

Revelation 14:1-5

“Behold the 144,000”

February 19th 2011

Introduction

Ø Pastor Rob is away so lets play a little game this morning

Picture of “Duck or Rabbit” from goggle images

It is a Duck, anybody see a rabbit?

Ø these pictures used to trip me out as a kid

- these pictures still trip me out as I was preparing for this study
- these pictures, that the more we behold them, the more we look at them, the more we see

Well, I do this not just to be weird this morning, but so we can understand what the Apostle John is asking us to do in the opening of Rev Chap 14 – behold the 144,000

Ø We have been spending the last two Wednesday Nights looking at the 7 Seal judgments and the 7 Trumpet judgments from Revelation Chapters 6-9

- And what the book of Revelation does is between the Trumpet Judgments and the Bowl judgments
- It gives you some insight into the major players or characters making an impact on history on planet earth during the Tribulation period

Ø And this Wednesday Night we are going to start to look at the good guys in the Tribulation period from Revelation chapters 10 and 11, plus 14 where we see

The Good Guys of the Tribulation

The Angel with the Word – Revelation Chapter 10

The Two Witnesses – Revelation Chapter 11

The 144,000 – Revelation Chapter 14

The Messengers – Revelation Chapter 14

The Saints – Revelation Chapter 14

Jesus Himself – Revelation Chapter 14

And of course contrast with the villains of the Tribulation period from Revelation Chapters 12-13

The Villains of the Tribulation Period

Satan – Revelation Chapter 12

The Antichrist – Revelation Chapter 13

The False Prophet – Revelation Chapter 13

Ø the Unholy Trinity so to speak that we will examine a few Wednesday Nights from now

But this Wednesday night we will begin examining the good guys and I wanted to give some special attention and focus this morning to one in that category, the 144,000

Ø I wanted to do that because Scripture encourages us to do that when the Apostle John says ‘Behold’

“Then I looked, and behold.”

Ø He is not just seeing, I looked and saw

- But the point of the word “**behold**” – **to look closely and consider** – that is what we are to do - the Lord desires you and me who are studying this book to look closely at this as well.
- As we do there is so much we can see, kind of like when we consider that picture of the duck, I mean the bunny
- The more you look, the more you see

And as I have spent time this week looking at these verses, the Lord has ministered to my heart 6 things to behold concerning the 144,000

Behold The 144,000

#1 – Their Power – Revelation 14:1

#2 – Their Praise – Revelation 14:2-3

#3 – Their Purity – Revelation 14:4a

#4 – Their Proper Partnership – Revelation 14:4b

#5 – Their Purpose – Revelation 14:4c

#6 – Their Perfection – Revelation 14:5

Ø Lets look at these one at a time

#1 – Their Power – Revelation 14:1

Ø The first thing I want you to notice is their power

“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads”

Ø The first thing we notice is these 144,000 have power

- The language of verse one stands these 144,000 against those enemies of God that have gone before
- They are not in hiding, they are not bowing in cowardice
- They are standing – ready to do battle with the Satan, Antichrist, the false prophets and all their followers

Ø This is a powerful group

But what I want you to notice is that their power does not come from themselves

Ø their power comes from their association with the Lord

- they are with the Lamb
- His name is written on their foreheads

Ø They are standing here on Mount Zion, standing in victory

- Standing in victory because they are standing with the Lord

I point this out because this is the way it is, and will be for you and me

Ø maybe you don't realize this – but you are really powerful

- oh I know there is a lot against us – but your life can be extremely powerful
- you have the ability to change a person's eternal destiny
- Think of Billy Graham – the thousands upon thousands that will be in heaven because of this man – that is more power than any world leader can possibly have
- Think of the man who lead Billy Graham to Jesus, that was a powerful life

The Bible speaks of Elijah –

Ø a normal man like me or you (if you're a man)

- He was human just like you and I, yet when he would pray it wouldn't rain
- When he would pray – the dead would be raised

Ø He was a normal man, but a man with tremendous power

But whether we are speaking about Billy Graham or Elijah

Ø the reason they are so powerful...

- the reason you and I have such tremendous power is not because I am buff – though I am
- they don't call me, “ruff and tuff Jason Duff” for no reason

We have tremendous power

Ø but it is for no other reason other than our relationship with Jesus

- because you and I are in Him
- because His name is written upon you – you are called a Christian
- because of that you have great power

David as a young man came to the battle field to bring supplies to his brothers. He saw Goliath mocking God and his people. And it so incensed David that he decided to go out against Goliath – picture of the scene

- Ø As he went out – what a contrast it must have been
 - David, the runt of the family, against this giant 8 feet tall
 - Yet David says to him one of the most inspirational lines in all of Scripture.
“You come to me with a sword and a spear, but I come against you in the name of the Lord.” – I Samuel 17:45

And right there the battle was over

- Ø David was able to run at Goliath, not because he was buff, but because he was with the Lord

And so too we will have to face many Goliaths in our lives

- Ø we will have to face enemies who stand shameless against the Lord God
 - just like these 144,000 did
- Ø It might be an impossible situation you face
 - It might be family who doesn't want you to walk with the Lord
 - It might be the world system coming against you will all it has

The truth is you can stand, in fact you can do more than stand, you can charge on in the face of adversity (more than conquerors)

- Ø you are powerful
 - not because of who you are, but because of who He is
 - **Paul said - “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” – Romans 8:37**
 - it is through Him

Please understand this, this morning

- Ø you can not stand alone in victory
 - you can not detach yourself from the word, from worship, from fellowship, and then think you will be able to stand
 - you will fall!!!
- Ø David could not run against Goliath in his own strength
 - Are you kidding me, it would have been a joke
 - I remember when Phil McKay was the football coach and the guys on the team were more musicians that tackle football players and so Phil wanted to demonstrate – he looked at the assistant coaches, myself, Alex Boshaw and Aaron Wells and he picked Aaron – big, D lineman from Oregon State and it was a good thing he didn't pick me, I wouldn't be alive today to tell the story

That would have been David versus Goliath in his own strength

- Ø But David's strength flowed from the Lord, from his position with Him

So too with you and me

- Ø the enemy will crush you if you stand on your own
 - but your strength flows from the Lord
 - It comes from your relationship with Him

You and I need to be with the Lord

- Ø not just positionally
 - “Yes I'm not against Him, so I am with Him”
 - No – more than that
- Ø We need to be with the Lord practically
 - Spending real physically measurable time with the Lord
 - We need to have His name on our minds
 - Thinking about who He is and what He has done

Then you will be able to run at those who would stand in the way of the Lord

- Ø then you will have victory over the world, the flesh, the devil and other goliaths in your path
 - you are powerful
 - Not because of you, but because you are with Him
- Ø These 144,000 – they are powerful, because they are with Him
 - Next...

#2 - Their praise – Revelation 14:2-3

“And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as if they were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.”

The second thing I want you to notice, the next thing I want you to “behold”, to think about and apply to your life is the fact that these people praise

Ø More than that – it is a song that only they can learn, a song that only they can sing
Now what is the Lord trying to teach us?

- Ø “a song that only they can sing”
 - Some of those songs Scott Cunningham does... remember...
 - “I will draw near to you, I will draw near to you, to you, YOU!!!!” – I don’t know how he gets that high

§ It is a song only he can sing

Then there are those songs with lots of words

- Ø I sing this way, I’ve watched you do it too
 - We are His _____ and He is our _____
 - Drawn to redemption by _____ In his eyes
 - If His _____ was an Ocean – we all _____
 - Heaven meets earth like an unforeseen kiss – “a kiss, what am I singing” and just as you are thinking that
 - The way – He loves Us, oh How He loves us
- Ø A song that only worship leaders can truly sing
 - Is that what John is speaking off
 - I don’t think so

These 144,000 will be living in a time like the world has never known

- Ø more than that, they have a ministry different than any other
 - they face trials and pains that you and I will never face – really – stinging flying scorpions – anyone face that – these are unique trials
- Ø And they emerge from this time with not a pity party
 - Woe is me – The sky is falling. – Nobody loves me, everybody hates me – going to the garden and eat worms. First ones a slimy one, second ones a hairy
- Ø They don’t emerge with some huge pity party

They have faced adversity

- Ø They have faced trials
 - They have stood with the Lord, and they emerge victorious
 - They emerge with a song that only they can sing

The reason they are the only ones who can sing it, is they are the only ones to uniquely go through what they have gone through

- Ø but they have done it
 - and they have a testimony unlike any other
 - They have a song of the Lord’s faithfulness that only they can sing

And you know what precious men and women

- Ø the same thing is true for you and me
 - you have a life that is uniquely yours

- you have trials – that even though I face similar ones – you have those uniquely your own
- you have things to over come that only you will have to face in the exact circumstance

Ø And so often when we face tuff things, the tendency is to whine, it is to complain
We become like another story of Elijah. I told you he was like you and me. Elijah just had a great victory on Mount Carmel, and then Jezebel says “I am going to kill you like you killed my priests.” And what does Elijah do – he runs, and he whines – I am the only one who serves you, poor me – and God basically says “get up, no, you are not the only one.”

Ø how often we can be like that

- poor me – I’m Eeyore
- And I know that response is natural, that response is what our flesh loves to do

Ø But I want you to understand that is the flesh – so important for next when we see how this ties into purity

- But that response is the flesh

And the Lord wants us to “behold” – check out the 144,000

Ø They arise from tribulations and trials

- Not with a woe is me tune
- But with a song of victory that only they can learn

As we learn this and apply this I believe God will do radical things in our lives individually and in our lives corporately as a church

Ø We go through things

- We stand and get ministered to by the Lord
- And with each passing trial – we learn more of the Lord
- More of who He is, and how He works

We see this is what happened to Mary and Martha

Ø They had a brother whom they loved and Jesus loved, named Lazarus

- And Lazarus was very sick, and the girls called for Jesus because they knew Jesus was the one who healed

Ø But Jesus didn’t come right away – and when He finally arrived He made it sound as if it was better that He didn’t arrive quickly.

- Jesus asked them if they believed that He could bring them through this
- And with simply faith they respond yes

And you know what happened next

Ø But learn, through their trials that day as Jesus walked them through the trial, they knew Jesus as they never had before

- Up and to this point – He was the one who could heal
- But after this day they knew Him as the Resurrection and the life

Ø A song that they could only sing

- Because God had walked them through it

Here is my point

Ø each of us have to go through things

- and God, if you will trust Him, like Mary and Martha, like the 144,000 will take you through it, not always remove, but take you through

And as God takes you through the trials

Ø you will learn more of who the Lord is and what He does

- And you too will have a song that only you can sing

#1 – Their Power – by being with the Lord

#2 – Their Praise – they stand and have a song..

Ø Next I want you to notice

#3 - Their Purity – Revelation 14:3

Ø “These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they were virgins.” And then in verse 5, it says, “And in their mouths were no guile.”

- These 144,000 are not only powerful, they don’t only have praise, but they are also pure

Many, many people will die in the Tribulation period

Ø But one group will make it through, unscathed, untouched by what is happening in the world

- That group is the 144,000

I think one of the reasons they make it through is their purity

Ø We see those who give in to the world are effected by boils and other judgments

- But these are not effected
- And I think one of the reasons God can protect them is their commitment to purity

And I’m sure it will not be easy for them

Ø the Tribulation period will have many trials, many temptations

- and when those things are around it is so easy to feel sorry for yourself
- No one has to face what I do (they really can say that) - I’m tired

How easy it will be for these to just take the Mark of the beast

Ø Just kind of give him worship

- Just go along with the flow
- So much easier
- But so destructive

These are the ones who stayed pure

Ø and these are the ones who made it to the end

- and there is such a lesson in that for us, friends..

Purity pays - I know this world has a draw

Ø I know there are trials and tribulation that you have to face every day

- And I know your flesh cries out, “I’m tired, I haven’t been doing such a good job”

Ø The enemy knows when you are weak

- Jesus in the wilderness being tempted by Satan, it was when He was weak.
- The Bible says after He has fasted for forty days, He was hungry – I love those no duh statements – He was hungry, and weak and that was when Satan attacked
- And when Satan was done it says, he departed until an opportune time

“Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.” – Luke 4:13

Ø What is that saying

- That is saying Satan wasn’t going to leave Jesus alone forever, he was coming back again when Jesus was vulnerable

The enemy usually doesn’t come at you at a retreat or a Youth Camp for you younger guys

Ø he does it when you have just been through some hard exhausting days

- when you are experiencing trials

And he begins to tell you, - go ahead and do it

Ø Go ahead guys and take a drink

- You need to relax – just do it – get drunk
- Just log on to the site – you need to get your mind off things
- Go ahead and date that non Christian – all the Christian guys are lame

Its when you find yourself in that position the enemy attacks

Ø But I want you to behold

- I want you to consider these 144,000 and apply the lesson to your life - Purity pays
- Ø It is always wise to choose purity even when things are tuff
 - Purity pays and sin stinks

Sin effects you

- Ø those things you allow to come into your mind
 - they stay there, the mind is an amazing computer
 - And you can be praying or worshipping and the most vial thoughts can come into your mind
- Ø Sin effects your mind
 - Let God cleanse you and choose pure things to put in their place

Sin effects you, it effects your future

- Ø I had a meeting with a Mom and her daughter a few years back
 - And the Mom was furious because her daughter was getting very physical with her boyfriend
 - And we talked for a while, and the daughter finally said, “well, how about you Mom, what about that boyfriend you had a few years ago, that was always spending the night”
- Ø And I have no idea how that woman felt
 - But I know she told me she was seeing her sin come home to roost. She was seeing the effects.

The Bible says “You reap what you sow”

- Ø If you sow to the flesh
 - You are going to see it come out
 - You are going to see it mark you
 - You are going to see it effect your future
- Ø If you sow to the Spirit
 - You are going to see it come out
 - You are going to see it mark you
 - You are going to see it effect your future

Purity pays

- Ø these 144,000 though life was tuff
 - they served the Lord
 - And God brought them through, and made their life effective
- Ø So it will with you - Choose to repent and serve the Lord

These guys had power, they had praise, they had purity, and 4thly...

#4 – Their Proper Partnership – Revelation 14:4

“These are the ones who follow the Lamb where ever He goes”

In business there are partnerships

- Ø Sometime you have a silent partner - one guy running the operations, and another guy paying the bills

When I played golf competitively I had sponsors

- Ø I decided where I would play, how often I would play
 - And these other people would pay the bills for my travel, tournament entry fees
 - And they would do it to have the product exposed or they would do it in case of my turning pro I would have been obligated to give them 5% of my earning for my career

§ They are bummed now

- Ø But I made all the decisions – they were a silent partner

Some of us try to treat God that way

- Ø We know we are in this together

But we think we are the boss in charge, and we will go our way, we will do what we want

- Ø And Jesus is there to pay the Bills, for my sin, to get me out of trouble, to bless the decisions I have made

This way of thinking, though very common, is absolutely wrong.

- Ø Jesus does not want to be your silent partner
 - Jesus wants to be your senior partner

They followed the lamb wherever He goes

- Ø That is the way life was meant to be
 - Lord, what do you want me to do
 - What is Your heart – Okay I will go!!!
- Ø And the awesome thing is you can trust the Lord, knowing the One who you entrust yourself to is infinitely wise, and unbelievably loving

If you trust your life to anything else you have no guarantees

- Ø When I was doing college ministry, we did an outreach in Maui, someone has to reach, my job was to drive the vehicle in the rear – make sure no one got a flat or out of position
 - And Charlie, the college pastor was in the lead van
 - We had an off day and so we took the Road to Hanna, it is this long winding road, much of it one lane, it took forever
 - So we decided, lets keep going, its an island, eventually you come out the other side, it has to be faster
- Ø We are seeing signs, rental vehicles not allowed, turn around – oh it can't be worse than the road to Hanna
 - It was, the road was so narrow, at times you were on a cliff, and when cars would come the other way
 - Well one, pass so close the side view mirror was crushed on Charlie's Van – I am watching this from the back thinking – where are you taking us

Some of you feel this way with the Lord

- Ø That is what following the world will do
 - It will lead you to places you don't want to go
 - It will consume your time, your life
 - And leave you with nothing

Serving the Lord

- Ø it may feel like driving the wrong way
 - You may not understand what God is doing
- Ø But if you put Him in the proper place
 - You will be blessed
 - He will take you right where you need to be

David says in Psalm 37:23 – “The steps of a righteous man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way.”

Psalm 119:105 – “Your word is a lamp to my feet. And a light to my path.”

Just one step at a time

- Ø “But I don't know where I'm going
 - You don't have to
 - You just have to follow the Lord where ever He goes

Proverbs 3:5 - “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.”

- Ø God, my life is Yours - I want to go where You are going
 - That's the 144,000's heart - May that be ours too

#1 – Their Power – by being with the Lord

#2 – Their Praise – they stand and have a song..

#3 - Their Purity – it pays, unstained by the world

#4 – Their Proper Partnership – just following the Lord

Ø Next we see...

#5 – Their Purpose – Revelation 14:b

“These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.”

Ø these 144,000 have been redeemed

The idea of the word redeemed is to be bought back

Ø The Lord owned us by right of Him creating us, but we did our own thing and gave ourselves to sin

○ Jesus went to the cross and bought us back

We right now, and these 144,000 some day have been redeemed, bought back from the world

Ø but these 144,000 I want you to notice have not been bought back for no reason

○ they have a purpose and that purpose is to be the first fruits to God and to the Lamb

○ Well, what does that mean?

The idea of first fruits comes from the Old Testament

Ø a farmer would plant a crop

○ the crop would grow, and as it was time for harvest the farmer would go into the field

○ And they would set apart the first part of the harvest as to the Lord

Ø And they offer these first part of the harvest or first fruit to the Lord - It was the part of the crop that was reserved, set apart for the Lord's use

These 144,000 have been redeemed

Ø but not so they can just sit around and wait for heaven

○ they have been saved for a purpose

○ they have been set apart for the Lord

At growing up in my house as kid on Thanksgiving my Mom had these special dishes that were set apart for only that meal. The rest of the year we wouldn't dare ask to use them. They were not for us, they were for others to see, others in our family. They were set apart for a special use

Ø And the same was true of the 144,000, - they were set apart for special use

○ And we see what this is as these guys are used all over the world during the last 7 years to do the work of the Lord

○ They have this special purpose

The same thing again is true of you and me

Ø we have been redeemed

○ we have been bought back – made by God, walked away from Him and He has paid the price to buy us back

Ø But that doesn't mean as some of you think that you can sit back and just wait for glory

○ Serving the Lord is for other people

No – you have been redeemed for a purpose

Ø you are to be set apart for the master

○ you have a special calling for your life

For the 144,000 – it was to witness

For me – to teach the Word

For you – that is the grand adventure

Ø that is the race that has been set before you

○ its not my race, its yours

○ I encourage you to discover your part, and do it with all your heart

#1 – Their Power – by being with the Lord

#2 – Their Praise – they stand and have a song..

#3 - Their Purity – it pays, unstained by the word

#4 – Their Proper Partnership – just following the Lord

#5 – Their Purpose – to be used of the Lord

Ø And finally this morning

#6 – Their Perfection – Revelation 14:5

“for they are without fault before the throne of God”

Ø Before the throne of God this group is seen as perfect

- Now that may be where you draw the line
- You were with me, sounded good, sounded like something I could do
- But perfect before God

Ø Before Men

- Maybe I can fake it
- Maybe before men

Ø But before God – I’m toast, I know I’m not perfect

Hold on – here is a radical truth

Ø this attribute of the 144,000 is the one you already have for sure

- God sees you perfect
- Because He sees you clothed in His son

Ø Remember what we learn in Romans that when you give your life to the Lord, when you take what He did on the cross for you - You are Justified

- And that means it is just as if you’d never sinned
- More than that – God sees you as if you had the purity of Jesus

You as these 144,000 will be, are positionally righteous

Ø you are as clean as you will ever be

- now practically – that is another story
- We all still do things that are wrong

Ø Practically God is still working

- But in Christ we are positionally righteous

The awesome truth is one day your position will become the practical truth

Ø we will stand before Him clean

- Again in Romans Paul makes this point that that is how the Lord already sees you

“Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” – Romans 8:30

Ø Paul speaks of your position in Christ meaning the way you practically live as if it had already happened

- “He also glorified”

Now some people don’t teach this

Ø because you might hear it and then want to sin

- And don’t miss understand me, just because Jesus is madly in love with a nasty sinner like you and me, doesn’t mean sin doesn’t have consequences
- You will grieve the spirit, you will miss out on many blessings, living in sin

But that aside

Ø I know what a loser I am, and how far I am from perfection

- But then I have God saying to me, “what sin” I see you as clean before me, because you are in Jesus
- I just want to be with you, and use you

Ø I understand that, I see that

- And that doesn’t make me want to sin more
- That makes me want to run into His presence and love Him

- You love me, this failure, oh, I love you so much

His love makes me want to be quick to repent

Ø realize the emptiness of the world

- And go after Him with all that I am

My son and his valentines to God

Ø I see him and the love he has for God and the really good boy he is and it doesn't make me say, well I have a lot of capital there

- I can be a really stinky father and he will probably be alright
- No – it drives me to my knees to say, God help me cultivate his young heart that loves you, so it doesn't become empty religion

And I look at God that loves me so perfectly, it doesn't make me say, oh I can get away with a whole lot and He will still love me

Ø No, it makes me get on my face and say – God, you have made me positionally righteous, Lord develop that in my life that practically I would be pure before you

- and you can use me to touch this generation living in a dark world, like You will use these 144,000 to touch their dark generation