

What Can We Learn About The 144,000?

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We're going to start with a time that is yet ahead of us and Gordon eluded to that in his sermonette. It's a time when the Father has had enough. He has just had enough of the degeneracy and the evil of Satan's world. Let's look at Revelation 6. We're not going to wind up there but this is just a preamble so to speak. In verse 1, the Lamb, Jesus Christ opens the first seal. Then in verse 2 of chapter 6, the first seal is opened and we know it's a white horse that goes to conquer. Then Revelation 6:3 and 4, a second seal is opened and there's a red horse that takes peace from the earth. In verses 5 and 6, the third seal, a black horse and famine comes forth upon the earth. Then in verse 7 and 8, the fourth seal is a white horse and death comes to 1/4 of the population of the earth. Then verses 9-11 is the fifth seal, the acknowledgement of the death of the saints who have died previous to this time. Then verses 12-17 is the sixth seal and there is a mighty worldwide earthquake and the sun turns black and the moon turns to blood. At the end of that chapter, conditions are so bad that all humans are hiding from the wrath of the Lamb. Conditions are just unprecedented.

As Ancient Israel had to endure the first three plagues, I believe we will all probably have to face several of these. Now Christ pauses in describing the action. Before we get to where the seven trumpets begin in Revelation 8, we come to an event described in Revelation 7 and that's where we want to focus on—one of two passages today. This pictures where we ultimately want to be. We want to be part of this. We want to be there during these terrible times that are described in the chapters preceding and the subsequent chapters. So, let's begin in Revelation 7:1.

Revelation 7:1 *And after these things [the six seals] I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.*

2) And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: (KJV)

And we know the living God is God the Father. For those of you who might be new and tuning into Pacific, on our website, we have papers and sermons, absolutely proving that the living God is God the Father. So, this angel comes out from the east having the seal of the living God.

2 continued) ... and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea ... (KJV)

With the wind that they're withholding.

3) Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we [referring to the five angels now, the four holding the winds and this fifth one coming out of

the east] *have sealed the servants* [Greek word *doulos* and that means “slaves”] *of our God in their foreheads.* (KJV)

Bible Hub, if you look up their interlinear, it says, “Our God [*instead of just God*] it says [*the word “the” is omitted*] *the God of us.*” So, they are sealed—the servants of *the* God of us.

4) And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousands of all the tribes of the children of Israel.
(KJV)

Of course, we would hope to be there and to be sealed. Then the end time plan of God Almighty continues to unfold. In Revelation 8 the seventh seal, the first four trumpet plagues occur. Revelation 9, trumpet plagues five and six, Revelation 10, the preparation for the seventh trumpet, Revelation 11, the two witnesses prophesied, they are murdered and they are resurrected, Revelation 12 Satan is cast to the earth and he goes after the church. Then in Revelation 13, Satan, the beast and the false prophet deceive all of those on the earth. Then we come to Revelation 14 and you might want to place a marker here. Notice the 144,000 are mentioned again, under different circumstances.

Revelation 14:1 *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name ...* (KJV)

If you look at an interlinear—Bible Hub in particular—says, “having His Father’s name, having been written in their foreheads”, meaning it had been done previously to this time. So, the 144,000 previously had their Father’s name written in their foreheads.

1 continued) ... 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. (KJV)

These are the two passages—sections of scripture—that mention the 144,000. We see that this group has been redeemed from the earth and they are standing with Christ at His return, therefore they must be spirit beings at this point in time and they are called Firstfruits. As I said, Revelation 7 and 14 are the only two places where the 144,000 are mentioned, but it seems to me that these two passages refer to the same group. Some people would argue that point. If the 144,000 were sealed in Revelation 7 then one would expect them to be standing with Christ on Mount Zion in Revelation 14. That is not some huge, giant leap.

Despite only the two mentions, there is a lot to learn about the 144,000; there's a lot that we can learn. Who in Revelation 7 were sealed as humans, then in Revelation 14 had been redeemed from the earth and are now standing with Christ on Mount Zion? Since we yearn to be part of the 144,000—if we are alive when these events happen—it might behoove us to take a close look at what it takes to be counted among that very blessed, very protected group. So, we're going to put Revelation 7 and Revelation 14 together and see what we can see, which leads to the title today:

What Can We Learn About The 144,000

There will be five points today.

1. 144,000 are sealed in this life; meaning in their human life.

Revelation 7:3, we just read it.

Revelation 7:3 *Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we [the five angels] have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.* (KJV)

So, the 144,000 are sealed while they are alive, while they are on the earth as human beings. If we look around the landscape today among God's church, we don't see 144,000 out there, do we? We just don't. The facts are, though, that there are church of God people in South America and Central America who have never heard of Worldwide or came out of Worldwide. There are certain areas of Africa and Russia and other parts of the world; the Western Pacific, with people who never came out of Worldwide but there are church of God groups there. How many they total, only God Almighty knows. Remember when Elijah thought he was all alone, he was running from Jezebel, who was trying to kill him and he just wanted to die—he thought he was the last man standing and remember what God Almighty said to him, we won't turn there, 1 Kings 19, he said,

"I have 7000 who have not bent the knee to idols."

Elijah had no clue. Similarly, today, we have no clue. God knows, we don't need to know. We just do what God wants us to do.

Here in Revelation 7:3, the noun for the word *seal* in verse 2 and the verb *sealed* in verse 3 are the same Greek word, Strong's #4792 and this what it means; I'll quote from Strong's. "To stamp with a signet or private mark; for security and preservation." So, the 144,000 were sealed while humans on this earth and the reason they were sealed was for their security and their preservation. We have to ask the question—what would they be protected from? Why is it necessary to protect them? What is going on that would cause Almighty God to send those angels to seal them for security and protection.

We know in Revelation 12—we just skimmed over that—that Satan is cast to the earth and comes after the earth. So that is one possible reason. There's another reason in

Matthew 24:24, so let's go over there. We know in Matthew 24, the context is the end time and we know the disciples asked about the end time and what are the signs and Christ is giving them an answer. Could this be one of the reasons the 144,000 are sealed—one of the reasons?

Matthew 24:24 *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; [miracles, things worldwide that people can see, very impressive] insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.* (KJV)

The 144,000 have to be the very elect, or part of the very elect. Could it be that they are sealed in addition to be protected from Satan, and his wrath at being cast down? That they are protected from super natural deception, that deceives the whole world? Events that seem so real and thus prove to the mind that does not have a Godly mind that they should go in this direction, they should worship these, worship these people and follow these leaders. We are told here that if it were possible, even the very elect could be deceived. Could the sealing be as a protection against that?

In addition, this sealing also could be an identifying sign. Identifying sign to the holy angels—these are the ones you need to protect. An identifying sign to the demons, is you keep your hands off. Could that be? We need to think about that. The point is, as we close this first point, we see that our Father and His Son promise protection during these horribly trying times, to this group of 144,000. Protection that we can take to the bank, that we can count on, that we can trust in.

The second point is:

2. The 144,000 have the Father's name written in their foreheads; meaning in their minds.

The forehead is the seat—you go back behind the bone of the forehead—and that is the seat of the intellect of a human brain. Let's go now to Revelation 14. We'll read what we covered before.

Revelation 14:1 *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.* (KJV)

Now remember, here the 144,000 are now spirit beings and they are called Firstfruits. The Father's name was previously written in their foreheads. We don't know exactly when; the Bible doesn't say. Is it possible that this writing occurred when the 144,000 were humans and it was a condition to being sealed in Revelation 7? The Bible doesn't say, we don't know, we are speculating. Could it be that that is when it happened? We don't know but we know at some point, they had the Father's name written in their minds. They had their minds opened and their Father's name was written in their minds.

Most modern translations say “on their foreheads” rather than “in their foreheads”. Normally the early translations—the Tyndale of 1526, the Geneva Bible of 1587 and of course the King James of 1611, use the word in their foreheads and all the modern translations use the word on. The Greek word is Strong’s #1909 and it can mean “in” or it can mean “on” or it can mean “upon”, and the translator’s pick and choose as to what word they want to use. These two meanings, in and on, leave us with two possibilities, but as spirit beings here in Revelation 14, both possibilities would be true as we walk through this. If it’s translated on their foreheads—of the 144,000—it could be a form of identity, it could be a sign to notify all spirit beings in God’s Kingdom, that they are the Father’s special possession. In fact, the Amplified Bible kind of hints at that in their translations of Revelation 14:1. I’ll quote now from the Amplified.

Revelation 14:1 *...and His Father’s name inscribed on their foreheads* [signifying God’s own possession]. (AMP)

Could the 144,000 as spirit beings have some spiritual sign on their foreheads indicating who they are and what they did, in becoming spirit beings from human beings? If it’s translated “on”, that would be a possibility. If it’s translated “in their forehead” then it seems to be, that as spirit beings, the 144,000 would certainly have by that time, their Father’s name written in their foreheads and in their minds. They are spirit beings standing with Christ, certainly they would know who the Father is and they would know His name and they would know all that His name implies. For those who might have joined Pacific in the last month or even a year, let’s give a very brief explanation of what the Father’s name is and what that implies.

Let’s go back to Exodus 6:2, just as a refresher, because we know here that in Revelation 14, the 144,000 do indeed have the Father’s name in their minds—in their spiritual minds. Most likely in their physical minds, before they were made spirit beings.

Exodus 6:2 *And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: 3) And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by [in the King James, “the name of” is in italics because it wasn’t in the original] the name of God Almighty [that is a title, El Shaddai, it is not a name], but by my name JEHOVAH [in the King James Yehovah is spelled out, it’s not LORD as in most all the other translations] was I not known to them.* (KJV)

It’s a blessing that the King James translates *Yehovah* directly. The Hebrew for Yehovah is Strong’s #3068 and it’s the same Hebrew word as *LORD* in verse 2. Strong’s definition is “to exist, the self-existent or the eternal”. Now let’s go back to Exodus 3:14, again this is a refresher but it might be new to many.

Exodus 3:14 *And God said unto Moses [this is from the burning bush], I AM THAT I AM:* (KJV)

The New International translates I AM THAT I AM as this: I am the one who always is. Think about that. Before creation, this Being always is. Into the future, He always is. He is now.

14 continued) ... and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. (KJV)

This is the only time this is mentioned in the entirety of God's Word.

15) And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God [Yehovah Elohim] of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever ... (KJV)

It couldn't be plainer, really. Baker and Carpenter in their Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament states this, about Strong's #3068: *"The word refers to the proper name of the God of Israel, particularly the name by which He revealed Himself to Moses in Exodus 6:2 and 3. Most scholars agree that its primary meaning should be understood in the context of God's existence. Mainly that He is the I AM THAT I AM in Exodus 3:14. [Then Baker and Carpenter elaborate] The one who was, the one who is, the one who will always be.*

That is our Father's name and we understand that. He was the God of the Old Testament, He existed before creation, there has never been a time that He did not exist, He exists now as the living God and He will always exist. There will never be a time when He does not exist. And of course, His eternal Son right with Him. At this time in Revelation 14, the 144,000 would have already known the Father's name. Who He is and all it implies. In addition, that name could be an identifying sign on the foreheads of the 144,000 for all spirit beings to identify who they are.

Now let's go to the third point.

3. The 144,000 will be spiritual virgins.

Revelation 14:4 *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. (KJV)*

Let's look at the word *defiled*; Strong's #3435, they were not defiled with women. The Greek word for *defiled* means "to soil". The New Living Translation translates Revelation 14:4, "They have kept themselves as pure virgins." Unspotted, undefiled, unpolluted. What did the Apostle James say about that whole idea of being pure? James instructed us in what pure religion is. It's interesting the words that he used.

James 1:27 *Pure religion* [obviously we want to believe pure religion, we want to follow pure religion, we want to have pure religion as part of our very being] *and undefiled before* [the word "the"—this is one of those instances where the

translators omitted the word “the” because of their trinitarian bent.] *God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

So, we are told, *pure religion* and *undefiled* go hand in hand. The Greek word for *undefiled* is Strong's #283 and it has a connotation; it means “unblemished as a sacrificial lamb”. Of course, no lamb that had a blemish could be sacrificed. We know Jesus Christ is the perfect sacrifice and He lived a perfect life, so James is eluding to that. He says that this is *pure religion* and *undefiled* before God Almighty. So, we want to pay attention to that. He said that we need to be pure and undefiled; we have to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. Satan is the God of this world. Satan is a polluter, a deceiver and a corrupter. James is saying you have to keep unspotted from that. The Greek word for *unspotted* is Strong's #784 and it also means “unblemished”. It can mean “physically unblemished” or “morally or ethically unblemished”. It means “without spot, without any corruption, morally or ethically”. James is telling us, pure religion, undefiled religion, if we want that, then we have to be without spot from the world and the garbage that the world heaps upon on all of us. So, these 144,000 have become *unblemished*; they have become *undefiled*.

Think about when we were called. What were we like when we were called? I don't know about you, but I was certainly blemished. I was certainly defiled. Growing up in a household where my dad grew up on a ranch in New Mexico, dad's language was—the politest thing I could say—very colorful. Much to the chagrin of my strait-laced mother. He would salt his language with an exquisite choice of four-letter words and guess who grew up in his sight. Then you go off to military school and if you've ever been in the military, you understand the language of the military. So, when I came into the church, I was, let's say, heavily “spotted” in many areas, as we all were. Through conversion then, things begin to change. Because of that change, we're told the 144,000 are now called virgins. Totally unspotted, totally unblemished, not tainted at all. The Greek word for *virgin* is Strong's #3933, it's *parthenos* and it means “maiden, by implication an unmarried daughter”, that is one who has not been defiled. In other words, a *virgin* is “someone who is pure, untouched, undefiled”. We're told the 144,000 have become that over time. They didn't start off that way. We haven't started off that way, but over time our Father and His Son are molding us and shaping us from being defiled into becoming undefiled. From being polluted, which is Satan, to being clean and pure in our Father's eyes.

In this context, none of the 144,000 had an illicit spiritual or physical relations with Satan, who is the god of this world. The term *virgin* is used appropriately because it is someone who is defiled, has had illicit relations, some sexual, some otherwise. We are told here that the 144,000 go to the point where they were not having illicit relationships with the god of this world, or with the people that the god of this world provokes.

Paul had that same desire for the church in Corinth. In 2 Corinthians 11 Paul knew what the goal was and he knew what Christ, the Head of the church, wanted Him to do

regarding the Corinthian church. How He should mold and shape the Corinthian church, using Paul to do so.

2 Corinthians 11:1 *Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed, bear with me.*

2) *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you [he's talking specifically to the church at Corinth but in principle it applies to each one of us down through the ages] as a chaste virgin to Christ. (KJV)*

As head of the church.

3) *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (KJV)*

Remember a *virgin* is “clean and pure and uncorrupted”. So, Paul wanted them to be pure and undefiled—that was his goal. That should be our goal and that is the Father’s goal and Christ’s goal for us, to come to the point where we are pure and undefiled. Paul also makes it clear in verse 3 that he knew the power of Satan to corrupt. Satan will do anything to corrupt us; our minds, our motives, our languages, our deeds, how we think, how we view the Father, how we view the Son, how we view our fellow man—he will do anything to corrupt and pollute that. If we want to be among the 144,000 in this life, we have to become spiritual virgins; unpolluted, uncorrupted, pure and unspotted, by Satan and the world—we are not spotted by Satan, we are pure because we reject Satan and we reject the direction that this world is going. It seems like you can’t turn the news on every night or read a paper or go to the news on your computer and this world has come to a new level, each day it seems, of corruption. A new level of satanic thinking, a new level of getting farther and farther away from anything resembling the truth of God Almighty. We have to become spiritual virgins, as human beings, in this life. To prove to our Father and His Son that we will do this.

That leads to the fourth point of what we are learning from the 144,000.

4. The 144,000 will follow the Son wherever He goes, wherever He leads.

Revelation 14:4, we read that earlier but I’ll read it this time out of the New Living Translation. We’re told that the 144,000:

Revelation 14:4 *They have kept themselves as pure as virgins [which was the previous point], following the Lamb wherever he goes. (NLT)*

The Greek word for *following* is Strong’s #190 and it means to accompany, especially as a disciple. It’s our goal to walk in Christ’s footsteps as His disciples, as His students, as someone who watched what He did and then we follow. We follow His Word; we follow His example in this life. We have to ask ourselves, if the 144,000 follows and Christ leads wherever He went, where did the Son go? How did He lead us by His

example? It's become so obvious, we've covered this so often in our study of Who the Father is and Who the Son is, that Christ came on this earth to do one thing. That's to do the will of His Father. We won't turn there, we know it by heart, John 5:30. Christ said,

"Of my own self, I can do nothing, I seek not my own will but the will of the Father who sent Me."

So, we know that whatever Christ's will is, is His Father's will. Therefore, our will should be the Father's will. What does the Son and His Father want us to be doing, if we are going to follow Christ's lead and we're going to go wherever He went when He walked this earth? Let's look at Matthew 7:21. There's going to come a day of reckoning and this one scripture, this one verse, tells us the dividing line between those who have eternal life and those who will not.

Matthew 7:21 *Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; (KJV)*

You look across the landscape, I don't care if it's in Africa or the United States, wherever it might be, you turn on a television set on Sunday morning and there's a lot of "Lord, Lord" being proclaimed. On the internet, there's a lot of people saying, "Lord, Lord". Christ is saying, not everybody that does that is going to be in the Kingdom of God. What's the dividing line? What's the determiner?

21 continued) ... but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (KJV)

We want to do the Father's will. What does that entail? We want to put first things first. We want the weightier matters of the law. We don't want to get distracted out on the twigs and branches or in the fluff and puff. We want to get to the meat of the matter. In Matthew 21:28. Christ is making it very plain that it's a matter of what we do, not what we say we will do. If you look back to verse 21, it's clear Christ is addressing the priests and elders—the religious leaders of His day.

Matthew 21:28 *But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard.*

29) He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

30) And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. (KJV)

Then Christ addressed the priests and elders.

31) Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. (KJV)

Why? Because they said but did not do. They said, "Lord, Lord" but their actions belied their words and that is an enormous warning to all of us. One of our prime goals should

be to discern the will of our Father, in all aspects of our lives. That's one of the things that I wrestle with almost on a daily basis is:

“God Almighty, tell me what your will is in this matter, because I don't know. Or I am not totally sure. Tell me what your will is, whatever it is, I'll do it. I just want to do it, but I need you to tell me what it is.”

So often we wrestle with those things and we have to obviously go into the Word of God and we learn by example—by Christ's example, the prophet's example, the patriarch's example—of what the will of God is, what the will of our Father is. We have to discern that in all aspects, but once we discern it, we have to do it. We have to actually do it.

With that in mind let's go to Matthew 18. Any time we find in the Bible what the key is to getting into the Kingdom of God, it should prick our attention and this is one of those passages in scripture.

Matthew 18:1 *At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? (KJV)*

That's an important question, we want to know the answer to that. So, what did Jesus say? This person with this title, this person that's of this build or this person that had this office or rank, when he was on this earth or was in the church for this long? No, He didn't say that. He didn't say a word, He asked a little child to come to Him and set this little child in the midst of them. Of course, they all marveled, saying why is this little child standing here and this innocent child is looking around at this group of people—adults—then Christ, I'm sure had a pregnant pause and let them consider.

3) And said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (KJV)

Pretty simple. You have to do two things, be converted and be as a little child.

Let's look at the first one—*converted*. The Greek word *converted* is Strong's #4762 and it is a very simple definition, it means, “turn around or reverse course”. It can be literally or it can be figuratively. We would say today, make a 180.

How does that play out in day to day living? Turning around, reversing course—how does it play out? One of the best descriptors of that is found in Ephesians 4:22 and as we go through this, think about “reversing course”. Think about changing from one person to another person—converted versus unconverted. This is how it is this is how it gets done, this is what our job is, day by day, minute by minute, second by second sometimes when it comes to what comes into our mind. Paul is writing to the church at Ephesus but also to all of us today.

Ephesians 4:22 *That ye put off [this is a change, a 180 degrees] concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;* (KJV)

We've just read that Satan is the author of corruption. He wants to pollute, pervert and corrupt everything of God Almighty.

23) And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24) And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (KJV)

What these verses say, is that we have to put off the corrupt person that we used to be—or maybe that we are now—when we first came into the church and we have to be renewed in our mind, to become a new person, a new man, be renewed in that spirit of our mind. That man is created in the image of God, in righteousness and holiness. Now he gets to some specifics.

25) Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: (KJV)

You can't turn on the television with a politician opening his mouth and there isn't a lie in there somewhere. "They didn't tell me. I didn't know or I didn't give those instructions." Just amazing.

25 continued) ... for we are members one of another.

26) Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: (KJV)

Whether it's a marriage, a friendship, brothers and sisters in God's church, get it worked out and get it worked out now. Don't let it fester because if you let it fester, guess who is right there opening the wound wider and wider—Satan, the great divider.

27) Neither give place to the devil.

28) Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29) Let no corrupto [Satan is the author of corruption] communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. (KJV)

Verse 30 we're going to switch to the New Living Translation because I think it's clearer and we would understand better in these days.

30) And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. [Not that the Holy Spirit is a being, it's not] Remember, he [referring to the Father] has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. (NLT)

Obviously if we walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

31) Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. (NLT)

Instead of that—he says that’s the old man.

32) Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. (NLT)

It’s amazing, people will get out on bended knee and want God Almighty to forgive them but they won’t forgive their neighbor or mate, something that happened earlier in the day, or the week before or the year before or five years ago. It’s just amazing how people can carry those two parallel ideas and not see that there’s not some huge conflict there. Going on in chapter 5:1, we know there’s no chapter breaks in the original text.

Ephesians 5:1 *Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. (NLT)*

Think about this concept; Live a life filled with love for others. Do we live a life filled with love for others? I fall woefully short in that. We need to think about that.

2) following the example of Christ. [He loved all and gave His life for all.] He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God. (NLT)

When we follow the Father, our words, our thoughts, our deeds are indeed like sweet perfume to Him.

3) Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God’s people.

4) Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God.

5) You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. (NLT)

Think about that, greed and idolatry go hand in hand because when we lust after something or have green in our hearts, we are putting something in front of God Almighty.

6) Don’t be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins ... (NLT)

I’ve talked to ministers who excuse sins and ranked sins. They say, this one isn’t so bad.

6 continued) ... for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him.
7) Don't participate in the things these people do. (NLT)

That's becoming unspotted, that's becoming pure.

8) For once you were full of darkness, [and all of ours were before God called us] but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! (NLT)

These verses are a concise statement of what conversion is. Change from the old person to the new person. Change from corrupt to pure. We see that Christ said, "who is greatest in the Kingdom of God?" You have to be converted. Number two, He said we have to be as little children. Remember He said in Matthew 18:4, "whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven." Think about that, think of the nature of a little child. We're talking three, two, four years old maybe. Let's go to Psalm 32:2 and see how a child-like nature changes as we grow older and when we become adults, we are susceptible to things that have no place in a Godly, human being. Anytime we see, "blessed is", we want to be part of that.

Psalm 32:2 *Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, [no sin imputed] and in whose spirit there is no guile. (KJV)*

We don't often use the word "guile" today. The Hebrew word for *guile* means "trickery or subtlety". You maneuver to get people to do what you want or you maneuver to shade the truth, or you maneuver to satisfy lust or greed and little kids don't know that when they are one, two, three or four years old. Over time, going into the teen years and the adult years, people know, learn, how to manipulate. They learn how to deceive and live to get what they want. That is exactly the mind of Satan. We as humans being, when we were called, we had that mind. Little children have not yet learned that. They haven't learned the cunning of Satan, they haven't learned the craftiness of Satan, they have not learned to exalt the self. "Look at me" and put themselves on a pedestal. Little kids are just plain, simple, little kids. That little kid in front of the priests and elders was just a little wide-eyed child just looking around, standing in front of adults but no big deal to them.

Let's go back now to Matthew 18:5, we were back in Matthew 18 where Christ said, if you want to be greatest in the Kingdom you have to be converted and as a little child. Let's pick up the thought now of being the little child.

Matthew 18:5 *And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.*

6) *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. (KJV)*

The Greek word for *offend* is Strong's #4624 and it's the Greek word *skandalizo* and we get the English word "scandalized" from it. You hear people say, "I was scandalized" or "That scandalized me". It means "to trip up, to stumble, to entice to sin or to entice to apostasy". What Christ is saying, you better not take one of these little ones that believes in Me and lead them astray—entice them to sin.

7) Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! (KJV)

Verse 10.

10) Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. (KJV)

That's a stunning concept to think about, that we have angels beholding the face of God Almighty and they are responsible for doing His will in our lives. The Greek word for *despise* means "to think against or to disesteem". Today we would say, to look down on somebody and elevate the self. Let's go to Philippians 2:3. This is something that all of us need to keep in mind, every minute of every day. As a church, as a group, if we want to be cohesive and unified, this is part of our marching orders.

Philippians 2:3 *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. (KJV)*

What a concept and again this is a characteristic of *humility*. If you esteem others better than yourself, that's a humble mind. We must become as humble as little children. The 144,000 follows in Christ's footsteps wherever He leads, wherever He wants us to go, but the key to following His lead is conversion, humility, voluntarily submitting to the Father and His Son.

The last point.

5. The 144,000 are called Firstfruits.

Revelation 14:4 *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. (KJV)*

The Greek word for *redeemed* is Strong's #59 and it has an interesting word that was picked for its meaning; it means "to go to market", that is by implication "to buy something, to buy something at the market". It has a special meaning "to redeem or to buy back". Let's go to 1 Corinthians 6:19 and see what that word really means relative to us being part of the 144,000. Paul is writing and he's getting onto the members of the Corinthian congregation because of their sins and their cavalier attitude towards sin.

1 Corinthians 6:19 *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you [that's a mark of conversion], which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (KJV)*

You don't belong to yourself.

20) For ye are bought ... (KJV)

That's Strong's #59 which we just read in Revelation 14, *being redeemed*.

20 continued) ... with a price [Christ's death]: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (KJV)

We see that Christ's death and resurrection redeemed the 144,000 from Satan's world. They are called first fruit. The Greek word for "first fruit" is *aparche*, Strong's #536 and it means a beginning of a sacrifice, the very beginning of a sacrifice. Zodiates in his Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament says it is the first of the ripe fruits. So 144,000 are the first of the ripe fruits. We have an example in the Old Testament—we won't turn there, one of many—Exodus 23:19. They were told then, the first of your first fruits of your land, you bring into the house of Yehovah; you offer it to God Almighty, which is exactly what Christ did, being the very First of the Firstfruits. Let's go to Hebrews 6:20 and see that point. This is another title of Christ. I have a list in my computer of all the titles I can find for Christ and this is one of them.

Hebrews 6:20 *Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. (KJV)*

The Greek word for *forerunner* is Strong's #4274 and it means "a runner ahead"—a runner that runs ahead of everyone else—it means "a precursor". The definition of a precursor, I looked it up in the New Oxford American Dictionary, means "a person or thing that comes before another". So, Christ is the precursor of the Firstfruits, He is the First of the Firstfruits. Remember the spring harvest couldn't begin until the very first of the first fruit was offered on wave sheaf Sunday and it was spiritually fulfilled by Jesus Christ. We see that the 144,000 are labeled first fruits. To explain that let's go to 1 Corinthians 15:19. Paul makes an interesting statement. If you look at it at first glance it gets your attention.

1 Corinthians 15:19 *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. (KJV)*

We all have hope in Christ, but what he's saying, is that if it's relative to just this human life, we are in trouble.

20) But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

21) *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*

22) *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

23) *But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; (KJV)*

We know Revelation 14 where the 144,000 are called Firstfruits and Christ the First of the Firstfruits, meaning He is the first of the Firstfruits.

23 continued) ... afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (KJV)

The rest of the Firstfruits, the 144,000 that stand with Christ on Mount Zion. Then in James 1:17, you can write this down as a reference. James says that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures. There are plenty of scriptures that talk about first fruits and us being the Firstfruits. All I can say is, when you think about it, look at the world today and how thankful we should be of our calling, to be part of these first fruits. Where would we be if we weren't called today? We would be mixed up in this mess and here are as the first fruits of the God Almighty. We just need to make sure that we are there on that day in Revelation 14.

Let's close with a question. Terrible times lay ahead of us, we know that. In Matthew 24 we've read that before, there's going to be a Great Tribulation that hasn't happened since the beginning of the world, we know that. We read earlier that unless these days are shortened, no flesh should be saved, but for the elect's sake—the Firstfruits' sake—they will be shortened. If any man says to us, Christ is over here, Christ is over there, what did Christ say? Don't follow that. There are going to be—as we read earlier—there are false Christ's, false prophets, who are going to come upon us and show great signs and wonders and if possible, they will deceive the very elect. These are the times ahead of us that we need to be prepared for. Only the very elect will be sealed as part of the 144,000. How do we make sure we are part of the 144,000? We have seen many concepts of that today. It's simple in concept. The answer is simple in concept, it's hard in execution. We've already seen today that we have to be converted and we have to have childlike humility and have to grow in the fruit of the spirit. What is the very first one? Love, love toward our Father—love Him more than anything—and love our fellow man as ourselves. Putting nothing in front of us—in front of God. We read earlier that a greedy person is an idolater because he worships the things of the world. We have to be careful about that.

There are going to be signs and lying wonders in our face that want to lead us astray and corrupt us into worshipping something that comes from Satan. The other big fruit of the Holy Spirit that we covered today is meekness and gentleness. They go hand in hand and the definitions overlap. Who is greatest in the Kingdom? You have to be converted and like a little child. The fact is, not everyone is going to make the Kingdom of God. Christ said, not everybody who says "Lord, Lord" is going to be there. Let's bring it a little closer to home, we'll close with this one scripture, Revelation 3:4. This is referring to the Sardis era, Christ is talking about the Sardis era and we know that the Sardis era will be alive along with Philadelphia and Laodicea in the end days.

Revelation 3:4 *Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments;* (KJV)

Look at the theme going through the scriptures today about being pure and undefiled.

4 continued) ... and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. (KJV)

In Revelation 14, they are standing with Christ in white garments.

5) He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, [the implication being that there are some in Sardis that their name will be blocked out] but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. (KJV)

We see that not all Sardis is going to be part of the 144,000. I remember Mr. Armstrong pounding the lectern saying, I don't think half of you are converted. If we look at our history, coming out of the Worldwide Church of God that is very apparent that that's true. Probably even more so than that. If we want to be part of the 144,000, we must know our Father's name and all that that implies. We must become undefiled in a polluted, horribly corrupt world that we live in today. We must follow in Christ's footsteps wherever He goes no matter the difficulties or obstacles or people coming at us because we are different from everybody else. Above all we need to develop a humble, Christ-like, child-like spirit, in order to be in the Kingdom of God.