

Revelation Class Week 4: Chapter 7 - The First Interlude

The Identity of the 144,000 and Their Role.

Revelation 7, Isaiah 66:16-24, Romans 11:1, 7, 11, 17-21, 25-27. Numbers 1.

1. The most common options for the identity of the 144,000 are 1) the church, 2) ethnic Jews, 3) ethnic Jews who believe in Jesus, 4) Ethnic Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus.

Option 1 is held by replacement theologians. They believe natural Israel has no place in the end times plan of God.

Option 2 is contradictory to scripture, Jesus is the only way of Salvation. Jews don't get a free pass because they are ethnic Jews.

Option 3 is primarily held by dispensationalists and others who believe Israel is completely separate from the church. Generally, in this view these are those who come to faith during a literal 7 year time period.

Option 4 is distinct from option 1 and 3. The thought behind it is based on how Paul talks about it in Romans 11 and other portions of scripture.

2. Romans 11 seems to clearly show God does have a purpose for the restoration of Israel.

3. Romans 11 tells us Gentiles are _____ natural Israel.

4. The "servants" language of Revelation 7:3 is used of all believers in the rest of Revelation (Rev 1:1; 2:20; 6:11; 11:18; 19:2, 5; 22:3, 6).

5. The 144,000 are likely ethnic Jews who believe in Jesus and Gentile believers grafted into Israel.

6. The idea of Gentiles being in the priesthood is not only in the New Testament but the Old Testament in passages like Isaiah 66.

7. 144,000 is not a literal number but symbolic, it is a census of the Lord's End Time Army similar to Numbers 1.

8. The church _____ replaced Israel. The church is _____ Israel and those who believe in the Lord.

The Missing Tribe of Dan

Joshua 19:47-48; Judges 18; 1 Kings 12:25-33

Options:

1. There are 12 sons but Joseph is split into two tribes Manasseh and Ephraim. Which leaves 13, so naturally one tribe has to be left out. Happens to be Dan.

2. Dan is the black sheep of the family, abandoned it's allotment in the land and was the a center of Pagan worship in Israel.

3. Furthering option 2 some of the early church believed the Anti-Christ would be a decedent from Dan.

Side note:

Ephraim being called Joseph is likely due to John's use of Ezekiel, in this case Ezekiel 37:15-28.

The Great Multitude - Revelation 7:9-17, Zechariah 14, Daniel 7:13-14.

The Great Multitude is either viewed as a separate group as the 144,000 or the same group but in a new vision with different details. Where the 144,000 show us a grand army who follows Jesus the Great Multitude shows the fulfillment of prophesy in Zechariah 14 (and Daniel 7:13-14).

The palm branches in the hands of the multitude is from Leviticus 23:40 in correlation with the Feast of Booths/Tabernacles (Sukkot). The Feast of Booths is the celebration and remembrance that Israel dwelled in “booths/tents/tabernacles” with the Lord in the Exodus. This further shows the fulfillment of Zechariah 14 where “16 ...everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths.”

There is a major connection with the Feast of Booths and the Temple. God dwelled in a tent just like the Israelites did. Solomon dedicated the first temple on the Feast of Booths. Ezra and Nehemiah dedicated the second temple on the Feast of Booths. Now we are the temple and the final fulfillment of the Feast of Booths will be when all believers are with the Lord and “serve Him day and night in His temple, and He who sits on the throne will shelter them with His presence.” - Revelation 7:15.

Revelation 7 Parallels Revelation 21-22:

Revelation 7:14 - Revelation 22:3.

Revelation 7:17b - Revelation 22:1.

Revelation 7:17c - Revelation 21:4.

The Final Seal, Silence in Heaven, and the Prayers of the Saints. - Revelation 8:1-5.

Option 1: The silence is an “appalled silence at the final judgment of the world.” - G.K. Beale

Many Biblical and 2nd Temple extra-Biblical texts speak of a silence at the Day of the Lord: Zeph. 1:7; Zech. 2:13; Rom. 3:19. Also, 4 Ezra 7:30; 2 Baruch 3:7. See also, Isa. 47:5; Ezek. 27:32; Amos 8:2-3; Lam. 2:10-11; Hab. 2:20; 1 Macc. 1:3. The seals have seen witnesses, judgement, and the people of the Lord with their God, the only thing left in this narrative is the final judgment. The silence in heaven is an appalled silence, while there is great justice in the judgement of the world, many souls are lost to the eternal fires of hell.

Option 2: “Silence signals the eschatological return to primordial silence” David E. Aune

Revelation 21-22 is depicted as a “re-creation” of the world. This could be a brief return to Genesis 1:1-2 before the Lord spoke and created all that He created.

Option 3: “Silence must be maintained in the presence of God, particularly during certain phases of the liturgy...” - Sigve K. Tonstad

A worship service is certainly going on as evidenced in Revelation 4-5. The Worship of God and the Lamb is a continuing theme throughout the book. Sometimes silence can be a powerful form of worship.

Option 4: “The silence is in astonishment of the Lamb.” - Sigve K. Tonstad

Compare to Isaiah 52:14-15.

Option 5: “The praises of the highest orders of angels are hushed that the prayers of all the suffering saints on earth may be heard before the throne” - R.H. Charles.

While God doesn't need silence to hear the prayers of the saints it could speak to the magnitude of the prayer of the saints that precede His second coming (8:5). God pays close attention to His people's prayers. The depiction of the saint's prayers being like incense in verse 3 is found through the scriptures in various places (Psalms 141:2). The temple itself was set up with an altar of incense just before the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. The altar of incense which was to be kept burning day and night was representative of the people's prayers being brought before the throne of Yahweh.

Answers: 3) grafted into. 8) has not; grafted into.