

WHO ARE THE 144,000 AND THE “GREAT MULTITUDE”?

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<https://endtimeupgrade.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/144000-1-1.mp3>

At the beginning of chapter 14 in the *Book of Revelation*, the apostle John has just emerged from a series of disturbing End-of-the-Age visions: in chapter 12 a “*great red dragon*” who pursues and persecutes the followers of Christ (12:3); then in chapter 13 two *Beasts* from sea and earth who conspire together to “*make war on the saints and conquer them*” and to “*cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain*” (13:7,15). Now in this next chapter, the scene shifts dramatically, and John the apostle sees the victory celebration of the saints in the Heavenly Realm - a total contrast to what he had seen previously.

Following is a vivid description of the transition:

Where perdition has been holding grand jubilee of destruction, [here] appear the symptoms of a better order. The still lingering gloom begins to show some gilding of its edges... In place of the horrid Beasts, the Lamb comes into view. In place of the blaspheming herd, the redeemed appear, with the name of the Father and the Son upon their shining brows. Voices from heaven, intoned with mighty joy, and attuned to golden harps, are heard in song - “new song,” fit to be sung before the throne and all the celestial company. A first-fruit of a new beginning is waved before God... And the whole picture begins to look to the effectual and everlasting sweeping away of the horrible nightmare of a distressed and helpless world... (from *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* by Joseph A. Seiss, originally published in three volumes 1870-1884)

There are certain chapters (7, 11-15) in the *Book of Revelation*, which focus on portraying the struggle of God’s people during the End of the Age era of Great Tribulation, followed by their triumphant appearance in the Halls of Heaven. Starting in chapter 7, God’s camera zooms in for a close-up look at one particular group, the 144,000 Jewish “*servants of our God*”

who receive the seal of *“God on their foreheads”*. (7:4)

But then, as if to show that these are not the only ones to receive the *Seal of God*, God’s camera zooms out, and the scene shifts to a much larger group: *“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.”* (7:9) What happens to them follows, as we shall see, the same trajectory as that of the 144,000:

- Both groups struggle through the Tribulation era, and
- Both appear in the Heavenly Realm, honoured and rewarded for their faithfulness during those final trying years at the End of the Age. The *“great multitude”* in chapter 7 and the *“144,000”* in chapter 14 show up as victors in the Heavenly Realm. And again in chapter 15, the apostle writes that he saw *“those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass.”* (15:2) Who else could these be but the same *“great multitude”* from chapter 7, those who came *“out of the great tribulation”*. (7:9,14) And like the 144,000 who were *“playing on their harps”*, they also are envisioned standing in the Heavenly Realm *“with harps of God in their hands”*. (14:2, 15:2)

So, all that to say, it seems quite reasonable to understand that the *“great multitude”* also will receive the seal of *“God on their foreheads”*, along with the 144,000. (7:4,9) Like the Children of Israel in ancient times before their Exodus, or like the faithful in Jerusalem during the days of Ezekiel the prophet, God’s people in those future days will receive protection from God’s judgments (but not from the persecution of the Antichrist and False Prophet). ([Exodus 12](#), [Ezekiel 9](#))

And who are God’s people now? Does being Jewish and a fleshly descendant of Abraham qualify a person to be counted as one of “God’s people”? Not any more. For that distinction belongs now to those who are followers of Christ, the Light of the world. (See Post [“Who Are God’s People”](#).)

In the time of Abraham some 3,500 years ago, God singled out him and his descendants to experience His personal dealings in the Earth. With the

advent of the New Covenant, those personal dealings expanded to all who would come to know Christ via the Holy Spirit.

“But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.” (John 4:23)

From that time on, the Jewish people had no more special relationship with God than did any other person from a different race, nationality, or culture. This was a reality that Jesus explained clearly on different occasions (a reality, by the way, that did not sit too well with the religious authorities of His day):

They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did.” (John 8:39)

“I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness.” (Matthew 8:11-12)

Who then are the 144,000? The general tendency in Bible scholarship has been to differentiate them from the *“great multitude”*, with a view to assigning the 144,000 into a special role of some kind - perhaps as some elite group of Jewish people who resist the Antichrist during the Tribulation to later become Earth’s future rulers, or perhaps as the members of a certain denomination or some very elite group of believers, not necessarily Jewish.

Such doctrines smell of a certain degree of holier-than-thou exclusivity and one-upmanship, running contrary to the admonition *“to everyone... not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.”* (Romans 12:3)

As we know, at the beginning of this chapter, John the apostle had just described the scene of 144,000 Jewish saints. (7:4-8) The judgment angels were about to blow their trumpets in preparation for some judgments to come before the Second Coming. But before doing that, they are instructed to wait *“until we have sealed the servants of our God on their*

foreheads.” They are marked with the seal of God’s protection against the upcoming plagues.

It seems the Lord was giving John, who was Jewish, some re-assurance that, despite the falling away of the majority of the Hebrew nation in his day, there would in the End emerge this remnant of 144,000 who would turn to Christ during that final era of history.

It helps to keep in mind here the fact that the Bible, which is God’s Book, is also a human Book. It was written by human beings, whom God interacted with to get across His story. Although it is infallibly true, it is also undeniably human and very personal. God is personal, and in this particular instance, the Lord was dealing personally with the apostle John and his concerns while at the same time delivering a message meant for the whole world of believers.

So, after the close-in view of the 144,000 (7:1-8), the scene shifts dramatically. God’s “camera” zooms out for a wide-angle view - of “*a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation [not just the Jewish nation], from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.*” (7:9) At this point one of the *Elders* comes along and asks, “*Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?*” (7:13) The apostle is somewhat bewildered by the whole scene and replies, “*Sir, you know.*” The *Elder* answers his own question, “*These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.*” (7:14)

So that’s an eye-opener. Like the 144,000, this “*great multitude*” also go through the final *Great Tribulation* era. Furthermore, in chapter 14 the 144,000 are pictured “*before the throne*”. (14:3) And likewise in this chapter, the “*great multitude*” are standing “*before the throne*” (7:9) - rewarded, just like the 144,000, for their faithfulness during those trying times. In addition, it is said of the “*great multitude*” that “*they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*” (7:14) Much the same is said of the 144,000 “*who follow the Lamb wherever he goes.*” (14:5) The logical conclusion? The 144,000 are one small branch in the great family of God’s people to emerge out of and through that final era known as the *Great Tribulation*. (14:3)

It is this author’s belief that God’s intention in chapter 7 was relatively

simple. He showed His apostle the vision of the 144,000, then followed it with that of the *“great multitude”* - with the intention of showing that the 144,000 were part of a much larger group. Much of what Paul wrote dwelt on this theme, or *“this mystery”* as he called it, *“that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”* (Ephesians 3:6)

It is possible that the Lord wanted to reassure His apostle that a good many of his fellow Jews, who seemed obstinate at that time, would come around during the End of the Age era and be counted worthy of great honor and reward. (And judging by the references to peculiar features of Jewish history and culture, it is hard to imagine how the 144,000 could be any group other than Jewish followers of Christ.)

As to how there happen to be 12,000 Jews in each of 12 Hebrew tribes is difficult to fathom. The Jewish people dispersed after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 and have become hopelessly intermingled with each other and with other non-Jewish nationalities.

One possible answer is that, in the Kingdom of Heaven, as part of our inheritance, God gives His children reminders of the features and experiences that we enjoyed during our earthly lives. For Jewish people the 12 tribes of their patriarchal history is a treasured memory that perhaps God will allow them to retain. For the Jewish apostle, it would have been a comforting realization about life in the Afterlife, that his cultural identity would not be erased. And that would apply, not only to the Jewish people, but to any other culture in the world. What is familiar and appeals to us in this life will carry over into the next (to a certain extent at least).

Anyway, that's a possible explanation (and there are many others) for this puzzling passage about the 12-tribe organization of these 144,000 Jewish saints in the Heavenly Realm. (See [Appendix 1](#) for more details.)

Although the Jewish people no longer have the central role in God's personal dealings with humankind, nevertheless, because of their central role in ancient Biblical writings, they have remained as a “sign”. That explains why their nation of Israel has re-appeared in modern times and serves as a sign to the rest of the world that many of the ancient

prophetic messages from the Old Testament and here in the *Book of Revelation* are about to see fulfillment.

The Jewish people, in the *Book of Revelation* and elsewhere, play a significant role in the prophetic framework of Scripture, but as far as receiving the promises of Scripture, they have no more favor than anyone else. But they do serve as a helpful sort of microcosmic example of what happens to all of humanity. And in this particular case in Revelation 7, it seems the faithful ones among the Jewish people are singled out as a microcosmic example of how it will be for all the faithful followers of Christ in the End of the Age era - especially the guarantee of protection from the Trumpet judgments that will sound during the era of the Great Tribulation.

Let us now take a close look at those Scriptures in chapters 14-15, which speak of the Tribulation victors... with reference also to verses in chapter 7:

14:1 Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.

The apostle had just envisioned the world's people receiving a "*mark*" in their foreheads (13:16-17), which identified them as followers of the Beast and his system. That "*mark*" offers temporary benefits (protection from the Antichrist's persecution and access to material goods and services). In contrast to the people of the world, we see now a selection of those who are marked with the "*name*" of the Father and the Son: 144,000 Jewish followers of Christ.

Evident here, by the way, is the counterfeit nature of the "*mark of the Beast*". His efforts to identify and reward his followers are nothing more than a futile attempt to imitate a reality that already exists in the Heavenly Realm. The Dragon, the Devil, can only copy what God does; he cannot create anything new.

Regarding these 144,000, they were introduced earlier in chapter 7, as those who will be protected from the Trumpet judgments that will afflict the Earth and its people during the *Great Tribulation*. They refuse to

worship the Beast, for which they will suffer persecution. And here they are seen reaping eternal benefits, the glorious result of their faithfulness during the trying times of difficulty and persecution of the *Great Tribulation*.

Now, as mentioned earlier, it is helpful to understand that these 144,000 appear as a microcosmic sample of “*a great multitude*” of true believers from around the world. That would seem to be one obvious reason why, promptly after the vision of the 144,000, the apostle was given the vision of the “*great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages*”: to make it clear that Christ’s followers included faithful people from around the world. And presumably, they too will receive the *Seal of God*.

Regarding this *Seal of God*, it is designed to protect God’s people from the five-months torment of the 5th Trumpet:

They [the locusts] were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. (9:4)

It does not seem likely that God would grant such protection to a limited number of Jewish people only. It would make sense that the same protection will be granted to all the people of God around the Earth. But aside from this protection against the 5th Trumpet plague that God brings (or allows), God’s people will still have to suffer from the persecution that the Antichrist and his forces will bring. The *Seal* protects God’s people from God’s judgments, but not from the Antichrist’s persecution necessarily.

As for the other plagues, they afflict only a third of the waters and vegetation. Presumably, similar to how it was for the children of Israel in Goshen, God’s people will be dwelling in areas not affected by those plagues. But likely, the onset of those plagues will generate resentment and persecution against those who are trying to declare God’s message and who are blamed for calling down those plagues. That is the picture we get in chapter 11 anyway, of the *Two Witnesses*, whose ministry resembles that of Moses and Aaron who called down the ten plagues on ancient Egypt.

In chapter 12, we read that *“the woman”* (God’s people) *fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.... that she might fly from the serpent”*. (12:6,14) This will be God’s provision and protection for His people against Antichrist persecution. And presumably, these will also be areas that are not affected by the Trumpet judgments on Earth’s waters and vegetation.

14:2 And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps,

It would be hard to imagine what this sounded like to the apostle. Certainly, it must have been an awesome experience to hear this heavenly orchestra-choir.

14:3 and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.

In our present world, nations have their national anthems, which stir the hearts of citizens to feel a sense of patriotism and love for their country. Perhaps this *“new song”* could be thought of in a similar way - a special song to extol the exemplary characteristics of the Jewish people under the banner of the God of Heaven.

And they are *“on mount Zion”*. What that means is difficult to define - although it is usually considered to refer to the city of Jerusalem. Certainly, it is significant for the Jewish people as a symbol for their territory and identity. In addition, their nation will likely be the territory from which the new Government of the world shall rule under the banner of Christ.

The rulers, of course, will consist of representatives from nations around the world, but the Jewish people will have, it seems, the honor of hosting that government in their land. (See [Appendix 2](#) about “Earth’s future rulers”.) But before they are ready and worthy to take on that important responsibility, it will take much purging of their present waywardness (via Antichrist persecution) - a reality that is apparent in the

prophetic chapters of [Ezekiel 38-39](#). (See Posts for [Chapter 3](#) and [Chapter 9](#))

14:4-5 It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.

“[The 144,000] have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins.” The Book of Revelation frequently portrays people, even whole nations in terms of sexual defilement - a figurative way of saying they have gone off track by having traded the worship of God for the worship of this world. And here in verse 4 such *“defilement”* is compared to how an unfaithful husband might thoughtlessly leave his wife to go chasing after other lovers.

This kind of symbolism appears also in [chapters 17-18](#) about the *Harlot* empire, which is repeatedly accused of *“fornication”*. Not in a literal sense, for as the passage makes plain, the empire’s bad behavior and influence result from her lustful desire for the wealth of other nations. This woman’s *“fornication”* personifies how the *Harlot* empire’s unfaithfulness to God has caused her and the world’s people to become drunk with worldly materialism. (This is a big subject, by the way, which is covered more thoroughly in [Post 2 in the Fall of the Harlot](#) series.)

So this passage in chapter 14 does not speak literally about sexual immorality. True believers, both men and women, are *“virgins”* in spirit who have not *“defiled themselves”*. That is, they have avoided spiritual fornication; they have not traded their faithfulness to God for the idolatry of this world’s Materialism.

They are liberated by the Spirit, flexible new bottles *“who follow the Lamb wherever he goes”* - which reminds us of what Jesus said, *“The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”* (John 3:8) And what Paul said, *“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.”* (Romans 8:14)

“And in their mouth was found no guile.” (KJV) They maintained their

integrity through those dark days - children of truth in the midst of a world of untruth, those who showed by their deeds what they knew in their hearts to be true. And thus they stand *“blameless”* in the courts of Heaven - not because they’ve never done anything wrong, but because of their love for God, have submitted themselves to Him, turned their lives around, and so have been forgiven and clothed with the righteousness of Christ. *“They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”* (7:14)

And as it appears from chapter 19, they are among those who are *“blessed”* to be *“invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb”*, referring to the grand celebration to be held at the end of the *Great Tribulation*. (19:9) At this point in time, God’s true children from around the world and from all generations will be gathered supernaturally into the Celestial Realm, rewarded for their faithfulness during their earthly lives.

“These have been redeemed from mankind as the firstfruits for God and the Lamb.” It seems the 144,000 are being singled out as representative of the entire harvest of those who have come to Christ. Further ahead, an angel states, *“The harvest of the earth is fully ripe.”* (14:15) The picture we get there and elsewhere in the *Book of Revelation* (especially in [7:9-17](#)) is that the entire spectrum of followers throughout the Earth, not just a selected group of Jewish followers of Christ, are reaped in this great harvest at the end of the Great Tribulation.

(Now there are many other theories about how the 144,000 fit into the eschatological framework for this final End of the Age era. It is this author’s preference to stick to an inclusive interpretation. So if the 144,000 represent Christ’s followers in one nation or people, then why should there not be similar groups from every nation throughout the earth? And this would result in an enormous number of people of those who love God, as stated in Revelation 7:9 - *“a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages.”*

Of course, within this great number of believers, and within the 144,000 too, likely there will be different levels of reward and honor. But all of them will be *“overcomers”* and joyful to have been *“redeemed from mankind”*.)

There are many mansions in the Father's house, many degrees in glory, and many ranks of saints as well as of angels. There is such a thing as being saved with loss, such a thing as missing our crowns even though we may get to heaven (1Corinthians 3:15)... To stand before God approved and blameless from the midst of a condemned world - a world given over to the powers of perdition by reason of its unbelief and sins, a world which has become the theatre of all the accumulated evil of the ages, a world in which it is death to wear any badge or adhere to any profession contrary to the mark of the Antichrist, is an achievement of grace and faithfulness in which there may well be mighty exultation.

(from *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* by Joseph A. Seiss, originally published in three volumes, 1870-1844)

In the Early Church, it was the Jewish people who became the *"firstfruits"* of those who were redeemed to God through Christ. For John the apostle, who was himself Jewish, it was natural to refer to these followers of Christ at the end of the Age in the same terms. They even have their own song or anthem that no one else could learn. But certainly, although they are the *"firstfruits"*, they are not the only *"fruits"*. For as John had observed earlier, there is a *"great multitude... from every nation"*, and - this may be just speculation - there is no reason why each of these will not have their own song also that no one else can learn. We get a hint of this in chapter 15:

And I saw... those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass... And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb... (15:2-3)

The *"song of Moses"* refers indirectly to the victory song of the children of Israel after escaping their enemies by crossing the Red Sea. And of course, it applies well to the victory of those who remain faithful during the sea of troubles of Earth's final Tribulation era.

Those who refuse to worship the Beast and join the commercial system that he controls would not be limited to 144,000 Jewish believers only. It would have to include the true followers of Christ from around the world - *"from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages"* as John

the apostle had earlier observed. (7:9) And as they are identified here in chapter 15, they would also be the ones who *“conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name.”* (15:2)

And presumably, each *“nation”* is unique and separate in its history, experience, and reward. So it would seem likely that, just like the 144,000, they each have their own unique song of victory that no one else is able to learn or sing.

We might consider the example of a parade, wherein several groups and marching bands from different organizations are featured, each one displaying their unique gifts and style. The group at the head of the parade is the vanguard (or *“firstfruits”*, let’s say). But it is not the only group, or even the best one necessarily.

If we look again at chapter 7 and the original vision of the 144,000, it would appear that God is just letting the apostle see the future of his own people, for whom he was greatly concerned. But then, a little further ahead, John sees *“a great multitude”* who, like the 144,000, came *“out of great tribulation”*. (7:9,14) One of the 24 *“elders”* has to explain who they are, since the apostle is not able to *“get it”*. As sometimes happens in Biblical revelations, the prophet gets a mixed-up idea of what a revelation means, which needs to be corrected.

In Daniel chapter 8, for example, Daniel had the idea that the vision he saw dealt with an upcoming persecution of his own people. What he didn’t understand was that the persecution would happen in the End of the Age era and would encompass a worldwide group of God’s people (which will, of course, include those Jewish people who will be counted then as followers of Christ). (Read discussion about this in [Post 2A “Gabriel Appears”](#) of the *Daniel 8* series.) So although the vision did apply in some measure to future persecution of the Jewish people in ancient times, the angel Gabriel comes along to clarify that the main aim of the vision was to outline what would happen in the far distant future:

“Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end... Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter end of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be.”
(Daniel 8:17,19 - NKJV)

There is also the example in Revelation 17. After seeing the vision of the *Great Harlot*, John says, *“I marveled greatly.”* (17:6) The angel then had to come along and say, *“Why do you marvel?”* (17:8) It seems John was so awed by what he saw, since the Harlot looked somewhat attractive outwardly, that he couldn’t grasp the depth of corruption that she was responsible for. So the angel steps in to give the complete picture that John’s description had missed, elaborating further on the terrible calamities that are to befall this seemingly attractive, but horribly decadent and destructive, city system (personified as the *Great Harlot*).

And the pattern is similar there in chapter 7 of the *Book of Revelation*. John is given a narrow slice of the overall picture: namely, what would happen to his own people during this final era of Great Tribulation. And no doubt he was greatly encouraged by that. But then John sees the *“great multitude that no one could number”* (7:9). He has no idea who they are. So one of the Elders, knowing that John doesn’t have the full picture, comes along to explain who these people are. In addition to the 144,000 faithful Jewish people who must endure the Great Tribulation, John and we learn that there are millions of God’s people from around the world who also must endure the same and are rewarded accordingly.

This only makes sense, for otherwise, if only 144,000 Jewish believers are the *“servants of God”* who receive the honor of standing with the Lamb in Heaven before the Throne, that would seem uncharacteristic of God to show undue favoritism to one nation above the others. (7:3, 14:1) *“For God does not show favoritism.”* (Romans 2:11, Acts 10:34 - NIV, NLT) The 144,000 and the *“great multitude”* are all on the same level.

This idea of Jewish superiority was a major sticking point that had to be addressed in the days of the Early Church. The apostle Paul expressed well the new theology of inclusiveness that God had introduced into human society:

You [Gentiles] were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has

broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit

(Ephesians 2:12-22)

So the picture we get is that the 144,000 and the *“great multitude”* all belong to the same large group - *“the whole structure... a holy temple in the Lord”* - of those who remain faithful during the final, trying years of the Great Tribulation. And if that is the case, then it is that same large group, which will include the 144,000, standing before the *Throne* and before the *Lamb* and the *Elders*.

Appendix 1: The 144,000 as a heavenly organization

The organization of the 144,000, as outlined in the *Book of Revelation* chapter 7, differs in some ways from the Old Testament organization of the 12 tribes of Israel. For example, in the nation of ancient Israel, the tribe of Levi did not inherit any land because they were assigned to the priestly role, quite different from that of the other tribes. But here in the *Book of Revelation*, they are listed as being no different from the other tribes. In the earthly realm, those who toil and work the land need priests to guide them in spiritual matters. But all who dwell in the Heavenly Realm are priests already. So this offers one small hint that the scene has shifted from the earthly realm into the celestial dimension.

Another hint along this line appears in the elimination of the two tribes of Ephraim and Dan. Perhaps they forfeited the honor of being named in this final roster of the tribes of Israel because of their waywardness during ancient Israel's history. Ephraim was the tribe which led the northern tribes astray to rebel and trade the worship of God for the worship of false gods. So, in place of the name of Ephraim, the name Joseph is listed (who was the father of Ephraim). As for the name of Dan, this tribe, having failed to conquer the territory they were supposed to inherit in ancient Israel, shifted their location far to the north. And to speed the process along, the tribe installed a mercenary "priest" to validate the whole scheme with a veneer of legitimacy. So that waywardness from the past may be why the tribe of Dan also didn't make it into the roster of [Revelations 7:4-8](#).

Well, those are just some possible theories/speculations to explain, from a spiritual angle, the odd, mysterious manner in which the 144,000 "*servants of our God*" are listed in this chapter 7 of the *Book of Revelation*.

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Appendix 2: Earth's Future Rulers

The Scriptures in the *Book of Revelation* are straightforward on this subject as to who Earth's future rulers and inhabitants will be. In chapter 20 the apostle describes his vision thus:

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years... they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. (20:4,6 - NKJV)

Those who were faithful followers during their earthly lives are the ones to whom are given the privilege of living with Christ in the new Age to come, as well as the responsibility to rule over the remainder of Earth's citizens. Their "qualifications" have nothing to do with race or nationality;

their faithfulness to follow the Light of Christ is what will determine their standing in the Age to come.

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