

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

On March 7, 2013, we received a comment regarding our recent article The Great Crowd of Partakers where we stated that the 144,000 are not prophesied to be the kings and priests pursuant to Revelation 5:8-10, but rather the kings and priests are said to be a great crowd, as identified in Revelation 7:9.

Here are the scriptures we were referring to:

“And when he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp and golden bowls that were full of incense, and the [incense] means the prayers of the holy ones. And they sing a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, because you were slaughtered and with your blood **you bought persons for God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and you made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they are to rule as kings over the earth.**’” – *Revelation 5:8-10*

“After these things I saw, and, look! **a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; and there were palm branches in their hands.” – *Revelation 7:9*

And here is what the article said:

“Here, John is told that a multi-national great crowd are the ones who would be kings and priests! How did we miss this point? How did those who developed the Doctrine of the 144,000 fail to see that the kings and priests are not the 144,000, but are really a ‘great multi-national crowd?’ This clarification makes a huge difference in the fundamental teachings of Jehovah’s Witnesses. It reveals that the teaching that only a limited number of mankind would qualify as kings and priests is a misinterpretation – an error.

“Instead, John the Revelator tells us that those who would serve as kings and priests are unnumberable! No man is able to count the number of those who would serve as kings and priests. Doesn’t that now effect our view of who can and should participate in the Memorial Supper? And doesn’t it now effect our view of who can enter the Kingdom of the Heavens? It certainly should!

Here is the visitor's comment:

“‘You bought persons’ [from Revelation 5:8-10] does not say ‘a great crowd.’ It could mean one person of each tribe, tongue, people and nation. In that case, the crowd is maybe great, but it is perhaps less than 144 000. It could mean a lot of people, but it is not sure that it refers to Revelations 7:9. So ‘kings and priests’ must not be the ‘great crowd.’”

To the author, thank you for your email. You make a good point. We did not mean to say that the ‘great crowd’ of *Revelation 7:9* is the same group as the persons ‘out of every tribe and tongue and people and nations’ of *Revelation 5:9-10*. Although they could be the same. We mentioned that the group at *Revelation 5:9-10* who are said to be kings and priests are an unnumbered crowd – we do not know the number.

As you said, it could be smaller than 144,000; but you must also realize that it could be quite a bit larger. It could be millions. John does not reveal the number. So our point is that since we do not know the number of those who will be kings and priests, the Governing Body cannot use the number of 144,000 to teach that there is a limit to those who would be in the ‘covenant for a kingdom’ or who would have the heavenly hope.

At this point in our ministry, we do not attempt to interpret prophecy. So we are not trying to interpret the identity the ‘great crowd’ or the ‘144,000.’ We are simply showing that it is unwise to use the symbolic and prophetic book of Revelation to establish doctrines, especially doctrines having to do with matters of eternal salvation.

If you have any more thoughts on this matter, please feel free to write us again.

“Elaia Luchnia”
