

144,000, A Literal Number

"I Will Stand Upon My Watch..." ~ Hab 2:1

TO THE CHURCH OF THE LAODICEANS, GOD HAS DIRECTED ME TO WRITE TO YOU THUS...

The 144,000: Literal or symbolic? Why Every SDA Alive Today Must Strive To Be in that Number!

Dear Brethren,

I have a most *startling message* to deliver to you. One that will likely provoke displeasure, anger and even hatred from some of my readers and *perhaps* alienate a few of my friends. But, be that as it may, I feel compelled to give the warning.

For as the Prophet Amos wrote, "The lion hath roared; **who will not fear? The Lord Jehovah hath spoken; *who can but prophesy?***" ~ Amos 3:8 KJV.

The message is this: **IF YOU ARE A SDA AND YOU ARE ALIVE WHEN PROBATION CLOSES, THEN UNLESS YOU ARE AMONG THE 144,000, YOU WILL NOT BE SAVED!** This is the message that the Lord has given, not through me, but through his servant Ellen G.White.

The following facts are now provided in support of the above assertion from the prophet herself.

A.) Only the 144,000 will see the earth wasted with famine and pestilence

"The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder.... " (*Word to the Little Flock*, p. 14).

Here is what Ellen White wrote in *Great Controversy*, pages 648/ 649, about the 144,000:

"Upon the crystal sea before the throne, that sea of glass as it were mingled with fire,--so resplendent is it with the glory of God,--are gathered the company that have "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name." [1 REV. 15:2].... And they sing "a new song" before the throne.... it is the song of their experience,--an experience such as NO OTHER COMPANY [i.e. group of saints] have EVER HAD.... they have stood WITHOUT AN INTERCESSOR through the FINAL OUTPOURING of God's judgements.... **They have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat.**"

How could the great multitude and the 144,000 be the same group [as "the great multitude no man could number"] if the former saw the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, when those who died before the plagues, would not have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence? Not all the saints who have passed on have experienced or seen these things.

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Can anyone with an objective mind, reading the above, still maintain that the "great multitude" is the same group as the 144,000 that will "have passed through the time of trouble" and lived "WITHOUT AN INTERCESSOR through the FINAL OUTPOURING of God's judgements"?

Surely, this can only apply to those who are actually alive to face and successfully come through the time of Jacob's trouble.

We will observe a few other characteristics of the 144,000 that are different from that of the great multitude:

Of the 144,000 it is said that they are of "them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name" (Rev. 15:2).

Clearly, not everyone who will be saved as part of the great multitude will have "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name," for only those who live in the time when the mark and number of the beast is enforced can have gotten the victory over that enforcement.

B.) 144,000 are from among "living saints" not those who died

There will be only 144,000 saints alive at the coming of Christ.

Sister White states: "**Elijah** was a **type** of the **saints** who will be living on the earth **at the time of the second advent of Christ** and who will be 'changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump,' **WITHOUT TASTING OF DEATH**. [1 Corinthians 15:51,52 cited]"- *Prophets and Kings*, p. 277.

Ellen White adds, "**Moses, represent[s] those** who will be raised from the dead at the time of the second advent; and... **Elijah, representing those** who at the close of earth's history will be changed from mortal to immortal and be translated to heaven **without seeing death**." - *ibid*, p. 228.

Thus, we learn from the inspired pen that there will be a type of saint who will be translated from the earth "without seeing death". Who are they?

Ellen White answers: "A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob's trouble. Then all the saints cried out with anguish of spirit, and were delivered by the voice of God. **The 144,000 triumphed**." *Early Writings*, pp. 36, 37.

How did the 144,000 triumph? By escaping the death decree! That is, they are translated "without seeing death."

As such, the 144,000 cannot logically be the same as the great multitude of all those who have lived and died in Christ.

Additionally, *if the 144,000 is symbolic of the great multitude (as some claim) then it would mean that all who have ever died in Christ will have to be resurrected to go through the time of Jacob's trouble in order for them to be among "THE 144,000 [who] triumphed*". Of course, every SDA Bible student know that will not be the case. So again, the two groups cannot be the same.

C.) Further proof that the 144,000 are not the same as the "great multitude"

To put the matter beyond dispute, Ellen White removes all doubt when she wrote that, unlike the 144,000, the GREAT MULTITUDE are compared to:

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"those raised with Him [at his resurrection being]... representatives of that **great multitude who shall come forth from the grave at His second coming**" (E. G. White, [Desire of Ages, p. 834](#))

D.) The 144,000 will be alive to see the resurrection of the great multitude

In *Early Writings*, pages 15-16 (1851 edition), speaking of the 144,000, E.G. White says as follows:

"Then there was a mighty earthquake. The graves opened, and the dead came up clothed with immortality. **The 144,000 shouted, "Alleluia!" AS THEY RECOGNIZED THEIR FRIENDS WHO HAD BEEN TORN FROM THEM BY DEATH [i.e. the "great multitude"]**, and in the same moment we were changed and caught up together with them [i.e. "them" being either the great multitude or the 144,000] to meet the Lord in the air." [see also, *Testimonies for the Church*, p. 61].

If the 144,000 are alive to see the coming of Christ in the clouds, and will see the **"the sleeping saints,"** raised from their graves, then the 144,000 must be a distinct and separate group from the *those saints who will be resurrected as part of "the great multitude."* For Ellen White states, **"The 144,000 shouted, "Alleluia!" as they recognized their friends who had been torn from them by death..."**

So, from this quote we learn that the 144,000 are not only alive when Christ comes, but will also see those "friends [the other saints] **who had been torn from them by death.**"

It is therefore an inescapable conclusion that the 144,000 are a separate group from the saints who have died (and not part of the "special resurrection" of the faithful SDA pioneers). For all the other dead saints "will be resurrected [only at the coming of Christ] to form part of the great multitude."

E.) A literal Number!

Reader, I want you to think carefully on this fact: Revelation 7:9, 14 declares, ".... **AFTER** this [i.e. after seeing the 144,000] I beheld, and, lo, **a great multitude, which no man could number**, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues..."

Now my friends, how could the **great multitude** be those "**which no man could number**" and yet be the same as the 144,000, which is a NUMBER? Anyone who still insists that the 144,000 and the great multitude are the same is attempting to make the Word of God contradict itself. For if "**no man could number**" the great multitude then John the Revelator could not say that he saw 144,000 saints sealed, if that number is the same as the "great multitude." For John would be contradicting himself: as he says no man could number the one group but that the other group WERE NUMBERED as 144,000.

F.) Further proof that the 144,000 is a literal number

In the book *Early Writings*, p. 15, E.G. White says of the 144,000:

"Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming. The LIVING SAINTS, **144,000 in number**, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake." (see also, *Word to the Little Flock*, p. 14).

Now, as yourself, why add the words "in number" when 144,000 is clear a number? Is it not clear that she was intending to make it beyond dispute that this was a literal number?

G.) How could the 144,000 be a literal number if the 12 Tribes of Rev. 7 are symbolic?

You may ask, "How could the 144,000 be a literal number if the 12 Tribes of Rev. 7 are symbolic?" As we read above in the book *Early Writings*, p. 15, E.G. White speaks of "The LIVING SAINTS, **144,000 in number**...."

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Literal and symbolic (or rather metaphoric) language is permitted here because the symbolism ("tribes of Israel") has already been explained elsewhere in the Bible:

"For they [are] not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. *That is, They which are the children of the flesh [literal Israel], these **are not the children of God***: but the children of the promise [to Abraham as fulfilled in Christ] are counted for the seed.... **not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles**... As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, **which were not my people** [these]... **shall they be called the children** of the living God." - Rom. 9:6, 23-26.

There are those who say, and with *seemingly* some justification, that some of the SDA pioneers were sealed, having preached the sealing message of the Sabbath truth; and that these pioneers will be resurrected to be part of the 144,000 who will go through the time of trouble and remain live to see Christ returns.

I will not seek to disprove or prove whether this assertion is correct, except to say that *there are certain* statements from Sister White in her writings which seem to support that view. **In any event**, whoever will eventually comprise the LITERAL 144,000 must be from amongst those who are **ALIVE** when Christ comes. For no one who has died and remains in the grave through the time of trouble will be part of the 144,000, as only the 144,000 will "have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat" (G.C., pp. 648/649), and are the only saints that would have "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, **and over his mark, and over the number of his name**" (Rev. 15:2).

H.) The 144,000 have no "hem of red on their garments."

On pages 18, and 19 of *Early Writings*, Ellen White states concerning her vision of Heaven:

"As we were traveling along, we met a company who also were gazing at the glories of the place [i.e. Heaven]. I noticed **red as a border** on their garments; their crowns were brilliant; their robes were pure white. As we greeted them, I asked Jesus **who they were**. He said they were **martyrs that had been slain** for Him. With them was an **innumerable company** of little ones; they also had a **hem of red on their garments**."

Here we see that the "martyrs" for Christ are described as each having a hem of "**red** on their garments" and having been "**slain**". It follows that such the martyrs cannot be among the 144,000, as the 144,000 are called "**living saints**" and are said to be alive when **the other saints "wake" from the grave**. [see *Early Writings*, p. 16.]

In contrast to the martyrs, the 144,000 are "all clothed with a glorious white mantle from their shoulders **to their feet**," with **no border, or hem of red**. [*Early Writings*, page 17].

Note, their white garments have no red marks or stripes, because they are not martyrs and do not die, but live to see Christ's return.

I.) Which class of Seventhday Adventists will be sealed and what class will not?

Speaking of the sealing of the 144,000 Sister White says:

"They will always be on the side of faithful and **plain dealing with sins** which easily beset the people of God. Especially in the closing work for the church, in **the sealing time of the one hundred and forty-four thousand** who are to **stand without fault** before the throne of God, **will they feel most deeply the wrongs of God's professed people**." *Testimonies*, Vol. 3 p. 266.

"Mark this point with care: Those who receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost, represented by a mark by the man in

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linen, are those 'that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done' in the church. -- *Testimonies, Vol. 3, p. 267.*

Again she says, "The seal of God will be placed upon the foreheads of those only who sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land [the church]." -- *Testimonies Vol. 5, p. 212.*

If you are not living in harmony with all of God's principles or **if you are not sighing and crying for all the abominations** (not just those that you dislike) that are overrunning many of our churches, then **you will not be seal!**

J.) What will be the fate of SDAs who do not form part of the 144,000 and live to the close of probation?

How could there only be 144,000 saints alive when Christ comes? Because, *sadly*, most SDAs, the majority, will die in the plagues and the general slaughter of the wicked.

Ellen White states it thus:

"This [slaughter] is forcibly set forth by the prophet's illustration of **the last work** under the figure of the men, **each having a slaughter weapon in his hand.** One man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side. "And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem **[the SDA churches around the world]**, and **set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.** {see RH, September 23, 1873 par. 4} {RH, June 8, 1886 par. 1}

"This sealing of the servants of God [the last work]," says Ellen White "is the same that was shown to Ezekiel in vision." -- *Testimonies To Ministers, p. 445.* (Read Ezekiel 9 my friends. **READ EZEKIEL 9!!**).

"God has begun to draw this covering over His people, and it will soon be drawn over all **who are to have a shelter in the day of slaughter.**"—*Early Writings, p. 44.*

K.) Only a small number, 144,000, will receive the seal of God

Ellen White often used the ratio 1 in 20 (at least five times) in her writings about those SDAs who will be *eventually* be saved:

"There are lessons of the highest importance that **not one in twenty** of those **who claim to be children of God** have yet learned." {RH, June 28, 1887 par. 2}

Was E.G. White saying that not even one in twenty would be ready for Jesus' coming? I am not sure.

But, she says again:

"It is **a solemn statement that I make to the church, that not one in twenty** whose names are registered upon the church books **are prepared to close their earthly history**, and would be as verily without God **and without hope** in the world **as the common sinner....** **So many** have brought into the church **their own unsubdued spirit, unrefined; their spiritual taste is perverted by their own immoral, debasing corruptions,** symbolizing the world in spirit, in heart, in purpose, confirming themselves in lustful practices, and **are full of deception through and through** in their professed Christian life. **LIVING AS SINNERS [YET] CLAIMING TO BE CHRISTIANS! . . ."**

- *Christian Service, p. 41 (1893).*

Reader, one in twenty is 5 percent of SDAs! There are just over 22 million SDAs today, I am told. That would make just around 10,000,000 (i.e., just 1 million). But remember she said NOT one in twenty! Remember also that many of those on the churches books are NOMINAL SDAs. Remember, too, that

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many of the 22 million will die before probation closes. So we will have an even smaller number of SDAs at the time when the Time of Trouble commences:

"I saw a **little** company traveling **a narrow pathway**. All seemed to be **firmly united, bound together by the truth**, in bundles, or companies. Said the angel, '**The third angel is binding, or sealing**, them in bundles **for the heavenly garner**.' This **little** company looked careworn, *as if they had passed through severe trials and conflicts.*"
- *Early Writings*, pp. 88, 89 (1854).

L.) Apart from the plagues and the slaughter of SDAs, what else will cause over 22 Million SDAs to dwindle to a "little company"?

Ellen White answers:

"November 20, 1857, I was shown the people of God, and **saw them mightily shaken....**"
—*Test.*, Vol. 1, p. 179.

"I asked the meaning of **the shaking** I had seen, and was shown that **it would be caused by** the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness **to the Laodiceans.... this will cause a shaking among God's people.**"—*Test.*, Vol. 1, p. 181.

The question is, was Ellen White using literary hyperbole when she wrote about "not one in twenty"?

Even if we believe that she was merely making a point of the terrible spiritual condition of the SDA church membership, we must still realise what she was saying to us: **not many (perhaps no more than 5 percent of the SDAs left alive when probation closes) will be ready for the coming of Christ.**

Here is a statement from Ellen White, which I previously quoted, this time in full: **"The true people of God... will ever view sin in its real, sinful character. They will always be on the side of faithful and plain dealing with sins which easily beset the people of God.** Especially in the closing work for the church, in **the sealing time of the one hundred and forty-four thousand who are to stand without fault** before the throne of God, will they feel most deeply the wrongs of God's professed people."
- *Testimonies*, Vol. 3 p. 266.

M.) How many does Sister White say are to be sealed?

Just 144,000!

The worrying part about this number is that it is not comprised only of SDAs! That means that many SDAs alive today will never be sealed and hence never make it to heaven. Oh, what a solemn thought! Oh, fearful realisation! **My emotions overwhelms me as I write: to think that I may not be among that number. And to think that many of my SDA friends and acquaintances who I have come to love, will not be part of that number--** because they DO NOT SIGH (ARE NOT DISTURBED BY) **AND** DO NOT CRY (SPEAK OUT AGAINST) **ALL** THE SINS THAT ARE COMMITTED IN THEIR CHURCHES.

Notice carefully, reader, who Sister White says will be numbered among the 144,000 that will receive the seal of God to stand through the time of trouble. She says that only those who are **now** **"on the side of faithful [in]... plain dealing with sins** [that is sins in the SDA Church] will be sealed and fitted up to be among the 144,000.

Are you engaged in "plain dealing with sins" in your church? If you are alive today, and live to see Christ come, then to have any hope of being among the 144,000 (literal in number), you must take up the work of "crying and sighing for the sins that be done" in the SDA church, else you will have NO HOPE of being among the 144,000. Likewise, if you do not engage in this work, and you die before the close of probation then you will not even make it into the "great multitude". Brethren, this is serious! Are you serious about

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sin? Are you serious about your salvation? Then, do the right thing! Call sin by its name, "rebuke, exhort, with all authority; let no man despise [or deter] you." - Titus 2:15. And put away all your own sins!

Sister White admonishes us: "Wrongs *must be reprov'd, sin must be called sin, and iniquity must be met promptly and decidedly*, and *put away* from us as a people." —*Test.*, Vol. 3, p. 260.

Note the following statements by Ellen White:

"The time has come for earnest and powerful efforts to rid the church of *the slime and filth* which is **tarnishing her purity.**" -- *Testimonies To Ministers*, p. 450.

Are you aware of any "**slim**" or "**filth**" in YOUR church? What have you said or done about it? Nothing? Then at this point, you are not in the reckoning to be numbered with the 144,000. And, you now have only a little time left to make your calling and election sure, if it is not already too late for you.

"Oh that every lukewarm professor [believer] could realize **the clean work** [i.e. **surgical removal**] *that God is about to make among his professed people!*" -- *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, p. 190.

N.) What is the time of the sealing of the 144,000?

"AND after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, **holding the four winds of the earth**, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.... I saw another angel ascending from the east, **having the seal of the living God**: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, *Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.*" Rev. 7:1, 2, 3.

We see here that the sealing of the 144,000 takes place just prior to the unleashing of the winds of Revelation 7. Thus, those who will be part of the 144,000 MUST be among those who will live through the time of the unleashing of these winds (the plagues).

Why is the Lord holding back these winds? "The Lord holds back the tempestuous winds. He will not suffer them to go forth on their death-mission of vengeance **until His servants are sealed** in their foreheads." —*19 Manuscript Release*, p. 279.

"The four angels from heaven are to "Hold! hold! hold! hold! **until the servants of God are sealed** in their foreheads." —*Life Sketches*, pp. 118, 119; *Early Writings*, p. 38.

"Four mighty angels are **still holding** the four winds of the earth.... the angels hold the four winds, forbidding the terrible power of Satan to be exercised in its fury **until the servants of God are sealed** in their foreheads." —*Maranatha*, p. 167.

O.) When does the sealing take place?

Who will make up this literal 144,000? Only God knows. But E.G. White says it will be just before probation closes:

"I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer's inkhorn by his side returned from the earth, and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints **were numbered and sealed**. Then I saw Jesus, who had been ministering before the ark containing the ten commandments, throw down the censer. He raised His hands, and with a loud voice said, 'IT IS DONE'." - *Early Writings*, p. 279.

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Rev. 7:9 tells us that the great multitude COULD NOT BE NUMBERED and so logically, the “saints” who are said by Ellen White to be “NUMBERED AND SEALED” cannot be the great multitude.

This numbering and sealing work is represented in the book of Ezekiel as the man with the writer's inkhorn (Ezekiel 9:4), who performs the sealing of the living saints before the close of probation. [*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 445].

This sealing takes place after the sounding of the final warning message:

“Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon’s roar. **Now** they are **eternally secure** from the tempter’s devices. **While Satan was urging his accusations**, and seeking to destroy this company, **holy angels unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God**” —*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 475; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 587.

P.) Who will finally make up the 144,000?

"Who is to compose the 144,000? This those who are the elect of God will in a short time know without question." — E. G. White, *Manuscript 26*, 1901; *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 174.

But sister White gives us a clue: "Only those who, **in their attitude** before God, are filling the position of those who are repenting and confessing their sins in the great antitypical **day of atonement**, will be **recognized and marked** as worthy of God's protection." —TM 444, 445.

And all those "who are repenting and confessing their sins in [our] great antitypical day of atonement," will also be sighing and crying out AGAINST the sins that are found within the SDA church.

Moreover, in addition to reproving sin in others, **ONLY** "Those who **come up to every point**, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, **have heeded the counsel of the True Witness**, ... **will receive the latter rain** and thus be fitted for translation."—*Test.*, Vol. 1, pp. 187, 188.

Q.) Strive to Be Among the 144,000

"Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand. And let us do all that we can to help others to gain heaven."-- *Review and Herald*, March 9, 1905.

In Conclusion:

Many of us are not even preparing to be among the Great multitude, never mind any special 144,000, as we still under condemnation by the following:

"A passive piety will not answer for this time. *Let the passiveness be manifested where it is needed, in patience, kindness, and forbearance.* **But we must bear a decided message of warning to the world. The Prince of Peace thus proclaimed His work, 'I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword.'** Evil must be assailed. Falsehood and error must be made to appear in their true character. Sin must be denounced. And *the testimony of every believer in the truth must be as one.* All your little differences which arouse the combative spirit among brethren, are devices of Satan to divert minds from the great and fearful issue before us."—*General Conference Bulletin*, February 6, 1893, Pioneer A. T Jones, quoting E.G. White.

The Preparation Needed

"We are now living in a most perilous time, and not one of us should be tardy in seeking a preparation for the coming of Christ.

Let none follow the example of the foolish virgin, and think that it will be safe to wait until the crisis comes before gaining a preparation of character to stand in that time.

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**It will be too late to seek for the righteousness of Christ,
the wedding garment that will fit you to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb"**

—*Youth Instructor*, Jan 16, 1896.

Dear friends, now is the time to "strive with all the power God has given us to be among the 144,000." —
The Review and Herald, Mar. 9, 1905.

Secret Science of Victory over Sin: "*Submit Yourselves to God. Resist the Devil* and he will FLEE from you; Draw near to God and He will DRAW NEAR TO YOU." — James 4:7.

"The character we cultivate, the attitude we assume today, is fixing our future destiny." —RH Aug 19, 1890.

By Philton Moore