

August 27, 2023

- Revelation 14: 1-5 -

“The Lamb’s Elite Commandos”

**Introduction:**

The US Navy SEAL teams are an elite force that faces the greatest, most vicious evil on our planet. One of their famous motto backed by legendary achievements is “The Only Easy Day Was Yesterday,” Its’ been said once the enemy is aware of an America Navy Seal team they are already gone and finished their mission. They conduct clandestine missions behind enemy lines, capturing enemy targets and intelligence against impossible odds.

Among the best-known SEAL successes was the rescue of Captain Richard Phillips, master of the merchant ship Alabama, after four Somali pirates took him hostage in April 2009. During the standoff that followed, a contingent of Navy SEALs parachuted into the area and boarded the destroyer USS Bainbridge. On Easter Sunday, April 12, when it looked as if the pirates were about to shoot Phillips, the crisis came to a dramatic end. Three SEAL snipers on the fantail of the Bainbridge aimed and squeezed their triggers simultaneously, killing all three pirates in the bobbing lifeboat some 90 feet away. These men and women are hero of an elite fighting force.

Folks God has an elite force that is going to face the greatest, most vicious evil that will ever exist. This force could be called “the Lamb’s Elite Commandos”. They operate during the tribulation against the forces of Satan and when their mission is completed not one will be lost. One may wonder what happen to this group of 144,000; could they make it through to the end with such overwhelming odds. Well the Great Shepherd of the sheep is now identified with them and he did not lose one!

**I. The Lamb and the 144,00 vv.1**

1. The fourteenth chapter begins with the 144,000 of Israel. We immediately meet a group of triumphant men who are elite victors, namely the hundred and forty-four thousand. Revelation 14 will answer two important questions raised by Revelation 13. The beast of Revelation 13 was terrifying and fearsome; he even can make war against the saints and overcome them (Revelation 13:7). So it is fair to ask, “Is the beast completely victorious over all God’s people?” The presence of the 144,000 on Mount Zion with the Lamb emphatically says “no.” The second question has to do with this Satanic dictator himself: “What happens to the beast and his followers?” The rest of Revelation 14 will answer that question.

They are still on earth, not yet glorified or transfigured. It is important to see exactly the location where of the 144,000. The opening sentence tells us they were "standing on Mount Zion" and the Lamb was with them. Ps. 76:2 -- the temple mount in Jerusalem. This is the eternal city of God. This means that they were on earth, in Jerusalem, not in heaven. And they are seen together, with the Lamb (Jesus).

Mount Zion doesn't just mean the little hill, it means Jerusalem, that great place. Mount Zion is where the Messiah is to come, so said the psalmist, so says Isaiah in Isaiah 24: 23.

The city was captured by the Jews in 1967 and became the eternal undivided capital on July 31, 1980 soon it will become the capital of the entire world. President Trump officially recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel Dec 7, 2020 .

a) They are 144,000 male Jews chosen out of Israel -- "Christ's Elite Commandos". They have the seal of God on their foreheads and the power of God sustained them. They are pictured in a triumphant posture back in verse 1, standing on Mount Zion with the Lamb. These are victors. These are winners. These have triumphed. The scene depicting the Lamb on Mount Zion therefore presents the return of Christ. Remember what I said about the Bible does not always follow chronological order.

This then is a glimpse of the end of the Tribulation, when the Christ returns. They are the greatest preaching force the world will ever see. They are all men, all one hundred and forty-four thousand of them.

## II The 144,000 and the New Song vv 2-3

1. There appears to be an open conduit out of heavens Throne Room where two voices are heard, the one is the voice of God and the second appears to be the church. Remember when Jesus was transfigured...a voice spoke in Luke 9:28-36. We are not told precisely whom it is that sings, but you will notice they are identified with a pronoun.

2. Verse 3 says, "And *they* sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders." Who are "they"? It is apparently a huge group. But it was a sweet sound of harpists playing their harps it may be simply a reference back to the twenty-four elders playing their harps in Rev. 5:8. Harps are mentioned, by the way, about forty times in the Old Testament and they are associated with joy. What the 144,000 hear is the church as it is "with the Lord," singing his praises and singing the song of the redeemed!

a) They sing with the four beasts--rather, as Greek, "four living creatures." The harpers and singers evidently include the 144,000: "the harpers and song are in heaven, but the 144,000 are on earth." Not even the angels can learn that song, for they know not experimentally what it is to have "come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.

Nobody could sing the song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. Why? Only the redeemed, only those purchased by Christ's blood. Only those who have experienced redemption who have literally been redeemed from the earth, that is spared from the judgment. And they are there to sing the new song.

They can learn the song of the redeemed because they know themselves what redemption means. They, too, have been redeemed. Liken unto "Redeemed, How I love to proclaim it."

## III The 144,000 and their Character vv. 4-5

1. Verse #4 describes their character as Virgins- what does this mean? It describes their purity. They are the Lambs elite. These men will not be defiled. The word for defilement simply means to soil or to stain or to desecrate. The phrase "with women" leads to the conclusions that the issue here is sexual purity. And that's going to be some remarkable kind of behavior given the world of that day. Sexual sin will be rampant. They remained true to God.

What it means is there are a hundred and forty-four thousand morally pure preachers without the moral defilement of the culture around them, they will stand apart. It literally says they're parthenoi, they're chaste. They have resisted the seduction of harlots as well as the harlot system. And they've maintained purity.

a) Some however do believe they are celibates. This is not a put-down of marriage, or of sex. It is a reference to what these 144,000 would do. For them to be married would be defiling because it is outside the will of God for them. That is all this means. They are separated unto the Lord to be his, just as the Apostle Paul was.

b) They follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth-- (John 14:23). They followed the Lamb throughout the earth. They are the "firstfruits" of the harvest during the tribulation period. We already have seen part of this in Chapter 7 -- the great multitude which no man can number that come from every "tribe

and nation and people and language" redeemed--"purchased." being the--rather, "as a first-fruit." And some would suggest to us then that the hundred and forty-four thousand are the first-fruits of Israel. They're there and that's only a beginning indication of the redemption of all of Israel.

4. I sees the hundred and forty-four thousand as a special group of men out from all the rest of saved people, offered to God for unique service. Not like all the rest. After all, there were only a hundred and forty-four thousand of them. Not everybody fit into that at all.

So as those who had been given to God in the unique way, they're like an offering. They're like a special sacrifice, dedicated to God and offered to Him for divine service. This is not just a normal group of folks, but a group offered in special consecrated service to the Lamb. That's the purpose of their life. They have one purpose for their life. They will serve the Lord, they will proclaim the gospel out of a pure life to a perishing and hating world.

5. The word "guile—meaning no "falsehood or lies". without fault--*Greek*, "blameless": "No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless," i.e., without blemish. They have been cleansed and changed by grace -- just as we also have been.

There was no exaggeration, there was no overstatement, there was no understatement, they spoke precisely the Words of God.

There is an interesting Old Testament verse that ties in with this, [Zephaniah 3:13](#),...There the prophet Zephaniah saw the very same thing, that there would be a great group of Jews in the end who would be known for their precision in speaking the truth of God.

Beware of lies! When Aristotle was asked what a man could gain by telling a falsehood, he replied, "Never to be credited when he speaks the truth." Prov 12:22; Prov 14:5

### Conclusion:

Here are twelve thousand Jews out of every tribe and if they are human beings, and they are, they cannot be sinless. But they are sanctified. And when it says they are blameless, it is the kind of blamelessness that the Apostle Paul "according to the law, blameless." In other words, they will have such impeccable reputations that there is nothing in their lives of a sin for which they could be held liable and guilty. They are not sinless, but sanctified...living holy lives, godly lives. What about you this morning?

God has called us to a ... present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.