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Just a quick reminder. I have published a book entitled “**Liberating the Book of Revelation, Returning to the Source of the Message.**”

**Liberating the Book of Revelation** is intended to help us all know what the Spirit said and how He said it. This book is focused not so much on interpreting the book of **Revelation**, that is what this podcast is for, but on accurately representing the book of **Revelation** in the manner in which the Spirit originally spoke it to John.

I encourage you to go to amazon.com and you can find the book either under the title “**Liberating the Book of Revelation, Returning to the Source of the Message**” or by my name as the author: **Stephen Villanueva**. It is available in hardback, paperback, e-book format, and the *audible* version was recently released.

## EP118 Revelation 14 verses 4-5

In our last podcast we began to explore the image of the Lamb on Mount Zion and the 144,000 who bear His name and sing a new song to the Lamb. These are those who are spiritually pure, they have been undefiled by idolatry, including **the work of the hands**. They avoided giving themselves to the most dangerous threat they face, which is not the Beast, not the second beast, but the Woman who rides the Beast, Mystery Babylon, the spirit over religious apostasy as expressed in the religion of Christianity.

With that, let's pick back up with our study continuing in **Revelation 14:4** and the idea that they are **now** accompanying the Lamb.

### **Revelation 14:4-5**

These **now** are the ones who have not been caused to be defiled with women, for they **now** are virgins. These **now** are the ones who are **now** accompanying the Lamb wherever He may **now** go. These were caused to have been purchased from among men as first fruit to God and to the Lamb. And no falsehood was caused to be found in their mouth; they are **now** unblemished.

## They Are NOW Accompanying the Lamb

“These **now** are the ones who are **now** accompanying the Lamb wherever He may **now** go.”<sup>1</sup> This entire sentence is rendered in the *present* tense. So, we know this is addressing our **now** and is not just some **End Times** phenomenon. Rather, this is talking about those, every moment of **now**, who walk with Jesus.

Most translations say that they follow the Lamb, but the Greek word (“*akoloutheo*”) comes from the idea of being in the same way as someone, or of **accompanying** them like a companion, like a friend. By way of example, Jesus once told His disciples:

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<sup>1</sup> “follow” is rendered in the *present active participle*; “goes” is rendered in the *present active subjunctive*

**John 15:14-15**

"You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; **but I have called you friends**, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

Accompanying a person speaks of intimacy far more so than does the idea of "following" behind someone, as a servant does a master. Hence, these 144,000 are in relationship with the Lamb, and so they stick with Him and accompany Him wherever He now leads or withdraws Himself. They are now found to be with Him. If He stops, they stop. If He moves, they move. They do not leave His side, even if the path He now walks leads them to death—to their sacrifice.

*Enoch*

This is like what the **Codex** tells us about Enoch, the great grandfather of Noah who lived in the 7<sup>th</sup> generation after Adam. We are told that Enoch walked with God. The imagery is that Enoch walked side-by-side, arm-in-arm, moving only as **Yahweh** moved, turning when **Yahweh** turned, stopping when **Yahweh** stopped. Enoch walked in such unity with **Yahweh** that he did not die physically; rather, he was taken up (raptured) by God.<sup>2</sup> It is as if God wanted his friend to be with him.

In this manner, Enoch serves as a type of those who accompany the Lamb wherever He may now go—those who will likewise be raptured to meet Jesus in the air.

**Purchased from Among Men**

*"These were caused to have been purchased from among men as first fruit to God and to the Lamb."*

Twice the Spirit references the 144,000 having been purchased. First, He mentioned that were caused have been being purchased from the store of the earth, and this second time, that they have been purchased from among men.

In the first instance, the *perfect passive participle* was used. God made the decision sometime in the past to be purchasing them from the earth, to give them a new home and to establish their residency in the heavenly realms. They were in effect brought into God's household (as were all the **Called**), and they have remained in the Household of God.

And since the *perfect* tense was used, we know that this purchase decision has an echo or a resonance that extends throughout time; and because the *participle* was used, we know this was a process, as they were "*being*" purchased. It was not just a quicky transaction. The idea is that it took a lot of negotiation and dealing, and time, to complete the purchase. It takes time for God to teach us and convince us that we need Him in all things all the time, and that we must never leave His side. It's a process.

The payment for the transaction was the blood of the Lamb.

But in this second instance of being purchased from among men, the Spirit switched things up and used the *aorist passive indicative*, meaning that it happened, the Spirit of God did it (it was intentional), and that is a statement of fact. With this *past* tense view of events, we know that they were separated

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<sup>2</sup> **Genesis 5:21-24; Hebrews 11:5**

from other men, they were measured off as belonging exclusively to God.

Thus, when it came time to measure those who are now worshipping in the Sanctuary, the “144,000” (the two witnesses), **Yahweh Mekoddishkem** separated them from all others who were in the household of God. He made them holy.

As a result, we will find that they will be referred to as the **Called and Chosen and Faithful** who are with the Lamb, the Lord of lords, the King of Kings.<sup>3</sup>

## They are the First Fruit

*“These were caused to have been purchased from among men as **first fruit** to God and to the Lamb.”*

At the beginning of this section, the first thing we saw was the Lamb. In other words, we were presented with an image of sacrifice. Accordingly, the first time we ever saw the image of the Lamb was back in **Revelation 5:6**, where we were told that the Lamb had been standing as it had been caused to being slain. Again, it is the image of sacrifice. And because of this sacrifice, in all of heaven and earth, only the Lamb was worthy to open the seven seals.

Now jump to our passage and with the mention of “*first fruit*,” we again are presented with the language of sacrifice. However, in the Greek, the word we have translated in most Bibles as “*first fruits*” has nothing to do with fruits, and it is also singular and not plural. It is a compound word (“*aparche*”) meaning “beginning” or “first in time” and “off”—essentially being “offed first,” or figuratively understood as a “first fruit” sacrifice.

In the Greek, there is a tasty hidden aspect to this play on words. The word translated as “first fruit” (“*aparche*”) is a compound word comprised of “*apo*” meaning “off” and “*archomai*” meaning first in position—as in First Place. However, “*archomai*” is the *middle* voice of a primary verb (“*archo*”) meaning to be first in rank or power. And being in the *middle* voice we know that there is a choice connected to being “offed first.” Thus, even though the concept is connected to the idea of sacrifice, this is not a negative thing. It speaks of a chosen place of rank, power, and rule.

This is so critically important and a huge **PERSPECTIVE CHANGER**. In **Revelation 11**, when we studied the sacrifice of the two witnesses it was hard to stomach. But this brings us a new perspective. Even though the instrumentality of their death was people who were motivated by the Beast and by the enemies in the unseen realm, having been the “first” to be “offed” was volitional. **They chose this position; they chose this rank.** They chose this honor.

The two witnesses were not sacrificed by a cold-hearted God who just wanted them to suffer; rather, like Jesus, they gave their lives for others. For their part, it was an act of *agape* love. For “*Greater agape (love) no one now has than this, that one might lay down his life for his friends.*”<sup>4</sup> And since God is *agape* love, we are never more like God than when we walk the path of sacrifice that He walked.

It is a beautiful concept and one that we must not lose sight of just because there will be blood, and pain, and suffering, and death. It is a choice to be an instrument which expresses God’s nature of love.

<sup>3</sup> **Revelation 17:14**

<sup>4</sup> **John 15:13**

### *Why First Fruit?*

Ignoring the fact that the Greek does not mention literal fruits (which in the Greek is “*karpos*”), and our word “*aparche*” is not plural but singular, why has “offed first” been likened to a first fruit offering? The Spirit first used this expression when speaking through Paul and then through James.

In the letter to the **Romans**, the Spirit mentions that we are now having the “first off” of the Spirit (“*aparche*”) – the first to be picked, so to speak, so we ourselves, in ourselves, now groan now choosing to be waiting for adoption, the redemption of our body. It’s as if the fact that we know we are part of those who are “offed first,” we want it to be done with already and get on with our adoption. But we now choose to patiently wait for our adoption, as that is the hope that causes us to be saved.<sup>5</sup>

Then in the letters to the **Corinthians** and the **Colossians**, the Spirit tells us that Christ has been caused to be risen from the dead, the first fruit (“*aparche*”) of them that were caused to have been sleeping. He is the beginning, the first born from the dead, so that he might come to have **FIRST PLACE** in everything.<sup>6</sup> Yes, Jesus was technically, the “first to be offed” or the “first to be plucked.”

The connection is that since we are literally the body of Christ (with Christ being the head), we too are included in this category of being the “first to be plucked” of them that were caused to have been sleeping.<sup>7</sup>

Now to take this thought process one step further, this reference of them who “*were caused to have been sleeping*” is a reference to those in the Old Testament who died in their faith believing that **Yahweh** was their **I AM**. Though they died, and many of them were martyred or killed, *men of whom the world was not worthy*, they were not us. The Spirit clarified this for everyone when He said:

### **Hebrews 11:39-40**

And all these {referring to all the heroes of faith}, having been caused to gain approval through their faith, did not choose to receive what was promised, because God had chosen to be providing something better for us, so that apart from us they may not be caused to be made perfect.

The bondservants of Jesus, those who are now overcoming, those who have been measured off in the Sanctuary, the two witnesses, the 144,000, are the first to be plucked, or the “first to be offed.” Think about what the Spirit just said; it is mind numbing. Those great men and women of faith who lived prior to the resurrection of Jesus, did not choose to receive what was promised, because apart from us, yes apart from us, they could not be made perfect. By our choice to be part of those who are first offed, we have **FIRST PLACE**, the **FIRST POSITION**, and we are dedicated as an offering to God.

### *The Festival of First Harvest*

In the **Codex**, the Israelites were commanded to participate in the **Feast of First Harvest** (which occurs on the day that we know as Pentecost). “*You shall bring the choice first fruits of your soil into the house*

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<sup>5</sup> See **Romans 8:22-25**

<sup>6</sup> See **1 Corinthians; Colossians 1:18**

<sup>7</sup> See **Ephesians 1:22, 4:15-16; Colossians 1:18**

of God.” *These first fruits were to be brought to the priests, for the priests.*”<sup>8</sup>

The first fruits sacrifice functioned as a pre-thanks offering for all that was to come throughout the entirety of the produce growth cycle. It was an acknowledgement that all their provision came from the hand of **Yahweh**—that He was their **I AM**—their source of all.

In that regard, Israel was once said to be the first fruits of His harvest.<sup>9</sup> This statement in effect pointed forward to the full gathering from the nations of both Jew and Gentile that would come forth from their growth cycle. They are the offspring of the woman who are **now** keeping the commandments of God and who are **now** holding to the testimony of Jesus.<sup>10</sup> They are the “God Prevails” – the Israel of God.<sup>11</sup>

Likewise, Jesus is spoken of as the first fruits offering to God. He functioned as a forward-looking promise to all who would come after Him throughout the growth cycle. He is the personal promise that that they would be gathered and presented to God at the ultimate harvest—at the rapture of the church.<sup>12</sup>

And in that manner, the “144,000” being the first plucked offering to God and to the Lamb also function as a forward-looking promise to all the fruitfulness that will come from the gathering of the **Elect** and the **Righteous**, and so on. The spiritual pattern remains consistent.

## Sacrifice

As we mentioned before, in following the Lamb’s example, the sacrifice of the two witnesses is a **volitional choice** which the bondservants of God make, in *agape* love, to lay down their lives (to be “offed”) for others, so that those who must endure the **Great Tribulation** (the **Elect** and the **Righteous**) would not only survive but be safe and cared for by God.

In fact, there is a **VERY GOOD** chance that it is because of the volitional sacrifice of the 144,000 that the Father cut short the days of the **Great Tribulation** (for the sake of the **Elect**) and chose to fill the seven vials of wrath with “*thumos*”—with rage, and not with “*ogre*”—intensified indignant rage. He reserves “*ogre*” for His judgment on religion.

**AS WITH JESUS’ SACRIFICE, SO TOO WITH THE SACRIFICE OF THE “144,000,” HIS  
MERCY IN JUDGMENT IS EXPRESSED BECAUSE OF THEIR  
INTERCESSION THROUGH HIS AGAPE LOVE.**

## No Falsehood

“*And no falsehood was caused to be found in their mouth...*” The Greek word translated “*falsehood*” is where we get our word pseudo, or fake.<sup>13</sup> There was found nothing fake or false in their mouth. And

<sup>8</sup> See *Exodus 23:19; Numbers 18:13, Leviticus 23:10*

<sup>9</sup> *Jeremiah 2:1-3*

<sup>10</sup> *Revelation 12:17*

<sup>11</sup> *Galatians 6:15-16*

<sup>12</sup> *1 Corinthians 15:20,23*

<sup>13</sup> “*pseudos*”

“found” is rendered in the *arist passive indicative*. Since they were purchased from this earth, the earth was not able to conform them into its image, an image that is entirely based on the enemy’s falsehood and lies. Rather, because they even **now** choose to follow the Lamb, He transforms them into His image.<sup>14</sup>

This picture of no falsehood in their mouth is a picture of their possession by the Spirit of God and His abiding in them so completely that they speak that which is of God, the truth, and not that which is from the lies and distortions of the enemy and all their blasphemies. The substance of their witness is based on complete substitution: “*It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me.*”<sup>15</sup> And since Jesus had no deceit or falsehood in His mouth, neither do they!<sup>16</sup> This is imaged for us in the **Codex**.

### **Zephaniah 3:13**

Those who are left in Israel; they shall do no injustice and speak no lies, nor shall there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue. For they shall graze and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

## **Blameless or Unblemished?**

“... they are **now** unblemished.” In many translations, the word “*unblemished*” has been translated as “blameless.” This is not right, for “blameless” is based on an entirely different Greek word. The Greek word that is used in this text is “*amoomo*” (*amomos*), means unblemished like a sacrificial lamb that is without defect. The Greek word “*anekletos*” means to be blameless.

It should therefore be translated “*unblemished*.” This is the language of sacrifice derived from the sacrificial system of worship found in the Old Testament. And the theme surrounding the 144,000 is sacrifice.

The notion of being “blameless” is very different from being “*unblemished*.” In the Greek, the word translated in the **Codex** as “*blameless*” means that there is no debt to collect upon, no charge to be made against someone.<sup>17</sup> Thus, it has moral, behavioral, and legal overtones. But our morality, our doing it right, our following the law, has **NOTHING** to do with what the Spirit is communicating.

The notion of being “*unblemished*” has nothing to do with morality nor behavior, but it has to do with condition—the typology of which was established for us in the **Codex**. For instance, the “Passover” lamb was required to be an unblemished lamb – a lamb without spots or defects.<sup>18</sup> Only such a lamb was worthy for sacrifice.

Jesus, our Passover Lamb was unblemished. After all, only the Lamb of God was deemed to be worthy to open the scroll, no one else was worthy—no one else was without defect. But if Jesus was unblemished, spotless, healthy, whole, complete, and without defect, then how are these 144,000 unblemished?

First, the Spirit says that we were not redeemed or purchased with perishable things, from the futile

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<sup>14</sup> See **Romans 12:1-2** (both “conformed” and “transformed” are rendered in the *passive* voice.)

<sup>15</sup> **Galatians 2:20; John 15:1-11**

<sup>16</sup> **Isaiah 53:9**

<sup>17</sup> See **1 Corinthians 1:8; Colossians 1:22; 1 Timothy 3:10; Titus 1:6, 7**

<sup>18</sup> See **Exodus 12:5**

way of life inherited by our forefathers (aka all those religious traditions and the **works of our hands**), **but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, unblemished and spotless.**<sup>19</sup>

Second, back in **Revelation 7:14**, the Spirit described for us the 144,000. *“These are the ones who **now** dig down deep in their soul and choose to be coming out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*<sup>20</sup>

They have been purchased by the blood of the unblemished Lamb and they have in turn dug down deep in their soul and made the choice to wash themselves white in the blood of the Lamb. In other words, they have not relied upon their own efforts to be good for God, they have not relied on rote tradition or religious practice, they have not relied upon any institution to make them whole, and they have not relied upon their own ideas of what it means to be unblemished, and they have not relied upon the **works of their hands**. Rather, they literally washed themselves in the blood of the Lamb, covered themselves with the precious blood of Christ, and in so doing, He made them unblemished, worthy of sacrifice.

This is another reminder that the **grace** of God is always and only about what God does for us, and not about what we do for Him. He offers those in His household the opportunity to be free from the law, free from dead works (from trying so very hard to be good for God), and free from everything that keeps them dirty or engaged in evil deeds. For their part, they just need to now choose to wash (to now be believing) and thereby choose to now be coming out of the Great Tribulation, out of the time of Wrath.

### ***Ephesians 1:3-9***

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been blessing us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He dug down deep in His soul and chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would **now** be holy and **unblemished** before Him. In love Being predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His **grace**, in which He graced us in the having been caused to being loved. In Him we **now** have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His **grace** which He lavished on us (in excess) in all wisdom and insight ...

### ***Colossians 1:21-23***

And you sometime **now** being caused to have been being alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you holy and **unblemished** and blameless before Him — **if** indeed you **now** continue in the faith having been caused to being firmly established and steadfast, and not **now** caused to be moving away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was caused to being proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, chose to be made a minister.

<sup>19</sup> **1 Peter 1:18-19**

<sup>20</sup> **Revelation 7:14**. Note, “come out of” is rendered in the *present middle participle*

**Hebrews 9:13-14**

For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer **now** caused to be sprinkling those who have been caused to being defiled **now** sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the **blood** of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, in the **future** cleanse your conscience from **dead works** to **now** serve the **now** living God?

They are unblemished because in His marvelous and wonderful grace, He graciously and lavishly provided His blood, His perfect blood, to wash them from all the dead and worthless works of their goodness and their religion, such that they may now accompany **Yahweh** in hope and in joy, even when the pathway He walks leads to their ultimate sacrifice. For their part, they are to remain or continue in this faith, or said differently, they are to continue to **now** be believing that it is **ONLY** the blood of the Lamb that makes them worthy—that makes them unblemished!

**Now and Then**

This is not just a tale of the **End Times** but is also about now, about all who now live in Christ (not for Christ, but in Christ). This image of the 144,000 is layered, as we have seen. When we are first introduced to the 144,000, we see them as a great multitude too big to count from every tribe, tongue, nation, and people.<sup>21</sup> And now in this image, we are given a glimpse of those who will be sacrificed—the first to be offed or the first to be plucked.<sup>22</sup>

These descriptions (virgins, accompanying the Lamb, purchased from the earth and from man as a first plucked offering or sacrifice to God, without guile and unblemished) apply to the entire lot, to all those who have made their choice to not abide in this world, but to be found even now abiding in Heaven with Christ.

Sometimes, it may not “feel” like these descriptions identify us because of all the ways we tend to not live like that. And the devil is always bringing accusations against us for not living out these descriptions, and those accusations ring in our ears. But the good news is that this is all the Spirits’ work with in us. It is not something we can make happen; rather, it is how He confirms us to the end, if we are willing to now be found accompanying Him wherever He leads, again, even if that is the pathway of death.

By the way, the pathway to be found **in Christ** is the pathway of death and it is traversed through belief; there is no other way to be found in Christ. Whether we are those who get sacrificed to God through the instrumentation of the Beast and the second beast, or those who offer up to God our entire being as a living sacrifice, the pathway is the same. It requires us to be **willing** to let **Yahweh** put to death all that is within us that does not originate in Him. Remember, **the source matters, the source is everything!**

Our *Old Sinful Nature*, the *flesh*, simply must die if our spiritual virginity is going to be restored. And here is some more good news. God loves us so much, and is so obsessed with us, that He will do whatever it takes to accomplish that goal. All He is looking for is our **willingness** to let Him have His way with our lives so that we might accompany Him wherever He leads.

<sup>21</sup> **Revelation 7:4-17**

<sup>22</sup> See **Revelation 11:7-13; 12:17; 13:7**

Jesus once said that He is the way the truth and the life.<sup>23</sup> He also said that He came that we might have life in abundance.<sup>24</sup> But then He also said that far too many, specifically those who love their religion and love the law, are *unwilling* to come to Him so that they might have life.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, we must never forget that **His goal for us is His life in us** (*it is no longer I who live but Christ in me*).

His goal is not that we muster up enough strength and determination to be good virgins, to be blameless, and to never speak falsehood, and so on, so we can be good witnesses for Him. But, with active belief (remember, **faith is a now thing**), He wants us to be *willing* to let Him sacrifice on the altar all that is not of Him, all that does not want Him to be our personal **I AM**; and in so doing, we choose to become that first plucked offering, a signal, a sign, a promise, of all that is to come.

Ironically, traversing through the pathway of death which leads to life, we become free—truly free to follow the Lamb wherever He goes. The journey may be difficult, but the results are amazing. We become unshackled and unburdened by all that is dead and dying.

On that pathway to death, we choose to be laying aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, and which distracts us from following the Lamb. As a result, we become free to live, free to love, free to now be fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.<sup>26</sup>

Let's stop here and in our next podcast we will pick up with the three Angels who, in effect, deliver one message.

I am glad you "tuned in" and have been "ready to listen."

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<sup>23</sup> **John 14:6**

<sup>24</sup> **John 10:10**

<sup>25</sup> **John 5:40**

<sup>26</sup> See **Hebrews 12:1-2**