

WORDS OF COMFORT

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Revelation 7:9-17 contains some of the most comforting and hope-instilling words in the Bible. The text says: “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

Comfort in tribulation

These words provide great comfort to God’s people especially during their tribulations. In this vision of heaven, we see “a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (Rev 7:9). These people cry, “Salvation to our God which sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb” (Rev 7:10). This is sincere praise offered by God’s redeemed. God is also worshiped by all the angels around His throne, and by the 24 elders and four beasts (Rev 7:11). They say, “Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen” (Rev 7:12). God is truly worthy of this praise. In verse 13, one of the

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(continued)

elders asked John about this great multitude of people in heaven. They were wearing the white clothing of the righteous (Rev 7:13-14; see also Rev 3:5,18; 4:4; 19:7-8,14). The angel asked John who they were and where they came from. In verse 14, John replied, "Sir, you know." We are then told that "these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sits on the throne shall dwell among them. *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*" (Rev 7:14-17). We notice that enduring persecution is a requirement (see also Acts 14:22; 2 Tim 2:12; 3:12; 1 Pet 2:19-25). We also notice that being purified of all wickedness is a requirement (see also John 8:31-36; Acts 15:9; Rom 6:16-23; 1 John 3:7). The reward for this is eternal life in God's literal presence, with no hunger, thirst, sun, heat, or tears. We also notice that in heaven we will have work to do. Yes, there will be a period of rest from our earthly labors (Heb 3:11-4:11; Rev 14:13). But after that, we will be *serv*ing God in heaven for eternity (see also Rev 22:3-5). Our service to God in this life trains us for the eternal service we must render to Him in heaven.

Our encouragement

To those faithful, persecuted Christians at the end of the First Century A.D., these words would have had deep meaning and brought much comfort. It should do the same for us today also. From Revelation chapter 7, we have the great comfort of knowing that if we serve God faithfully, we will be spared from the coming judgment of all the wicked. If we endure our great tribulations and are faithful to God to the end, we will be with God forever in eternity with many incomparable blessings. Therefore, let us clothe ourselves with righteousness, endure tribulation, and overcome all things for the rest of our time on this earth (1 Pet 4:1-2; Rev 2:10).