

Revelation 14:1-7: The mission of the 144,000 and their spiritual characteristics.
The identity, role and destiny of the 144,000 in the Tribulation are clearly prophesied.

Summaries of relevant background from related passages:

1. Rev. 7:1-8: The 144,000 is first mentioned when an angel appears in v2-3 requesting for the sealing of these “bond servants” of God. In Greek it is “doulos”, a term for mature servants of God and sealing is needed because it is the only guarantee for survival for the rest of the Tribulation. John hears the number in v4 indicating it is a precise figure and then v4-8 list them by tribes affirming that they are all Jews. Generally when such precision in numbers and kinds are given, it’s to be taken literally and not symbolically.

2. Rev. 11:1-7: John in v1 is to measure the temple but in Greek “naos” is used, limiting it to the sanctuary and Holy of Holies where only Jews are allowed. Thus the worshippers must be the 144,000 and the two witnesses in v3 are to lead them. Measuring indicates God’s special protection and it is supported by v2 for the outer court and holy city that are not measured are given to the nations. These are the antichrist’s forces who will take over the temple in middle of the tribulation (2Thess 2:3-4, Dan. 9:27). But how can the 144,000 worship in a small sanctuary and Holy of Holies, especially when the antichrist is in control of the temple? This can harmonize if the Holy of Holies is on the move like the Tabernacle in the OT. It fits also with the two witnesses’ ministry in v3-6. They are to prophesy for 1260 days which is impossible in a Jerusalem controlled by the antichrist. Yet it’s tenable if they are on the move especially with the immense power in v5-6. It is like Moses’ plagues as he leads the Jews in Egypt. In Matt. 24:15-16, they are also asked to flee and their migration is also depicted in Micah 5 (see the 1-page for this passage).

3. Rev. 12:6: Israel or the woman has a place prepared for 1260 days, same duration as the 2 witnesses’ ministry (11:3). The nations hold Jerusalem for 42 months (1277 days). After killing the witnesses (12:7), there’re 17 days when the 144,000 are defenseless and in 12:15-16, Satan moves in to destroy but God will still protect them (see below).

Explaining the passage Rev. 14:1-7: As the 144,000 in v1 are before God’s throne, with the four living creatures and elders (3), they *must be in heaven*. They are described in v4-5 which is spiritualized rather than a literal rendering. Thus to follow the Lamb wherever He goes is not literal but to emphasize their obedience. “Virgins” is to stress sexual purity as the 144,000 must surely include married couples. To be without lies and blameless in v5 means that they are mature believers and not young converts after the rapture, for then they will not even qualify to be elders (1Tim. 3:6). But in v6-7, they will take the gospel to the world in the Tribulation. Yet all this will work if the present Messianic Jews go on into the Tribulation as the main part of the 144,000 (see Micah 5). But *how is it they are now in heaven?* It is best to see them as resurrected in a Rapture II as explained below.

Isaiah predicts a slaughter at Bozrah in Edom: It is first stated as a great slaughter soaked with blood in 34:5-7. Next in 63:1-6, Isaiah while in Zion or Jerusalem observes in a vision someone flying from Bozrah who is righteous and mighty to save (1). He must be Christ and again it is after a great slaughter (3). The haven in Rev. 12:14-16 must be in Edom, cornered by the antichrist but Christ returns to slaughter his army in Bozrah and the 144,000 are raptured to safety to appear in heaven in Rev. 14:1. Thus they are as first fruits (Rev. 14:5), before all other Jews to be resurrected as promised in Eze. 37:12-14.

Notes: other views

1. Rev. 7:1-8: Most commentators take these as symbolic to represent the Church or that they are the martyrs by Roman emperors.
Dispensational take them as literal Jews but they are only to appear in the Tribulation after the rapture. But if this is so, they are still coming to Christ during the period of partial hardening which they say only ends when Christ returns. Thus it is most logical to see that the partial hardening has ended and so the conversion of the present Messianic Jews who will move on into the Tribulation as the main of the 144,000 matures servants of God.
2. Rev. 11:1-7: Most commentators sees the temple as the Church.
Dispensational see it as the Jerusalem temple but do nothing to explain how the two witnesses and their worshippers can do this in the naos and how are they to prophesy in a Jerusalem controlled by the **antichrist**? The conflicts between the antichrist and the two witnesses **are** supposed to just occur in Jerusalem .. how???
3. Rev. 12: Again many take this as a general protection of the Church and not only in the Tribulation.
Dispensational take the flight in v14 as literal to fly to the wilderness but this seems so improbable. Note that so many parts of this sign **are** already to be taken figuratively as the 12:2 the woman to represent Israel; so why insist on the flight being literal?
4. Isa. 34 and 63; no attempt for either party to explain these verses and how all these fit in in saving the 144,00? Dispensational just depict this as part of Christ coming to judge the nations. But if so why the repeated stress on Bozrah???

Revelation 11: Ministry of the two witnesses during the Tribulation. KV 3

The two witnesses prepare Christ's second coming as John the Baptist did for the first. They are the return of Moses and Elijah as promise in the OT (Deut. 18:15; Mal. 4:5).

1. The ministry of the two witnesses. 1-13

John is to measure the temple which must be the ministry base of the two witnesses **(1-2)**. It is the OT temple or "heiron" in Greek, to be rebuilt in Jerusalem before the tribulation. However here the word "naos" is used, which refers only to the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant and God reside. In v1, the worshippers and altar are also to be measured. As only Jews are required to worship in the temple, they are most likely the 144,000 led by the two witnesses and the altar, their area of worship. Measuring indicates God's special favor and protection which is supported by v3 as the area not measured is given to the nations. These are the forces of the antichrist for he will take over the temple in middle of the tribulation (2Thess 2:3-4, Dan. 9:27). In fact Jerusalem will also be his capital and thus in v8 the city is called Sodom and Egypt implying unrestrained sins and resistant to God. A key problem is to explain how the Jewish believers can worship in a small Holy of Holies, especially with the antichrist in control of the temple. All this can harmonize if the Holy of Holies is again on the move just like the tabernacle in the OT. It could happen if the Ark of the Covenant is rediscovered and reinstated in the OT temple. When the antichrist captures Jerusalem for the 42 months in v2, the two witnesses and their followers then took it with them to hide in the mountains. Support for this may be found in two strong Greek words "exballo exothen" translated as "leave out" in v2. This is too soft for literally it is to "expel outside" and it can indicate a separation of the Holy of Holies from the other temple courts. Furthermore it harmonizes with the nature of their ministry in **v3-6**. They are to prophesy for 1260 days and it is hard to imagine how they could do this in the temple of Jerusalem dominated by the antichrist. Furthermore as olive trees and lampstands provide respectively spiritual nourishment and guidance, it will be difficult if they are not on the move. They appear to be in conflict with evil forces but have immense power for self protection, even devouring their enemies with fire (5-6). Their powers over nature seem unlimited striking the world with any disaster they so desire (6). It's like Moses' plagues in Egypt and the turmoil's from the seals and trumpets so far could all be resulting from them in their struggle with the antichrist. This explains why the world hates them and celebrates their deaths (10). However on completion of their work they will be killed **(7-10)**. Their killer is now specified to be the antichrist described as the beast from the abyss because of his demonic powers. Their bodies are desecrated in a city that must be Jerusalem because this is where Christ was crucified (8). However they were resurrected in a great demonstration of God's power **(11-13)**. Many gave glory to God, who must be all over the world. The 144,000 can be used to reach them and perhaps for this final evangelistic drive, the last trumpet in 10:4 is delayed.

2. The worship and blowing of the seventh trumpet. 14-19

The seventh trumpet sounded **(14-15)**, with the usual round of heavenly worship **(16-18)**. In **v19**, the heavenly temple is the one which the OT tabernacle is a copy. Note the ark for it suggests that there can be one on earth as stated above. The bowls come next in 15:5-8.

Lesson to Ponder: Just know that the darkest hour of the witnesses' death is *not* the end.

啟示錄 14:1-7：十四萬四千人的屬靈特徵和他們的使命

在大災難中的十四萬四千人，他們的身份、角色和命運都有清楚的預言。

相關經文及有關背景摘要

1. **啟示錄 7:1-8**：十四萬四千人在这首度被提及，在 **2-3 節** 出現的天使要求替這些神的“僕人”加上印記。希臘文 “doulos” 是指屬神的成熟的僕人。他們需要有印記，因為這是他們在大災難中得以保存性命的惟一保障。約翰在第 **4 節** 聽見這個數目，顯然這是個確實的數字。在 **4-8 節** 他們按支派被列出來，確證了他們全都是猶太人。通常當聖經給出精確的數字和類別時，我們就當照字面而非以象徵來理解。
2. **啟示錄 11: 1-7**：約翰在第 **1 節** 需要量度聖殿，所用希臘文 “naos” 這字把聖殿的範圍限於聖所及至聖所，就是猶太人才可以進入的地方。因此那些禮拜的人必定是那十四萬四千人，而第 **3 節** 的兩個見證人會領導他們。量度是指他們得到神特別的保護，第 **2 節** 也給出這樣的證據，因為外院和聖城這些沒有被量度的地方都被交給列國了。那都是敵基督的軍隊，他們在大災難的中段會佔據聖殿（**帖撒羅尼迦後書 2:3-4**，**但以理書 9:27**）。但這十四萬四千人怎可以擠在小小的聖所和至聖所裏敬拜呢，特別是聖殿為敵基督所控制？如果至聖所如舊約的會幕是可移動的話那就協調了，這和兩個見證人在 **3-6 節** 的工作也是相互吻合的。他們會說預言 1260 天，在敵基督控制下的耶路撒冷這是不可能的事。但如果他們是在不斷遷移，特別加上他們在 **5-6 節** 所被賦予的強大力量，尤如摩西在帶領以色列人出埃及時所施的十災，這一切都說得過去。在**馬太福音 24:15-16**，他們也是被吩咐要逃難，而彌迦書 5 章亦曾描述他們的遷移（參此章的一頁釋經）。
3. **啟示錄 12:6**：有一個地方為以色列或婦人提供庇護共 1260 天，一如見證人工作的期長（**11:3**）。列國佔據耶路撒冷共 42 個月（1277 天）。在見證人被殺後（**12:7**），有 17 天這十四萬四千人未受保護（**12:15-16**）。撒但要進行清洗，但神仍施行保護（見下述）。

啟示錄 14:1-7 的經文釋義：在第 **1 節** 那十四萬四千人是在神的寶座前，同時一起的還有四活物及長老（**3 節**），那**必定是在天上**。**4-5 節** 對他們的形容是靈意而非字面的。因此羔羊到哪他們也跟到哪，這應該是強調他們的順服而非他們真的如此行走。“童身”是強調他們的貞潔，因為十四萬四千應該也包括已婚夫婦。**5 節** 的不出謊言和沒有瑕疵意指他們是成熟的信徒而非在被提發生後信主的初信徒，因為他們還不夠資格作長老（**提摩太前書 3:6**）。但在 **6-7 節**，他們在大災難中會把福音傳遍世界。但諸事的成就必需現行的彌賽亞猶太信徒進入大災難，作為十四萬四千的大部份人才行（參彌迦書 5 章）。但他們**怎會現在在天堂呢**？最合理的解釋是他們在第二次被提中復活了。就這下面會作出解釋。

以賽亞預言在以東的波斯拉有一場大屠殺：**以賽亞書 34:5-7** 首次提到一場血流成河的大屠殺。然後在 **63:1-6**，以賽亞在錫安或耶路撒冷看到一個異象，有一人從波拉斯潤步而來，他是公義和大有拯救能力的（**1 節**）。祂必定是基督，而再一次這是在一輪大屠殺之後（**3 節**）。**啟示錄 12:14-16** 的避難處必定是在以東，他們被敵基督逼入絕境，但基督回來，在波斯拉殲滅他的軍隊，而十四萬四千人則在**啟示錄 14:1** 被安全地提到天上去。因此他們是初熟的果子（**啟示錄 14:5**），是在所有猶太人如**以西結書 37:12-14** 所應許的復活之前。

第十一章：兩位見證人在大災難中的工作

鑰節：3 節

那兩位見證人預備基督的再來，就如施洗約翰預備主第一次降臨那樣。他們是摩西和以利亞的再來，舊約是這樣應許的（申命記 18:15，瑪拉基書 4:5）。

1. 兩個見證人的工作—1-13 節

約翰要把聖殿量一量，這一定是那兩個見證人事工的根據地（**1-2 節**）。這會是舊約的聖殿，將在大災難之前在耶路撒冷被重建。聖殿在希臘文是“heiron”，不過在這裏用的是“naos”一字，那是單指至聖所，即約櫃和神停留的地方。在第 1 節那些來敬拜的人和祭壇也需要被量度。因為只有猶太人才需要在聖殿敬拜，那他們必定是那十四萬四千由兩位見證人帶領的猶太人，而祭壇就是他們敬拜的地方。量度代表神特別的眷顧和保護，這從第 3 節可以看到，因為沒被量度的地方都給了列國，他們都屬敵基督的陣營。敵基督將會在大災難中期把聖殿佔據（帖撒羅尼迦後書 2:3-4，但以理書 9:27），事實是耶路撒冷也會成為他的首都。故此在第 8 節耶城被稱為所多瑪和埃及，意味著當地罪惡肆虐，人敵擋神。一個主要困難是如何解釋那些猶太信徒怎可能塞在狹小的至聖所裏敬拜，特別當聖殿已落入敵基督的手中時。如果至聖所像舊約時的會幕那樣是移動的，那麼這說法就言之成理了。要是再找到約櫃，重新放回舊約的聖殿裏，以上的事情就可能發生。當敵基督正如第 2 節所述佔據耶路撒冷 42 個月時，那兩個見證人和他們的跟隨者也就帶著約櫃在山上藏匿起來。這看法是基於兩個強烈的希臘字“exballo exothen”，和合本譯這作“留下”。這譯法有點輕描淡寫，因為按字義那是“逐出去”的意思，看似至聖所可能跟聖殿的其他院子脫離了。還有這和 **3-6 節**提到他們的工作性質是一致的。他們要宣講神的話一千二百六十天，很難想像他們怎可以在敵基督控制下的耶路撒冷聖殿作這事。而且，他們是橄欖樹和燈台，是提供屬靈餵養和指導的，如果他們不是移動的話就很難做到了。看來他們是在和邪惡的勢力爭戰，只是他們有極大的能力作自我保護，甚至可以用火吞滅敵人（**5-6 節**）。他們有無窮能力去控制大自然，只要願意就可以隨時以各種災禍擊打世界（**6 節**），就像摩西在埃及降下的十災那樣。那些因印章和號筒所引起的混亂，極可能是他們與敵基督爭戰時所引發的。這樣就可以解釋為甚麼世界會恨他們，並且為他們的死大事慶祝（**10 節**）。不管怎樣，當工作完畢時他們將會被殺（**7-10 節**）。而殺害他們的在這被明確表明是敵基督，牠是從無底坑上來的獸，有著惡魔般的能力。他們的屍首被棄置在大城的街道上，那一定是指耶路撒冷，因為基督也是在這被釘十字架的（**8 節**）。然而他們復活了，那是神能力的大大彰顯（**11-13 節**）。許多人歸榮耀給神，祂是掌管全世界的。那十四萬四千人可以成為使者去接觸他們，也許因為這終極的福音行動，讓 10:4 的最後一枝號筒被延後了。

2. 敬拜和吹響第七枝號筒—14-19 節

第七枝號筒被吹響（**14-15 節**），天上另一回敬拜正在進行（**16-18 節**）。**19 節**的天上聖殿就是舊約會幕的原樣。留意約櫃被提及，表明在地上可能有另外一個像前面所提過的約櫃。碗的出現會在 15:5-8 那處。

思想心得：總要知道見證人的死雖是最黑暗的時刻，但那可**不是**結局。