

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.**  
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)*

#03-09146

## ***The 144,000 First Fruits to God #3***

August 8, 2009

**(1) Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. (2) And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. (3) And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. (4) These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.** (Revelation 14:1-4 NASB)

The last issue of this series dealt with point #4: The 144,000 have the name of the Lambkin and the name of His Father on their foreheads. In ancient times, God placed His name on structures of wood and stone, but today He places it on living stones, the ecclesia which is the body of Christ. However, John was not dealing with the entire "church" in his description of the 144,000, for they are the first fruits, meaning they are the first of the ecclesia to come into the reign of Christ in the coming eon. They are the conquerors or, if you prefer, the overcomers. See issues #02-0804, January 11, 2008, *Overwhelmingly Conquer Through Him* and #02-0861, April 9, 2008, *To The One Conquering*.

Before moving on, I have two comments. First, I realize that the word *Lambkin* might be strange to most reading this; please see issue #03-0922, February 13, 2009, *The Lambkin [Arnion]*.

Second, it is important to emphasize that the old Jerusalem is no longer the place where God has placed His name, even though, today, it is a rebuilt city in the Middle East. He removed His name from the earthly Jerusalem just as He removed His name from the earthly Shiloh (Jeremiah 7:12). The Lord even told Israel to consider the fact that He removed His name from Shiloh, the first place that He made His name dwell. Ancient Israel did not heed His warning, and the Lord removed His name and glory from the temple and the city of Jerusalem. God is not going to reside in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem; He has already begun to reside in a new spiritual temple called New Jerusalem.

#5: The number 144,000 appears in Revelation 7 and 14, but there is a marked difference between the two sets of verses. On the one hand, Revelation 7 depicts the conquerors from a military standpoint. They are sealed to signify that they are divinely protected for battle. **"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death"** (Revelation 12:11 NASB).

On the other hand, Revelation 14 depicts the conquerors not in battle but before the throne playing harps and singing a new song; a song that no else can learn except them. The question arises as to whether the 144,000 in Revelation 7 and 14 is one and the same, or are they two different groups that total to 288,000. It is interesting that David had an army of 288,000 or two times the number 144,000.

**Now this is the enumeration of the sons of Israel, the heads of fathers' households, the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, and their officers who served the king in all the affairs of the divisions which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, each division numbering 24,000....** (1 Chronicles 27:1 NASB)

Each tribe was required to provide 24,000 men each month, and twelve times 24,000 yields 288,000.

Interestingly, the number 288 appears again in reference to the number of the ones called upon to sing to the Lord.

**Their number who were trained in singing to the LORD, with their relatives, all who were skillful, was 288.** (1 Chronicles 25:7 NASB)

Others who study numbers in Scripture and apply gematria claim that the number 288 is associated with the conquerors. I leave this for another issue.

At any rate, the question remains as to whether there are 144,000 or 288,000 conquerors.

#6: Revelation 14 is more decidedly female in orientation than Revelation 7, which is more male in orientation.

**These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste [virgins]. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.** (Revelation 14:4 NASB)

I must admit that for many years I had a problem with this verse. Men not being defiled by women did not make any sense to me since women are not defiling to men but a blessing. Using the word *defile* for one who does not have sexual relations with a woman does not seem appropriate. After all, marriage and sexual relations is ordained of God, so the use of the word *defiled* seems out of character. Besides, the use of the word *chaste* or *virgin* applies more to women than to men, although men are not excluded from its use. However, in Scripture, the word *virgin* always applies to women.

Perhaps there is a better way to translate this verse. Others have noted that the “defiled with” could be translated “defiled among.” The Greek word translated *with* is *meta*, which could mean “among” as well as “with.” Thus, the verse could refer to ones from among women who are not defiled, for they are virgins. This makes more sense than trying to force these verses into an entirely male theme.

#7: Revelation 7 and 14 signify two aspects of the bride of the Lambkin. The bride or wife of the Lambkin (Revelation 19:7-8; 21:9 CV) is destined to reign with Christ and to follow the Lambkin wherever He goes. The male theme of Revelation 7 signifies the ruling or reigning side of the bride, and the female theme of Revelation 14 signifies the relational side of the bride. Following the Lambkin is a female theme, for wives followed behind their husbands in Jesus’ day.

The thought that needs to be taken away from this point is that the troop of the first fruits will include both males and females. If one believes in the literal interpretation of the number 144,000 or 288,000, then an argument could be made that there will be 144,000 from the male ranks and 144,000 from the female ranks, for God shows no partiality.

However, of far greater importance is the fact that there is neither male nor female in Christ (Galatians 3:28), and the first fruits of the first resurrection will no longer marry (Matthew 22:30), for they have been joined to Another, Christ who was raised from the dead (Romans 7:4), betrothed to one husband, and presented as a pure virgin (2 Corinthians 11:2), a holy and blameless wife, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Ephesians 5:25-27). The wife will exhibit both male and female traits, just as Paul was both a father and a mother to the ecclesia (1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11).

Like John, may creation soon hear something like the sound of many waters proclaim: **“Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb [Lambkin] has come and His bride has made herself ready”** (Revelation 19:7 NASB [CV]).