

THE BOOK OF REVELATION  
"White Robes Through Blood"  
Revelation 7:13-17

Review

1. Before the seventh seal is opened, by divine decree, God seals 144,000 Jews on their foreheads. These represent 12,000 from each of the physical literal tribes of Israel (selected (7:1-8). In Ezekiel's enumeration of the tribes of the Millennium, Dan and Ephraim omitted here, are included (Ezek. 48:1-7, 23-29). As tribes, they get through the Tribulation without a seal.
2. Why then the sealed 144,000? They are the "Jehovah Witnesses" (not the present cult!) who have the message of the "Gospel of the Kingdom" (Mt. 24:14). They will touch non believers world-wide (Isa. 66:19) and are the "wise" turning hearts to righteousness at that time (Dan. 12:1-3 -- note the context).
3. Those reached through this world-wide outreach are seen by John in a vision (7:9). This turns out to be a "great multitude" which is unnumbered (7:9), standing before the Lord (7:9), righteous and victorious (7:9), and loudly vocalizing "salvation" to "our God" (7:10).
4. John's vision included the response of worship on their faces first (7:11) and then praise (7:12). The angels are reported to speak (not sing) before the throne of God (7:12, 13). Everything is Theo centric.
5. This unusual vision of John leads to:

ELDER'S QUESTION

Note: In response to John's marvelous revelatory vision, one of the 24 elders poses two questions to John. While it is admitted that there is debate about the identity of the elders (4:4), it was concluded in our previous study, they represent the Church, the Body of Christ. They are clothed with perfect righteousness, crowned as victors, and seated around God's throne. One of these redeemed raises the questions.

1. QUESTIONS -- EXPRESSED v. 13

a. Who Are These?

The employment of the perfect passive participle is significant ( ). It demonstrates the white garments are absolutely in place and provided by another (God!) cf. v. 9.

b. Whence Are These?

The aorist indicative is used for "came" ( ). John is puzzled by this huge multitude (v. 9) and God provides the answer.

2. QUESTIONS -- EXPLAINED vv. 14-17

a. Multitude is Known v. 14

Using the perfect tense, John writes "I said to him." The vision was still fresh and vivid to the apostle. Moreover, John uses a respectful address to the elder, not as an act of worship ( ). In contrast with the elder, John considered him more knowledgeable of the identity of the multitude,

hence "you know" ( -- intimate knowledge). Here is confession of ignorance and request for information.

b. Multitude is Sourced v. 14

The verbs "washed" and "made white" are aorists. They point to a definite historical act done. It is imperative to see these two acts are the result of the "blood of the Lamb," not the blood of the multitudes themselves. His blood alone cleanses from sin and provides the power to live a holy life. It is the real literal blood of the Lamb which is efficacious (cf. Mt. 26:28; Ro. 3:25), 5:9; Col. 1:20; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:2; Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5; 5:9; 22:14. Do not allow for any substitute. There is none!

d. Multitude is Activated v. 15

"Therefore" is more accurately translated "on account of this." It is because of the blood washing (v. 14) that the statements of this verse are made.

1) They are before the throne of God. What an incredible activity. This is necessarily the throne already mentioned (v. 11 cf. 4:1-11; 5:1-14). This is not the throne of "His Father David" (Lk 1:32, 33 cf. Mt. 25). This is all heavenly.

2) They are servicing day and night. This is not a reign on earth, but a heavenly service ceaselessly. "Day and night" are used of eternity (20:10). That there is a temple in heaven is clear (cf. 11:19; 15:5, 8, 16:1 cf. Ex. 40:34, 35; 2 Chron. 5:13, 14; 7:2).

3) They are tabernacled over. Our blessed God, Who sits on the throne, is stated to "tabernacle" or spread a canopy "among" (better: "over," ) the multitude. So the throne becomes strength, shelter, and protection for the redeemed. Glory!

e. Multitude is Blessed vv. 16, 17

a) Negatively v. 16

Here are a series of matters which will no longer be a problem for the redeemed: 1) No longer hunger. 2) No longer thirst. 3) No longer (double negative) sun-ray problems. 4) No longer (not any) heat (burning pain). What a change to anticipate.

b) Positively v. 17

1) Shepherding. The reasons for the end of what is listed negatively is now given. Such is the sense of the conjunction "for" ( ). The Lamb (cf. 5:5-6; 7:9, 10, 14, 17), in the midst of the throne (5:6), will shepherd His own, hence the problems of materialism and sense are gone.

2) Leading. The connective "and" ( ) adds something, another blessing. The Lamb will lead to the very sources of unalloyed delight -- living fountains of water. What refreshment!

3) Wiping. What a finale. God the Father joins the Lamb and ( ) will wipe out ( ) every (singular) tear away from ( ) the eyes of the redeemed. Tears are gone forever. Hallelujah.

Conclusion

Oh the depth of God's mercy! At the time of poured out wrath, this precious comforting passage is revealed. God has His own "blood-washed" number in every dispensational period. Amen.