

These were purchased from among men, to be the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no lie: they are without blemish.

#### Initial Questions 14:1-5

1. Where was the Lamb standing according to vs. 1? Where is Mt. Zion?
2. Where have we read of the one hundred forty four thousand before in The Revelation?
3. What was the "new song" of vs. 3, and who alone could learn the song?
4. Discuss the real value of a vital, spiritual song service during worship hour in light of the fact that it is through song that redeemed shout the praises of God.
5. Does vs. 4 teach that a celibate life is a higher form of spiritual life than the marriage state (as according to Roman Catholic teaching)?
6. What spiritual or moral significance can the designation "virgin" have in vs. 4?
7. Does vs. 4 - "These were purchased from (*apo* away from, or out of) among men" stand in opposition to resurgent universalism (i.e., that everyone is going to be saved)? Does this phrase show that some men are not redeemed and why they are not?
8. What is the moral character of "those purchased" according to vs. 5?

#### The Vision of The 144,000 on Mount Zion Chapter 14:1-5 (Cf. 7:1-8)

##### *Verse 1*

John has now discussed the dragon, the beast of the sea, and the beast of the land or the false prophet. This "diabolical trinity" (John mentions it again in 16:3) is placed in the most radical tension with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The final sign in this series of scenes from the divine drama of redemption is the re-entry of the 144,000 (note that this would have been a large number to the 1st century church) discussed in chapter 7:4f. They are with the Lamb, with His seal (His name) on their foreheads. They are standing victoriously on Mt. Zion, the city of the great king. The king and His redeemed stand in an absolute contradiction to the beast and his fellow perveyors of darkness.

## Verse 2

John now gives us a poetic description of the voice which he heard. The voice John heard was to give a preview of hope! How could the first century Christians continue to hope for ultimate and final victory - when the dragon and his cohorts had "overcome the saints"? The voice was sweet and harmonious like "harpers harping."

## Verse 3

This majestic cast of the purchased ones were neither in despair nor despondent over the apparent victory of satandom. Quite the contrary, "they sing a new song." Only when one's heart is filled with the joys of salvation can one know the thrill of true spiritual singing. They were singing this song of praise in the very throne room of the universe. What is essential to one's life, before one can sing like this? John states that "no man could (*edumatō* - no man is able or can learn it) learn the song except the 144,000, the ones having been purchased from (*apo* - away from) the earth." Who are those "having been purchased ones" (*ēgorasmēnoi* - passive - past - participle)? John identifies them as "those who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins or celibates." There is certainly no condemnation of marriage in this verse (read Matt. 19:12, I Cor. 7:1-8, Heb. 13:4). The image of the virgin (*parthenoi*) is a symbol of purity. The Bible uses adultery (see book of Hosea) as a symbol of a lack of purity. Chastity is a mark of every true follower of Christ!

This great throng was the "first fruit to God and to the Lamb." The firstfruit (*aparchē*) is a consecrated offering in both O.T. usage, and here. This is precisely what Paul asserts in The Epistle to The Romans, chp. 12:1. *The Hebrew Epistle* makes a like claim in chp. 13:4-5. Their spiritual purity was made manifest by the fact that "in their mouth was not found a lie (*pseudos* - anything false); they are unblemished." (See John 8:44 - "the father of lies." Lying became one of the chief temptations of Christians during periods of persecution. See Josephus, the Fathers, especially Cyprian and the problem of the lapsed).

Many strive in vain to identify this throne (especially The *Jehovah's Witnesses*). In chp. 7:1-8 it is made plain that if taken literally, these are all physical Jews from tribes of Israel. Nothing is stated there that this group is solely composed of

men. But in chp. 14 the group is specifically identified as males who are undefiled with women. There is nothing but difficulties in the path of anyone who claims that he can identify with certainty this group - other than the fact that they are the redeemed. Roman Catholic theologians cannot make out their case for celibacy from this passage either, contrary to their claims. Study the biblical teaching about marriage and divorce, and note the biblical use of the symbol of adultery for impurity.

## SECTION 41

### Text 14:6-7

6 And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having eternal good tidings to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people; 7 and he saith with a great voice, Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters.

### Initial Questions 14:6-7

1. What was the message of the flying angel - vs. 6?
2. What significance does this vs. have for the missionary enterprise?
3. What does the word fear mean in vs. 7?
4. What characteristics of God are discussed in vs. 7?

### Three Angelic Proclamations, and a Voice from Heaven Chapter 14:6-13

#### Verse 6

The preview of hope is now made available to mankind. John saw "another angel flying in mid-heaven (see 8:13) having an eternal Gospel to preach over (*epi* - over, the extent of) the ones sitting on the earth." Every one could now have an opportunity to hear the glorious gospel of Christ. There will be no national, color, social, or intellectual lines drawn as this angel proclaims the good tidings of forgiveness through Christ.