

THE 144,000 JEWISH EVANGELS

PART III

A FIRST-FRUIT OF THE NATION DURING THE TRIBULATION

By Arlen L. Chirwood

“And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.

And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts [‘four living creatures’], and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits [‘a first-fruit’] unto God and to the Lamb.

And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Rev. 14:1-7).

The timing of the removal of the 144,000 from the earth is seen in both chapters eleven and twelve. In chapter eleven, they are still seen on earth *at the*

time Jerusalem and the Temple are destroyed (or, are in the process of being destroyed), with the Jewish people fleeing for their lives *at this time* (v. 13; cf. Matt. 24:15ff; Luke 21:20ff). In chapter twelve, they are seen being removed from the earth *following* the casting of Satan and his angels out of heaven and *at the time* that the Jewish people in Jerusalem and Judaea flee for their lives (vv. 4-6). Thus, Satan and his angels will be cast out of the heavens *before the middle of the Tribulation, evidently shortly before*. And the 144,000, the man-child, will be removed from the earth *in the middle of the Tribulation*.

(Satan and his angels will be cast out of the heavens after all seven heads of the Beast have been crowned. Note, in Rev. 12:3, all seven heads are seen wearing *diadems* at this time [a “diadem” is a monarch’s crown, a crown worn by one holding the sceptre (ref. Chapters VII and XII in the author’s book, THE TIME OF THE END)]. And the seventh head [the final world ruler, the final king of Babylon, Antichrist] will not rise to the position he will aspire [worldwide power and dominion], wearing a *diadem*, until near the middle of the Tribulation.

Thus, Satan and his angels being cast out of the heavens onto the earth will have to occur very close to the middle of the Tribulation. And the 144,000 will have to be removed from the earth very close to the time that the remainder of the Jewish people in the land flee for their lives, for they are placed together in Rev. 12:5, 6 [with the escape of the 144,000 from the wrath of Satan and Antichrist being *into the heavens*, and the escape of other Jews in the land being out *into different parts of the earth*].)

The 144,000 Removed from the Earth

As previously seen, the man-child — the 144,000 — will be removed from the earth, following birth, to escape Satan’s wrath. And the removal of the man-child would parallel another removal of Israel’s Seed over 2,000 years before — Christ’s removal from the land following His birth, to escape Herod’s wrath.

Israel brought Christ forth through a Jewish woman. Shortly after His birth, He was taken into Egypt to escape Herod’s death decree on all the children in and around Bethlehem, two years old and under. He was taken to a location which was outside Herod’s jurisdiction. Then, at a later time, Christ was brought back into the land to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to Israel for about three and one-half

years (Matt. 2:13-21).

Israel will bring forth the man-child through a means other than natural childbirth. Nonetheless, the matter is likened in Scripture to natural childbirth (Rev. 12:2, 4, 5). Shortly after the 144,000 have been brought forth, they will be removed from Satan and Antichrist’s jurisdiction, into the heavens (Satan, immediately prior to this, will have been cast out of heaven and will no longer have jurisdiction in the heavens [Rev. 12:4, 7-12]). Then, at a later time, the 144,000 will be sent back to the earth to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles worldwide for about three and one-half years (Matt. 24:14).

And there will likely be another reason for their being removed into the heavens at this time. Unlike Christ during His earthly ministry, they will need training for the ministry which they are to carry out.

Christ, in this respect, removed Paul into the heavens following his conversion and evidently personally taught him the message which he was to proclaim (II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:11, 12; Eph. 3:1-3). Paul had previously sat “at the feet of Gamaliel” and had been “taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers” (Acts 22:3). But Christ still had to take Paul, who was quite knowledgeable in the Scriptures, and teach him the message which he was to proclaim throughout the Gentile world.

And the 144,000, though many of them will have possibly been taught by the two witnesses, will likely experience the same thing Paul experienced following his conversion. During the time spent in heaven, the 144,000 will evidently be taught the message which they are to proclaim throughout the Gentile world by Christ Himself.

The 144,000 Returned to the Earth

As Christ was taken back into the land to later proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to Israel for about three and one-half years, the 144,000 will be sent back to the earth to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles worldwide for about the same length of time (or, as Paul was also returned to the earth for a corresponding purpose).

The 144,000 being sent back to the earth to proclaim this message — though not stated in so many words in Scripture — is inferred several different ways. The proclamation of this message is seen in Matt. 24:14 and Mark 13:10 as “the gospel of the king-

dom” being proclaimed among all nations during what is evidently a time extending to the end of the Tribulation, and it is seen in Rev. 12:17 as individuals possessing “the testimony of Jesus Christ” during the last half of the Tribulation.

Then, the proclamation of this message is connected in a direct manner with the 144,000 in Revelation chapter fourteen. In this chapter, the connection of the 144,000 with the message to be proclaimed is seen after a fashion in keeping with how the Book of Revelation is structured.

Immediately after the 144,000 have been introduced (vv. 1-5), the text reads:

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (vv. 6, 7).

That proclaimed by the angel in verse seven is not the content of “the everlasting gospel” in verse six. Rather, this is simply *an announcement* to those dwelling on the earth by the angel appearing with this gospel.

Angelic activity is seen at every turn throughout the Book of Revelation. And, in the light of Israel’s calling, the placement of this angel with a message to those on the earth — “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” — immediately after the verses dealing with the 144,000 (who are about to carry a message to the same people on earth), can be understood only *one way*.

Israel is the nation which God called into existence to deliver His message to the Gentile nations throughout the earth, not angels. And, in view of Israel’s calling, the reference in these two verses, particularly contextually, *cannot possibly* have to do with an angel carrying the gospel message worldwide to all the nations on the earth. Rather, *it can only have to do with an angel appearing with the message which the 144,000, seen in the immediately preceding verses, are to proclaim.*

And the latter, along with Rev. 12:17 (viewed in the overall structure of the chapter) and the Olivet Discourse references (Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10), *would necessitate the 144,000 being returned to the earth to proclaim this message.*

(Note that the message which the 144,000 will proclaim is referred to as the “gospel of the kingdom” in Matt. 24:14. In this respect, the word “everlasting” in Rev. 14:6 [Gk., *aionios*] could probably be better translated “age-lasting.” The Messianic kingdom is in view in Matt. 24:14, and this kingdom comprises *one age* — the seventh day [foreshadowed by the Sabbath in Gen. 2:2, 3, following six days of restorative work], the seventh one-thousand-year period in the septenary structure of time, the coming Sabbath of rest in Heb. 4:9 [cf. v. 4].

Aionios is used in the Greek text of the N.T. to refer to “a long period of time,” often “an age.” The “long period of time” can be understood as “eternal” only if the context so designates.

Neither the Hebrew of the O.T. nor the Greek of the N.T. contains a word for “eternal.” *Olam* is the word usually translated “eternal,” “everlasting,” or “perpetual” in English translations of the O.T., and *aion* [a noun] or *aionios* [the adjective form of *aion*] are the words translated “eternal” or “everlasting” in the N.T. [*aidios*, an older form of *aionios*, used only two times and meaning exactly the same as *aionios*, is the only exception (Rom. 1:20 and Jude 6)].

Olam, *aion*, and *aionios* all have to do with “a long period of time,” which, if the context permits, can refer to “eternity” [e.g., the *Aionios* God in Rom. 16:26]. But the words standing alone, apart from a context, cannot be understood as “eternal.” Context is the all-important factor to ascertain the length of time in view when these words are used.

Aion and *aionios* are usually thought of and used numerous times in the N.T. in the sense of “an age.” And a usage of this nature is even brought over into English. For example, the English word “aeon [or ‘eon]” is derived from the Greek word *aion*.

The only way in which the Greek text can express “eternal” apart from textual considerations is through a use of *aion* in the plural [e.g., Luke 1:33; Heb. 13:8, referring to “the ages,” i.e., ages without end, which would comprise eternity] or a double use of *aion*, in the plural and articular both times [e.g., Rev. 1:6; 4:9, 10; 5:13, 14; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15; 15:7; 19:3; 20:10; 22:5 — referring to “the ages of the ages,” again, ages without end]. Also, the same plural double use of *aion* occurs in Rev. 14:11 without the definite articles, meaning “ages of ages.”

The preceding lists all occurrences of the plural double use of *aion* in the Book of Revelation. This plural double use only occurs seven other times in the N.T., all articular [Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20; I Tim. 1:17; II Tim. 4:18; Heb. 13:21; I Peter 4:11; 5:11].)

The Ministry of the 144,000

The ministry of the 144,000 will reach to the ends of the earth over the short space of about three and one-half years — to “all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” (Rev. 7:9). Many reached with the message will be *slain* for their faith, with many others, in the words of Matt. 24:13, *enduring “unto the end”* (the end of the Tribulation) and *being “saved”* (being physically delivered out of the Tribulation).

Those slain for their faith during this time are described in Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9-17; 20:4. Their state during the time between death and the end of the Tribulation is seen in the former two references (6:9-11; 7:9-17), and that which awaits them during the Messianic Era is seen in the latter reference (20:4).

Following death they are seen in Christ’s presence in heaven, and *during the Messianic Era* they are seen occupying regal positions with Christ in His kingdom.

Those enduring until the end and being delivered out of the Tribulation are seen in Matt. 25:31-46. And, as seen among those slain during the Tribulation in the larger scope of the passage in Revelation chapter twenty (vv. 4-6), both *faithful* and *unfaithful* appear among the saved who endure until the end and come out of the Tribulation alive in Matt. 25:31-46.

A judgment of these individuals who come out of the Tribulation alive, as with those slain in Rev. 20:4-6, occurs when Christ returns. And, exactly as in Rev. 20:4-6, the faithful will be allowed to enter into the kingdom, but the unfaithful will be turned away; and the same metaphorical picture of a burning in relation to the unfaithful, as seen in John 15:6 and Heb. 6:8, is seen in both judgments (in both Matt. 25:31-46 and Rev. 20:4-6).

(For more information on Matt. 25:31-46, refer to Chapters XXII-XXIV in the author’s book, *PROPH-ECY ON MOUNT OLIVET* [Revised Edition].)

For more information on Rev. 20:4-6, refer to Chapter XXXIII in the author’s book, *THE TIME OF THE END.*)

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