

## 18. The Great Multitude of Tribulation Saints

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why God will give the one hundred and forty-four thousand from the nation of Israel the privilege of being the witnesses of the death and resurrection of Christ during the tribulation. In this topic, we will see the result of their faithful witness during that time.

John had been given a vision of the one hundred and forty-four thousand who would be sealed. Revelation 7:9-12 says, “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, 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!” All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *be* to our God forever and ever. Amen.” Here, we see that later John saw a large gathering of people. We will see that the people of this great multitude are the tribulation saints who received the witness of the one hundred and forty-four thousand and came to God in repentance and faith.

This gathering of people is so large that no one can count the number. These people come from every nation. All of the tribes of the world are represented in this large multitude. Every people group on the earth is included in this gathering. Every dialect from within each people group is also included. These verses make it very clear that no group of people from the entire earth will be left out of this group. This large group of people will all be gathered in heaven in front of the Lamb (Christ). Each person gathered in this huge group of people will have a palm branch that he or she is waving. This was often done in the Old and New Testaments to celebrate a special event. John 12:12-13 says, “The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: ‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! The King of Israel!’” In John, it was to celebrate the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem.

This huge celebration in heaven will be in front of the throne of God. This entire crowd will be shouting with loud voices saying, “Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” Salvation speaks of deliverance from the eternal consequences of sin. Today, each Christian receives this deliverance at the moment of salvation. We will see in a few verses when this huge group will receive that deliverance. Instead, we see that this great multitude of people will recognize the source of their deliverance. This multitude will realize that the Father who sits on the throne is the One who willed this salvation. They will recognize that the Lamb of God was the One who shed His blood in order for them to receive that salvation.

Suddenly this great multitude will be joined by an even greater crowd who will join in this time of celebration. These additional worshipers will include all of the angels. The entire church represented by the elders along with the four living creatures will join in this worship. They will

all fall on their faces before the throne and worship God. This entire group will then join together and express their worship by saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *be* to our God forever and ever. Amen.” Here, we see that all blessing belongs to God. The same is true for all glory and wisdom. Everyone will express their thanksgiving to God and to the Lamb for their salvation. They will all recognize that all honor, power, and might will belong to God forever and ever. This will be a huge celebration of worship to God.

Revelation 7:13-14 shows that John will be asked two questions. “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 washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’” Here, we see that one of the elders asks John a question. However, the questions and the answers given really are for us because John said that the elder knew the answer to the questions. The first question was, “Who are these arrayed in white robes?” The answer that the elder gave John was that these were the very large number of people who will become saints during the tribulation.

Here, we see that, during the time of the tribulation, God will make certain that people from every nation, language, and ethnic group will have the opportunity to believe in Christ, because they have not heard and chosen to reject Him before the tribulation began. In 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12, we see that this is not a second opportunity for those who heard the Gospel of salvation and rejected it. Those verses say, “And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” Here, we see that all who rejected the message of salvation will believe the lies of the antichrist and will not repent during the tribulation.

The second question was, “Where did they come from?” We see that these are tribulation saints that have come out of the great tribulation. We also see how they became tribulation saints. We read that these saints, “Washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Here, we see that the tribulation saints will receive salvation in the same way that every believer throughout history has received forgiveness of sins. Hebrews 9:22 says, “And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.” The word translated “remission” is translated “forgiveness” in several verses. Ephesians 1:7 says, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” It is through Christ that we have forgiveness of sins. The same thing will be true in the tribulation. Here, in Revelation, we see that the tribulation saints will have robes that are washed and made white through the blood of Christ.

We go on to read about the ministry of this great multitude. Revelation 7:15-17 says, “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 waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” Here, we see that the tribulation saints will be before the throne of God. This looks forward

to the time, at the end of the tribulation, when the tribulation saints will serve the Lord on this earth. This will happen during the one-thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth, called the millennium.

The reason that we can know that this is during the millennium is due to the fact that this multitude serves God day and night in the temple. Revelation 21:22 says, “But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.” Then, Revelation 22:5 says, “There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.” Together these verses show us that, in heaven, there will be no temple and there will be no night. As a result, the verses here, in Revelation 7, look forward to the time when Christ will be ruling on earth for a thousand years.

During the reign of Christ on the earth, we see that the tribulation saints, who were put to death for their faith, will have the privilege of serving Christ and ruling with Him during the time He reigns on the earth. We see that the throne of God will be in His temple. This service will be both day and night. Revelation 20:4 says, “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” In addition, in 1 Corinthians 6:2, we read, “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?” Here, we see that the church will also have the privilege of ruling with Christ during this time.

One of the greatest blessings of this time is that the One who sits on this throne in the temple (Christ) will dwell with us. John 1:14 tells us what it was like when Christ came to dwell on this earth during His ministry on earth. That verse says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Throughout this thousand-year period we will have the opportunity to behold His glory. During that time, all of the followers of Christ will be protected from hunger, thirst, and the burning heat. We see that, during this time, the Lord will also shepherd the nation of Israel. Ezekiel 34:11-13 says, “For thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country.’” Christ will also lead them to the living waters and wipe every tear from their eyes.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand and learn to explain that Christ will keep all of the promises of God to Israel and also gather tribulation saints from every nation, people and tongue. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things to others.