

Questions About Who Are the 144,000?

By Pastor Ed Anderson

Who are the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation?

Answer:

Great question. The identity of the **144,000** in the book of Revelation has been the subject of much study, especially in historicist interpretations like those often held by Seventh-day Adventists and other prophetic students. Let's walk through a clear, Bible-based explanation.

Where are the 144,000 Mentioned?

The **144,000** are mentioned in **two key chapters**:

- **Revelation 7:1–8** – They are “sealed” before the winds of destruction are released.
- **Revelation 14:1–5** – They stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, having His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads.

Literal or Symbolic Number?

Many scholars and Christians, especially historicists, see the 144,000 as **symbolic**, not literal. Here's why:

- The number is **12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel**, but the list in Revelation 7 doesn't match any literal Old Testament listing of the 12 tribes.
- The tribe of **Dan** is **missing**, and **Ephraim** is **omitted**, while **Joseph** is included.
- This suggests that the list is **spiritual**, pointing to a symbolic “Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16), not a genetic one.

Who Are the 144,000 According to the Historicist View?

1. A Special Group at the End of Time

- The 144,000 are **God’s last-day faithful people**, who are **sealed** before the plagues of Revelation 16 are poured out (see Revelation 7).
- They go through the **final crisis** without falling away. They are described in Revelation 14 as **pure, obedient, loyal**, and spiritually mature.

2. Spiritual Israel

- They represent the **spiritual tribes** of Israel—symbolizing all of God’s faithful from every nation who have been spiritually “grafted in” (Romans 11:17–24).
- They are “redeemed from the earth” (Rev. 14:3) and follow the Lamb “wherever He goes.”

3. Sealed Before the Close of Probation

- The 144,000 receive the **seal of the living God** (Rev. 7:2), which marks them as safe to stand during the **time of trouble** (Daniel 12:1; Revelation 15:8).
- The seal is not a visible mark but a spiritual sign of **character loyalty**—often connected with obedience (especially to God’s law, including the Sabbath — see Ezekiel 20:12, 20).

Characteristics of the 144,000 (Revelation 14)

Characteristic	Meaning
Stand with the Lamb	They are united with Jesus
Father’s name on their foreheads	They reflect God’s character (Exodus 34:6–7)
Sing a new song	They’ve had a unique experience with Christ
Redeemed from the earth	Saved and set apart
Not defiled with women	Spiritually pure, not corrupted by false doctrines (women = churches, see Rev. 17:5)
Follow the Lamb	They obey Jesus fully
No deceit, blameless	They are honest and mature in faith

Are the 144,000 Different from the “Great Multitude”?

Yes. Revelation 7 describes two groups:

1. **144,000** – sealed, specific number, described first (Rev. 7:1–8)
2. **Great Multitude** – too many to count, from every nation, comes out of “great tribulation” (Rev. 7:9–17)

Historicist View:

- The 144,000 represent **God’s faithful remnant at the very end of time**, especially those alive when Jesus returns.
- The **Great Multitude** includes the saved of **all ages**, from all over the world.

Summary

Element	144,000 (Historicist View)
Origin	Spiritual Israel (Rev. 7:4–8)
Number	Symbolic of completeness (12×12×1,000)
Timing	Last-day believers before the close of probation
Identity	Faithful, sealed, loyal, pure, obedient
Purpose	To stand for God during the final crisis and reflect His character fully

Final Thought

The 144,000 are not just a number—they’re a **calling**.

They represent those who **love God fully, follow Jesus completely, and are sealed with His character**.

“And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.” – **Revelation 14:5**

You’re not just learning about prophecy—you’re learning how to be part of this faithful group. Keep seeking, studying, and trusting God’s Spirit to lead you step-by-step.