

The Triumph of Saving Grace

by Danny Bond

The sermon highlights the ultimate triumph of saving grace in Revelation 7, where a great multitude is saved by God's greatest act of saving grace, inspiring evangelism and the salvation of God.

Duration: 48:00

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Revelation 7:9-17

Topics: "Saving Grace", "End Time Prophecy"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the life of the apostle John, who is depicted as an old man living in a cave on the island of Patmos. Despite his difficult circumstances, John did not give up or lose faith. The sermon explores the gloomy events described in the book of Revelation, including the sealed judgments and the erosion of the churches. However, amidst the darkness, John receives a revelation that brings him hope and encouragement: the ultimate triumph of saving grace. The speaker emphasizes the significance of this revelation to John, as it reveals that the small flock of believers will one day grow into an innumerable multitude.

Transcript

Father, we come to Revelation 7. This is the revelation of Jesus Christ and we ask, Holy Spirit, that that's what we would experience here this day. Open our eyes, Lord, that we might see the glory of God here in Jesus Christ and in your great plan of redemption you have for any that will believe upon you. Quicken us, Lord, in terms of where we stand with all of this in time on planet Earth now in these last days.

Quicken us to what you would have us to do, how you would have us to live, and what you would have us to share with others. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

In front of us in Revelation, we have what I have called the ultimate triumph of saving grace. Revelation chapter 7, verses 9 down to verse 17. You read in verse 9, After these things I looked.

After these things is the way John writes when he's about to share with us another revelation that was given him. The chapter opens up with after these things and we learned all about the 144,000 and it was a great vision of what's going to be happening on the Earth in the last days, last seven year period of man on Earth. Really, the last three and a half years is where we are by the time we get to Revelation 7. Revelation 7 is basically a parenthesis in between the unfolding of the seal judgments.

We pick up chapter 8. We will open the seventh seal. But this is a refreshing time for John as he's on Patmos and he's writing these things down. It has been rather gloomy.

You could say all through chapter 6 as the first seal is loose, the second, the third, the fourth. You have false peace busted up by war. Then you have famine, pestilence, worldwide death.

And you have the vengeance of God beginning to be outpoured. Then the Earth begins to quake. The sun turns dark, the moon like blood and the men are crying under the rocks to hide them and so on.

So it's very gloomy. It's more, you could say, of more gloom and almost disappointment to John. John is almost a hundred years old here.

He was a very young man when he laid his head on Jesus' chest at the Last Supper. He has seen a lot in his Christian life. And this becomes a very powerful way of encouraging John that he has done the right thing with his life.

And so it is for us as well. Charles Spurgeon, in one of his daily readings entitled *The Night Also is Thine*, from Psalm 74, verse 16. Spurgeon reminds believers this.

He says, gloomy seasons of religious indifference and social sin are not exempted from the divine purpose. When the altars of truth are defiled and the ways of God forsaken, the Lord's servants weep with bitter sorrow, but they need not despair for the darkest eras are governed by the Lord and shall come to their end at his bidding. What may seem defeat to us may be victory to him.

And that is very much the point in the section before us. As things get so dark, so bleak, it is an hour of great victory for God in saving so many souls as we're going to see here. When the grace you can put it this way, when the grace is the least expected, God pours out the most.

Let's read over the passage. Revelation seven nine. After these things, I looked and behold, a great multitude, which no one could number of all the nations, tribes, people and tongues standing before the throne and before the lamb clothed with white robes with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice saying salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

And all the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures fell on their faces before the throne and worship God saying, I'm in blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen. Then one of the elders answered saying to me, who are these arrayed in white robes and where did they come from? And I said to him, Sir, you know.

So he said to me, these are the ones who come out of the Great Tribulation and wash their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. 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 dwell among them.

They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore. The sun shall not strike them nor any heat for the lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Notice the interest to entrance to heaven often has many tears. But God is going to wipe them away forever once you get there. I was reading this week and one of the commentators pointed out.

He said, study this passage very carefully because there is much here revealed about heaven and precious little. We have of that thing about precious little we have revealed to us about heaven. I don't know about you, but I wish there was another volume entirely to go with the Bible that just dealt with heaven, because the thought of dying and then going to heaven, you know, that whole thing I wish I'm placing my whole eternity in God's hands.

Precious little we have concerning heaven. So what we do have, we should study very, very, very carefully until it sinks down well deep into our souls. There's much here for us.

We have in front of us here the largest revival in history. We have here the greatest theme of worship in heaven. We have here the holiest associations.

When we get there, we have here the clearest identification of who these people are. This great multitude, no one can number. And we have in verse 17, the brightest future imaginable.

Your future is bright, regardless of what is going on in your life today. Your future. If you know Jesus Christ today is absolutely bright.

Let's look at this. To begin with, we have here the largest revival in history. After these things, I let them behold a great multitude, which no one could number.

Imagine yourself in a great baseball stadium. It's packed 60,000 people. They're cheering at full volume.

They're happy. A play has been run that they like. That's a lot of people, isn't it? Are you there? Can you imagine? OK, go well beyond the 60,000.

Into a number that you cannot number a multitude, you cannot number. It's as far as I can see. These are the people that are in heaven.

We know of great revivals in the history of the church. It's one of the most fascinating things to study as a Christian. I don't know if you ever have, but it really is fascinating to study.

There's the Great Reformation and the tendency of the Great Reformation. There are names like Martin Luther, John Haas of Anarola, others. There was a great awakening in the 1700s in England with incredible revival poured out with George Whitfield, the mighty man of God.

He encouraged John Wesley and his brother to preach in the open air. The revival became bigger. Up in Wales, over in Wales, there was Roland Hill and the great revival going on there.

We know of such revivals. And there was in the in America, there was the great awakening with Jonathan Edwards, who's known not only to the Christian world, but to the secular as well for being one of the greatest intellects this nation ever produced. So we know great revivals.

It was the Welsh revival in 1904 that was incredible. But we know nothing of a revival on this scale. This is worldwide and it takes place during this tiny period of three and a half years, the last three and a half years of man on earth.

This multitude is so great it can't be counted. Think of that. To give you a perspective in the Bible, almost everything can be counted.

In the Old Testament, you have Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, Deuteronomy, first five books of the Bible. Numbers counts everything and has a number for everything, how much they gave, when they died and so on. When you have Jonah called of God to go preach and evangelize the Ninevites.

He has to walk three days journey across this huge city. It is estimated there were over a million people in Nineveh. He preaches this brief message to repent before God and the entire city turns to the Lord.

It's a huge revival of around a million people. Things are numbered in the Bible. Pentecost, we know three thousand came to the Lord on the day of Pentecost.

When Jesus fed the five thousand, there were probably with women and children, thirty thousand in the crowd. We know the Bible numbers things, but here the multitude is so great, no one can number it. It's huge, huge.

It's the greatest revival in the history of the world. And it doesn't just come out of England or America or Wales or somewhere else. It comes, we're told here.

In verse nine, out of all the nations, tribes, peoples and languages or tongues. It is huge. A multitude that cannot be counted.

This multitude, if you look at them and contemplate them, is God's greatest act of saving grace, because in the greatest hour of wrath, God shows his greatest mercy. You have, as I mentioned, the false peace of the Antichrist with the world's peace and safety and sudden destruction comes their way. Then you have people dying of starvation from famine and pestilence and asteroids bombarding the earth.

In chapter six, you have unrestrained evil. The time is coming. Second Thessalonians, two, seven says the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.

Only he who now restrains that the Holy Spirit will do so until he is taken out of the way. The time is coming when the restraint on men's hearts. To sin will be taken away and men will be living in unrestrained evil on planet Earth that will equate to unrestrained brutality.

So asteroids, earthquakes, volcanoes, lava, hot lava flowing on the earth, unrestrained brutality, Antichrist, get this, the Antichrist operating at full throttle. Add to that a time when Satan is in a rage because he's running out of time. You realize Satan knows the Bible.

Satan knows the Bible. The Bible says in Revelation, he's going to be thrown into the lake of fire. So in this last three and a half years on the earth, Satan knows he's going to be thrown into the lake of fire.

His time is short. He's going to do everything he can to make sure that he escapes the lake of fire. And because he lives in falsehood and deceit.

And Jesus said there's no truth in him. He actually, I think, believes he can beat what the Bible says about his fate. And that is what explains his ferocious, insatiable fortitude to press on and try to conquer Jesus Christ, all the saints, all his glory and all the work of God.

He knows his time is short and he believes he can still beat it. That's why he's so vicious. So in the midst of all this on planet Earth, what a place it's going to be.

God sweeps in so swift, so comprehensive, saves so many so fast that they cannot even be numbered. I say it is the greatest hour of his wrath and he shows his greatest mercy. That to me tells me a lot about my God, because you know who these people are.

These people are the individuals who missed the rapture. They are individuals who lived through the preaching of their friends. They heard their co-worker witness to them about Christ.

They were given a track. They watched a movie. They read the Left Behind series and got left behind anyway.

Can you imagine that? There will be those people. Imagine that. They'll read, hey, are you reading Left Behind? Man, I applaud to them all.

There'll be people like that and then they'll be left behind. Oh, my. So to read that there's a multitude that no man can number, so many of this multitude, if not all of them, heard the gospel, rejected Christ, missed the rapture and somehow God finds a way to save them anyhow.

His greatest act of grace, saving grace. This multitude here should be a solid inspiration to us of evangelism. It should be a solid inspiration to us of evangelism, because here we see this.

Redemption will triumph in the end. Don't you love that thought? Redemption will triumph in the end. If ever it was going to be obliterated and men would plunge into darkness with no one saved, it would be this time.

But instead, on the contrary, it's the largest revival in the history of the world. People being saved everywhere. So when I see that redemption is going to triumph in the end, we are on the winning side.

And I realized that in leading just one person to Christ, I changed their forever. That makes me want to sow the seed of the word of God anyway that I can. I would encourage you to look at it this way.

If these people, so many of them are saved, the multitude that cannot be counted. And they missed the rapture. You know that so many of them heard the gospel after the rapture and the wrath of God is poured out on the earth and it becomes so awful.

People are going to be driven to Christ left and right. And it will be because of what so many of their friends told them before. They were raptured.

That tells me that I should be about sowing seeds. Listen to this. That will bear fruit later.

Sowing seeds that will bear fruit later. If the rapture comes next week, then I want to make sure I've done anything I can to sow seeds and plant seeds before that, so that individuals after I'm gone will come to know Christ because of what I shared with them. Even if they reject him now, just because you share the Lord with someone and they reject him doesn't mean they will always reject him.

I thank God that's true. Otherwise, I wouldn't be here. So many people share Jesus Christ with me and I rejected him.

I rejected some of them to physically and some almost became martyrs. But thank God that even when I was in my greatest rage and rejection to Christ, he was still loving me and still intending on saving me. And here I am today because of the grace of God and Jesus Christ.

Just because somebody is rejecting you or your witness now doesn't mean they always will. We should sow seeds that will bear fruit after even after we're gone. And the joy of sowing the gospel seeds is so great in Isaiah fifty five eleven.

God says, so shall my word be that goes from my mouth. It shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish what I please and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. For you will go out with joy and be let out with peace.

The mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. It is a joy to sow the word of God. Do you know that? Look at how this works.

Jeremiah was faithful to sow the word of God. He even tried to quit a few times because nobody responded to his message. Jeremiah was faithful to sow the word of God, even faithful than to write down what God showed him later on.

Years later, a man by the name of Daniel, a young man by the name of Daniel, was taken captive to Babylon. While they're seeking the Lord, Daniel found the writings of Jeremiah, which became the mainstay of his life in Babylon, which was a long life to about a hundred. One day, Daniel was pouring over the scriptures in Jeremiah and Jeremiah's writings, and as he began to pour over them and began to pray, Daniel nine, the Lord began to open his heart and God began to reveal to him the events of the last days, the things that Daniel had revealed to him while he was studying Jeremiah are the very things we read in Daniel and bring over to Revelation to help us to understand Revelation.

God gave Daniel Revelation while reading Jeremiah that helps us to understand the book of Revelation. Are you with me? Aren't you glad that Jeremiah was faithful to sow the seeds of the word of God that would bring forth fruit after it was huge in Daniel's life and we partake of that benefit now? It's always that way. So this multitude should be a solid inspiration to us in evangelism.

This multitude was a great inspiration to John on Patmos. To me, I love to see how practical our God is, how intimate our God is. John had served the Lord throughout his life.

He's in exile now on Patmos. As far as he knows, he'll die there. He's an old man.

He has recently written out seven letters to seven churches, five of which were bad. We know they didn't respond. Those churches, as far as John knows, the way they are eroding, they won't respond either.

He has also seen this sad what you could call Judas effect. So many people betraying the Lord, so many people as fakes along the way in his life, turning from Christ. Don't forget, Jesus had spoke in the days John spent with spent with him of it always being a little flock.

And now it seems to be getting littler and littler to John. But John lives on Patmos long enough to see Jesus revealed to him that that little flock would one day grow to be a number so huge no man could count it. What does that mean to John? Everything.

He's at his lowest point in life. He served God his whole life to end up living in a cave. How would you feel? How would you feel now that you have your stuff? So if you didn't have any stuff, wouldn't be so bad.

Now that you have your stuff and you have your routine and you have your life, you get the same aisle at the market, same way, reach for the same thing, put in your cart, you know, you go out to your car, beep it,

get in, do your routine. OK, suppose all that was taken away and you had to live on a cave, live in a cave on an island, a little tiny rock island, a barren island. You can even grow garden and you're in there now you're old and yet you didn't blow it.

You did not blow it. Well, here he is. He didn't blow it.

He lives in a cave and he's old. He's going to die there. And all the other apostles were martyred.

How do you think he feels? This is terrific. Ship me out as an old man, take my stuff, make me live in a cave, possibly on a chain gang. Research indicates.

Then you give me all these depressing letters to write to these horrible churches. Then you show me all this wrath. Lord, I'm delighted to have the encounter, but doesn't change the fact I'm going to bed in that cave.

And I wonder if I really did the right thing with my life. I can see Ephesus from here on this rock on a clear day. I see the houses up on the hill.

I live in the cave. Doesn't change the fact I lost it all. I live in a cave.

Maybe just maybe I didn't do the right thing. And that is so huge, isn't it? Because it's so real to us. It's our life.

So John goes from the lowest point on this island to this revelation would lift him to his highest point in his whole life. Because now he sees a great multitude. The little flock has become a great multitude.

No man could number before he dies. He lives to know with absolute certainty. He certainly he did the right thing in following Jesus Christ.

Let me say this to you. If you walk with Christ and you continue faithful, then one day at a time, no matter what happens in your life, you won't have to live with the what ifs. You won't have to live with the what ifs, even if you end up in a cave.

As long as you have a clean heart and a clean conscience, God has his purposes. And when John was in that boat, slowly going out to the island to get out and go live in his get his cave the same time you're in one on one cave, one on one communal showers, not here. You don't get a shower one on one.

You get a blanket. When he got that, you understand how depressing it was. But you know what? By the time he was all done, he had insight and detail of where he was going in heaven that he didn't have when he went there.

So John is taken from his lowest point to his highest point by this vision that should encourage us as well. We have the largest revival in history, which takes us up into heaven here to the greatest theme of worship in heaven. It is the salvation of God.

Revelation seven nine. After this, I looked beyond the great multitude, which no one could number of all the nations, tribes, people and tongues standing before the throne and before the lamb clothed with white robes, which is the statement about the righteousness of God and Jesus Christ given to them as a free gift with palm branches, symbol of triumph and victory. God's rescuing hand in their hands, crying out with a loud voice, a loud voice.

Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the lamb. And they're waving palm branches in the Feast of Tabernacles. They would build these little booths out of palm branches and then they would wave them around.

And it was to commemorate the fact that in the wilderness, when they were going through the wilderness and they came up to the Jordan River and they didn't want to go into the promised land. Remember that the giants will kill us. We're as small as grasshoppers in the site.

And they had unbelief. And God said, then you'll die in the wilderness. Everybody 20 years old and above.

The rest that are under 20 will live through the wilderness and they will go in to take the land. So as they were being judged, everybody 20 years old and older and dying in the wilderness, God was at the same time. That was his judgment.

At the same time, he was preserving those who would live to go on into the promised land. So years later, they celebrated that with palm branches, waving that commemorated the fact that God had greatly delivered them in grace. Well, he was judging others.

So here they are in heaven. Those that were greatly delivered while God was judging others, he was gracious to them and they cry with a loud voice saying salvation belongs to our God. You know why it's loud? God likes it loud.

No, it's not written there, but they cry with a loud voice and it's loud because their hearts are expressing a gratitude that is so deep. And. It gets deeper, the longer they're there.

Just imagine the gratitude of somebody saved. Out of the tribulation, who missed the rapture, the gratitude. Oh, my.

And so here they are, Christ rejecters, they were given the ultimate second chance. This is real. What John saw is real.

It is exactly what's going to happen. They are snatched out of the wrath, either by a disaster of a cliff falling on them or an asteroid hitting them. Listen, you missed the rapture.

It gets kind of sketchy. You know how it might go for you, either hit by an asteroid or dying of natural causes or dying because you're martyred under the persecution of the. Either way, they come out of it up into heaven and they get there.

You're in heaven with the angels and the Lord, he's on his throne, I'm here, it just gets louder and louder, the deeper the realization goes to their hearts, into the safety and the glorious bliss of heaven forever. And the gratitude of those in heaven only grows. We see that they sweep in to their worship, everybody else who's there, everyone else who's there.

I like that. You sweep in the innumerable multitude of all of heaven. Revelation 7-11.

And all the angels stood around the throne and the elders, the 24 elders we already studied, represents the church. The church. What happens is in this section of the book of Revelation, the focus is really on God dealing with Israel to bring them back to salvation.

144,000 evangelize their nation and much of the world. So the focus is on God in the last seven years on earth. The time of Jacob's trouble foretold in the Old Testament is God dealing with Israel and at the same time dealing with the rest of Christ, rejecting humanity.

But the focus is Israel. In the book of Revelation, this will help you understand it. From the time you get to chapter 4, when the church is raptured, until chapter 19, the focus is Israel.

There are other things happening, but the focus is Israel. Right now, these are people in heaven, and you know how they got there? Well, there's a reason that the 144,000 is in chapter 7, and when we're finished dealing with them after these things, this multitude in heaven. 144,000 evangelists, a multitude in heaven.

144,000, a multitude in heaven. You get the connection? It's saying to us that a big part of the way that they got to heaven was through the evangelism of the 144,000 Israelites who come to know Christ and are sealed to evangelize and live on into the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. So here they are.

Their gratitude only grows. They got there, many of them, through the witness of 144,000, and they affect everybody else. Angels around the throne, the elders, the four living creatures, they all fall on their faces and worship God, just shouting out these phrases.

You see, they're worshipping, and then they fall on their faces and look. Verse 12, saying, notice this, Amen, and then all these praises, and then Amen. Do you see that? Amen and Amen.

It is a solemn opening. It's the most serious thing possible. Amen.

It is true. It is done. Our salvation, blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving.

Do you see that? Thanksgiving, the effect on the human heart of a real salvation, of real salvation that takes you to a real heaven. We have a real relationship before God and His infinite glory with infinite blessings in store. The effect is that of ever growing gratitude, and the whole multitude of heaven now gets into the worship with this innumerable multitude saved out of that three and a half year period in heaven.

Everybody joins in with them in a panoramic display of gratitude that grows forever. Do you realize that? In heaven, your gratitude is going to grow forever. Heaven is a, one thing we are learning about it here, it is a place of activity, a place of change.

The multitude that no man can number are those that came out of the tribulation. Earlier, we studied in Revelation that there were those under the altar, remember, that came out of the tribulation. Now they're out from under the altar and they're standing at the throne.

There's activity in heaven. Things change in heaven. Heaven is the most exciting, glorious place with activity and action directed by God that will go on that way forever.

And I say that because so many of us come to the Bible with a preconceived idea of what heaven is about. Kind of like a nice house. Jesus said in my father's house are many mansions.

I'm going to go prepare a place for you. Oh, he's going to make a really nice room for me in the father's house. But we get this idea that the father's house is neat and tidy and stays that way all the time.

And like many nice houses never really changes. Once you get your stuff and you get your stuff arranged, you leave your stuff the way it is, but a little plastic over that one couch in the living room that no one ever

sits on and stay in the family room all the time. And we get our stuff.

We get this idea. I think we bring it to the Bible that heaven is this sort of glorious but stagnant place. We get this idea that you get your gold belt, your robe and you get assigned to your place.

But other than that, it's kind of like there you are. We get this idea that it's just this ongoing same thing. It's not.

We have already read of visions that take us up into heaven and show us all of this change, all of this activity and all of this excitement and gratitude for the activity. There's precious little revealed anywhere about heaven. What is revealed is very precious.

And I love to understand it all as much as I can. The largest revival in history, the greatest theme of worship in heaven is our salvation. We grow in our gratitude forever as we realize what we got.

And then in verse 11, the third thing here is the holiest associations are granted to those that are saved. Notice it's all the angels, all the angels. How is that encouraging? Well, think about this now.

What's your place in turning your Bible to Hebrews? This is amazing. Hebrews one, chapter one, verse 14, the angels, the very holy angels. We will be with this group.

With the holy angels, you say, so what? I'll tell you what is important about that and glorious. Hebrews one, 14, are not all angels ministering spirits sent forth to serve those who will inherit salvation. You realize what that is saying? That is saying that if you're a Christian today, God assigned angels to your life before you ever became a Christian.

Then they were part of the salvation process in your life and they are with you now. If you are a Christian. Jesus one day took some young children, he sat them on his lap and he began to pray for them.

And then he said, their angels do always behold the face of the father in heaven. We get the phrase guardian angel from that. Listen, little children grow up and become adults.

And when you're an adult and you're a Christian, angels are ministers to you as an air of salvation. It's right there in the book of Hebrews. That is why later and follow this later in Hebrews.

That is why the writer says, don't you know that sometimes you have entertained angels without knowing it? Angels unaware. That's true. So I find it amazing that I get to go to heaven as a sinner saved by grace and I get to spend eternity with angels and the angels I read here are so excited that they fall down with everybody else.

It's been saved and worship the Lord for their salvation. Why think about it? Think about you being in heaven and you get to go over and talk to one of those angels that was assigned to your life. Can you imagine the discussion? Hi, I'm Danny.

Yeah, I know I'm here. I know. And am I glad you saw me on my face worshipping with everyone else? Yeah, I did.

Am I glad you're here? You made it. You don't know how many times as the father to take me off the project on your life. You know, I've been wanting to meet you up here so I could ask you, why were you like that? I never I could never understand why you live days on end without him.

Oh, am I glad you made it. Let's rejoice, shall we? You know, we get to actually this is real. We'll actually meet those angels that were ministers to our salvation and they will tell us great stories and we will rejoice together forever.

And it isn't just my life or your life. You have other people that live before you and they have spent the ages ministering to human beings, even when they don't know it, who will live forever in heaven. And they share them in that glorious salvation that we have.

That's why they're so grateful with us. And so we will have the holiest associations in heaven with the holy angels. We who down here are so simple.

I love that. That's my God. When he found me, I was in the mirey pit and he saved me.

And the Bible said he found me in the mirey pit and he sets my feet upon the rock. When he saved me, I was in the mirey pit and he has been lifting me and lifting me and lifting me and lifting me from the first day. I met him.

And one day I will be lifted to live with the holy angels forever and all the other redeemed of the ages. And so it is, there is this holy association that is ours in heaven. The fourth thing I want to take you to is the clearest identification here of who these people actually are.

And I want to take a minute with it for this reason. Interpreters and commentators come up with all different kinds of interpretations as to who these people are. And we need to know who they are.

Who are they? They are those that are saved in the tribulation after the rapture. Read it. Revelation 7 13.

One of the elders answered, saying to me, who are these arrayed in white robes and where did they come from? I said to him, sir, you know. So he said to me, these are the ones who come out of the great tribulation. That's the last three and a half years before Jesus Christ comes back to the earth and wash their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb.

Dr. Robert Thomas comments on the significance of this elder's question. He says this exemplifies the dialogue format, dialogue format used from time to time to convey an explanation of a vision. You find it in Jeremiah, Amos, Zechariah.

He goes on to say this is a tool. It shows that visions were not given for the purpose of just spectacular displays, but to convey revelation. The details of which were not to be missed.

I like that in quote. I like that because people come to the Bible and go, oh, wow, revelation. I can't understand it.

I read it. All this stuff going on now. It isn't just for some great display to dazzle you and confuse you.

It's revelation that you are not to miss, that you are to understand. So the angel, lest we would read this and go, well, we're not really sure who they are. He says, John, who are they? So I don't know.

Tell me, you know, thanks. They are those saved out of general tribulation. Seven years.

The great tribulation specific. The last three and a half years. This is a unique group, unique in all of human history that you see in heaven right now.

It is not the rapture. This is not the church. They join the church, but this is not the church specifically.

These are those saved right out of the great tribulation. Now, how did they get there? They got there, as I've stated, no doubt to the witness of the hundred and forty four thousand. But we're going to read on a revelation to study the two witnesses to their witness as well and other believers on Earth.

What is so fantastic about this is that God's plan for Israel from the beginning was for them to be the light of the world. They would be the ones with a true and living God, and they would draw all men to focus on them and point them to their God. Then when their God came to Earth and stepped out on planet Earth and said, I'm the way, the truth and the life, everyone could come to know him.

Israel completely blew. Their stewardship of being the light of the world and they rejected their Messiah. God is going to give them another chance to be the light of the world and they're not going to blow it.

And many will be sent to heaven because of them. So these people died in the tribulation and went to heaven. They believed on Christ after they had rejected him and missed the rapture.

They came into heaven over a period of seven years and more specifically, the last three and a half years. But notice this. In verse 14, it says these are the ones who come out of the great tribulation.

Do you see that? Verse 14. These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation. I'm drawing your attention to that for this reason.

There are those that teach a mid tribulation rapture. They'll go right here and they'll show you an innumerable host in heaven. These are those that come out of the great tribulation.

Well, there's a problem with that interpretation, and it's this. This phrase come out, come out of the tribulation, the great tribulation. It is translated from the Greek from a present durative possible participle, present durative participle of the verb.

The present durative participle of the verb depicts a prolonged process, a prolonged process. This group keeps growing because people over a period of time keep coming to heaven as they die. That rules out rapture completely because the rapture of the church is a single, instantaneous, sudden event.

First Corinthians 15 tells us it is in the twinkling of an eye. So to come out over a sustained period of time rules out this being a mid trip rapture. And these are not the church.

These are people who die as they are saved in the midst of the great tribulation. Very important to understand. So someone doesn't come along and confuse you about everything we've studied so far.

Clare's identification. We are told they are the tribulation believers. Finally, number five, the brightest future is where we end.

Verse 15. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and they serve him day and night. Is there day and night in heaven? You read all of Revelation, you find out there isn't.

In the new heaven and the new earth, in the new Jerusalem, there is no day or night there for the lamb is the light. So why does it say day and night is it is an idiomatic phrase that refers to the span of eternity. That's all they continue their perpetually in his temple.

Therefore, they serve him day and night in his temple. Very interesting. If I can stick this in a really fast, very interesting, because John sees them in the temple serving Lord in his temple.

When Christ comes back to the earth. And he sets up his kingdom on earth for a thousand years, there's a temple after that, after the great white throne judgment. The earth and the heavens, as we knew it, depart away.

And it says in Revelation will study it. God creates a new heaven and a new earth. And it distinctly says there's no temple there.

Why does John see them in a temple? Because as long as earth still has sinful men living on it, as long as Satan is still free, God has a place, a sanctuary where he is that is walled off from that evil. And it's the temple of the Lord that you see here. But once God is all done and he's eliminated all sin in the new heaven and new earth, there'll be no temple where he's isolated off because there will be no sin.

He will dwell in the midst of his people in unbridled glory. It's worth pointing out. He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.

Verse 16. And they shall neither hunger or thirst anymore. The sun shall not strike them nor any heat.

The lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them. He will throw his presence over them and take care of them, lead them to living fountains of water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. In verse 16, neither hunger or thirst.

You remember that during this period, if you come to know Jesus Christ, you will be unable to buy and sell because in order to buy and sell, you have to take the mark of what the beast. So these people are going to come to heaven very hungry and very thirsty and they will have been on the run since the day they came to know Christ. And the sun will have been burning down upon them.

And yet they will come out of that into the glory of heaven. They will not hunger anymore. They will not thirst anymore.

The sun will not strike them anymore, nor any heat. Watch where this is going for the lamb was in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of water and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Follow this.

This is great news to us. I am so thankful that is where I'm going. But how about for the people that are in the great tribulation, hiding in a cave, on the run, hungry, unable to buy food, unable to get water.

Listen, when they read this, it is going to give them the courage to stand up for Jesus, knowing that's where they're going. The minute they die, they will die with these verses on their minds. And thus they will die victoriously.

Isn't God good? Christ rejecters who miss the rapture will be given this grace and that will be so precious to them. So we sow the seed now. And if we get raptured, others will come to Christ and miss it because we told them about Jesus and gave them a Bible and pointed these things out to them.

God is good, isn't he? I'm so glad I know Jesus Christ. And I'm so glad I know him now. And I'm going to go on a rapture when it comes.

I'm going straight to heaven. Something else happens to me in the meantime. Do you know him? If you know him, lean your whole life on him now.

Trust him. Because you know where you're going. To heaven.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for this great study in your word. Thank you for this great passage.

Help us, Lord, to see it in a new light and to see our lives here with a new sense of purpose. To sow your seed, Lord, even if it bears fruit after we're gone. God, give us a passion for those that don't know you.

Help us to remember how it was when we didn't know you. May we lead many to Christ, that when we get to heaven and we're there in that multitude, many will be there because we showed them the way. And we ask you to do this in our lives for Jesus' glory, for we ask it in his name.

Amen.

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