The Marks of a Triumphant Saint
Revelation 14:1–5

We are going to meet once again a remarkable group of people who came out of the great Tribulation. We met them for the first time in Revelation 7; they are 144,000 Jews, 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel; they are Jewish evangelists who came to know Christ as their Lord and Savior and began to preach the gospel of Christ during the great Tribulation; they were sealed with the seal of God so they could not be harmed or killed during their ministry; they have tremendous success for John said he “looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” (Revelation 7:9–10).

These are Gentile believers who were won to the Lord by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, but were martyred for their faith; they are now in heaven waving palm branches before the Lamb, Jesus, hailing Him as their King and singing praises to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb; during the Tribulation, the Jews are finally going to fulfill the purpose for which God called them, to be a witness to Him; the prophet Isaiah declared the time would come when Israel would live up to her calling; “You will do more than restore the people of Israel to Me. I will make you a light to the Gentiles, and you will bring My salvation to the ends of the earth” (Isaiah 49:6).

Chapter 14 reintroduces us to these Jewish evangelists, and what an amazing group they are; they have never been defiled with women; they kept themselves chaste; they follow the Lamb wherever He goes; they have been purchased as firstfruits to God and the Lamb; no lie is found in their mouth and they are blameless before Him. Why do we meet them again in chapter 14, seven chapters after our first introduction to them? Chapter 14 is another parenthetical chapter designed to encourage the reader; chapter 13 was a chapter that introduced us to the two beasts: one who came out of the sea, the Antichrist, and one who came out of the
earth, the False Prophet; they are the two worst characters to walk the earth; remember the Antichrist will bring upon the world a false peace, then war, famine, and death; the False Prophet will force the world to worship him by creating a system where people have to bear the mark of the beast in order to buy or sell; they are responsible for the deaths of millions of believers that the 144,000 won to Christ.

Chapter 14:1–5 takes us to the end of the Tribulation, after Christ has returned to earth and established His earthly kingdom; the scene is that of Jesus, the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion in Jerusalem and with Him are the 144,000 faithful Jewish servants; they came out of the great Tribulation victorious!

**The Presence of the 144,000**

“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred forty-four thousand....” (14:1a); the Lamb and the 144,000 are standing on Mount Zion in Jerusalem; not one of the 144,000 are missing as they all came safely through the Tribulation.

Mount Zion was once the name of a fortified rock hill of pre-Israelite Jerusalem; it is located between the Kidron and Tyropoeon valleys in what today would be the northeastern part of the old city of Jerusalem; the word Zion is used in Scripture in various ways; the psalmists used the word to speak of the location of Solomon’s temple (Psalm 2:6; 48:2; 84:7;132:13); Isaiah spoke of Zion to include the whole nation of Israel (Isaiah 1:27); Amos referred to the whole city of Jerusalem as Zion (Amos 6:1); however, the most common usage of Zion refers to Jerusalem as the city of God during the Millennial reign of Christ (Isaiah 1:27;28:16; 33:5); it was God who said of His Son, “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion” (Psalm 2:6).

In our text, Mount Zion in Jerusalem refers to the place where the Messiah will return to set up His earthly kingdom and reign over the earth from the throne of David (Luke 1:32); and it is there were God’s saints will again be glorified; the evidence of that is the 144,000 who will stand with Him on that Mount.

God loves Jerusalem, and He intends to dwell in it eternally; Psalm 68:16 says that God has desired the mountain of Zion “for His abode” and that He intends to “dwell there forever;” Psalm 132:13–14 contains a similar promise: “The LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation. ‘This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it.’”
Someday, we too, like the 144,000 will stand with our Lord Jesus Christ on that mountain; not one of the 144,000 are missing, so not one believer in Jesus will be left out; we will all be there to celebrate His rule and reign over the earth.

Triumphant saints are those who endure the trials of life and who at last will stand with Christ on Mount Zion in Jerusalem to begin His Millennial reign.

The Possession of and the Power for the 144,000

*The possession of God...* On the foreheads of the 144,000 is written the Father’s name; “... having His Father’s name written on their foreheads” (14:1b); the 144,000 belong to God; they are His possession; God promised those 144,000 when they were sealed with the seal of God that no harm would come to them; that they would not die during the days of God’s wrath on the earth; they are going to stand and they are going to survive through the worst of circumstances; God sealed them and God protected them and now they stand with the Lamb, victorious on Mount Zion in Jerusalem!

*The protection of God...* How did they survive? It was though the power of God; Psalm 91 comes to mind when I think of God’s protecting power to those whom He possesses: “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, ‘He is My refuge and My fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.’ Surely He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you.... For He has given His angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.... Because He has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he knows My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation” (Psalm 91:1–7, 11–12, 14–16).

*The plan to trust in God...* The victory and the triumph of the 144,000 is because they trusted in the power of God to see them through; if you are going to be a triumphant believer you too must trust in His power; to believe that He can deliver you from the worst of circumstances; you are a possession of God; He has put His seal upon you; as Paul said to Timothy: “Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, the Lord knows those who are His” (2 Timothy 2:19);
however, your victorious survival in a world that despises the true believer and before whom Satan is constantly trying to break you down, depends on you trusting the power of God for deliverance; this also brings to mind how Jude closes off his little epistle: “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen” (Jude 1:24–25); we are to rest in the power of God who can keep us from stumbling and present us faultless before Him!

Several weeks ago, Kathy and I watched the movie, *90 Minutes in Heaven*; it is the story of a young Baptist pastor, Don Piper, who was killed when an 18 wheeler hit him head on while driving on a Louisiana bridge in a downpour of rain; by the time emergency arrived he was already dead; his mangled body inside the car was crushed under the weight of the roof of the car on top of him.

A prayer warrior, who was a member of his congregation, was driving on the same highway; not knowing who was in that wreck, he pleaded with paramedics to let him go and pray for the man in the car; in fact, he said, “I feel compelled of God to do so.” “He is already dead,” said one of the paramedics, “it will do no good, but if you want to pray for him, go ahead.” The prayer warrior lifted up the mangled trunk of the car, crawled inside and began to pray having no idea who he was praying for; then he began to sing, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry, everything to God in prayer;” as the prayer warrior sang, the deceased began in a faint way to sing those same words.

“He is alive,” screamed the prayer warrior; sure enough he was alive! Prayers went out all over the world for Pastor Don Piper to make it through multiple surgeries; the therapy was long and painful; yet, for some reason, the preacher did not want to live; finally he confessed his reluctance to stay here on earth; for the 90 minutes he was pronounced dead he said he was quickly caught up into heaven where he was greeted by loved ones who had gone before him; though he did not see Jesus, it was the most beautiful and serene place he had ever been; whether you choose to believe he went to heaven is not so much my point; rather, it is God answering the prayers of thousands of people—many who did not even know him—in bringing a dead man back to life; furthermore, once he was healed, he travels the world to share his story of the power of God.

The movie ended with a touching scene of Pastor Don and his wife going to dinner with the prayer warrior and his wife; the pastor was remembering the prayer of the warrior and him singing, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus;” then the pastor said, “I
remember you putting your hand on mine;” “No” said the prayer warrior’s wife, “He did not put His hand on yours, it must have been the hand of Jesus.”

While such a story is rare, God knows those who are His, and in His sovereign will and power He resurrected a dead pastor and gave him a new ministry; the mark of a triumphant saint is to know that you are the possession of God and by His power you can overcome every obstacle of life—and that includes death; if you are not resurrected in this life, you will be in the next and all your friends who have gone on before you will be there to greet you when you enter those gates of pearl, and so will Jesus be there to welcome you into your new home.

The Praise of the 144,000

“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 it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders, and no one could learn that song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth” (14:2–3).

The sound of God’s voice... The voice that John heard was the voice of God; it is described in two ways: “like the voice of many waters;” this speaks of the peacefulness of God’s voice; we have a fountain in our backyard with running water; we will often eat our lunch on the patio and enjoy the relaxing sound of running water; then it is “like the voice of loud thunder;” this speaks of power; no one can miss a thunder clap, and the voice of God is unmistakable; when He speaks no man can close His ears to shut it out; it’s like the voice of thunder; so the voice of God is both peaceful and powerful.

The sound of soothing music... Then John hears the sweet soothing sounds of harpists; music to calm the troubled heart; but from where does God’s voice come as well as the sound of harps but from heaven; and where are the 144,000? They are with the Lamb, Jesus, standing on Mount Zion in Jerusalem during the time of His Millennial reign; they hear from heaven not only the voice of God, but the calming sound of heavenly harps; it was a sound the 144,000 were delighted to hear because of all they went through during the Tribulation.

While the 144,000 were protected from the wrath of God during the Tribulation, they saw a lot of devastation; they faced a lot of hostility, they had a lot of rejection; you can believe there were many unsuccessful attempts on their lives; therefore, you might think they would be a bit haggard and worn down like Israel when they were in captivity in Babylon; there, the psalmist says that Israel hung their harps on
willow trees for there was nothing to sing about (Psalm 137); not this group; they have come out of the great Tribulation and now they stand alongside the Lamb of God; rather than be depressed, they sing as if it were a new song before the throne—that is, they are singing to God, and before the four living creatures and the 24 elders who had been seated around the throne of God, but now are most likely in their presence on the Millennial earth; yet the voices of the 144,000 reach all the way to heaven; they sing because they “were redeemed from the earth.”

In Revelation 7 we read about the song of the great multitude that came out of the great Tribulation; they cried out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” Then they fell on their faces and began to worship before the throne, saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen” (7:9–12).

The singing of a new song... Notice the 144,000 sing a “new song”, perhaps a song that no one else could sing because no one else had the trials they experienced during their ministry; how long they preached during the Tribulation the text does not tell us; some believe they went through the entire Tribulation, some only the first half of the Tribulation as they are not mentioned again in Revelation; remember, our text is giving us a view of their future on Mount Zion during the Millennium; this scene is an interruption in the Tribulation for the purpose of giving hope in the midst of a time that seems hopeless; as you will see in our next lesson, we will meet three angels flying in the midst of heaven and having the everlasting gospel, preaching to those on earth; perhaps, they replace the hundred-forty thousand as evangelists during the second half of the Tribulation (14:6–13).

One thing we have learned from our study of Revelation is that God loves music; we have seen a lot of praise music in heaven sung by the four living creatures, by the 24 elders, by the Millennial Kingdom on Mount Zion, the 144,000 Jewish evangelists who join Him on that Mount, when they hear the voice of God and the sound of many harps all they can do is burst forth and sing a new song that only they, the redeemed, could sing.

One mark of a triumphant saint is they offer praise and worship to God and to His Son; yes, we too have a new song to sing for we too have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb; the psalmist told his readers to sing a new song when he writes how the Lord lifted him up from out of a horrible pit, from out of the miry clay and set his feet on a solid rock and established his steps; then he says: “He has put a new song in my mouth—praise to our God” (Psalm 40:1–3a). Psalm 96 says: “Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! Sing to the LORD all the earth. Sing to the LORD,
bless His name; proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day” (Psalm 96:1–2); yes, it is because we are redeemed that we have a new song to sing—a song the world cannot sing because it does not know the salvation that is in Jesus Christ.

The Personality of the 144,000

Their purity... “These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins...” (14:4a); some would contend they are unmarried because it says they are “virgins;” could that not also imply sexual purity? I believe so; sex within marriage does not defile a person; but sex outside of marriage does, as well as adultery; here you have 144,000 Jews who were not guilty of getting involved with a prostitute or having any sexual involvement with anyone other than their own wives.

You would be hard pressed to find 144,000 pastors today who have not defiled themselves sexually; just recently, one of the most recognized pastors in the United States was forced to step down after 40 years from his mega church in Chicago after it was learned that he had a long-term sexual relationship with a woman who was not his wife; in years past, Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker brought such shame to the Christian faith when they were caught with prostitutes; the public attention to their sins brought great discred to Christianity and caused unbelievers to lump all Christians together as hypocrites; the pedophile and homosexual problems in the Catholic Church has cost the church billions of dollars in lawsuits, as well as parishioners leaving the church; the pedophile and homosexual problems in the Catholic Church has cost the church billions of dollars in lawsuits, as well as parishioners leaving the church; Sean Hannity, who was a loyal Catholic, said recently that he no longer attends Mass because of the refusal of the Church to remove priests from their office who have sexually violated children; the Catholic church has been guilty of reassigning a pedophile priest to a different location rather than stripping him of his ordination.

We as Christians are called to sexual purity; it is a mark of a triumphant saint.

Their passion... “These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes....” (14:4b); these 144,000 saints are totally devoted to Christ; they follow Jesus wherever He goes; that is the simplest definition of a Christian. “Follow Me!” was the command that was always on the lips of Jesus; He said that to Philip (John 1:43) and to Matthew (Mark 2:14); He said that to the rich young ruler (Mark 10:21) and to the unnamed disciple (Luke 9:59); when Peter asked Jesus after His resurrection what was going to happen to John, Jesus told him not to be concerned about what would happen to others, but to concentrate on following Him (John 21:19–22); He left us an example, said Peter, that we should follow in His steps (1 Peter 2:21).
Essentially the Christian life is the constant imitation of Jesus Christ and that is one of the marks of a triumphant saint.

Their privilege... “These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb” (14:4c); these 144,000 were purchased from among men as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb; that is redemptive language, to be bought with a price; Peter reminds us that “you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold... but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18–19).

The 144,000 are redeemed as the “firstfruits to God and to the Lamb;” what are firstfruits? In the O.T. firstfruits was a term for giving an offering to God; when a farmer grew his crops, and it was harvest time, the farmer was to give the first part harvested to God as an offering and as a sacrifice to Him; the firstfruits were the best of the crop; they were the foretaste and symbol of the harvest that was to come.

Another mark of a triumphant saint is that he always offers the best he has as a sacrifice to God.

Their principle... “And in their mouth was found no deceit...” (14:5a), these 144,000 were truth tellers; no lie was found in their mouth; when they spoke for God they did not exaggerate, they did not understate, or overstate their case; they spoke precisely the truths of God’s Word; the prophet Zephaniah says that the day will come when “the remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness and speak no lies, nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth” (Zephaniah 3:13); so these 144,000 speak the truth while Satan is propagating lies; we need to remember, these saints of God are doing their preaching at a time when, as Paul said, “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:8–9); they had to confront the lies of Satan.

We live in a time when it is not popular to correct false teaching; everyone has a right to their own beliefs and we should not call them out for it; we are to respect what they say, even if we don’t agree with it; that is phoney-baloney; every epistle in the NT was written to correct false doctrine and there are times when Paul even mentions the names of those false teachers; he calls them out and says, “Don’t listen to them;” in Philippians he mentions the names of two ladies who were causing division in the church: Euodia and Syntyche (Philippians 4:2); to Timothy he mentions Hymenaeus and Alexander whom Paul delivered to Satan because of
the blasphemies that came from their mouths (1 Timothy 1:18–20); again he mentions Hymenaeus along with Philetus who were speaking profane and idle babblings of unrighteousness and their lies were spreading through the churches like a cancer (2 Timothy 2:16–17).

Today there is an attack on the truth in general, and biblical truth in particular—it has accelerated; most heartbreaking of all, some so-called evangelical leaders are tossing biblical truth overboard, stripping Scripture of its authority and replacing objective truth with a so-called narrative approach to Scripture; that is, the Bible is just a Book of comforting stories about God and life.

Brian McLaren, a former evangelical leader complains that orthodox, conservative Christianity has “shown a pervasive disdain for other religions of the world,” whose members we should view “not as enemies but as beloved neighbors, and whenever possible, as even dialogue partners and even collaborators.”

Yes, we should love them and wish them prosperity, but that is not the point here; while Jesus was a master listener and one to ask questions to get to people’s real needs, He never compromised the truth; He never said, “Collaborating with other religions will set you free;” rather He said, “If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31–32).

Of course we should reach out to Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, atheists and those who are members of cults and share with them the good news of Jesus Christ; but we can never become partners or collaborators with falsehood!

The 144,000 had to confront the false doctrine of the False Prophet and the Antichrist—a challenging assignment at best; they did not back down; they spoke God’s truth in an uncompromising way; they did not collaborate with the False Prophet.

A mark of a triumphant saint is he always speaks truth and never compromises with the truth of God’s Word.

Their perfection... “... for they are without fault before the throne of God” (14:5b); these 144,000 were a holy people, not a sinless people; the Seventh Day Adventists have suggested that they are among the 144,000 and that they are a sinless crowd; that cannot be; if they are people, which they are, then they are not sinless.
When we get saved, God wants us to be holy and blameless before Him; we are saved to be holy; Peter wrote, “He who called you is holy, you also must be holy in your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:15–16); Paul told the church at Ephesus that Christ wants to present His bride, the Church to Himself, “a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” And how does He do that? Paul says, “...that He (Christ) might sanctify her and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word...” (Ephesians 5:25–27). We are perfected through sanctification and the cleansing that comes from the Word of God as we take it to heart; sanctification is a process; the perfection of holiness is a process called sanctification whereby we become more mature, more virtuous, more Christ-like in our walk with Him; Scripture is given to us that we might be trained in righteousness that the man of God might be perfect or complete for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

The 144,000 are holy and sanctified before God; they are not sinless, but they are men who grow in their faith and in their maturity so to be equipped for every good work.

A mark of a triumphant saint is the evidence of maturity in his walk with the Lord; he is continually being sanctified as he grows in holiness and perfection before God.

What a group this 144,000 are; they are all that we should strive to be in Christ; they demonstrated the marks of a triumphant saint; let’s review those marks:

Be possessed by God and depend on His power to sustain you through the hardships of life.

Be praising God with a new song because you have been redeemed.

Be pure in your lifestyle and not be seduced into sexual sin.

Be passionate to follow Jesus wherever He leads you.

Be privileged to offer Him the firstfruits of your labor as one redeemed by the blood of Christ.

Be principled to always speak the truth and never allow deceit to come from your mouth.

Be perfect with a sanctified holiness as you grow into a mature believer. Amen!