

The Many and the Few

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Over and over again in our Father's word we hear about the term *the many and the few*. It is repeated over and over and over again in our Father's word; *the many and the few*. It's always a contrast between the world, which is *the many*, and *the few* are those who God is dealing with, who He has given His Holy Spirit to. There is this contrast between the many and the few, the world and our Father's children. So when we take note of that we have to ask the question, what is our Father trying to tell us by this? Are there messages and understanding He would like us to glean from this. Especially in these end days, how does this contrast apply to us—*the many and the few*.

So, we're going to explore that today which leads to our title:

The Many and the Few

We'll explore that through five points. So, let's set the stage. The obvious first point:

1. Ancient Israel was “the few” compared to the nations around them.

Let's go to Deuteronomy 7:6-11. Everything will be out of the King James unless otherwise noted. Moses is speaking.

Deuteronomy 7:6 *For thou [referring to Israel] art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. (KJV)*

What an honor.

7) The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people [you're not the largest, the biggest]; for ye were the fewest of all people: (KJV)

The rest we'll quote out of the New King James.

8) but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

9) Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; [Our obligation is to love Him and put Him first and keep His commandments]

10) and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face.

11) Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them. (NKJV)

I went back and tried to gather as much information as I could to ask the question, what was the world's population about the time of the exodus. Of course, no one knows for sure but there are people who spend their whole careers studying population and population density and going back in history. The best estimates are that the world population at the time of the exodus was somewhere between 40-50 million people. We know Israel—we're told in Exodus 12—there were 600,000 men in Israel. So if you add women and children, you could come up with 1.5 to 1.6 million Israelites. If you compare that to 40-50 million in the world, that would mean that Ancient Israel was 3/10's of one percent of the estimated world population. So the world obviously is *the many*. Yehovah's special people are indeed *the few*.

Let's go to point 2 and shift our focus to the early New Testament church.

2. The members, the brethren—those called in the early New Testament church—then became “the few” in the Roman Empire when the church first started.

Prior to John the Baptist coming on the scene, the emphasis of Moses and the prophets that followed Moses was to faithfully follow the covenant at Mount Sinai. But then John the Baptist came to prepare the way for the Messiah. He insisted that the focus should be on the coming Kingdom of God and the need for each individual to prepare for that coming Kingdom by repenting and by being baptized. That way, he paved the way for Christ's ministry. Once that way was prepared by John the Baptist for the Messiah, then Jesus could bring His work of ushering in the New Covenant. With that in mind let's go to Mark 1:14-15 and see this fact about John the Baptist preparing the way.

Mark 1:14 *Now after [that's important] that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,
15) And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. (KJV)*

We see here that John's work was now finished. He was in prison, he was done. His work was done. Jesus' work was just beginning. Now let's go to Luke 12:31-32 and notice what Christ says about those who are being called during His ministry and then going forward beyond that. Christ is speaking to the disciples; you can see that in verse 22. He's talking to those He has called.

Luke 12:31 *But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. (KJV)*

All these things that you worry about and are concerned about.

32) *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* (KJV)

The Greek word for *little* is Strong's #3398, it's the Greek word *mikros* and it means "small in size, small in quantity, or small in number". The Greek word for *flock* is Strong's #4168 and is the Greek word *poimnion* and the figurative meaning is that it is "a group of believers". So, Christ is calling those who are responding; He is naming those who He has called and who have responded as *a little flock*. So we understand that compared to the world at large or compared to the Roman Empire at that time, Christians were a small, small group. There is no indication to the contrary that this would change in the future. There is no indication in scripture or prophecy that there was going to be some gigantic, "Convert the World" movement that will be successful. That's been tried down by millennia and look at the results of it.

Let's look at the world population at 100 A.D., at the end of the life of the Apostle John, the last apostle living. It was estimated to be approximately 300 million in the world. There are various estimates about the number of Christians in the world at 100 A.D. but we have to realize in that day that most of the Christians were persecuted. So it was not some growing movement that it would be later on a few hundred years later. The New Testament church by most estimates was approximately 7000 in the Roman Empire. It could be 10,000, it could be 5,000 but about 7,000. The population of the Roman Empire in 100 A.D. is about 60 million. If you look at 7,000 out of 60 million the church represented 1/1000th of one percent of the Roman Empire. Not the world, just the Roman Empire. 1/1000th of one percent. So talk about a "little" flock. When Christ used that term, He knew exactly what He was talking about. *The few, the little flock*.

Let's look at one other scripture that also applies to the New Covenant *few*, let's go to Matthew 11:12, this is a scripture that has created controversy over the years in different interpretations, different understandings and in my margin in the Bible I have one understanding written down and crossed out and another one written down and crossed out over the years. I think we've all done that. Christ is speaking to the multitudes in verse 7 and notice what He says.

Matthew 11:12 *And from the days of John the Baptist until now [until He spoke these words] the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* (KJV)

I've always scratched my head at that scripture because it seems to be put in there with the term *violent* and *violence* and it didn't seem to fit. There's been a lot of explanations over the years. The Greek word for *violent* is Strong's #973 and is the Greek word *biastes* and it means "someone who forces", that is figuratively "someone who is energetic". It can also mean "violent". Someone who forces or someone who is energetic. Thayer's Greek Lexicon says of this word the following:

Using force [and it also mentions violence. Then it goes on to say in Matthew 11:12], *those who are called who strive to obtain its privileges* [meaning the

privileges of the Kingdom of God, eternal life] *with the utmost eagerness and effort.*

So rather than *violent*, Thayer's says it should be *those who are eager and put forth the effort.*

We have to remember in understanding the scripture, what is the context? The context is, *from the days of John the Baptist until now.* Christ spoke those words. We have to remember in the times of the Old Covenant, prior to Christ walking on this earth, Yehovah called and dealt with an entire nation. As we know they didn't always respond well and they were rebellious and they turned against God but He indeed called the entire nation. So in that sense, if you were an Israelite during the period of the Old Covenant, it was easier in the sense that you were part of a larger group of people—the entire nation—whom God was dealing with. So you were surrounded by fellow believers and you followed the instruction of God Almighty as a nation. You had the comfort of being part of a bigger group.

Now under the New Covenant, our Father calls and deals with individuals, not nations. Individuals from all nations, from all races, as was later revealed to Peter in Acts 10 where the sheet came down from heaven and all the unclean beasts were there. Let's go to 1 Corinthians 12:13 and see some added information to what we find in Matthew 11.

1 Corinthians 12:13 *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles [not calling a nation], whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (KJV)*

So today our calling is an individual calling and that is opposed to Yehovah calling an entire nation, with everyone in the entire nation. We have to understand what Christ is referring to here in part, is the fact that individuals are called and not necessarily even entire families but individuals out of a family are called. Today it is harder because of that individual calling, as opposed to God Almighty calling and dealing with an entire nation and everyone in that nation.

What we see when we put all this together, regarding Matthew 11, is that since John the Kingdom is obtained by *the few* who have a vehement desire, who press with all their might to be in that Kingdom. That's putting what Thayer has to say and what Strong's has to say. But to be fair, there is a different take on that from Spiros Zodhiates who we often quote, he wrote The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament and is quite knowledgeable in Greek. He has a different take on this and to be fair I want to give both sides of that. Let me quote from The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Spiros Zodhiates regarding the word *violent* in Matthew 11.

To suffer violence but also [here's where he differs] to hurry into or press into without proper thought or repentance. A violent person, one who uses force, but also one who hurries to appropriate something that seems good without measuring the consequences of such action. In Matthew 11:12 it refers to those

who heard the preaching of John the Baptist and came to him to be baptized without truly repenting of their sins. They must have said to themselves, let's hurry to be baptized, let's accept the advantages by the mere physical act of baptism.

All we have to do is be dunked and then we have the Kingdom of God, we have eternal life.

Continuing quote...

But they never repented and believed in Christ. They may seize, by their own energy, but they are not saved unless they repent, believe and are accepted by Christ. This word is spoken of one who has a vehement desire for anything.

For those of us who were around during the breakup of the Worldwide Church of God in the mid 1990's and later, half the people just left and were never to be heard from again. Some went into atheism, some to agnosticism, some went back to being Catholics or Protestants and they didn't count the cost. They just jumped in without true repentance—they were baptized, they were dunked, but they did not truly repent—and they did not understand what they were getting into. This is why we ask during baptismal counseling, "Have you counted the cost? Are you willing to die for what you believe? Are you really willing to do that?"

Going back to Matthew 11, either way—either through Thayer's interpretation or Zodhiates interpretation—we can actually put them together and say:

"The Kingdom is obtained by those who have a vehement desire, who press with all their might and who repent and who count the cost."

For the early New Testament church, we see very clearly the Roman Empire was "the many" and the church of God, by 100 A.D., was the very, very "few".

The third point I would like to make is coming back to us now—coming home to us.

3. When we were called and when we were converted, we were called out of "the many" and into "the few" — to become "the few"

Let's go to Matthew 10:32-37; Jesus is speaking and I'm going to read this out of the NIV.

Matthew 10:32 *"Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.*

33) But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven. (NIV)

Very sobering words.

34) *“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.*

35) *For I have come to turn “a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law —*

36) *a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’ (NIV)*

Because of that individual calling; plucking people out of a family.

37) *“Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (NIV)*

What Jesus is telling us is, that once our Father calls—once that call is made—that individual is turned over to Jesus. When we acknowledge Christ and we acknowledge the calling from the Father and respond to that, we separate ourselves from others. We separate ourselves from our parents or from our children or from our neighbors or sometimes from our best friends. Today we are the few because of our beliefs. We acknowledge a supreme Being, the Almighty, the Most High God, Yehovah the Father and we acknowledge His only begotten Son, Jesus the Messiah. We believe in a spirit world. Many people don’t even believe in a spirit world. Especially the scientific community. If you can’t put a tape measure on it or weigh it, it doesn’t exist. But we believe in a spirit world and we reject atheism, we reject agnosticism which are very trendy today. The growing number of atheists and agnostics in the United States is mushrooming. In Europe, depending on the country, 80-90% of the population now in Europe with a couple of exceptions, are atheist or agnostic. We separate ourselves because we acknowledge the spirit world and we acknowledge the Almighty God and His Son. We believe there are two separate Beings. Not three, but two. We reject the trinity, we believe the Father is an independent being and the Son is an independent Being who both share the same spirit, the Holy Spirit. In that sense, once we accept that and believe that, we separate ourselves, quote unquote, from all of the rest of “Christianity”. We become *the few*. We believe the Sabbath is the day of worship and we reject Sunday as the day of worship. Once again, we separate ourselves from the vast majority of “Christianity” and we become *the few*. We believe and keep our Father’s Holy Days. We reject Easter and Halloween and Christmas, New Years and in doing so—in rejecting the world’s holy days—and following our Father’s Holy Days, we once again become *the few* out of *the many*. We believe in heterosexuality not homosexuality. We believe in only two genders, a man and a woman. We reject the idea of shifting gender identities. Those are very trendy now, very popular now. Again, we become *the few* by that belief.

I could go on and on and take the rest of the time noting the differences between us and the rest of the world but you get the idea. All of the Firstfruits in the world today—let’s think about that—how many are there? We are wildly speculating here but of the ones who believe the way we do, probably maybe 50,000 in the United States when you add up all the people who profess to be Holy Day keepers, Sabbath keepers, who understand the trinity is wrong—maybe 50,000—but let’s be generous and say it’s

100,000 in the United States. We're going to be generous and I'm going to make a point by being generous in just a minute. So, let's say there is 100,000 in the United States and Canada and maybe in the rest of the world there's 100,000; could be more, could be less. So let's say 200,000 of the Firstfruits in the world today. Now let's compare that to a world population. The world population on November 15 of last year, 2022, was estimated on that day to pass 8 billion. It's accelerated since then. If you do the math of a total of 200,000 converted human beings on this earth in comparison to 8 billion, the Firstfruits are 25/100,000 of 1%.

With that in mind let's go to 1 Corinthians 1:23-31. What Paul is writing about here is what we are experiencing right now also, as being the Firstfruits in these end days.

1 Corinthians 1:23 *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks [the Gentiles, meaning the rest of the world] foolishness; (KJV)*

The Greek word for *stumbling block* is Strong's #4625, it's the Greek word *skandalon* from which we get our English word "scandal" from. It means "a snare, an occasion to fall, a thing that offends". The same holds true for us today because when we preach that the Sabbath is a day to be kept, it's a stumbling block to Protestants and Catholics. When we preach to Christ crucified, it is a stumbling block to Jews. When we reject the world's holy days and the world's gender identity and all of that, it becomes a huge stumbling block to them and it becomes foolishness when we quote the Bible to those who are agnostic or atheistic because they believe this is all a myth. So it holds true today.

Going on in verse 24) ...

*24) But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks [meaning Gentiles, the rest of society, we preach], Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.
25) Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.
26) For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:
27) But God hath chosen the foolish things [the humans] of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things [the humans] of the world to confound the things which are mighty;
28) And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not [meaning of no account], to bring to nought things that are: [meaning people that are exalted]
29) [the reason our Father does this is] That no flesh should glory in his presence. (KJV)*

Continuing verses 30) and 31) out of the NIV.

30) *It is because of him [the Father] that you are in Christ Jesus, [because of His calling] who has become for us wisdom from God [Christ has become wisdom from God]—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.*

31) *Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."* (NIV)

As we've seen, not many are called as Firstfruits. The word Firstfruits is aptly chosen in the Bible because the first fruits of any harvest are just a small portion of the total harvest. We understand that, we know that. In 1990 it was the height of Worldwide Church of God's attendance, of the various figures put out by the Worldwide Church of God before their demise, or change, the attendance was roughly 200,000. If we take that number and compare it to the world population in 1990, at that time it was 5.3 billion. The Worldwide population all over the world—Worldwide had offices in every continent, every major nation back then—the attendance was around 200,000. So 200,000 out of 5.3 billion. Worldwide was 3/10000 of 1%. Talk about the few. By following our Father's way in a world that is dominated by Satan, we have indeed become *the very few*; all of us here today are *the very few*. We should not be surprised by that.

That leads us to the fourth point. We come home here to Pacific now.

4. When it was revealed to us in Pacific, who God is and who His Son is and who the God of the Old Testament was, we became *the few of the few*.

First let me set the stage of how that happened. Let's look historically and set the stage for how this happened. Not listening to what God Almighty says is a common theme in the Bible. It's a common theme among the people who God has dealt with down through the millennia. It's a common theme that they don't listen to what He says and they pay a heavy price for that. It happened in the Old Testament.

Zechariah prophesied at the rebuilding of the temple after Judah was exiled in Babylon, Turn to Zechariah 7:1 and then 8-14. We'll read verse 1 just to set the time frame. This is out of the New Living Translation.

Zechariah 7:1 *On December 7 of the fourth year of King Darius's reign, another message came to Zechariah from the LORD.* (NLT)

This would be the year 518 B.C., pretty well documented. Now let's go to verse 8.

8) *Then this message came to Zechariah from the LORD: [What is God Almighty telling him]*

9) *This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: Judge fairly, and show mercy and kindness to one another.*

10) *Do not oppress widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor. And do not scheme against each other.* (NLT)

What a concept; what good advice on how to live peaceably one with another.

11) *"Your ancestors refused to listen to this message. (NLT)*

This was part and parcel of the Old Covenant, of not oppressing widows and orphans and foreigners and being kind to one another.

11 continued) ...They stubbornly turned away and put their fingers in their ears to keep from hearing.

12) They made their hearts as hard as stone, so they could not hear the instructions or the messages that the LORD of Heaven's Armies had sent them by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. That is why the LORD of Heaven's Armies was so angry with them.

13) "Since they refused to listen when I called to them, I would not listen when they called to me, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

14) As with a whirlwind, I scattered them among the distant nations, where they lived as strangers. (NLT)

Because Judah would not listen to Yehovah and Israel before Judah didn't listen, they suffered horribly. So this is a pattern down through history that our Father calls people, deals with people and they don't want to listen to what He has to say. Not listening to what Yehovah said also happened in the New Testament. Let's go to the account from the deacon Stephen in Acts 6; he is speaking in front of the Sanhedrin. As we know Stephen gave his life, he forfeited his life for what he said. Acts 6:9-15 and then we'll go to the first verse of chapter 7 and then verses 51-57 in Chapter 7. Reading out of the New Living Translation.

Acts 6:9 *But one day some men from the Synagogue of Freed Slaves, as it was called, started to debate with him. They were Jews from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, and the province of Asia.*

10) None of them could stand against the wisdom and the Spirit with which Stephen spoke. (NLT)

They could not argue from scripture because what he was speaking came right out of scripture.

11) So they persuaded some men to lie about Stephen, saying, "We heard him blaspheme Moses, and even God." (NLT)

This is typical human nature, when you can't argue from the source, in this case God's word, what happens? They resort to personal attacks. The same thing happened when we, in Pacific, began to preach the truth about our Father and His Son and who did what back in the Old Testament. They could not argue, would not argue from scripture but what they did was resort to personal attacks—attacking the character of people in Pacific.

12) *This roused the people, the elders, and the teachers of religious law. So they arrested Stephen and brought him before the high council.*

13) *The lying witnesses said, "This man is always speaking against the holy Temple and against the law of Moses. (NLT)*

Steven never said that.

14) *We have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy the Temple and change the customs Moses handed down to us." (NLT)*

That part is true. When we began teaching the truth several years ago about our Father and His Son in scripture, people began to accuse us of teaching that Christ was a created Being. We've never said that, that's why Mark Sappington addressed that recently because it comes in waves. People are saying, you teach that Christ is a created Being. We've never taught that, have no intention of doing that, don't believe it, but yet people are trying to throw wood on a fire and rather than debate or discuss the point based on scripture.

15) *At this point everyone in the high council stared at Stephen, because his face became as bright as an angel's. (NLT)*

Acts 7:1 *At this point everyone in the high council stared at Stephen, because his face became as bright as an angel's.*

2) *This was Stephen's reply: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me. Our glorious God appeared to our ancestor Abraham in Mesopotamia before he settled in Haran. (NLT)*

Then he goes on to give the history of Israel. After he does that, let's go to verse 51 and notice what he says after he has given the history of Israel.

51) *You stubborn people! You are heathen at heart and deaf to the truth. Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit? (NLT)*

The Holy Spirit is calling you; it's trying to lead you in a certain direction but you will not hear it, you resist it.

52) *Name one prophet your ancestors didn't persecute! [Can you imagine their ears stinging at this point] They even killed the ones who predicted the coming of the Righteous One—the Messiah whom you betrayed and murdered.*

53) *You deliberately disobeyed God's law, even though you received it from the hands of angels." (NLT)*

The Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.

54) *The Jewish leaders were infuriated by Stephen's accusation, and they shook their fists at him in rage.*

55) But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed steadily into heaven and saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor at God's right hand. (NLT)

For those who believe that somehow God and Christ—the Father and the Son are co-equal and as one minister put it, the throne of God is a two holer, which is blasphemy to me—how can you disregard what Stephen saw and what Luke has recorded?

56) And he told them, "Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God's right hand!"

57) Then they put their hands over their ears and began shouting. They rushed at him ... (NLT)

They didn't want to hear it. If you don't want to hear something and put your hands over both your ears and start yelling as loud as you can, you're not going to hear anything and that's exactly what they did.

58) ... and dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. His accusers took off their coats and laid them at the feet of a young man named Saul. (NLT)

We see here the Jewish leaders of Christ's day refused the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Undoubtedly some of those leaders were being called and undoubtedly many of them rejected the lead of the Holy Spirit and they denied Christ and denied the Father. Acts 19, let's turn there and we're going to read verses 23-34. Luke is talking about the growth of the church and the commotion that it caused in the Roman Empire.

Acts 19:23 *And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. (NKJV)*

I remember when I first started reading the Bible and was being called, I noticed *the Way* because it is "a way of life". It's not just believing this fact, that fact and some other fact. It's about changing from the old person to the new person. It's about changing from Satan to being like Jesus Christ, walking in His footsteps. It's a *way of life*.

24) For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, who brought no small profit to the craftsmen.

25) He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade.

26) Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands.

27) So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship." (NKJV)

What did they do? These crafts people.

28) *Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"*

29) *So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions.*

30) *And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. (NKJV)*

Because they were afraid that he would be killed.

31) *Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater.*

32) *Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. (NLT)*

It's like saying, "I can't remember the argument but you're still wrong." They don't know why they're there but they are arguing about something.

33) *And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people. (NKJV)*

Let me read from The New Bible Commentary by Conrad Gemph. What he says about Alexander and the Jews putting him forward.

The realism of Luke's account is striking. The description of mob behavior in verse 32 is perfect. Perhaps the Jews pushed forward Alexander to make a defense in verse 33 in order to distance themselves from the Christians. The pagan crowd may not otherwise have been able to distinguish between these two groups of atheists as Jews and Christians who both denied the existence of their gods were called.

So Christians and Jews were called by the Greeks, atheists because they didn't believe in the Greek gods. It could be Alexander was trying to separate the Jews—his cohorts—from the Christians. Going on in verse 34.

34) *But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" (NKJV)*

Nobody could talk after that, nobody could reason or discuss, but the fact is, the Ephesians did not want to hear the truth, put their hands over their ears and started screaming, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" and they blocked the truth about by their chants. Coming back to Pacific now, when our Father began revealing the truth about who the God of the Old Testament was, it was up to each one of us to listen or not, to study or not, to heed or not. There were some brethren who did exactly the same as the

Sanhedrin in Stephen's day or the Ephesians in Paul's day. Stopping up their ears, saying "We don't want to hear it. Don't send us papers, don't send us explanations". They would not even consider or investigate the truth out of God's word. As a result of that we lost about 25% of our members. We became even fewer of *the few* in that regard. But that's a fact and frankly we should all be thankful for the honor of being *the few*, as compared to the world and the way the world believes and the way traditional Christianity believes. We are the few of *the few*.

The fifth and last point—we want to bring all this together.

5. Of all the humans who have ever lived since Adam and Eve, how many are “the few”?

How many are the converted? I'm not going to get into the 144,000 or the innumerable multitude of Revelation 7 but rather we are going to speculate—and it is speculation because only our Father knows—about who has had the Holy Spirit since the time of Adam and Eve. Who lived a righteous life with the Holy Spirit in them, who died in the faith or who are alive right now with the Holy Spirit in them? If you look at from Abel—righteous Abel—to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, to Moses and all the prophets and then some of the kings of Israel, certainly not all the kinds of Israel. But if you just look at those it's a few hundred total. And that is being generous. Let's be generous and say 1000. Again, I'm being generous in these numbers to make a point. How about all those who died in the faith since Christ ushered in the New Covenant. Up to that time, let's say 1000. How about since Jesus Christ walked this earth? We've already talked about at 100 A.D. there was approximately 7000 persecuted Christians and we know that after 100 A.D. the truth began to be coopted and perverted by what became the Catholic church. We know that after that period of time, very few held to the truth for the next 1800 years. They had to go underground because of persecution from the Catholic church and the Orthodox church.

Let's be generous and say from 100 A.D. to say 1800-1900A.D., it could be 50,000 probably. Now we come to the time where the Worldwide Church of God began, Mr. Armstrong was being called in the 1920's and the Worldwide Church of God existed for 65 years before it was coopted and metamorphosed into whatever it is called right now. Which has nothing to do with the truth of God at all. At its peak, there was about 200,000 in attendance. We have to ask the question, if there was 200,000 in attendance, how many were truly converted at that time? How many have died in the faith from the 1920's up until the demise of the Worldwide Church of God, over its 65 years of existence. We know that half left when the breakup of Worldwide so let's just be generous and say from the calling of Mr. Armstrong until the demise of Worldwide Church of God, let's say 150,000 people were truly converted. Some are still alive today but most are dead today. So then, what could the grand total be of all the saints, living or dead—we're going to be very generous again to make a point. We've totaled a bit over 200,000 since Abel but let's be generous and say 300,000. God has dealt with 300,000 people from Abel until today.

According to the PRB research center, roughly 8 billion people on earth today represent less than 10% of all those that have ever lived on earth. They estimate that there have been over 100 billion humans who have ever lived on the earth. Again, they do their research and they have their scientific methods but nobody knows for sure. But let's just pick this number—100 billion—who have lived since 4000 B.C. If that's the case, then 300,000 humans since Abel down to this day—dead or alive—compared to 100 billion humans, what do you think that might be? That would be 3/100,000 of 1% of all the humans who have ever lived. Talk about *the few*. This is by being generous with the numbers. It could be half of that, 1/4th of that, 1/10th of that.

When Christ said *little flock* and we hear over and over, *the many* and *the few*, God Almighty isn't kidding. He really means what He says. So up to this point we have seen that there is a contrast in our Father's word about *the many* and *the few*. We've seen that Ancient Israel was the few. The early New Testament church, once they were called out of the Roman Empire, they were *the few*. When we were called and we were converted, people all over the world came out of the nation they were in—the families, the tribes, the clans—we became *the few*. When the truth was revealed to us in the Pacific Church of God about who God is, we became the few of *the few*. Of all the humans who have ever lived, those whom God has dealt with and called and given His Holy Spirit to, are the very, very *few*, when you look at the numbers.

The way I read our Father's word, it's not *the many* but *the few* who will find salvation. That is contrary to mainstream Christian churches who believe that the whole world is going to be saved at some point. I know there are some churches of God that teach ultimately everybody is going to be saved, but that's not what I see in the Bible. Let's go to Matthew 7:13 and 14 out of the New King James. This is the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 7:13 *Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction [talking about never existing again], and there are many who go in by it.*

14) *Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way [through much tribulation we enter the Kingdom of God, we're told] which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (NKJV)*

These are sobering words. Some people make themselves feel better by saying,

“Well God's going to call everybody, He's going to convert everybody, He's merciful and understands my sins and He is going to give me a pass and He is going to wink at my sins.”

I've heard that so many times but that's not what scripture says. Let's go on in Matthew 22, we're going to read verses 1-14 out of the New King James. Christ is talking to the chief priests and the Pharisees; we find that in the previous chapter.

Matthew 22:1 *And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said:*

- 2) *"The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son,*
- 3) *and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. [They rejected the invitation]*
- 4) *Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.*
- 5) *But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business.*
- 6) *And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them.*
- 7) *But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. (NKJV)*

It's interesting that Judah's religious leaders, in Christ's day many of them knowingly rejected the Messiah. They had their chance right then and right there and they would prefer the traditions of men as opposed to the revelation of the Holy Spirit and the revelation of scripture. They knowingly rejected Christ and that temple was destroyed 40 years later.

- 8) *Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.*
- 9) *Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.'*
- 10) *So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. (NKJV)*

The weak of the world responded to the call and we read that in 1 Corinthians 1:26 and that whole set of scriptures. Verse 11 is out of the New Living Translation.

- 11) *"But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed a man who wasn't wearing the proper clothes for a wedding.*
- 12) *Friend, he asked, how is it that you are here without wedding clothes? But the man had no reply. (NLT)*

This man answered the call to attend the wedding but he did not actually prepare to be there. He answered the call but he didn't prepare himself to be suitable when he arrived.

- 13) *Then the king said to his aides, 'Bind his hands and feet and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' (NLT)*

So we see here that the calling, the invitation is a life and death matter. This man answered the call but we see that those who desire to be in the Kingdom, who desire to be at the wedding, must be prepared. They must prepare themselves. We're given a lifetime to prepare ourselves. Verse 14 back to the King James.

14) *"For many are called, but few are chosen."* (KJV)

We can't get over this fact. The Greek word for *called* is Strong's #2822 and is the Greek word *klatos* and it means "invited, especially to be a saint". The Greek word for *chosen* is Strong's #1588 and it's the Greek word *eklektos* and it means "selected"; selected by God Almighty, selected by His Son. We see that the invitation goes out to many individuals. Some respond, some don't. Those who respond are selected to be Firstfruits. But why do some not respond? Why don't they make the change? Let me read from The Mace New Testament regarding verse 14; he translates it this way:

Thus many are called but few are converted.

Few are willing to fulfill the obligation of their calling; meaning to repent, to be baptized, to receive the Holy Spirit, and then use the power of the Holy Spirit to change from the old self to the new self. The old self being the way of the world, the way of the many, to the new self being in the image of Jesus Christ, the very, very *few*. We read this scripture and it sounds to me like very, very few are truly converted. The bottom line is—and I remember the third minister I ever had, I was a fairly newbie in the church and I asked him what's going to happen to all the people and he looked me straight in the eye and said, "Understand, not everyone is going to be in the Kingdom of God", and boy is that ever true. I have never forgotten that. Not everyone is going to be in the Kingdom of God. From what our Father's word reveals, few find it, few are chosen. So that means we here in these end days, there can be no treading of water. There can be no thinking, "If I just tread water and stay with this group I'll just ease into the Kingdom of God." Or "Because God has called me and I have the Holy Spirit..." It's like a little kid on a slide with wax on it and you just slide easy into the Kingdom of God. That isn't the way it works. And yet, sad to say, too many of God's people today are treading water. They're just waiting it out until the end comes. But they're not working on themselves to become like Jesus Christ. There is going to be a day of reckoning; am I like Christ or am I not? Or am I like *the many*? Or am I going to be like *the few*?

In closing, the very best news is that each one of us right here, right now, are part of *the few*. We have the power of the Holy Spirit inside us, we have the opportunity to ever be in the presence of the Father and His Son. Let's go to 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and see the future of *the few*, the future of those who remain faithful of *the few*.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

17) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
(KJV)

That's what we look for and from what I read from the Bible, the few will find it, many will not.

One scripture in Revelation 17:14, we're breaking into the account of the beast and the kings that come with the beast. We want to be part of this event that is described here.

Revelation 17:14 *These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. (KJV)*

The few called, chosen, and faithful.

We need to be so thankful—so ever thankful—that we have been chosen to be part of the few and not be upset that somehow, we're not a part of some big mega church or part of some swelling of some event that's taking place. The Bible says that *His chosen are the few* and we need to be thankful that we are part of the few. We have been called to be part of the very few and what an honor and an opportunity that is. With that information let's end with one very important scripture in 2 Peter 1:10. This is what our job must be between now and the end of our days or when the Father and the Son come to this earth to straighten it all out.

2 Peter 1:10 *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: (KJV)*