

In other words, until they have come to full fruition, then the rest of the harvest cannot be reaped. This is to say that those of us who have professed to be the children of the Lord but have failed to come to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus, even though He has provided all the means necessary, are preventing the early harvest of that great multitude which await in their graves the resurrection morning.

Sometime at last the Lord is going to have that people. John heard the sealing of them as recorded in *Revelation 7*. When at last He does in very fact have them, then through them the objectives of the great controversy will be finally and fully achieved and then there is nothing to delay the immediate gathering of the harvest and the end of this world's history.

Therefore, exactly as portrayed in *Revelation 7*, with the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, the wrath of Satan is excited to its limits, his self-exposure is complete, and the work is finished. Then at once appear the great multitude.

In other words the whole arrangement of the information in *Revelation 7*, show that the one hundred and forty-four thousand are the first fruits in the sense that when through them

the final objectives of the great controversy have been achieved, the rest of the harvest can and will at once be reaped.

What a responsibility then rests upon those who claim to be the people of the Lord at the present time, to put away sin and wrong of every and any kind, to live the fullness of the righteousness of the life of Christ and to plan not for time but for eternity. The dead cry out from dusty beds:

“How long, O Lord, how long?”

And His answer must always be:

“Until I have a people through whom at last can be achieved the final objectives of the great controversy. Then a Great Multitude which no man can number of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, the first fruits will have been gathered and your reaping will come, in the releasing of you all from your graves.”

May the Lord of heaven find in His people of this generation the faithful and chosen company for whom He is searching. Can you Dear Reader catch a vision of the implications and the responsibilities of this hour and rise to it?

May God help us to do just that, before instead we join those in their dusty beds and wait there until at last some other righteous generation rises to do what we might have done, but failed to do.



## 4. The Glorious Reward

**W**E ARE now prepared as we continue the study of the great multitude to look into the glorious reward of this company.

This meditation will fill us with wonder and delight as we see something of that which the Lord has prepared for His children, and will make the things of this earth grow exceedingly dim and worthless by comparison. Vividly as the picture may be painted, it yet remains that...

### **1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>9</sup> ...eye has nor seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

Only when we arrive there will we begin to understand and appreciate the wonder and the glory of the Eden restored. Yet even then that will be but the beginning, for throughout eternity there...

### **The Great Controversy, p. 677:**

...will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.

## **The Great Tribulation**

First let us notice that they will have come out of great tribulation. The marginal reading states that it will have been the great tribulation, as if specifying a certain and particular tribulation. Elsewhere in the word of God specific times of trouble and tribulation are spoken about and described. Jesus said:

### **Matthew 24**

<sup>21</sup> For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time now, nor ever shall be.

Then He declared:

**Matthew 24**

<sup>29</sup> Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken.

This, especially as borne out by *The Great Controversy*, p. 306, clearly shows that the tribulation referred to here is the period of the dark ages, that terrible period covered by the one thousand two hundred and sixty days of prophecy. We have already seen that the great multitude does not come alone from this period of history. Therefore it cannot be to that tribulation we are being referred to in *Revelation 7*.

Then there is the great time of trouble or tribulation spoken of by Daniel the prophet in:

**Daniel 12**

<sup>1</sup> And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which stands for the children of your people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation to that same time: and at that time your people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

This is that time when the believers will have to develop and perfect Christian characters when the rest of the world will have declared the law of God to be void. Those who do this will be the one hundred and forty-four thousand and not the great multitude. Therefore it is to neither of these periods of tribulation to which we are referred in *Revelation 7*. This leaves us with the question as to which is being referred to and the answer is quite simple.

The great tribulation from Heaven's point of view and from the point of view of eternity encompasses the whole of the period of the great controversy. Before this trouble started, there was peace and unity in heaven and no tribulation at all, but with the beginning of the controversy there has been

nothing but tribulation since. Even the most peaceful and prosperous periods of the church have been times of tribulation. If it were not so, then the devil must have had times when he left the church alone and unpersecuted. This we know that he never did.

The great tribulation in the full sense of the term has been something like six thousand years long, and it is out of that period that the great multitude will come as the great harvest of the ages, the fruition of the work of Jesus Christ in giving His life as a ransom for many.

## In His Temple

It is said that the great multitude will be...

### **Revelation 7**

<sup>14</sup> ...before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple, and He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them.

We know that only the one hundred and forty-four thousand will enter the temple on Mount Zion in the new earth, and for this reason it has been concluded that the great multitude are the same special company.

But all difficulty is removed when it is seen that the temple on Mount Zion is not the one referred to here in the text just quoted. A careful reading of *Early Writings*, p. 17-19 quickly shows that the temple on Mount Zion is well outside of the Holy City. To reach it from the city it was necessary to cross fields and woods until the temple was reached standing upon a mountain surrounded by seven other mountains.

It is worth remembering that the Holy City rests upon a vast plain created by the rending of the Mount of Olives as it is written:

### **Zechariah 14**

<sup>4</sup> And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem in the east, and the Mount

of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north and half toward the south.

Thus there is no mountain in the city of God, neither is it built upon a mountain but upon a plain. It is in that city that the presence and throne of God are to be found as is also the temple of God.

Our verse tells us that the great multitude are before the throne of God and as such serve Him day and night in His temple, by which we are, to understand that to be before the throne of God and in the very presence of God, is at the same time to be in the temple of God.

This is revealed in the wonderful truth that there is no temple in the city so far as a distinct and separate building is concerned, for, the Father and the Son are the temple of it as John reported:

**Revelation 21**

<sup>22</sup> And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

Today, because of the separating wall of sin, the face and the presence of God is veiled from His people. We cannot look upon His face and live. In the Old Testament experience of Israel it was the same. The presence of God had to be veiled within the confines of the sanctuary deep within the inner veil wherein no man could venture and live except the High Priest but once a year, and then he had to have great clouds of incense to veil the glory of the Presence of the Deity.

But this will not be so in the kingdom to come. No temple will be needed there to veil the glory of the Divine Presence. There all the redeemed...

**Revelation 22**

<sup>4</sup> ...shall see His face for His name shall be in their foreheads.

## **The Great Controversy, p. 676-677:**

### **Revelation 21**

<sup>22</sup> I saw no temple therein for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

The people of God are privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son.

### **1 Corinthians 13**

<sup>12</sup> Now we see through a glass darkly.

We behold the image of God reflected, as in a mirror, in the works of nature and His dealings with men; but then we shall see Him face to face, without a dimming veil between. We shall stand in His presence, and behold the glory of His countenance.

Is it possible for the present human mind to understand what this will mean to the people of God in the eternity to come? No! It is impossible! Think of the joy and the wonder of speaking to God face to face, of holding open communion with Him and with His wonderful Son. Think of it! Let the wonder and the marvel of it fill us with awe, with humility and with the gladdest of anticipations. Let the prospect serve to nerve us for the conflict ahead and stir us with an enthusiasm to win that crown no matter what the cost on this earth may be.

### **The SDA Bible Commentary, vol 6, p. 1091:**

Then much will be revealed in explanation upon matters upon which God now keeps silence because we have not gathered up and appreciated that which has been made known of the eternal mysteries. The ways of Providence will be made clear; the mysteries of grace through Christ will be unfolded. That which the mind cannot now grasp, which is hard to be understood, will be explained. We shall see order in that which has seemed unexplainable: wisdom in everything withheld; goodness and gracious mercy in everything imparted. Truth will be unfolded to the mind, free from obscurity, in a single line, and its brightness will be enduring. The heart will be made to sing for joy. Controversies will be forever ended, and all difficulties will be dissolved.

All this and more is the heritage which awaits the great multitude as they step ashore in the heavenly home at last, together with the one hundred and forty-four thousand whose victory will have enabled Jesus to come again and take them as the great harvest into the garner of heaven.

## **The New Creation**

There we shall not be as we are here, weak, frail, sick and dying. The work of the second creation will be complete. Here the Lord has given us the perfect eternal spiritual life in the soul, but not yet have we received the new creation of the body in which that life must dwell and operate. That will be given to us at the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven. Finally at the end of the thousand years, after the old earth has been destroyed by fire, the Lord will create...

### **Revelation 21**

<sup>1</sup> ...a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and there was no more sea.

Accustomed as we are to the limitations of this frail flesh, we cannot imagine what it will be like to be emancipated from it and thus be able to enjoy and live the fullness of a life where there will be...

<sup>4</sup> ...no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away.

What wonderful physical and mental vigor will be ours then. We are told that the vital energy possessed by Adam in his creation was twenty times more than that now possessed by man:

### **Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 138-139:**

God endowed man with so great vital force that he has withstood the accumulation of disease brought upon the race in consequence of perverted habits, and has continued for six thousand years. This fact of itself is enough to evi-

dence to us the strength and electrical energy that God gave to man at his creation. It took more than two thousand years of crime and the indulgence of the base passions to bring boldly disease upon the race to any extent. If Adam, at his creation, had not been endowed with twenty times as much vital force as men now have, the race, with their present habits of living in violation of natural law, would have become extinct.

**Spiritual Gifts, vol. 3, p. 34:**

As Adam came forth from the hand of the Creator, he was of noble height and of beautiful symmetry. He was more than twice as tall as man now living upon the earth, and was well proportioned.

What a wonderful specimen of the Creator's art, this father of the human family must have been. If more than twice as tall as men now living, he would have stood over twelve feet in height, beautifully proportioned and possessed of twenty times the vital energy in body and brain as is left to the human race today, drained of it as we have been by the wickedness of the centuries.

But all of this is to be restored as we regain access to the tree of life:

**The Great Controversy, p. 645:**

Restored to the tree of life in the long-lost Eden, the redeemed will "grow up" to the full stature of the race in its primeval glory. The last lingering traces of sin will be removed, and Christ's faithful ones will appear "in the beauty of the Lord our God," in mind and soul and body reflecting the perfect image of their Lord. Oh, wonderful redemption!—long talked of, hoped for, contemplated with eager anticipation, but never fully understood.

Yet, even the fact that we shall have this tremendous vitality does not even yet reveal all the amazing powers which will be given to that great multitude when they stand in the heaven made new. For instance, we shall not merely have twenty

times better eyesight but will be equipped with powers of vision undreamed of in this life:

**Education, p. 303:**

There, when the veil that darkens our vision shall be removed, and our eyes shall behold that world of beauty of which we now catch glimpses through the microscope; when we look on the glories of the heavens now scanned afar through the telescope; when, the blight of sin removed, the whole earth shall appear in “the beauty of the Lord our God,” what a field will be opened to our study!

There the student of science may read the records of creation and discern no reminders of the law of evil. He may listen to the music of nature’s voices and detect no note of wailing or undertone of sorrow. In all created things he may trace one handwriting in the vast universe behold “God’s name writ large,” and not in earth or sea or sky one sign of ill remaining.

This statement plainly states that we shall be able to see there things of which now the mighty microscope can only provide us with glimpses. Nothing will be hidden from our view. We shall be able to make the most wonderful and intimate studies of the closest secrets of nature and see the handiwork of God, the book of nature, with a clarity and power impossible to us here.

Such a vision will reveal to us the character of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit as we could never possibly know it down here upon this earth.

Likewise our eyes will behold those things which now are scanned afar through the telescope, and beyond even that which can be reached by the telescope. There will be no limits, no confinements, no stopping places, no end to the development, the learning, the satisfactions and the fulfillment of all that is most desirable and wonderful in the heart of God’s children.

### **The Great Controversy, p. 677-678:**

There the redeemed shall “know, even as also they are known.” The loves and sympathies which God Himself has planted in the soul, shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, the sacred ties that bind together “the whole family in heaven and earth,” *Ephesians* 3:15, these help to constitute the happiness of the redeemed.

There, immortal minds will contemplate with never failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God’s redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar,—worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe, and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God’s handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation, suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator’s name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed.

And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before

them the riches of redemption, and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand-times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise.

### **Revelation 5**

<sup>13</sup> And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.

This is but a faint glimpse of what the Lord has laid up for His children. The great multitude should at this very time be living in the fullest enjoyment of all these treasures. Instead they rest still in their dusty beds, waiting, waiting.....waiting. It is through no failure or fault of God that they wait. Long since the word has gone forth,

“All things are ready, Come to the marriage.”

But the people of God have not come. They have tarried and dallied and allowed themselves to be deceived by the enemy and all the while the dead sleep on, waiting, waiting,.....waiting! How much longer, O you children of men? How much longer before the Lord God of Heaven has a generation of believers who will go all the way and not in the least come short of His glory?

Such He must have before He can see the full objective of the great controversy achieved. He has all that we need. The matter rests with us to respond, to lay hold upon that which

He has for us and to gain for Him that victory which will enable the release of the great multitude into glory.

May the Lord today awaken us to the solemn work of this hour so that we shall put away everything but His truth and work so the end can come and come quickly.





THE ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND is one of those Bible subjects which has commanded more than common interest. Many people have contemplated this theme and various theories are in circulation attempting to explain who will make up the members of this band, what their qualifications will be, and where their future will be spent.

This publication answers some of the questions about the one hundred and forty-four thousand. It covers certain misconceptions and the spiritual meaning of the subject. No room is left for uncertainty about their origin, when the company shall have been formed, the high levels of character perfection to which they are to attain, and the experiences they will have before they are translated from this earth.