

## LESSON 10

November 7, 2021

### Unit III. Visions of Praise

#### The Rest of the Story

**DEVOTIONAL READING:** Revelation 1:1-8

**BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:** Revelation 7:9-17

**PRINT PASSAGE:** Revelation 7:9-17

#### KEY VERSE

These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7:14b, KJV)

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“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.” (Revelation 7:14b, NIV)

#### LESSON AIMS

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Understand how God’s salvation and justice for all people inspire praise and worship.
- Embrace the significance of praising God in unity.
- Respond to God’s love, goodness, and grace with joy and exaltation.

#### KEY TERMS

**Beheld (verse 9)**—Greek: *idou* (id-oo’): saw; “looked” (NIV).

**Multitude (verse 9)**—Greek: *ochlos* (okh’los): a crowd; the common people.

**Nation(s) (verse 9)**—Greek: *ethnos* (eth’-nos): a race(s); the nations (as distinct as Israel).

**Salvation (verse 10)**—Greek: *sótéria* (so-tay-ree’-ah): deliverance; salvation.

**Throne (verse 11)**—Greek: *thronos* (thron’-os): a throne, seat; dominion.

**Voice (verse 10)**—Greek: *phóné* (fo-nay’): a voice, sound.

#### INTRODUCTION

My wife’s cousin-sister has recently rung the bell. Before I go into too much detail, let me make sure we all understand the term “cousin-sister.” This is a person who is a cousin (female in this case), usually a first cousin in relationship to you, who spent much of their childhood reared in the same household and raised as a sibling, eating the same food and often enduring the same punishments—hence the term “cousin-sister.” After her husband succumbed to cancer after a long twenty-year fight, less than a caregiver, she found out that she had colon cancer. The news took the entire family by storm. How could the Lord allow such a thing to happen to someone who had been so faithful to God and her spouse? After gathering strength and regaining hope, she began her treatment plan. Upon completion, she rang the bell. There was a big surprise celebration with balloons, signs, etc. Because we were in the midst of Covid-19, the celebration was a drive-thru, which still caught her off-guard and was very emotional for her. This survivor’s tale was not over. A little while later, my phone and my wife’s phone was being blown up by her. We were together at another appointment. When we got to the car, we called her back. She was so excited. She received her final results and was cancer-free. It just reminded me that we should celebrate victory

along life's journey, but remember it is preparation for the final victory we shall celebrate with our God and other saints, when we are removed from the very presence of our enemy.

### **THE BIBLICAL CONTEXT**

Chapters 7–9 in the book of Revelation capture the recording of the judgments of the seven trumpets. This second series of judgments is far more severe and extensive than those introduced by the opening of the seals. Before any of the seven angels sound these seven trumpets, two great multitudes are introduced—one on earth (verses 1-8) and the other in heaven before the throne of the Lamb of God. Prior to our lesson today, chapter 6 spoke of the seven seals' being opened and the releasing of judgment upon the earth. In verses just prior to those in our lesson, we receive an explanation of the sealing of 144,000 members of the children of Israel—12,000 from each tribe (7:4-8). After that, we will discover another group that appears to be spared from the coming judgment. The two groups together show God's grace and love as they are spared from the pending judgment to come, thus providing another reason for the saints of God to rejoice as God holds back to cover and take care of His own.

### **ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT**

#### **ALL PRAISE (REVELATION 7:9-11)**

##### **KJV**

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and

before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

##### **NIV**

9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

10 And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,

After John witnessed the sealing of 144,000 people from the tribes of Israel by God at the hand of one of His angels (in verses 1-8), John saw a vast crowd of people (verse 9a). This group was comprised of people from all over the world—"every nation, tribe, people and language" (verse 9a, NIV). The 144,000 represents God's people—the Christian church. Earlier in the chapter (verses 5-8), John indicated that the 144,000 is a representation of 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Although the twelve tribes were scattered during the Assyrian Captivity, Ezekiel foretold a restoration of the twelve tribes to full strength (see Ezekiel 37). The Christian church is widely considered to be the restoration of the twelve tribes. In his epistle, James addresses Christians as "the twelve tribes scattered among the nations" (James 1:1, NIV). Paul refers to the church as the "Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16), writing "If you belong to Christ, then you are

Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29, NIV). The apostles clearly saw the Christian church as a fulfillment of the promise of the restoration of the twelve tribes.

The white robes signify a level of purity unmatched on earth, and the palm branches are symbols of peace (verse 9b). Together, at the throne of God, this congregation of believers joins their voices to praise God for the salvation He provides through the Lamb (verse 10). The scene was so overwhelming and so awesome that all the angels and all the elders and the four living creatures gathered around the throne, fell on their faces, and worshipped God (verse 11).

### **WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

What can we do to make worship more inclusive for all?

### **ALL PROCLAIM (REVELATION 7:12-14)**

#### **KJV**

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

#### **NIV**

12 saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

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

14 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."

As the angels, elders, and beasts (verse 11) join in the worship, prostrate before the Lord, they add to the song of the redeemed, celebrating the Lord's saving power. The song starts with Amen (verse 12)—an affirmation that what has been said is true. Beholding God's greatness, they all chant "blessings, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and might forever." This encompassing worship chant is sealed with another "Amen." As they continue in harmonious worship, one of the elders asks John to name the identity and origin of those in white robes (verse 13). Instead of answering, John simply says, "You know" (verse 14a, NIV). The elder responds that "these are they which came out of great tribulation" and have "washed their robes . . . in the blood of the Lamb" (verse 14b). They are the church, the blood-washed saints of God. Only the blood of the Lamb can cleanse the stain of sin—the blood, therefore, represents Jesus' purification and cleansing of believers.

### **WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

Many churches have strayed in their preaching and singing emphasis on the blood of the Lamb, in favor of messages centered on praising God for His acts, healing, blessings, etc. Should their emphasis on blessings be balanced with a focus on the significance of Jesus' blood? Why or why not?

## **ALL PROTECTED (REVELATION 7:15-17)**

### **KJV**

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

### **NIV**

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 “‘Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them,’ nor any scorching heat.

17 “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 elder continues to examine the presence of those dressed in white by explaining their role and reward. Because they are more than conquerors (see Romans 8:37) and overcomers by the blood of the Lamb (see Revelation 12:11), they remain at the “throne of God”—serving Him day and night (verse 15a). As they serve, they receive the added blessing of dwelling in the presence of the one who “sits on the throne” (verse 15b, NIV). Because they are present with the Lord, those who have suffered and remained faithful will not suffer hunger or thirst, experience excessive heat, or weep again—they are forever protected by the Lamb (verse 16). John describes the encompassing shelter and safety of life in God’s presence. The Lord Himself shall be the light, warmth, and strength for all who have trusted in Him. The Lord Himself, the very Lamb of God, is in the midst of His people—feeding and leading them to “living fountains of waters” (verse 17)—healing, restorative waters that provide and sustain life. The section closes with a glorious assurance of comfort in God’s presence: “and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” With God, there will be no more hunger, grief, pain, sorrow, or grief. Rejoice, friends—our Lord reigns!

### **WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

Amid the sufferings of the present world, what consolation do you find in the description of life in God’s presence?

### **A CLOSING THOUGHT**

Today’s text draws attention to a future vision of the church engaged in heavenly praise. These heavenly visions point to a time following the Lord’s second coming. While we can only imagine the glory of being in the physical presence of God, John’s vision should inspire us to engage in worshipful praise right now. The great multitude had no distraction or hesitation as they freely worshipped God. Don’t you want to be in that number?

## **YOUR LIFE**

Pause for self-reflection. God will not forget those who have suffered in this life or for the sake of the kingdom. He will remember them with great joy and comfort in His presence. If you are suffering, take courage. God will see you through it and reward you in the end.

## **YOUR WORLD!**

Do you ever imagine heaven? Do you ever share your thoughts and expectations regarding life in God's presence? Many believers are so absorbed with this life, or so fearful of death, that they cannot embrace a joyful expectation of eternal life with God. This week, journal your thoughts or find a friend with whom to talk about heaven.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Dear Lord, we worship You joyfully. Let Your Spirit comfort and keep us during difficult times. Give us the strength of an overcomer and fill us with glorious hope of Your return. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## **CONCLUSION**

**(Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)**

While reading the Background Scripture, consider this thought: "Who's in charge here?"

## **HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS PRAISE FOR GOD'S ETERNAL REIGN**

*(November 8-14, 2021)*

**MONDAY, November 8: "Clap Your Hands, All You Peoples" (Psalm 47)**

**TUESDAY, November 9: "An Everlasting Kingdom" (Daniel 4:34-37)**

**WEDNESDAY, November 10: "Glory to God, Now and Forever" (Jude 20-25)**

**THURSDAY, November 11: "The Lord Is King Forever" (Psalm 10:12-18)**

**FRIDAY, November 12: "God's Faithful Witnesses" (Revelation 11:3-10)**

**SATURDAY, November 13: "The Lord Is Robed in Majesty" (Psalm 93)**

**SUNDAY, November 14: "A Crescendo of Praise" (Revelation 11:11-19)**