

# WORSHIP SERVICE - 10.3.2021

## THE GREAT MULTITUDE

### I. INTRODUCTION

**MAIN POINT:** The innumerable multitude of saints in heaven testifies to the triumph of the gospel.

#### Revelation 7:9-12

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

### II. THE ADVANCE OF THE GOSPEL

- This second part of chapter 7 further elaborates on the 144,000 who are sealed.
- We looked at this great number on earth as they are going through the tribulation but now we are looking at his same group in heaven as they have come through the great tribulation. (v14)
- The Church Militant on Earth, as the sealed servants of God
- The Church Triumphant in Heaven, as standing before the throne and before the Lamb.

#### 1. ITS SUCCESS

- Following the vision of the 144,000, John receives another in which he sees a great multitude that no one could number.
- He heard the number of the sealed, now he sees a number that cannot be counted.
- We saw that in 6:11 where the martyrs are told to rest a little longer until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete.
- This is a glorious picture showing us that heaven will be populated with more people than we can even imagine.
  
- Example of rapid growth of church in Jerusalem, but churches outside of Jerusalem were much smaller in comparison.
- In John's vision he sees a number that is vastly greater than the number of people alive at the end of the 1st century.
- The gospel agenda will prevail! Jesus is building his church!
- This vision tells us that we should be optimistic about the advance of the gospel and not pessimistic.

- The full number of God's elect will be brought in.

#### a. MOTIVATION TO EVANGELISM AND MISSION

- You and I need to be passionate about seeing souls come to Christ because our labor in proclaiming the gospel is not in vain.
- We can be confident that as we preach and proclaim the good news, some will be saved!
- Our job is to scatter seed, water and God will give the increase. (1Cor. 3:6-7)
- The parable of the Sower shows us that the sowing of the gospel seed will bear fruit in some the hearts of those he has made ready.
- The gospel proclamation is the means God has ordained for that seed to germinate and to bear fruit unto eternal life.
- **Acts 13:48** When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.
- We, like John, are to be captivated and motivated by this vision of the innumerable multitude in heaven of the saints of God, whom Jesus saved out of every generation, place, and time now gathered together in glory!

#### 2. ITS REACH

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb,

- This revelation represents to us the beautiful picture of the glory of heaven, the multi-ethnic throng of people all worshipping before the throne of God!
- The vast sea of people in John's vision are from every part of the earth.
- John is conveying with this symbolism of this group of FOUR that this great multitude which are sealed by God and brought through the great tribulation, hail from every part of the earth!
- Heaven doesn't only consist of ethnic Jews.
- The gospel's reach extends to every corner of the earth, to reach all different kinds of people, just like Jesus said it would.
- **Acts 1:8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
- Jesus said the gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:14)
- The gospel is advancing in the world through the faithful proclamation of God's people taking the message to every part of the world.

#### a. FULFILLMENT OF PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

- But in addition to the gospel promise to go to the ends of the earth, these descriptors reveal the absolute fulfillment of the promise God made to Abram in the covenant of grace.
- **Genesis 12:1-3** "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and **all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.**"
- **Genesis 13:16** I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.
- **Genesis 15:5** He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and **count the stars—if indeed you can count them.**" Then he said to him, "**So shall your offspring be.**"

- **Genesis 17:4-6** “As for me, this is my covenant with you: **You will be the father of many nations.** 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you very fruitful; **I will make nations of you,** and kings will come from you.
- **Genesis 22:17-18** I will surely bless you and make your descendants as **numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.** Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring **all nations on earth will be blessed,** because you have obeyed me.”
- God makes the same promise to Isaac, Abraham’s offspring, in Genesis 26.
- And then confirms the covenant with Isaac’s son Jacob, whose name is changed by God to Israel in Genesis 35.
- God’s plan of redemption has always included people outside of ethnic Israel.
- The gentile nations and peoples in the vision of the great multitude is the fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham.
- The heart and plan of God is for the nations of the world to hear and receive the gospel message.
- Jesus told his disciples in the Great commission to make disciples of all nations.(Matthew 28:18)

## b. END OF ETHNIC HOSTILITY

- This multi-ethnic multitude in the vision is also something that should eradicate any hint of racism or prejudice in the people of God.
- The gospel eradicates all racial distinctions that separate us, and the gospel eradicates all socio-economic class distinctions that separate us.
- We believe the gospel message which tells us that in Christ Jesus, both those who were far off, the Gentiles, and those who were near, the Jews, have both been reconciled to God in one body through the cross. (Ephesians 2:16)
- That should put an end to any racial hostility that might exist in the church.
- The vision also means that no ethnic group is outside of the reach of God’s grace.

## 3. ITS POWER

...standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

- Where is the multi-ethnic multitude?
- Before the throne of God and the Lamb. There is no mystery as to whether or not they can stand on the great day of the wrath of the Lamb.
- How are they described?
- **‘Clothed in white robes’** - they have been purified through testing having gone through the tribulation and now have been brought out from it.
- They were sealed with the name of God on their forehead, and God sovereignly protects them through judgment.
- V14 says their robes are white because they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. They have trusted Christ and his atonement.
- **‘With palm branches in their hands’** - this is an allusion to the Feast of Tabernacles. The Israelites celebrated this feast which reminded them of God’s protection of them through their wilderness wanderings.
- This symbol that originally applied to Israel is now applied to people from all nations who rejoice in their redemption. This is the true Israel.

- They have triumphed as they have passed through their own wilderness pilgrimage, having gone through the tribulation preserved by God.
- This is a symbolic picture of God's people celebrating a Feast of Tabernacles in heaven commemorating their end-times salvation.
- This they attribute to God and God alone!
- **'Crying out with a loud voice...'** - they are worshiping the God who saved them. "*Salvation belongs to our God!*" - this is the song of the redeemed.
- Only the redeemed can sing this song. Rev. 14, in the parallel vision of the multitude says that they are singing a new song which no one could learn except those who have been redeemed from the earth.
- Rev. 19, This heavenly multitude cries out, "*Salvation and glory and power belong to our God!*"
- In response, the angelic host, the 24 elders, and the four living creatures join in the worship of the redeemed declaring this seven-fold doxology: "*Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.*"
- They are witnesses of the redemptive work that God alone achieved and praise the sovereign attributes of God. He alone is worthy!
- The innumerable multitude of saints in heaven testifies to the triumph of the gospel.