



### Session 17 | Revelation 7:9-17 | The Great Multitude

- The closing question of the sixth seal (6:12-17) is *who shall be able to stand?*
- Revelation 7 answers the question with a twofold answer.

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## THE 144,000 | REVELATION 7:1-8

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- A precise number of Jewish believers, selected by the election of God, from each of the 12 tribes of Israel.
- Their protection is complete and sure, described prophetically in Psalm 91.

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## THE INNUMERABLE MULTITUDE | REVELATION 7:9-17

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### THE SCENE IN HEAVEN | VV. 9-12

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- V. 9: As in 7:1, the phrase ***After this*** does not necessitate chronological order. In all likelihood, the outcome of vv. 9-17 takes place over at least the first half of the tribulation, if not the entire seven years.
- V. 9, "which no man could number," - From *arithmos*, from which we get *arithmetic*. This is a very precise term, but was beyond ability to carry out with precision.
- V. 9, "from every nation..."
  - Though this is true of the church, it is not words the Scripture would use to describe the church.
  - Theologically, the church is distinct from both Jew and Gentile, as a "new man," an entity unto itself.
  - This multitude is gentile, distinct from both the 12 tribes and the church.
  - Though this group is in heaven, that does not require that they be part of "the church." See v. 14 for their identity.
- V. 9, "clothed in white robes"
  - White garments are mentioned several times in Revelation:
    - They were promised to those in Sardis who overcome (3:4-5)
    - The Laodicean's were encouraged to purchase them (3:18)
    - The 24 Elders wore them (4:4)
    - The martyrs of the 5th seal wore them (6:11)
    - The martyrs of this passage wear them (7:9, 13)
    - The armies of heaven wear them upon the return of Jesus as King (19:8, 14)

- A significant grammatical detail concerning the white garments:
  - The preparation or purchase of the garments is always in the *active* tense (seen clearly in 19:8).
  - The presentation of the garments is always in the passive tense ("they were clothed," never "they clothed themselves.")
  - Because of the active tense of preparing the clothing, I do not see that anyone presented in the white garment in the book of Revelation is part of the church, including those of Revelation 19.
- V. 9, "palms in their hands," As on the day of the Triumphal entry, with a very similar cry.
- V. 10, "they are crying" rather than "cried" (KJV) or "cry" (NASB). John is describing what is taking place at the moment he is watching.

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#### THE IMPORTANT QUESTION FROM THE ELDER | V. 13

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- The phrase "*answered, saying*", or the similar phrase, "answered and said," is used when a literal question has not been asked, but an analysis of the situation is being given. The Greek *apokrinomai* is literally, "from a judgment (opinion)."
- If one of the Elders found the identity of this group to be important enough to ask the question, we should find it important to know the answer!

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#### THE ANSWER FROM THE ELDER | V. 14

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- Because these "come out of the great tribulation" they must have been in the great tribulation.
- It is important to note that, while the source of cleansing is the same (the blood of the Lamb), the method of cleansing has changed drastically from the Church Age. This helps answer the question, "who are they" in v. 13. The active form of "washed" and "made" are incompatible with the age of Grace. Compare to Eph. 2:8-9.

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#### THE ACTIVITY OF THE MULTITUDE | VV. 15-17

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- V. 15, "Therefore," is literally, "through this," and builds upon the washing of the garments in v. 14.
- V. 15, They serve him day and night..." This is a vision in heaven. The Tabernacle was built on a model of Heaven, thus we have a glimpse of its shape and beauty. The New Heaven will have no "day and night" nor will it have a Temple, so this, like the earthly tabernacle, is temporary.
- V. 15, To "tabernacle" among is to "dwell" (KJV).
  - When Peter saw the glory of the Lord at the Mt. of Transfiguration, he wanted to build a "tabernacle," not a church, synagogue, temple, or building.
  - The Tabernacle and its feast were always future oriented, looking toward the time when God would dwell among His people.
- Vv. 16-17, Note that even when these are in Heaven during the days of the Tribulation, the promises are not delivered and the joy is not complete. The eschatology that doesn't include an earthly, physical kingdom is an unbiblical and incomplete eschatology.