



**WELCOME
TO
BIBLE HOUSE
OF
GRACE**

If you think items presented on this site to be in error, please let me know and I will gladly reconsider the content.

**144,000
and
24 Elders**

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

144,000 and 24 Elders.

Amongst theologians there are different ideas concerning who the twenty-four elders seated around the throne represent. Following is the four most common:

1. The two sets of twelve typify the heads of the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles. The heads of the twelve tribes are taken to represent the faithful of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles are taken to symbolize the faithful of the New Testament church and onward. Taken together they represent the faithful of the whole global church made up of Jews and Gentiles from Adam to Christ's return in glory.
2. The twenty-four courses of Levite priests spoken of in the book of Chronicles, the LORD commanded David to organized twenty-four divisions of Levite priests to service in the temple of the LORD, according, to the duty God had commanded Aaron. These twenty-four divisions of priests were appointed to serve in the Old Testament temple of the LORD. (1 Chron. 24:3-19).

It is supposed by some commentators that the twenty-four elders around the throne of God typify these twenty-four divisions of Levite priests who attended the service of the Old Testament temple daily and represent all the faithful of the whole Israel of God, and all the faithful members of the church, from the first faithful believer to the last faithful believer, typifying the entire global body of Christ from the Old and New Testament.

0

Supporting this idea is the following vision of Ezekiel in which the LORD brought him into the inner court of the house of the LORD and he saw at the entrance of the porch and the altar of the temple of the LORD:

- About twenty-five men, with their backs to the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east, worshiping the sun toward the east. (Ezekiel 8:16).

This vision may be a representation of the twenty-four divisions that David divided the Levite priests into to serve in the temple of the LORD (1 Chron. 24:3-19), with the high priest among them, making up the number twenty-five and in John's vision (Revelation chapter 3 and 4), it is possible that he may be alluding to this, symbolising the Old and New Testament church as a heavenly priesthood around the throne of God, which harmonizes with the following verse:

- You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9).
3. The twenty-four elders are symbolic of those of the Old Testament and New Testament who sing the new song in Revelation chapter five saying:
 - Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, (Revelation 5:9).

Here they are symbolic of the whole church of every age and nation and represent the overcoming church triumphant.

4. The twenty-four elders surrounding God's throne signifies the whole universe ascribing power and dominion to God.

- I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" (Rev. 5:13).

Perhaps the best way to discover who these twenty-four elders might be, is to start from the first mention of them and trace them through to the last mention of them. The first mention of the twenty-four elders is:

- Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. (Rev. 4:4)
- The twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ¹¹"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." (Rev. 4:10-11).

In these two verses the twenty-four elders (with the four living creatures) are seated on thrones in heaven clothed in white wearing crowns worshipping the One seated on the throne and while humbling themselves they credit Him with all honor and kingly power by casting their crowns down before Him. The one seated on the throne is the Lord God Almighty, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob. We know this, because in (Rev. 5:5-7) the Lamb takes the scroll from His right hand. The next mention of the twenty-four elders is in the following verses though in these verses they are referred to as elders only:

- One of the elders said to me (John), "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." ⁶And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. (Rev. 5:5-6).

Here we see that the Lamb is amongst the twenty-four elders (with the four living creatures) around the throne of God. Next, we read of the twenty-four elders is in the following verses:

- When he (the Lamb) had taken the scroll (from the One seated on the throne), the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, ¹⁰and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth." (Rev. 5:8-10).

They are called elders, because it was common for elders to have faithfulness, wisdom, knowledge and devotion to God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and authority and responsibility of government over his Kingdom. We know they are not angels, for they are said to be redeemed by the blood of Christ, and are distinguished from angels, since they are clothed in white with golden crowns and seated on thrones (Rev.4:4).

In Ephesians it is written:

- The household of God is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. (Ephes. 2:19-22).

These verses show us that the church of God is built upon the prophets and the apostles, which means the twenty-four elders most likely embraces the faithful of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles and symbolise the whole global church made up of Jews and Gentiles in Christ.

Clothed in white garments: signifies the faithful being clothed with the spotless robes of Christ's imputed righteousness. It carries the idea of holiness and purity which is often referred to as fine linen, clean and white which is emblematical of the righteousness the faithful have, because of their faith in Christ.

With golden crowns on their heads: (v4) signifies the following five things:

1. The glory the faithful have with Christ.
2. The state of dignity and glory to which God through Christ has granted the faithful.
3. The faithful being made kings by Christ as well as priests unto God.
4. The faithful church being victorious and triumphant over the world, sin, and the devil.
5. The faithful dwelling in God's Kingdom and reigning as kings over the world.

The Lord Jesus Christ will make the faithful a Kingdom of priests to his God and Father, (Rev. 1:6) and they will reign with Christ the King on earth a thousand years as kings and priests to God (Rev. 5:10) and then reign with him throughout all eternity in glory.

NOTE: Some suppose the twenty-four elders cannot symbolise the faithful of the Old Testament, because they are said to be washed in the blood of the Lamb, however this difficulty is easily overcome by the following two facts:

1. Old Testament Israel offered animal sacrifices to God, but they were not saved by them, they were a type and shadow of Christ the Lamb of God without blemish, they signified the Saviour's sacrifice (i.e., the innocent for the guilty). It was not the blood of bulls and goats that cleansed them, but Jesus' blood. This is because the power of Christ's cleansing blood flows back to the foundation of the earth so that the faithful of the Old and New Testament are saved by the same Saviour and the same Redeemer.

In the book of Revelation, it is written:

- And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8) (KJV).

Here we read that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world and the following verse shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that Jesus was not only the central focus of God's eternal mind and of His eternal plans and purposes for mankind's salvation and for eternity, before time began, but also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world:

- You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot foreordained before the foundation of the world and manifest in these last times for you. (1 Peter 1:18-20).

The cleansing power of Jesus blood shed on the cross of Calvary does not just cover and cleanse only those who have come to the Lord after his death and resurrection, but flows all the way back to the foundations of the earth to Adam and Eve like a spiritual river cleansing all the faithful of the Old Testament from the fall of Adam onward who by faith looked toward the coming and the appearing of the promised Messiah the Christ.

John's vision is a prophetic vision of the future in which John saw all those washed in the blood of the Lamb, since it is only by being washed in Christ's blood that anyone has access to God.

THE NUMBER 144,000, ITS UNIQUENESS AND WHAT IT SIGNIFIES

- And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel. (Rev. 7:4).

Each tribe is listed as having 12,000 (Rev. 7:4-8), and as having their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:14), which clearly shows the focus of this chapter is upon mankind, not angels. The number 144,000 implies a vast host of the human-race being saved, and the words, "that no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds," (Rev. 7:9) implies a vast host of the human-race being saved, in contrast to the common opinion that only a few will be saved.

This prophetic vision presents a picture of the Gospel being sent to all the world, to all Israel and to all nations, for the gathering of believers out of them, and at the end, a vast host of the human-race being saved, but not all the world. For God has not chosen all the Jews (i.e., all Israel), or all Gentiles, but has taken out of each of them a people for His name, some of all Israel and some of all nations and when they are all gathered in, they will all meet-together in the New Holy City Jerusalem.

144,000, is a unique number: that signifies the vast growth of the faithful church made up of, Jews and Gentiles. The following list shows just how unique the number one hundred and forty-four thousand is in the Bible:

- The root number of one hundred and forty-four is twelve the original number of the sons of Jacob and the tribes that formed the nation of Israel and the original number of the apostles that formed the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Twelve times twelve make one hundred and forty-four, times one thousand, makes one hundred and forty-four thousand, signifying two things, firstly, a large number grew from a small number and secondly, from a small group a larger multitude sprung up.
- The Old Testament had twelve tribes while the New had twelve apostles and the wall of the new Jerusalem has twelve gates with the twelve sons of Israel inscribed on them and twelve angels (Rev. 21:12).
- The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles (Rev. 21:14) and the length, width and height of the city measured 12,000 furlongs. (Rev. 21:16).
- The wall of the city measured one hundred and forty-four cubic measures. (Revelation 21:17), and the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with twelve types of jewels and precious stones (Rev. 21:19) and the twelve gates were twelve pearls (Revelation 21:21).

This list highlights the truth that twelve is one of God's prime numbers. It is a square number arising from twelve, the square root of it, being twelve times twelve thousand, and as such it may denote there being the true, genuine, and faithful offspring from the twelve tribes of Israel, being firstly the twelve apostles being built on the foundation of the nation of Israel and afterward multiplying greatly by the ministers and evangelist who followed them.

A certain number set forth for an uncertain number: the one hundred and forty-four thousand that are sealed embraces men and women from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people who are by faith spiritually and inwardly Jews. The true house of Israel, the true Israel of God is not limited to Jews only, but embraces both Jews and Gentiles in Christ of all generations, which means the number one hundred and forty-four is a certain number set forth for an uncertain number of which the symbolism signifies a, large number of faithful, devoted, and loyal believers multiplying from a smaller number who are only known to God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Supporting the idea that a certain number, is put forward for an uncertain number is the fact God clearly knows the exact number of faithful to be sealed and saved but we cannot, so the Holy Spirit uses a definite number which clearly denotes faithful Jews of the Old Testament (signified by twelve tribes of Israel) and faithful Gentiles saved through the ministry of the twelve apostles, to signify the true church of Christ. The following verses show that the final number saved in Christ will be so numerous that they cannot be numbered.

- He brought him (Abram) outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." (Genesis 15:5).
- I (John) 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 (Rev. 7:9).

A brief overview: after all that was said in the previous chapter, there is now an interlude of great encouragement for all faithful Jews and Gentiles in Christ, before the seven angels with the seven trumpets release their calamities on earth. Following is a brief overview of what I think is the most fitting explanation of the following two visions:

1. The 144,00 sealed, from the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev. 7:4).
 2. The great multitude that no one could number from all languages, standing before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:9-14).
1. **The 144,00 sealed, from the twelve tribes of Israel:** the number 144,000 is far too exact to literally refer to the twelve tribes of Israel, so must be taken symbolically (as the four winds, the four living creatures, the white robes and the Lamb are) to represent all the faithful of Israel. The idea is that some from all tribes will be saved and resurrected to eternal glory.
 2. **The great multitude washed in the blood of the Lamb:** immediately after seeing the redeemed Jews in heaven John sees a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, signifying all the resurrected Gentiles from every nation.

Putting both visions together the picture is of Jews and Gentiles that have come out of great tribulation throughout all generations and of all who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb being resurrected to heaven and standing before the Lamb of God and before God Himself serving him day and night in his heavenly temple, where they will hunger and thirst no longer and the sun will not strike them, for the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

This does not mean that the resurrection takes place here, since that takes place when the seventh trumpet sounds, but that John is given a vision of it in this interlude. It is as though God gives the church this heavenly vision to encourage those who will be alive during the reign of the final antichristian beast nations and false religious world power. Immediately after this vision the interlude ends and the seventh seal is opened and great calamities fall upon the earth.

CONCLUSION: The number 144,000 signify the faithful from the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles, that have greatly multiplied and will continue to do so until Christ returns in glory, supporting this idea is the fact they are called servants of God who have been sealed on their foreheads" (Rev. 7:3), signifying that they are saved into God's Kingdom and redeemed by the Lamb, and as such are his faithful witnesses who cannot be separated from Christ's love and God's grace.

Revelation chapter seven finishes with the words:

- For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Revelation 7:17).

Bible House of Grace