

## The Mission Fulfilled

Revelation 7:9-10

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It's so powerful to hear God's Word read in multiple languages, isn't it? The Book of Revelation was written by the Apostle John while he was exiled on the island of Patmos during a time of extreme persecution. The primary purpose of this book is to call believers to persevere by reminding them of God's sovereignty and the ultimate triumph of Christ.

Here's a brief outline.

- **Chapters 1-3:** John is given an exalted vision of the glorified Christ. Jesus writes letters to seven churches.
- **Chapters 4-5:** John is taken up to Heaven where he is stunned by the throne of God and by the Lamb who is worthy to open the scroll.
- **Chapters 6-19:** God's judgment is unleashed through the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls, culminating in the final defeat of the beast, the false prophet, and the nations that oppose God.
- **Chapter 20:** Christ returns to reign for a thousand years; Satan is bound, final judgment takes place at the Great White Throne, and the wicked are cast into the lake of fire.
- **Chapters 21-22:** John sees the new heaven and new earth, the New Jerusalem descending from Heaven, and eternal fellowship with God restored, where there is no more death, sorrow, or pain.

Revelation 7 functions as an interlude between the sixth and seventh seals, offering assurance that the redeemed will be secure when God's judgments fall. This chapter brings us comfort knowing the Great Commission cannot be stopped and will be completed when the redeemed remnant "*from every nation, from all tribes, and peoples and languages*" will be represented around the throne. This chapter helps us see what missions looks like when it's finished.

We've already heard Revelation 7:9-10 read in multiple languages; let's stand and read it together now: "*After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with*

***palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”***

Here’s the sermon in a nutshell: *While the mission will one day be fulfilled, we must live on mission today because God’s global purpose remains unfinished.*

Let’s continue in worship as we walk through this powerful passage.

**1. The people God will save.** Let’s consider the first half of verse 9: ***“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages...”*** The phrase ***“after this”*** references the 144,000 Jewish evangelists in verses 1-8. In apocalyptic literature, the verb ***“looked”*** often introduces something unexpected. The word ***“behold”*** can be translated as ***“lo and behold!”*** and is used to get our attention.

I was gripped by reading Charles Spurgeon’s sermon introduction when he preached on this verse: *“It seems as though a flash of wonder shot through his soul, and a flame of admiration burst from his tongue, when John exclaims, ‘After this I beheld, and, lo!’”*

The phrase ***“great multitude”*** emphasizes an *“enormous crowd, an immense throng of people,”* so many that ***“no one could number”*** them. Revelation 5:11 says, ***“Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands.”*** This is the final fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham and passed along to Isaac in Genesis 26:4: ***“I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.”***

Warren Wiersbe writes: *“You cannot read the Book of Revelation without developing a global outlook.”* John uses four different terms to describe this enormous crowd of worshipers. Before listing them, notice how he uses the word ***“from,”*** which means, *“out of every nation, out of all tribes, out of all peoples, out of all languages.”* This refers to representatives from every group, not necessarily every individual in that group.

- **Nation.** This is the Greek word *ethnos*, from which we get ethnic groups. This word is used by Jesus in Matthew 28:19: ***“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...”*** Mark 16:15 says the gospel is to be preached to ***“the whole creation.”***

- **Tribes.** This word is used of family lineages or clans and is often translated as “*kindreds.*” Psalm 22:27 says, “***All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you.***”
- **Peoples.** This refers to groups united by a common cultural or social identity. Psalm 67:3: “***Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.***”
- **Languages.** This refers to linguistic communities and goes back to how God divided people by language in Genesis 11. BTW, there are approximately 7,400 languages in the world today, with 3,100 of them having no Scripture at all.

These four terms occur repeatedly in Revelation to show how the gospel will penetrate every group in the world. Revelation 5:9 echoes this same idea, “***Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.***” Since Heaven will be multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual, and multinational, I long for Edgewood to more fully reflect what Heaven will be like. The vision of a diverse multitude calls us to share the gospel with all people, regardless of culture, language, or background (Matthew 28:19-20).

In my Bible reading on Friday morning, the Lord took me to Revelation 21 where I saw yet another stunning example of the fulfillment of Genesis 12 and Matthew 28. Listen to verses 22-23: “***And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.***” I smiled as I tried to imagine what John experienced.

Then, I came to verse 24: “***By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.***” There it is again, in the second to last chapter of the Bible! In Matthew 28:18, Jesus declares, “***All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.***” Revelation 21 shows how kings submit to His authority. In the Old Testament, the command was to “*come and see.*” Jesus told his followers to “*go and tell.*” This comes full circle because the nations will “*come and bring*” the “***glory and the honor of the nations***” into the new Jerusalem (see also 21:26).

As I continued reading, I should not have been surprised to see the nations appear in the very last chapter as well. Worship with me as I read Revelation 22:2: “***The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.***”

As we pray for the Langworthy's who are leaving for Uganda in two weeks (November 8<sup>th</sup>), what a joy to know that there will be representatives from the Aringa and the Madi languages gathered around the throne one day!

Many of you know that Pastor Ed and I serve on the board of Keep Believing Ministries. Many of Pastor Ray's sermons have been translated into various languages around the world. For our next project, the KBM team is translating the Edgewood sermon series called "On Mission" from the Book of Acts into the language spoken in a very large Asian country.

The translators sent me a couple finished paragraphs. It's humbling that the same sermons that were preached here are now being made available in a language spoken by over one billion people in the world.

一个使命

當福音的好消息在耶路撒冷遍地传播开来的时候，同时也延展而进入到不同的文化风俗，语言和民族群体中。各行各业，各个种族背景的人都因而得救，投入日益增长的教会中，受到拥抱与接纳。。（但圣灵降临在你们身上，你们就必得着能力，并要在耶路撒冷、犹太全地和撒玛利亚，直到地极，作我的见证。—《使徒行传》1章8节）

Here's what it says in English: *"While the good news of the gospel spread throughout Jerusalem, it extended to different cultures, languages, and people groups. People from every walk of life and every racial background were saved and enfolded into the ever-expanding church (Acts 1:8)."*

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**2. The posture of those who are saved.** This is described in the second half of verse 9: ***"...standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands."*** Revelation 6:17 asks the question, ***"And who can stand?"*** The answer is those who have been reconciled to God by the Lamb of God. The word ***"standing"*** means, *"to place before,"* and the tense indicates a permanent established position in the immediate presence of God the Father, and God the Son.

The word “**throne**” appears 54 times in the New Testament, with 44 of those occurrences found in the Book of Revelation. The throne of God represents His power, sovereignty, and authority over the entire universe.

It’s also where Jesus rules as Lamb, as the substitutionary sacrifice, who is also depicted as the “**Lion of the Tribe of Judah**” in Revelation 5:5. Jesus is called Lamb 28 times in the Book of Revelation. My mind goes to what John the Baptist said about Him in John 1:29: “**The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’**”

I turn to Spurgeon again...

*Oh! my brethren, how I love these two doctrines as I see them side by side... God, a sovereign, overawes me; I take off my shoes from my feet, like Moses, at the burning bush, but the Lamb has a voice that invites me to draw near and have fellowship even with the God who is a consuming fire.*

I often cringe when I hear people make superficial statements about what their loved ones are doing in Heaven.

- “Grandma’s baking pies for the angels.”
- “He’s finally fishing every day in the lakes of Heaven.”
- “Joe’s out golfing on the golden fairways.”

These comments are usually well-intentioned, but they miss the point of what Heaven is all about. Heaven isn’t about our hobbies; it’s all about God’s glory. Heaven won’t be an extension of our favorite pastimes, but rather a place filled with the exaltation of the Lord God Almighty who reigns forever and ever.

On Tuesday morning, when I was reading Revelation, I was struck by how believers will be able to “**stand**” confidently before the throne and the Lamb, and at the same time, how we will fall on our faces before Him. I was reminded of the questions asked in the song, “I Can Only Imagine.”

*Surrounded by Your Glory, what will my heart feel?  
Will I dance for you, Jesus? Or in awe of You, be still?  
Will I stand in Your presence, or to my knees will I fall?  
Will I sing ‘Hallelujah!’? Will I be able to speak at all?*

Later that day, during our staff team time, I invited everyone to close their eyes while I read various passages of Scripture which speak of how people, angels, and living creatures fell on their faces in awe before the Almighty (I'm going to ask you to close your eyes as well, which is always dangerous during a sermon).

- When the Apostle John encountered Jesus in all His glory, He was filled with awe and hit the ground: ***“When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead...”*** (Revelation 1:17)
- After describing a great multitude that no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the lamb, all the angels, all the elders, and all the living creatures ***“fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God.”*** (Revelation 7:11)
- When Ezekiel beheld the dazzling glory of God's throne, he responded this way, ***“I fell on my face.”*** (Ezekiel 1:28)
- When the Commander of the Lord's army appeared to Joshua, Joshua ***“fell on his face to the earth and worshiped.”*** (Joshua 5:14)
- At the transfiguration of Jesus, when the voice of God spoke, the disciples ***“fell on their faces and were terrified.”*** (Matthew 17:6)
- When the soldiers came to Jesus to arrest Him, we read these words: ***“As soon as Jesus said, ‘I am He,’ they went backward and fell flat to the ground.”*** (John 18:6)

Here's how I work it out. I imagine we'll start by standing before the throne, but as we gaze on His glory, we won't be able to stand for long, and we'll fall on our faces in awe of His holiness and loudly declare what we read in Revelation 4-5, ***“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come! Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created...worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation...to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”***

The redeemed around the throne will be ***“clothed in white robes.”*** This word for ***“robes”*** referred to long, flowing garments that went from head to toe, often worn by priests or nobility. The fact that they are ***“white,”*** which can be translated as ***“bright and shiny,”*** they also represent ***“purity, victory, and joy.”*** Revelation 7:14 says, ***“They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the***

**Lamb.”** The word “*washed*” denotes a completed cleansing like we see in Isaiah 1:18: “*Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.*” Just as sin revealed mankind’s nakedness, so the Savior clothes us with His righteousness, from head to toe!

We’re also told the redeemed will have “*palm branches in their hands.*” To the Jewish person, palm branches would make them think of the Feast of Tabernacles, which was a celebration of how God delivered His people from slavery in Egypt. We see this in Leviticus 23:40: “*And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees...*”

Palm branches were also used in Roman culture to honor war victors. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the large crowd of people praised Him by waving palm branches and shouting, “*Hosanna!*” which means, “*Save us now!*” This was a common way to welcome a victorious King when he would return from battle. These palm branches were also a symbol of joy and victory and were placed on graves as a sign of eternal life. Since they often grew out in the desert near water, palm trees were a sign that life-giving activity was near. By laying palm branches on the road, the people were signifying that Jesus was the victorious King who gives eternal life to those out wandering in the desert of life. The fact that the redeemed are waving palm branches again shows the victory has been permanently won!

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**3. The praise of the saved.** Verse 10 describes the volume and the content of the people’s praise: “*And crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’*” The phrase “*crying out*” is in the present tense, meaning it is a continuous shout. Interestingly, this is the same verb used for the cries of the martyrs under the altar in 6:10: “*They cried out with a loud voice, ‘O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’*”

The redeemed are not passive in their praise; rather, they cry out with a “*loud voice,*” which means, “*an intensely great and unified voice.*” This thunderous anthem is sung by everyone around the throne. Some of us struggle to sing here; but all of us will sing there, so we might as well start singing here!

Here's one of the lyrics we'll be singing, ***“Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”*** A literal translation reads: *“The salvation is to our God.”* This salvation is the only salvation, originating in God alone and accomplished by the Lamb alone for His glory alone.

God the Father ***“sits on the throne”*** because salvation has been fully and finally completed. I appreciated this insight:

*“Sitting suggests a position of rest, not in the sense of inactivity, but of completed authority. God is not striving or struggling; His rule is secure. This contrasts with the turmoil of the world under judgment in Revelation...it emphasizes that, despite the apparent power of evil forces (e.g., the dragon, beast, or false prophet), God’s authority is absolute. The Lamb’s association with the throne further highlights the redemptive aspect of God’s rule, showing that His sovereignty is expressed through sacrificial love and victory over sin.”*

Heaven will be a loud place as we see in Revelation 12:10, ***“And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, ‘Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.’”*** One pastor said it well: *“I know of no greater motivation for missions than getting a glimpse of the glory of Jesus.”*

The fulfillment of God’s global mission is not a maybe; it’s a guarantee. Among the redeemed remnant around the throne will be representatives from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. The question before us today is if we’ll pray and partner with Him to help make it happen.

- We gather because one day we’ll gather around the throne.
- We grow because one day we’ll become more like Christ as we bear His fruit and fulfill His mission
- We give because one day there will be those who heard the gospel because we helped send missionaries and we supported various gospel ministries.
- We go with the gospel because one day we’ll see faces we’ve never met from distant lands as we cry out together: ***“Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”***

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A couple weeks ago in our staff team time, while we were pondering how it could be that 3,100 languages still do not have a Bible, Pastor Daniel asked a probing question that unsettled each of us: “*What are we going to do about it?*” This sermon series and Go Con have helped to raise the temperature for missions as more of us are praying, “*Here am I. Send me.*” We’re also focusing our mission efforts on the least reached parts of the world. Here are some personal and practical ways to apply what we’ve been learning the last couple months.

1. Join the Unreached Prayer Group on the first Monday of every month from 7:00-8:00 pm. Our next gathering will be held on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.
2. Identify one person you want to reach. God’s will, will be done! His mission will be accomplished. The Lion who rules and roars is the living Lamb who loves you. Stay in the Word, worship Him, and witness with your life for the rest of your life. Who’s your one?
3. Participate in Operation Christmas Child.
4. Give to one of our missionaries or to a local Go Team Partner. Our SecondWinders ministry recently blessed One Eighty with winter coats, hats, gloves, and other items.
5. Explore a short-term mission trip or join our Disaster Relief Force team (more information about both are coming soon).
6. Fill out the Go Con Response Card.

We began the sermon by listening to Revelation 7:9-10 in various languages. Sadly, there are still thousands of languages where people have yet to hear the Word of God. I invite you to reflect quietly and pray silently for a few of these language groups where Revelation 7 cannot be heard because there is no Scripture available...yet.

- **Alawa** – Australia
- **Areba** – Papua New Guinea region
- **Marghi** – Nigeria / Chad region
- **Lhowa** – Nepal / Bhutan (Himalayas)
- **Several Sign Languages** – worldwide

*These languages represent real people, created in God’s image, waiting to hear His Word. Our task is still unfinished. Is there anyone here today who will say, “Here Am I. Send me?” If so, will you stand to indicate you’ve surrendered to Him, and you’ll do whatever He asks you to do?*

When you came in today, you likely noticed hundreds of red flags displayed in the grass around our facility. A red flag often signals danger and serves as a warning to pay attention and stay alert. Red also reminds us of the precious blood of Jesus Christ. As you leave today, take a moment to walk among the 310 flags. Each flag represents ten languages that still do not have a Bible. As you pass by them, pause and pray for the people who have yet to hear and respond to the gospel.