

Triumph of the Innumerable Multitudes  
Chp 7:9-17

*Verse 9*

I take this picture to be of the Church triumphant in heaven. They have prevailed over persecution, and death because of "the blood of the Lamb." The Elders gave this explanation of the vision in verses 13-17, in imagery, taken from many Old Testament sources (Isaiah 49:10; Isaiah 25:8; Ezekiel 34:23). Immediately after this comes the opening of the seventh seal (8:1). People from "every nation (*ethnous* - used in contrast to Israel) and tribes, and peoples, and tongues standing before the throne, and before the Lamb having been clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." These palm branches were strictly Jewish imagery from the Feast of Tabernacles. They were signs of victory. Note the use of palm branches in Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. The situation was in divine hands, therefore, not hopeless!

*Verse 10*

"And they cry with a loud voice saying: Salvation to our God sitting on the throne and to the Lamb." The multitude praised the Father and the Lamb for saving them. Christ is here called saviour; this is another clear affirmation of the deity of the Lamb.

*Verse 11*

The high eschalon of heaven assembles around the throne and "worshipped God."

*Verse 12*

These high praises flow out of the heart of those closest to the "one sitting on the throne." The imagery would be well known to John's readers, as the symbolism of oriental kings.

## SECTION 23

## Text 7:13-17

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence

came they? 14 And I say unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them nor any heat: 17 for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

#### Initial Questions 7:13-17

1. Who are those in white robes - vs. 13? (See chp. 6:11)
2. What was the great tribulation - vs. 14?
3. How were the robes made white, and what does this say concerning the atoning Blood of Christ and its relationship to the forgiveness of sins - vs. 1?
4. How long does the service to the Lord last according to vs. 15?
5. Who is the shepherd in this scene - vs. 17?

#### Verse 13

One of the elders identified the multitude. "These having been clothed with white robes, who are they, and whence come they?"

#### Verse 14

"And I have said to him: My Sir (*kurie*) usually means Lord, but here it refers to one of the elders and not God), you knowest. And he told me: these are (the ones coming *erchomenoi* - present middle participle, continue to come) out of (*ek*) the great affliction"—Charles says - "The martyrs are still arriving from the scene of the great tribulation." "And washed (*ephlan* - 1st aor. active ind. they were washed in a single act not a process) their robes and whitened them (see Isaiah 1:18) in the blood of the Lamb." Who is the unnumberable multitude? They are the redeemed!

#### Verse 15

"Because of this fact of being washed (*dia touto* - therefore) they are in front of the Throne of God, and serve (*latreuousin* -

present ind. continually, publicly serve. This is the word from which liturgy comes - public worship) him day and night in his Temple, and the one sitting on the throne will spread (his) tent (*skenosei* - word for tent or tabernacle) over them." The tabernacle was the special dwelling place of God. Now people from every nation are members of the body of the redeemed. God's people are no longer limited to physical Israel. Where ever the Gospel is preached and men respond to Christ there is God's dwelling place. God's faithfulness is crystal clear. He will take care of His own. We may betray God, but God will never betray us!

*Verse 16*

God's own will never hunger nor thirst. God's sovereignty will reign both in the universe and the hearts of the blood bought saints.

*Verse 17*

All reason for human sorrow is gone. The Lamb is Victory and great Shepherd. Every single tear will be wiped away by the Living God. Such tender care! The picture is not that redeemed sinners are so happy that they wipe away their own tears, but God loves them so much that He wipes mortal eyes clear of every single tear.

Next comes the seventh seal, and then follows the seven trumpets, which retrace the same basic ground of the seven seals but this is not mere repetition. A greater sense of urgency, a better vantage point of the completeness of the divine purpose and a sharper focus on the fact of God's complete control over the universe is revealed.

Review Questions for Seventh Chapter

1. What is the basic change which takes place between chp. 6 and 7?
2. From what direction is the other angel coming in vs. 2?
3. Read Zechariah 6:1-8 and discuss its use in vs. 3.
4. Is the list of the 12 tribes of Israel correctly given in vs. 5-8?
5. What does vs. 9 imply about our missionary efforts?
6. What does the imagery of vs. 14 tell us?
7. Why are the redeemed before the throne in vs. 15? What are they doing there?

## SECTION 24

## Text 8:1-6

And when he opened the seventh seal, there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels that stand before God; and there were given unto them seven trumpets.

3 And another angel came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel taketh the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth; and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings and an earthquake.

6 And the seven angels that had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

## Initial Questions 8:1-6

1. What does the trumpet signify - vs. 2?
2. What were trumpets used for in the New Testament world?
3. Does vs. 3 and 4 contain biblical justification for the Roman Catholic doctrine of the power of the prayers of the dead saints?
4. What does the casting of fire upon the earth signify - vs. 5?
5. Who prepared to sound the trumpets - vs 6?

Opening of the Seventh Seal: The Half Hour's Silence  
in Heaven; The First Four Trumpet Blasts  
Chapter 8:1-13

*Verse 1*

As with the seven seals (5:8-10), before the trumpets sound there is an initial vision of the function of the prayers of the saints. Here we see the power of the prayers of the righteous to avail God's intervention in the events of history (8:2-5), described in almost the same way as before.