

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

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GOD'S GREAT SALVATION,

OUR ULTIMATE DESTINY

REVELATION 7: THE GREAT MULTITUDE

## WHO ARE THEY?

*After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count . . . Then one of the twenty-four elders asked me, “Who are these who are clothed in white? Where did they come from?” Then he said to me, “These are the ones who died in the great tribulation.”*

- ▶ As with the identity of the 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel, there are notable differences of interpretation regarding this innumerable multitude. Some identify them with a seven year period of judgment (cf. Daniel 9.24-27; 12.1) at the end of human history—

*The end will come with a flood, and war and its miseries are decreed from that time to the very end. Then there will be a time of anguish greater than any since nations first came into existence. (DANIEL 9.26B; 12.1)*

- ▶ Others define “tribulation” as the entire period of gospel witness between Pentecost and the second coming of Christ at the end of human history.

*“Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”* (JOHN 16.33)

*“When the shattering of the holy people has finally come to an end, all these things will have happened.”* (DANIEL 12.7b)

- ▶ Regardless of one’s eschatological paradigm (the timing and order of future events in Biblical prophecy), there are critical truths we need to understand and apply to our lives.

## THE SAVIOR OF THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

*After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. And they were shouting with a great roar,*

*“Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!”*

- ▶ As indicated by the Apostle John’s subsequent conversation with the elder, this must have been an overwhelming sight. Standing here before the throne were people from ethnicities and tribes that John could never have imagined to exist, rejoicing in their salvation.

- ▶ This is the ultimate outcome of the magnitude of God's love for the world (John 3.16-17) and the atoning work of Christ's sacrificial death. Here we see the heart of God as He proclaimed it throughout the Old Testament and His purpose fulfilled for the "Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world" (13.8)–

*[The LORD] says, "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)

- ▶ Imagine: John saw people from every one of India's 2,500 people groups and 456 languages, from Indonesia's 722 languages!



- ▶ The praise and worth attributed to the “purchasing power” of the Lamb’s sacrifice (5.9) will, by the end of time, result in countless people coming to know Christ, from everywhere on earth—every ethnicity, every tribe, every language. This should encourage and motivate us because it means that: <sup>(1)</sup> No place or group of people is hopeless or impenetrable—regardless of how unreceptive, evil, or hostile the spiritual environment might be. The gospel is the power of God! <sup>(2)</sup> God is worthy to be praised from every tribe, nation, people, and nation—and He will be. If you possess the heart and love of God, you will passionately desire to be part of this fulfillment (Acts 1.8).

## THE “AMEN” OF HEAVEN

*And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living beings. And they fell before the throne with their faces to the ground and worshiped God. They sang,*

*“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor  
and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”*

- ▶ The praise of the vast multitude causes the angels to spontaneously fall before God, overwhelmed in worship, proclaiming seven-fold ascription of honor framed by a double “amen”. In other words, the supernatural inhabitants of heaven cannot contain their emotions at the sight of so many people redeemed by the saving work of God.

- ▶ The praise of the vast multitude causes all of heaven's angels to spontaneously fall before God, overwhelmed in worship, proclaiming a seven-fold ascription of honor framed by a double "amen". In other words, the supernatural inhabitants of heaven cannot contain their emotions or restrain their praise at the sight of redeemed people!
- ▶ When were you last affected in this way? When was the last time you were astounded at a missions report and overwhelmed with emotion and praise to God? When was the last time that you praised God in such a manner that angels responded, "Amen, amen!"



## THE ANSWER TO “WHO CAN STAND?”

*Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?”*

*I answered, “Sir, you know.”*

*And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*

- ▶ From heaven’s perspective, we should have a compelling desire to know and understand Scripture (cf. Daniel 12.5-6, 8).
- ▶ The only way that one can stand before the “One who sits on the throne and the Lamb” is through hearing the gospel and trusting in the atoning work of Christ. (See also Jesus’ exhortation in Luke 21.34-36.)

## THE MOST PRIVILEGED PLACE

*“Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.*

*‘Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst.*

*The sun will not beat down on them,’*

*nor any scorching heat.*

*For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd;*

*‘he will lead them to springs of living water.’*

*‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”*

- The ultimate destiny of the redeemed is the presence of God. The Savior is also the Shepherd, forever caring for those he redeemed.

- ▶ *“On earth as in heaven”* – the redeemed together in worship has always been God’s design (see Acts 1.14; 2.44-47; Hebrews 10.25).
- ▶ The redeemed in their ultimate, eternal, freest state “serve” God. This means that serving God is the ultimate freedom and joy and fulfillment. And if this is true of eternity, then it is also true now. To live a life of worship and service to the Lord in every aspect of our lives is both a practice for what we’ll be doing in the future, and the ultimate value for our lives in the present.

*You will show me the way of life,  
granting me the joy of Your presence  
and the pleasures of living with You forever.* (PSALM 16.11)

## FINAL THOUGHTS

- ▶ If this is what we are promised for eternity, if this is the hope and life that awaits us, and if we truly believe this and have it always before our eyes, then this will give us strength to endure hardships on earth.
- ▶ The God who deserves and demands worship is a God of ultimate love and compassion. This makes Him all the more worthy to be worshiped, served and adored.
- ▶ What characterized these believers must characterize every true believer: <sup>(1)</sup> the evidence of a life made righteous through the work of Christ, <sup>(2)</sup> the priority of seeking God's presence, <sup>(3)</sup> a spirit of worship, and <sup>(4)</sup> an understanding of our calling to serve Him.