

pointed out that “nothing but a deep religious conviction expressed in modern political terms could keep the movement alive, and that had to be based on Palestine alone. Any deflection from Palestine was—well, a form of idolatry”. He added, “If Moses had come to the 6th Zionist Congress, when it was adopting the resolution in favour of the Commission for Uganda, he would surely have broken the tablets once again”.

Afraid that he was not getting through to Balfour, Weizmann added, “Supposing I was to offer you Paris instead of London, would you take it?”. Balfour replied, “But Dr. Weizmann, we have London”. “That is true”, retorted Weizmann, “but we had Jerusalem when London was a marsh”. This sunk in. Balfour asked if there were many Jews like Weizmann. He said, “I believe I speak

the mind of millions of Jews whom you will never see and who cannot speak for themselves”. Balfour said, “If that is so, you will one day be a force”. As the interview ended, Balfour remarked that the other Jews he had met were quite different. Weizmann replied, “Mr. Balfour, you meet the wrong kind of Jews”.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing was to come of this interview for over ten years, but a seed had been set in Balfour’s mind that was to lead to the document known as the Balfour Declaration.

(To be concluded)

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1. Details of the interview taken from Weizmann’s autobiography, *Trial and Error* (pp. 143-4), Hamish Hamilton, London, 1949.

# Your Letters



## Two classes of people in Revelation 7 and 14

Regarding the exchange of views under the above heading in the October issue (p. 339), there is a middle course to be taken between the two views, a course which gives due weight to the details actually recorded by John. There can be little question that John is describing in Revelation 7 two distinct groups of people. He almost seems to be at pains to do so, as I believe is demonstrated by the [table opposite](#) (which includes, but also expands on, the details convincingly highlighted by Sister Smith). John even uses the phrase “After this” (v. 9) to put the distinction between the two groups beyond doubt.

That said, there is no reason to assume from this that the 144,000 are natural Israel simply because the names of twelve tribes are used of them. Were we to press that idea too literally, we would create a problem for ourselves in excluding from salvation anyone from the tribe of Dan, whereas Samson (a Danite) appears in the list of the faithful in Hebrews 11. Revelation is *full* of language applied first to natural Israel in the Old Testament but then reused in a different context, which is in accordance with Brother Green’s comments. We see that the Mount Zion of 14:1 cannot be literal from the fact that the voice of the 144,000 stand-

ing there John somehow hears “from heaven” (14:2). This is therefore a symbolic Mount Zion. We would need to explore Old Testament passages to understand this symbol fully, but Psalm 87 is most helpful here; God regards His faithful people as having been born in Zion. John sees a vision of something very similar.

Similarly, there is no need to contrast those “redeemed from *the earth*” (v. 3) with those “redeemed from *among men*” (v. 4), since this is saying the same thing. Those “on earth” in Revelation are frequently contrasted with those “in heaven”, a phrase used to indicate people in a relationship with God; so when Revelation describes someone as being “from the earth” we are being told not so much where that person originated as the sort of person he or she is. We should therefore understand the group from which the 144,000 are redeemed as being those who never come to the Father. As another apostle puts it, they are “of the earth, earthy” (1 Cor. 15:47).

Where does this get us? In chapter 7 we have two separate groups of people, but which are both redeemed. This is where we need to pay attention to the details John gives us. We can easily work out who the 144,000 are, because when the trumpet judgements begin to be blown in chapters 8 and 9 a definite separation is made regarding them. We are told in 9:4 that the effects of the

Characteristic	First group (vv. 3-8)	Second group (vv. 9-17)
Number	144,000 (v. 4)	Innumerable multitude (v. 9)
How John perceives them	Number <i>heard</i> (v. 4, there is nothing to suggest that John sees the 144,000 at all)	Seen (v. 9)
Nationality	Israelite (v. 4)	From all nations (v. 9)
Spiritual description	Sealed in the forehead (v. 3)	Wearing white garments (v. 9)
Location in John's vision	On earth (vv. 1-3; cf. 9:4)	In the heavenly temple (vv. 9,15)
Probationary state	Still affected by God's judgements on the earth (v. 3; cf. 9:4)	Redeemed and beyond all suffering (vv. 14-17)
When seen with the Lamb	Not till 14:1	At this time (v. 9)

fifth trumpet are felt only by "those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads"; that is to say, the 144,000, who are described in 7:3 as "sealed", are spared this judgement.

For this separation to make sense, it can only mean that the 144,000 are still around at that point; they are the chosen of God who are alive during this section of the prophecy. We are introduced to them in chapter 7, we learn a little of their discipleship in chapter 9, and when the time of their probation is over and they are proved faithful they join the existing company of the redeemed in the presence of the Lamb in chapter 14. Only then can they sing the song of the redeemed (vv. 2-5). Symbolically they have left the earth and 'gone to heaven', a figure used in Revelation to indicate that believers' salvation has been assured at the end of their probation.

In just the same way, we see those in the time of the fifth seal first suffering as the seals of the scroll are broken and then joining those already redeemed in the heavenly sanctuary of John's vision, identified by the white robes given them by the Lord (6:11; 7:9). Likewise the two witnesses of chapter 11 suffer persecution on "earth" (vv. 4,6,10) before ascending to heaven (v. 12). There is a consistent pattern here; throughout the various time periods of the prophecy the faithful are first tried and then taken to heaven, gradually accumulating in numbers in the presence of the Lamb, again referring to their spiritual standing. In the words of the Lord we might say that, although literally dead now, like Abraham they still "live unto Him" (Lk. 20:38). By the time the prophecy ends, the number of this glorious community of saints is made up, and John witnesses them as the new Jerusalem now collectively "coming down

from God *out of heaven*" (Rev. 21:2), forming one body of the believers of all ages fit to be joined to the Lamb as his perfect bride.

So yes, there are two groups of people mentioned in Revelation 7; but they are identical in character, for they are simply the redeemed from separate periods in the prophecy. Understanding things in this way, by using the evidence John himself gives us, we need neither to confound the two nor to identify them incorrectly. As ever, Scripture is its own best interpreter, and God is glorified therein.

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## Turkey's remarkable position

Brother Nigel Bernard's article, "[Euphrates Rising?](#)" (Nov. 2007, p. 387), highlighted the remarkable position occupied by Turkey in the modern Middle East. As I read the article I was caused to think of a passage from *Elpis Israel*, where on page 419 (14th edition) Brother Thomas wrote, "It is not to be supposed that the Autocrat would attack the Porte without some provocation, real or pretended. It is therefore the mission of the Frogs, as we have seen in a former chapter, to bring about such a state of things as will involve the Autocrat and Sultan in war".

Brother Thomas saw in the destabilising influence of nationalism (the froglike spirits of Revelation 16) a force which might trigger Russia's move into the Middle East. The rise of Kurdish nationalism, especially coinciding as it does with nationalist tensions in the Caucasus (not to mention Palestinian self-determination), might be just such a trigger. Any aggressive move by Turkey