

Revelation 14:1-7: the spiritual characteristics and the mission of the 144,000.
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 remnant 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.