

Worship Guide - Lake Mary
WORSHIP SERVICE -
10.10.2021

THE GLORIFIED CHURCH

I. INTRODUCTION

MAIN POINT: Capturing a vision of the unimaginable glory that awaits the glorified Church is a powerful motivator for perseverance and faithfulness.

Revelation 7:9-17

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."

13 Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" 14 I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 "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.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;
the sun shall not strike them,
nor any scorching heat.

17 For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of living water,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

II. TRIBULATION SAINTS

1. WHO ARE THEY AND WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

13 Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" 14 I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

- The Elder is not asking John these questions because he doesn't know the answer, rather he is pointing out HOW this white robed throng of worshipers got to heaven in the first place.
- They are the people that came out of the great tribulation and they got there by washing their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb.
- They aren't standing before the throne because they went through the tribulation and suffered, and experienced difficulty in life because of their witness for Christ, and earned their spot in the glory in heaven.
- They are in heaven by the blood of the Lamb.
- They came through the tribulation solely by trusting Christ and having their sins forgiven through the blood of the atonement.

2. THE GREAT TRIBULATION

"These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation."

- The definite article 'the' before the words great tribulation tells us that this is the latter-day tribulation prophesied by Daniel and Jesus and not just the general trouble that Christians face in this world.
- **Daniel 9:24-27** - contains prophecy regarding the tribulation.
- **Daniel 12:1** "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.
- Jesus himself stated that before his return there would be great tribulation.
- **Matthew 24:21-22** For then **there will be great tribulation**, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.
- There are many who believe that the great tribulation is a final, brief period of extreme trials through which these glorified saints mentioned in Rev. 7 will pass. (Dispensationalism)
- Our study of Revelation is what's called the Idealist View which sees the visions of Revelation as parallel visions that are symbolic in nature. The visions are showing us similar events and themes from different perspectives.
- In the Idealist interpretation of the visions, the tribulation is not relegated to a short period of time right before the return of the Lord, but rather is seen as the entirety of the church age that is characterized by hostility towards Christ-followers, opposition and persecution.

a. REASONS FOR A CHURCH-AGE TRIBULATION PERIOD

- There are a lot of reasons to believe the tribulation extends through the entire church age:

i. Jesus's own teaching, tribulation was a present reality for his disciples.

- **John 15:18-21** "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of

the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, **they will also persecute you**. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. 21 **But all these things they will do to you on account of my name**, because they do not know him who sent me.

- **John 16:33** I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world **you will have tribulation**. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

ii. The apostles understood their time as the last hour; the end times as a present day reality.

- Paul in his letters to the church at Corinth writes of the tribulation and affliction he has endured for the cause of Christ. (1 Cor 4:9–13; 2 Cor 4:8f; 6:4–10; 11:23–28; 12:10)
- Twenty-one of the twenty-three uses of the Greek word for tribulation, (θλίψις - thlipsis), in Paul's letters is a reference to a present reality.
- Peter writes encouraging those who suffer as a Christian to rejoice because they are sharing in Christ's sufferings. (1 Peter 4:12-19)
- **1 John 2:18** Children, **it is the last hour**, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore **we know that it is the last hour**.
- Part 1 of this series, we covered why John's usage in Revelation 1:3 of the phrase, "for the time is near" is the same as "the last days."
- Rev. 1:9 I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation...
- The seven letters to the churches are written to those living in the present reality of tribulation.
- The great tribulation is depicted throughout the NT as the ongoing story of the church through history, facing tribulation after tribulation.
- **Here's why this is important.**
- For the Sealed - the church on earth that is going through the tribulation - they know they're going to make it through so this gives motivation to persevere.
- Who are the ones standing in heaven? Those who have been made righteous by having their robes washed in the blood of the Lamb and have been brought out of the tribulation.
- None of this makes sense if the church is raptured out of the tribulation and does not go through it.

III. THE GLORY OF HEAVEN

1. THE SAINTS BEFORE THE THRONE

15 "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple;

- "Therefore"—means on account of the purity and righteousness obtained through the blood of Christ and the perseverance of the saints—this is the basis for why they can stand and are before the throne of God.
- There are several OT promises God made to Israel that are now applied to this great multitude showing that all believers in Christ fulfill these promises made to ancient Israel, thus proving the Church in both the OT and the NT are the true Israel.
- **Exodus 19:5-6** Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and ***you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.***

- **Rev. 5:9-10** “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, 10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

- **What is this new priesthood of God doing before the throne?**

- **Worshipping** - Revelation is filled with the songs of worship coming from before the throne, many of them from the saints of God.

- V10 “*Salvation belongs to our God...*”

- Much of our heavenly worship will be taken up with continually marveling at the thought that God would save us!

- Salvation will take on a much deeper and fuller meaning as you stand face to face with your Savior.

- **Joel Beeke**, Revelation Commentary, “*Doxologies and praises intensify as we go through the book of Revelation. They get more and more profound. Likewise, salvation consists of an infinite journey into our appreciation of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.*”

- You will never get tired or bored of worshipping God in heaven!

- **Serving** -Those before the throne are serving God day and night.

- We have a picture of a temple but it is not a physical temple. It’s a symbol that is presented to John that speaks of the place where God uniquely dwells—where his manifest presence is.

- Just like the Levitical priests served day and night before the presence of God in the Tabernacle, we too, as priests unto our God, will serve him day and night.

- We will serve God through our worship and we will serve God through other activities that we will carry out.

- There is no reason to think that there will be no work in glory—work was given to man before the Fall and we know that the burden of work will be lifted when the curse is fully reversed.

- In heaven, work will be a delight.

- Examples of angelic activity in Revelation.

- **Rev. 22:9** but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

- We too, like the angels in heaven, will be serving God before his throne.

- Heaven will be a place of eternal enjoyment and eternal employment.

2. ETERNAL REWARDS

a. God will tabernacle with us

- V15c and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

- **Ezekiel 37:26-27** I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will **set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27 My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.**

- **God will be our shelter.**

- **Rev. 21:3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

- The New Jerusalem (Rev. 21), which is a picture of the bride of Christ, is depicted as a city coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. And there is no temple in this city.

- **Rev. 21:22** tells us that there is no temple in the city because **its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb!**

- The city, which is God's people, is ALL temple!
- There is no place where God's presence is not.
- We will live for all eternity in the immediate presence of our God and Savior!

• **Isaiah 4:2-6** In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel. 3 And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, 4 when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning. 5 **Then the Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy.** 6 There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain.

- **Isaiah 49:10** they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them.

b. We will never lack anything.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.

- What a joy to know that everything that we have need of will be supplied.
- Heaven knows nothing of lack!
- God will not only provide for us, He is our eternal provision.

c. The Lamb will be our Shepherd

17 For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

- Because of the Lamb's divine position at the center of the throne, because he is God, he is able to provide all of the comforts his people need.
- As the Divine Shepherd he is able to lead, feed, and protect his sheep.
- The portrait of God as the shepherd of his people in Psalm 23 is one of the most comforting and hopeful pictures we have of how God relates to his people.
- What we see in this heavenly perspective is the realization of this psalm in its fullness.
- One of the reasons there is great discouragement and disappointment expressed by many believers is that they have an over-realized eschatology. This means that they look at the promises of Scripture that will be fully realized THEN and they want it NOW.
- We want the things that characterize the age to come to be present in the age we are living in.
- But here's what's yours right now and what is promised to you right now—tribulation, persecution, pain, suffering...that's yours right now!
- But here is the beautiful thing—the same Shepherd that is our eternal reward is not waiting to shepherd us THEN, he is our Shepherd right NOW!

- He is with us, leading us, spiritually protecting us, and comforting us as we go through the valley of the shadow of death (tribulation).
- This Shepherd, which will guide us to springs of living water THEN, beckons us to partake of those living waters right now.
- Revelation closes with an exhortation, "*Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.*" (Rev. 22:17)
- To all of the saints of God, be captivated by a biblical vision of heaven.
- The glory of heaven is the GLORY of heaven--the one seated on the throne and the Lamb.
- He is our eternal reward!