

Behold | Sermons through the Revelation

Sermon #16 | Revelation 7:9-17 | The Multitude | Dr. Randy White

Revelation 7:9-12 | The Songs of the Multitude

- In verses 1-8 of this chapter, the 144,000 were sealed *in the presence of their enemy*.
- The multitude in verses 9 and following are *in the presence of their Redeemer*.
 - The 144,000 was *one part* of the answer to the question of Revelation 6:18, **who shall be able to stand?**
 - Verses 9-17 are the second part of the answer.
- In these verses, we have *song* from the multitude and a *response* from the angels.
- The 144,000 was a precise number. This group is simply a **multitude, which no man could number** (v. 9).
- This multitude is said to be **of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues**. However, that description in itself is not sufficient to determine these are *gentiles*, as it may first seem. These are literally said to be *out of all nations*, etc. They could, in fact, be Jews who are not part of the 144,000 but are **faithful unto death** (as in Rev. 2:10).
- Because John saw as this multitude **stood before the throne**, we must presume one of two things:
 - This takes place *after the tribulation* since these individuals would be in Sheol, not **before the throne** (v. 11), if it took place during the tribulation or in the Old Testament days.
 - Or Sheol was emptied out at the cross and thus these people have been there since those times.
 - We will find our answer in just a few verses!
- The multitude is **clothed in white robes** and has **palms in their hands** (v. 9).
 - Palms are seen in two places in Scripture: the Feast of Tabernacles and the Triumphal Entry.
 - Both are associated with the establishment of the Messiah on the throne.
 - Incidentally, the word Phoenix comes from the Greek word for palms, φοῖνιξ [phoenix]. The mythical bird, which represents new life, is likely a perversion of the symbolism of the palm branches in the original religion.
- The multitude sings **Salvation to our God...and unto the Lamb**. A song of praise (v. 10).

- The angels also join in their own song of praise (v. 12).
- Notice that in Revelation 5:9, the 24 Elders praised God for having **purchased...men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation**. Now, in Revelation 7:9 we actually *see* those people. Note also that in 5:10 we are told that this group **shall reign on earth**, which tells us that this multitude is of the Jews, not the Gentiles.

Revelation 7:13-15 | The Identity of the Multitude

- One of the elders asks John a question, certainly for teaching purposes, **what are these...**(v. 13).
- John deferred on the answer, and the multitude was those who **came out of the great tribulation**. This answers our previous question of verse 11. Thus they are not “the church,” nor can they be “Old Testament saints.” Furthermore, this whole episode must, by logic, take place *after the tribulation* and thus during the coming Kingdom.
- Notice that this group has **washed their robes** (in the active sense). Such language would be accurate after the age of grace, but not for those who are *complete in Christ by His grace-gift* during the age of Grace. Compare 1 Corinthians 6:11.
- However, **the blood of the Lamb** is the *cleansing power* for salvation given through any means.
- Since this is after the tribulation, and these people **serve him day and night**, then does this take place *in heaven* or *on earth*?
 - It is tempting to say *in heaven* because this *looks like* the throne room. (But things similar are not the same!)
 - In the Kingdom, *God dwells on earth* in the Temple (Rev. 21:3).
 - This scene is *after the tribulation* and *after the Second coming* and thus *after the establishment of the Kingdom on earth*.

Revelation 7:16-17 | The Blessing of the Multitude

- These two verses describe life on earth *with the curse lifted*.
- These are days of utopia which the world has long dreamt for and often tried (unsuccessfully) to create. They are days that will only come when God *tabernacles* among men.
- When we pray, *Thy Kingdom Come*, this is what we are praying for!