

Understanding the 144,000

A Temcat Study

Perhaps no other subject in Bible prophecy has caused so much discussion, speculation and confusion as the mystery of the 144,000.

“It is not His will that they shall get into controversy over questions which will not help them spiritually, such as, Who is to compose the hundred and forty-four thousand? This those who are the elect of God will in a short time know without question.” 1SM 174 (1901). {LDE 269.1}

So we see that there are details about this subject that we are not shown and that it is not God’s will we should speculate regarding that which we are not shown—however—there is considerable information that has been revealed that we can truly benefit from considering.

A Brief Summary:

Since the commencement of the Third Angel’s Message which began in 1844, God has been calling out a people to stand under the banner of the third angel. These people are described in Revelation 14:12 “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

All false doctrines that came over from Paganism and the Roman church during the ‘falling away’ are repudiated and they stand on a solid Biblical foundation, free from all that has no higher authority than man’s ideas and traditions. They make the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus the ruling principle of their existence. Those who fully come into this condition receive the Seal of God.

Those who die in this faith, are sealed, and become part of the “Blessed Dead” and will be raised to hear the covenant of God with His people announced and see Jesus come in the clouds of glory.

Since 1844, the Investigative judgment has been taking place. It began first with the dead and prophecy and events in the church and world indicate that since 9-11-2001 it is turning to the judgment of the living. The Latter Rain is sprinkling. God is preparing a people to stand in the crisis soon to hit, and all who are willing to co-operate with Christ and the heavenly agencies, will be prepared to receive the Seal of God when the Testing time of the Sunday Law goes forward.

During that test, all who know this message will show what character they have prepared—they will either stand obedient, in the power of the Lord, and be Sealed, receiving at that time the full measure of the Latter Rain, or they will capitulate to the worldly powers and receive the Mark of the Beast. At that time there will be no second chance for Sabbath believers as their probation closes first.

Those sealed at the time of this crisis will go forth in the full power of the Latter Rain and proclaim the Loud Cry to the people of the earth, whose probation continues during this time. Many of them will come out of the fallen religions and stand with the saints and through

the power of the Holy Spirit they will learn in a very short time what it took the Advent Believers years to learn. They will receive the Seal and the Latter Rain and join in the proclamation of the final message to the world. These are called the eleventh hour workers in the parable.

“The time of God's destructive judgments is the time of mercy for those who have had no opportunity to learn what is truth. Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched; His hand is still stretched out to save, while the door is closed to those who would not enter.” Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 97.

During this ‘Loud Cry’ period, some of the sealed will die, many will be martyred, but a group will remain until the final close of probation for the entire world. This occurs when the powers join together to pass a decree that all the saints are to be put to death at a certain time. Those who remain alive at this time will constitute the 144,000. They will go through the ‘Time of Jacob’s Trouble’ and witness God’s wrath upon the wicked in the Seven Last Plagues. They will be translated when Jesus comes, without seeing death.

These stand as evidence of the power of the plan of redemption—precious trophies of the Lamb. Though tried fiercely, they will stand without sin during the time when Christ has ceased His intercessory work and has left the sanctuary. Prophecy is clear that they are the first fruits and the 2nd coming cannot happen until this special group is demonstrated to the universe.

The Biblical Description:

Revelation 7:2 “And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. 4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.”

Revelation 14:1 “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.”

Daniel 12:3 “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” {wise: or, teachers}

Daniel 12:10 “Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.”

We are to Strive to be Among Them

Although we do not know which of us will make up the final 144,000, we have been told we are all to strive to be among them. There is no separate standard that is lower for those who die before the final close of probation. We all need to be prepared for the Seal of God and this preparation is to be the focus of our lives. The most important aspect of the 144,000 both in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy is their character.

Revelation 14:5 “And in their mouth was found no guile: [no hypocrisy; no dishonesty or falsehood.] for they are without fault before the throne of God.”

“Those whom the Lamb shall lead by the fountains of living waters, and from whose eyes he shall wipe away all tears, **will be those now receiving the knowledge and understanding revealed in the Bible, the Word of God.** To us has been given the privilege of receiving the wisdom that cometh from God, of seeing the beauty and the glories of that Word which lies at the foundation of all true knowledge. The Bible teaches us what a Christian ought to be, and what he ought to do. {RH, March 9, 1905 par. 2}

“We are to copy no human being. There is no human being wise enough to be our criterion. We are to look to the man Christ Jesus, who is complete in the perfection of righteousness and holiness. He is the author and finisher of our faith. He is the pattern Man. His experience is the measure of the experience that we are to gain. His character is our model. Let us, then, take our minds off the perplexities and the difficulties of this life, and fix them on him, that by beholding we may be changed into his likeness. We may behold Christ to good purpose. We may safely look to him; for he is all-wise. As we look to him and think of him, he will be formed within, the hope of glory. {RH, March 9, 1905 par. 3}

“Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand. And let us do all that we can to help others to gain heaven. We are to have an intense interest in Christ Jesus; for he is our Saviour. He came to this world to be tempted in all points as we are, to prove to the universe that in this world of sin human beings can live lives that God will approve.” {RH, March 9, 1905 par. 4}

“On what foundation are you building? This question comes home to us all. We are living amid the perils of the last days. The law of God is almost universally disregarded. Satan is not idle; he walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may turn from the right way. And he does not always appear as a lion; he has the power to come as a lamb, and then his voice is soft and low. But shall we allow him to control our hearts? Under his direction, shall we build upon a foundation that will not stand the storm? We can not afford to do this. **Shall we not rather strive to be among that number of whom John writes, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus"?** {ST, September 24, 1896 par. 8}

“The path to freedom from sin is through crucifixion of self, and conflict with the powers of darkness. Let none be discouraged in view of the severe trials to be met in the time of Jacob's trouble, which is yet before them. They are to work earnestly, anxiously, not for that time, but for today. **What we want is to have a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ now, and a personal experience now. In these precious closing hours of probation, we have a deep**

and living experience to gain. We shall thus form characters that will ensure our deliverance in the time of trouble." {OHC 321.2}

"One of the marked features in the representation of the 144,000 is that in their mouth there was found no guile. The Lord has said, "Blessed is the man . . . in whose spirit there is no guile." They profess to be children of God, and are represented as following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. They are prefigured before us as standing on Mount Zion, girt for holy service, clothed in white linen, which is the righteousness of the saints. But all who follow the Lamb in heaven will first have followed Him on earth, in trustful, loving, willing obedience, followed Him not fretfully and capriciously, but confidently, truthfully, as the flock follows the shepherd. . . ." {3SM 424.2}

"John saw a Lamb on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000 having His Father's name written in their foreheads. They bore the signet of heaven. They reflected the image of God. They were full of the light and the glory of the Holy One. If we would have the image and superscription of God upon us, we must separate ourselves from all iniquity. We must forsake every evil way, and then we must trust our cases in the hands of Christ. While we are working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, God will work in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure." (RH March 19, 1889)

What other fact identifies this group?

The 144,000 are those who live through the seven last plagues after the close of human probation and at Jesus Coming are translated without seeing death.

"God would not suffer the wicked to destroy those who were expecting translation, and who would not bow to the decree of the beast or receive his mark. I saw that if the wicked were permitted to slay the saints, Satan and all his evil host, and all who hate God, would be gratified. And oh, what a triumph it would be for his satanic majesty, to have power, in the last closing struggle, over those who had so long waited to behold Him whom they loved! Those who have mocked at the idea of the saints' going up will witness the care of God for His people, and behold their glorious deliverance."--EW 284 (1858). {LDE 263.3}

"The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation, and suffer for want of food, they will not be left to perish."--GC 629 (1911). {LDE 264.1}

"If the blood of Christ's faithful witnesses were shed at this time, it would not, like the blood of the martyrs, be as seed sown to yield a harvest for God.--GC 634 (1911). {LDE 264.2}

"A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob's trouble. Then all the saints cried out with anguish of spirit, and were delivered by the voice of God. The one hundred and forty-four thousand triumphed. Their faces were lighted up with the glory of God." {LS 117.1}

"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. When God spoke the time, He poured upon

us the Holy Ghost, and our faces began to light up and shine with the glory of God, as Moses' did when he came down from Mount Sinai." {CET 58.1}

"The 144,000 were all sealed, and perfectly united. On their foreheads was written, "God, New Jerusalem," and a glorious star containing Jesus' new name. At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and they would fall helpless to the ground. Then it was that the synagogue of Satan knew that God had loved us who could wash one another's feet, and salute the brethren with a holy kiss, and they worshiped at our feet." {CET 58.2}

Why are they needed:

Before the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan can be fully brought to an end, it is necessary that a people be demonstrated that fully keep ALL of God's commandments and have been cleansed of all rebellion and sin, to the point that the full power of the Holy Spirit can be poured out on them without measure, and dwell within them. They must be so fully restored to holiness that they will at the end be able to stand, sealed unto God and without a mediator in the heavenly sanctuary.

Many faithful people lived and died in Old Testament times; but this special group could not have come from the times before Christ, because the covenant had not at that time been ratified by the blood of the Lamb of God. The 'Wave Sheaf' that Christ took with Him when He ascended was from among these.

There were many faithful during the long years of Papal supremacy, many of which were martyred for their faith. But the 144,000 could not be raised up from among them.

Only as the reformation was completed by a full and complete return to Biblical doctrine, laying aside all the Pagan and Papal errors fully, and a people raised up to repair the Breach in God's Law by restoring the Sabbath to its proper place, could we expect to see this group arise. They could not arrive in history until the third angel's message went forth at the opening of the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844.

Although many saints that have died in the past will be raised to be among the redeemed, because they fully, with an honest heart, lived up to all the light they had, the 144,000 are raised up when the full light of God's truth is shining on their pathway, including the testimony of Jesus—the Spirit of Prophecy, and they accept and obey the light in its complete fullness.

The 144,000 are to be the 'First Fruits' of earth and must be raised up, sealed, and presented before the harvest of the earth be reaped. In the typical ceremony the full harvest could not be gathered until the sheave of First Fruits was presented.

Other Prophecies about them: the Stone

This group is the 'Stone' that is cut out of the mountain (Mount Zion=God's People) and that smites the image on the feet and ushers in the Second Coming of Jesus. See Daniel 2.

It seems for years folk in Adventism just clung to the idea the 'stone' was the 2nd coming—and this in spite of the fact we were told over and over again by the Lord's messenger that we needed to study Daniel and Revelation much more deeply. When one takes a closer look at what the Bible is actually saying, letting the prophetic word interpret itself, then you see there is more to it.

The Stone is cut out of the Mountain--the Mountain represents Mount Zion--God's people. It is cut out without hands--so it is the work of the Holy Spirit that cuts it out. Clearly this points to the separation and sealing of the 144,000. It certainly leads to the 2nd coming--but that is an over-simplification and I think we can see there is more to it.

Certainly Christ is a Rock; but this 'stone' is cut out of the mountain - God's People. That is the key. It fits so beautifully with the sifting-sealing message!

The Fit Man and the Scapegoat.

This group is also represented by the 'Fit Man' who, in the typical service, led the Scapegoat out into a land not inhabited; to return no more to the camp.

"And Aaron shall lay both hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." Leviticus 16: 21-22.

This points forward to the time when Satan is bound on this earth for the 1,000 years—at that time, a truly uninhabited place. During this time the judgment of the wicked is going on in heaven.

Revelation 20:2 "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

"Then I saw that Jesus' work in the sanctuary will soon be finished. And after His work there is finished, He will come to the door of the first apartment, and confess the sins of Israel upon the head of the scape-goat. Then He will put on the garments of vengeance. Then the plagues will come upon the wicked, and they do not come till Jesus puts on that garment, and takes His place upon the great white cloud. Then while the plagues are falling, the scape-goat is being led away. He makes a mighty struggle to escape, but he is held fast by the hand that leads him. If he should effect his escape, Israel would lose their lives. I saw that it would take time to lead away the scape-goat into the land of forgetfulness after the sins were put on his head." Spalding and Magan Collection, p. 2.

This 'mighty effort to escape' is experienced by the 144,000 as the time of Jacob's trouble. This is when Satan seeks to press the sense of sin and unworthiness upon the saints—demanding that they be given to him to destroy.

The fit man is a symbol of the 144,000. God will use men in the last days to conquer Satan in the last great struggle. When probation is closed, God will have a sealed, sinless people on earth. In answer to Satan's accusations, that the law of God cannot be kept, God says: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus." - Rev. 14:12. The time has come in which the sins of God's people are to be laid upon Satan.

"You (Satan) gave man a wrong representation of My (God, the Lord) character and thus tempted them to sin. But here is a people now that will never sin again. Therefore you (Satan) are responsible for the sins of My people. These sins have caused Me and My Son much sorrow and pain."

Satan has no choice: he must take up the battle. He undertakes a mighty struggle to escape the sins of the righteous. These efforts to flee from the burden of sin, are not efforts to escape from the earth, but the desperate and determined attempt, to entice one of the 144,000 to sin. If one of them would sin in the time of the great tribulation, the time without a mediator in the sanctuary, then this would mean that the "fit man" (prepared man) would let the scapegoat escape. The glory and honor of the throne of God would come into discredit. But no one of the 144,000 will fail in that coming crisis.

"Like Jacob, every one, without an exception, was earnestly pleading and wrestling for deliverance." - EW, p. 272.

This is the proof that God saves from sin. Without this proof the "first-fruits" (Revelation 14:4) would not be accepted. There would be no resurrection, if it cannot be proved first, that the blood of Christ is an effective antidote for sin.

In this last struggle with Satan, the 144 000 are going to gain the victory over Satan. He, who kept God's people captive for so long, has now been defeated. Now he is going to be lead into captivity.

"They shall take them captives, whose captives they were." When this mission is successfully accomplished and the authority of God and His supremacy vindicated by His saints before the whole universe, then the resurrection of the just will take place. "In the presence of God and the heavenly angels, and the host of the redeemed, the sins of God's people will be placed upon Satan." - GC, p. 658.

What does it mean that they are Virgins?

Some have supposed that this means these have never been involved with false doctrines or error—but we know that they came out of great tribulations and have washed their robes in the Blood of the Lamb. If they were without error to start with—they would not need this preparation. No, some of them have come from deep darkness but now they are said to be Virgins, undefiled with women, [churches] because they have cast aside all the man-made traditions and error and stand as new creatures in Christ—fully surrendered to Him as His own. They look to no human, or group of people as their spiritual leaders—they look to Christ and his Word alone.

They know: "God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines, and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men,

the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority,—not one or all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. **Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support.**" GC88 595.

Some have thought that these sealed ones would be super strong physically and in perfect health. No—this is not the picture we are given because it will be the power of Jesus that holds these up—not human power. God says, "My strength is made perfect in weakness".

Where do they come from?

Some take the stand that the 144,000 all come from official, organized Adventism and are fully made up BEFORE the Sunday Law test arrives. Some have been heard to say that therefore, anyone coming in from Babylon during the Loud Cry would have to be a martyr—that is what comes of the idea that only those who are IN ADVENTISM before hand comprise the 144,000—there is NO PROOF of this at all! We are told in SOP of ones coming in and **learning in months what Adventists learned in years**—SO if they learn it—they are then IN ADVENTISM aren't they?

This quote make this clear:

"I saw that God had children who do not see and keep the Sabbath. They have not rejected the light upon it. 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. This enraged the churches and nominal Adventists, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth. **And at this time God's chosen all saw clearly that we had the truth, and they came out and endured the persecution with us.**" CET 93

Literal or Symbolic

"The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. When God spoke the time, He poured upon us the Holy Ghost, and our faces began to light up and shine with the glory of God, as Moses' did when he came down from Mount Sinai." CET 58.

Many feel that because of this statement from the Spirit of Prophecy, that the number must be literal, and yet we see no second witness that would verify that this indicates a literal number.

In Revelation 7 we see listed 12 tribes of Israel out of which they were to come and we realize that this HAS TO BE symbolic because even in John's time most of those tribes no longer existed and certainly they do not today. Also if this is literal then it would seem that only literal Israelites could be saved. Therefore it seems we have reason to consider that the number 144,000 is symbolic, and has deep spiritual meaning. Much in Revelation is symbolic and to take it literally can bring confusion. However, this is not a point that is worth arguing about—as we are told, the redeemed will know soon enough.

Who are the 144,000 is not to be a matter of controversy?

It is better to obey what the messenger of the Lord says, and seek to prepare a character to stand with the 144,000 and leave it with God who finally makes up the "Number" at the end. The confusion is caused because of building on suppositions instead of what Bible and SOP is actually saying. The parts that we are not told—we must leave alone—leave with God—not make up our own ideas and throw them out like monkey-wrenches into the works to create confusion. We do know that the 144,000 are those who live through the plagues and are translated without seeing death and we know what character they need to have; the rest is best left with God.

“Christ says that there will be those in the church who will present fables and suppositions, when God has given grand, elevating, ennobling truths, which should ever be kept in the treasure-house of the mind. When men pick up this theory and that theory, when they are curious to know something it is not necessary for them to know, God is not leading them. It is not His plan that His people shall present something which they have to suppose, which is not taught in the Word. It is not His will that they shall get into controversy over questions which will not help them spiritually, such as, Who is to compose the hundred and forty-four thousand. This those who are the elect of God will in a short time know without question.” {2NL 164.4}

“My brethren and sisters, appreciate and study the truths God has given for you and your children. Spend not your time in seeking to know that which will be no spiritual help. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" This is the all-important question, and it has been clearly answered. "What is written in the law? how readest thou?"--MS-26-1901. {2NL 164.5}

What will the Sealed ones Do?

“Servants of God, endowed with power from on high with their faces lighted up, and shining with holy consecration, went forth to proclaim the message from heaven. Souls that were scattered all through the religious bodies answered to the call, and the precious were hurried out of the doomed churches, as Lot was hurried out of Sodom before her destruction. God's people were strengthened by the excellent glory which rested upon them in rich abundance and prepared them to endure the hour of temptation. I heard everywhere a multitude of voices saying, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” EW 278.

“. . . 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. This enraged the churches and nominal Adventists, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth. And at this time God's chosen all saw clearly that we had the truth, and they came out and endured the persecution with us.” CET 93

Will their message be completely new and different?

The message will be the same that God called Adventists out to bear; the Three Angel's Messages and also addition light will be added to make a message that will lighten the earth during the Loud Cry.

"I saw that the holy Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers; and that the Sabbath is the great question to unite the hearts of God's dear, waiting saints."

"I saw that God had children who do not see and keep the Sabbath. They have not rejected the light upon it. **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.** This enraged the churches and nominal Adventists, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth. And at this time God's chosen all saw clearly that we had the truth, and they came out and endured the persecution with us. I saw the sword, famine, pestilence, and great confusion in the land. The wicked thought that we had brought the judgments upon them, and they rose up and took counsel to rid the earth of us, thinking that then the evil would be stayed." CET 93.

"We have, as had John, a message to bear of the things which we have seen and heard. God is not giving us a new message. We are to proclaim the message that in 1843 and 1844 brought us out of the other churches. We need the Holy Spirit to kindle in our hearts the zeal and earnestness that were then seen among God's people. I thank the Lord that there are still living a few who can remember those days, and who know whereof they speak." {RH, January 19, 1905 par. 22}

There will be additional light given that is in harmony with the foundational messages.

"I stated that I was a stock holder and I could not let the resolution pass, **that there was to be special light for God's people as they neared the closing scenes of this earth's history.** Another angel was to come from heaven with a message and the whole earth was to be lightened with his glory. **It would be impossible for us to state just how this additional light would come.** It might come in a very unexpected manner, in a way that would not agree with the ideas that many have conceived. It is not at all unlikely, or contrary to the ways and works of God to send light to His people in unexpected ways. Would it be right that every avenue should be closed in our school so that the students could not have the benefit of this light? The resolution was not called for." Letter 22, 1889. 13MR 334.

What happens at the close of the Loud Cry?

"I was pointed down to the time when the third angel's message was closing. **The power of God had rested upon His people; they had accomplished their work and were prepared for the trying hour before them.** They had received the latter rain, or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and the living testimony had been revived. The last great warning had sounded everywhere, and it had stirred up and enraged the inhabitants of the earth who would not receive the message.

"I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer's inkhorn by his side returned from the earth and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and sealed. Then I saw Jesus, who had been ministering before the ark containing the ten commandments, throw down the censer. He raised His hands, and with a loud voice said, "It is done." And all the angelic host laid off their crowns as Jesus made the solemn declaration, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still:

and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." {EW 279.2}

"Every case had been decided for life or death. While Jesus had been ministering in the sanctuary, the judgment had been going on for the righteous dead, and then for the righteous living. Christ had received His kingdom, having made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins. The subjects of the kingdom were made up. The marriage of the Lamb was consummated. And the kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, was given to Jesus and the heirs of salvation, and Jesus was to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. {EW 280.1}

"As Jesus moved out of the most holy place, I heard the tinkling of the bells upon His garment; and as He left, a cloud of darkness covered the inhabitants of the earth. There was then no mediator between guilty man and an offended God. While Jesus had been standing between God and guilty man, a restraint was upon the people; but when He stepped out from between man and the Father, the restraint was removed and Satan had entire control of the finally impenitent. It was impossible for the plagues to be poured out while Jesus officiated in the sanctuary; but as His work there is finished, and His intercession closes, there is nothing to stay the wrath of God, and it breaks with fury upon the shelterless head of the guilty sinner, who has slighted salvation and hated reproof. In that fearful time, after the close of Jesus' mediation, the saints were living in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. Every case was decided, every jewel numbered. Jesus tarried a moment in the outer apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and the sins which had been confessed while He was in the most holy place were placed upon Satan, the originator of sin, who must suffer their punishment." {EW 280.2}

The 144,000 during the Plagues:

The Sunday Law Crisis will be when the process of the sealing or marking takes place. It does not happen at the same instance for each individual but as each person is brought to the test, by his decision at that time he will receive either the Seal of God, or the Mark of the Beast and his probation at that point is over. It confronts all who know about the true Sabbath first; as they are judged by the light they have received. No one will be lost because they honestly did not know or have any reasonable way of having known. People will be lost when they sin against light that they have.

As the message goes forth into the world during the loud cry, individuals in the fallen churches and world at large will be confronted with the light, then they will decide whether to obey God, or the dictates of man—the issues will be clear. Many will take their stand for truth who had never previously known of the issues. Persecution will be active throughout this time and many will seal their testimony with their blood.

We don't know how long the process of the Sunday law going forward, first in USA, and quickly followed by other nations, is going to take. We know that the WHOLE EARTH is lightened with the message of the sealed ones and the glory of the fourth angel—and for a while it will look like the majority will stand for the truth.

It is at this crisis that Satan appears on the earth as Christ—and as this almost overmastering deception occurs, those that were following the truth, because it was becoming

popular, will turn back. Many who seem to have accepted, will prove stony-ground hearers and cast away their faith, ridiculing their former concerns. Soon after this, the powers that be, get together and demand that all who will not give up this 'delusion' are to be put to death, and a date is set for this massacre to be carried out. SOON after that, persecution will increase and finally the Death Decree is announced. **Probation for the world closes—those final living saints, the 144,000 are protected and cared for by angels and no more martyrs happen then,** but they see the plagues fall on the wicked. (See Psalm 91)

It is at this time that Michael stands up; He does His final work at the door of the sanctuary and leaves to put on the garments of wrath. He steps out from between guilty man and His Father's wrath. The plagues begin to fall, and at this time, the living saints that remain are the 144,000. There will be no more martyrs, but the saints will be in great distress—crying day and night to the Lord. This is the time of Jacob's trouble—and they shall be saved out of it!

Three Groups + 1

The Saved:

Revelation 7:9 "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; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

These are the redeemed from all ages.

The 144,000:

These will be those who live through the Seven Last Plagues and are translated without seeing death at Christ's Coming.

The 'Blessed Dead':

Revelation 14:13 "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

These are those who have died in the faith of the Third Angel and are sealed with the seal of the living God. They will be raised to hear the covenant pronounced by God to the 144,000 and all those who have died in the faith of the 3rd angel will see Jesus come--they will be raised just before the end. (So the final martyrs at the end will not sleep long.) AND THEN at Jesus' coming the rest of the sleeping saints are raised and all are transformed "in the twinkling of an eye".

"There are living upon our earth men who have passed the age of fourscore and ten. The natural results of old age are seen in their feebleness. But they believe God, and God loves them. The seal of God is upon them, and they will be among the number of whom the Lord has said, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."--7BC 982 (1899).

"That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake, "such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." Rev. 16:18. . . . The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. . . .

"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." Dan. 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.** {FLB 182.4} Those who had died in faith under the third angel's message, keeping the Sabbath, came forth from their dusty beds.

"They also which pierced him" (Rev. 1:7), those that mocked and derided Christ's dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory, and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient. . . .

"The voice of God is heard from heaven, declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming, and delivering the everlasting covenant to His people. ... And when the blessing is pronounced on those who have honored God by keeping His Sabbath holy, there is a mighty shout of victory." FLB 182

The special group of wicked

Also some like Caiaphas, and the etc will be raised to see Jesus come and die 3 times all told.

"They also which pierced him" (Revelation 1:7), those that mocked and derided Christ's dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient.

"[At His trial], Caiaphas, raising his right hand toward heaven, addressed Jesus in the form of a solemn oath: "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." . . .

"Every ear was bent to listen, and every eye was fixed on His face as He answered, "Thou hast said." A heavenly light seemed to illuminate His pale countenance as He added, "Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." {Mar 282.3}

"For a moment the divinity of Christ flashed through His guise of humanity. The high priest quailed before the penetrating eyes of the Saviour. . . . For a moment he felt as if standing before the eternal Judge, whose eye, which sees all things, was reading his soul, bringing to light mysteries supposed to be hidden with the dead.

"The scene passed from the priest's vision. . . . Rending his robe, . . . he demanded that . . . the prisoner be condemned for blasphemy. "What further need have we of witnesses?" he said; "behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?" And they all condemned Him.

"Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could

open. In all its vindictiveness this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

“When Christ comes the second time, not as a prisoner surrounded by a rabble will they see Him. They will see Him as heaven's King. . . . Then the priests and rulers will remember distinctly the scene in the judgment hall. Every circumstance will appear before them as if written in letters of fire.” Mar 282.

"They also which pierced him" (Rev. 1:7), those that mocked and derided Christ's dying agonies, and **the most violent opposers of His truth and His people**, are raised to behold Him in His glory, and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient. . . . “FLB 182.

False views

A 'Back Door to Heaven?'

A mistaken concept: “There is a different standard of holiness for those who die or are martyred, than for those who live to be translated. No one who is NOT PERFECT can enter into heaven without dying first”

Answer: No one is 'made perfect' by death!! Death earns no merit. No one who is not wearing the 'wedding garment' of Christ's righteousness will be saved whether they die or not. The saints that die, the saints that are martyred, or the saints translated—**none of them have ANY DIFFERENT STANDARD to meet**—they will only differ in their experience. There is only one standard—there has always been only one standard—Born again of the Spirit and living the Life of Christ through His indwelling power.

Whether we die or not, has to do with what God sees is best for us, and what will best glorify Him. It is not some back-door to slip through just in case you hadn't quite made a full surrender. No one will be saved who is not 'perfect'.

What is 'perfect'

So what is 'perfect'? It means **totally the Lord's, with no rebellion left in the heart towards God**, and no cherished sins unforsaken. 'Perfect' means to be in one's integrity—no KNOWN duty neglected and no KNOWN sin unforsaken. SO you see, a ignorant and primitive person may respond to the guiding of the Holy Spirit—fully and completely—and be in his integrity when he dies, and he will be saved. There was no rebellion—no sinning against light—he was 'perfect'. He will learn in heaven what he never had a chance to learn on earth.

BUT I am here with great light—I have the Spirit of Prophecy and the Bible—I am not perfect **if I am still in rebellion against known duty, or deliberately clinging to cherished sin**—I am only perfect if I am in my integrity—living up to **all the light** God has graciously shed on my path. In total surrender and total dependence on Jesus and filled with the Holy Spirit and so I am 'perfect' ready for the Seal of God, and whether I die or live to be translated—makes no difference.

144,000 includes all who have been saved since 1844:

The reformed SDA church and some others take the position that the 144,000 are made up of ALL saved who have died since 1844. They claim that God is waiting for the literal number to be made up, and as soon as it reaches 144,000 then probation just arbitrarily ends for all. Boom—that's it. Certainly this would be a very unfair way of doing things on the part of God, and also is a very pessimistic view of the numbers of the saved from 'every nation, kindred, tongue and people'.

Some seek to defend this concept with the following 2 references:

"Then the angel said, [to Ellen White] "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." {CET 98.2}

"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. I saw her death would result in good." {14MR 53.1}

But neither of these quotes state that they were PART OF the 144,000—rather that they would be saved and be in heaven WITH them, just as all the saved will be.

144,000 Saints to go to Old Jerusalem

Some of the factions of Shepherd's Rods teach that the 144,000 all have to go over to Old Jerusalem and there they will start a new 'kingdom' (after somehow the present residents have been removed by a war or bomb or something). God will transport them there in some way, maybe even flying saucers. They expect Jesus to come down and walk among these 144,000 that have been transported to Jerusalem. The object is so the whole world can witness the character and glory of their lives. But, no one will be allowed to come into this Jerusalem, only the 144,000. Supposedly then they witness to the world, and the world must have a chance to be saved at that point.

Such ideas are without foundation in inspired writings.

"Then I was pointed to some who are **in the great error of believing that it is their duty to go to Old Jerusalem**, and think they have a work to do there before the Lord comes. Such a view is calculated to take the mind and interest from the present work of the Lord, under the message of the third angel; for those who think that they are yet to go to Jerusalem will have their minds there, and their means will be withheld from the cause of present truth to get themselves and others there. I saw that such a mission would accomplish no real good, that it would take a long while to make a very few of the Jews believe even in the first advent of Christ, much more to believe in His second advent. I saw that Satan had greatly deceived some in this thing and that souls all around them in this land could be helped by them and led to keep the commandments of God, but they were leaving them to perish. **I also saw that Old Jerusalem never would be built up;** and that Satan was doing his utmost to lead the minds of the children of the Lord into these things now, in the gathering time, to keep them from

throwing their whole interest into the present work of the Lord, and to cause them to neglect the necessary preparation for the day of the Lord." EW 75.

[WRITTEN IN THE EARLY 1850'S WHEN "THE AGE-TO-COME" ADVOCATES TAUGHT THAT OLD JERUSALEM WOULD BE **BUILT UP AS A CENTER OF CHRISTIAN WITNESS** FULFILLING CERTAIN PROPHECIES OF THE O.T.]

"Men and women may study the will of God with profit. Let young men and young women, while the dew of youth is upon them, begin to study the word of God, which expresses his will. The steps of Christ are certainly marked out in the word. Go where they can be found today. Do not seek to go back to the land where Christ's feet trod ages ago. Christ says: "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." We can know far more of Christ by following him step by step in the work of redemption, seeking the lost and the perishing, than by journeying to old Jerusalem. Christ has taken his people into his church. He has swept away every ceremony of the ancient type. He has given no liberty to restore these rites, or to substitute anything that will recall the old literal sacrifices. The Lord requires of his people spiritual sacrifices alone. Everything pertaining to his worship is placed under the superintendence of his Holy Spirit. Jesus said that the Father would send the Holy Spirit in his name to teach his disciples all things, and to bring all things unto their remembrance that he had said unto them. The curse rests upon Jerusalem. The Lord has obliterated those things which men would worship in and about Jerusalem, yet many hold in reverence literal objects in Palestine, while they neglect to behold Jesus as their advocate in the heaven of heavens." {RH, February 25, 1896 par. 8}

"How many there are who feel that it would be a good thing to tread the soil of old Jerusalem, and that their faith would be greatly strengthened by visiting the scenes of the Saviour's life and death! But old Jerusalem will never be a sacred place until it is cleansed by the refining fire from heaven. The darkest blot of guilt rests upon the city that refused the light of Christ. Do we want to walk in the footsteps of Jesus? We need not seek out the paths in Nazareth, Bethany, and Jerusalem. We shall find the footprints of Jesus by the sick-bed, by the side of suffering humanity, in the hovels of the poverty-stricken and distressed. We may walk in these footsteps, comforting the suffering, speaking words of hope and comfort to the despondent. Doing as Jesus did when he was upon earth, we shall walk in his blessed steps. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." When the sin-cursed earth is purified from every stain of sin; when the Mount of Olives is rent asunder, and becomes an immense plain; when the holy city of God descends upon it,—the land that is now called the Holy Land will indeed become holy. But God's cause and work will not be advanced by making pilgrimages to Jerusalem. The curse of God is upon Jerusalem for the rejection and crucifixion of his only begotten Son. But God will cleanse away the vile blot. The prophet says, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed

away. And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." Rev. 21:1-5, R. V. RH, June 9, 1896 par. 4

Jacob's Trouble:

"I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come **the seven last plagues**. **These plagues** enraged the wicked against the righteous; they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us, the plagues would then be stayed. A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob's trouble. [SEE GENESIS 32.] Then all the saints cried out with anguish of spirit, and were delivered by the voice of God. **The one hundred and forty-four thousand triumphed. Their faces were lighted up with the glory of God.**" {CET 100.3}

The only righteous ones that will be alive at the close of probation for the world will be the 144,000. But there is another group—the most terrible group to be in, according to the quote below, will be some who did believe, left the truth, and are still alive during the plagues! Many, who have received the Mark of the Beast, are so deceived that they will not know it, until this time of the start of the plagues.

"Then I was shown a company who were howling in agony. On their garments was written in large characters, **"Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting."** I asked **who this company were. The angel said, "These are they who once kept the Sabbath, and have given it up."** I heard them cry with a loud voice, "We have believed in Thy coming, and taught it with energy." And while they were speaking, their eyes would fall upon their garments and see the writing, and then they would wail aloud. I saw that they had drunk of the deep waters, and fouled the residue with their feet,—trodden the Sabbath underfoot,—and that was why they were weighed in the balance and found wanting." {CET 101.1}

The New Song:

What is this 'New Song' they sing that none other can learn?

"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. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." These, having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as "the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb." "These are they which came out of great tribulation;" [REV. 14:1-5; 15:3; 7:14-17.] 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 "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "In their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault" before God. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." [REV. 14:1-5; 15:3; 7:14-17.] 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. But "they shall hunger no more; neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." [REV. 14:1-5; 15:3; 7:14-17.] {GC88 648.3}

Summary

In the Sealing time, we will see three groups represented in the professed people of God.

Laodicea; those who do not heed the council and repent and be converted will receive the Mark of the Beast.

Revelation 3:16, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:"

Sardis; These will be those who will come forth from the fallen religions to stand with the saints.

Revelation 3:4 "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."

Philadelphia; one of the churches that Jesus has no rebuke for: all who are saved in the end times will have returned to this experience. The Sealed company including the 144,000 will be Philadelphians.

Revelation 3:7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; 8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. 9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, **I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.** 10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Let us all lay aside every weight and strive with all our being in the power of Christ, to be among the 144,000! If it turns out we are not a part of the 144,000, and we fall asleep in Jesus before the end, we will rise with the Blessed Dead and see Him come!

As far as how we die - a natural death - an accident - or as a martyr, we need to leave that in the hands of a God who does all things perfectly. If we are faithful today, and each day,

we will be faithful if called upon to be martyrs. His grace is given as needed and He is faithful who has promised.

Revelation 2:10 “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

Friends; this is the time to come up to the help of the Lord. Do we care enough about our Saviour to cast this sordid old world behind us and fully surrender to His will—allowing Him to perfect His character in each one of us? Or will the entertainment and indulgence of appetite and lust, the tinsel and baubles of a dying world mean more to us than He who gave all and has done all to present us as part of this group to the universe—purified and made white in His own blood?

He has not failed nor will He will not fail us. Let us not be found with those who receive the curse of Meroz— What had Meroz done? Nothing. This was their sin.

Judges 5:23 “Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; **because they came not to the help of the LORD**, to the help of the LORD against the mighty.”

May each of us determine in our hearts: “Lord, by thy Grace I want—Nay, I CHOOSE to be in that number!!” And let us begin immediately to act on that choice.