

Special Sermon
October 18, 2020

Title: Standing on Christ's Vision

Subject: Salvation, Consummation, Jesus Christ, Angels, Worship, Service, Righteousness, The Lamb of God, Jews, Gentiles, Church, Israel

Theme Text: Revelation 7:9-10 (ESV) 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, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,** ¹⁰ **and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"**

Theme Illustration: The world's rulers from old times from Nimrod, to Alexander the Great, to Caesar, to the Axis powers, to the Soviet Union and Mao have dreamed of this scene except that they envisioned not a crying out in praise to God but to themselves. This dream is in the unity of man without respect to natural divisions, united and ruled but one kingdom or philosophy by man's own effort. A savior is not necessary. Man can save himself and do a better job than The Creator.

The true church of Jesus Christ stands upon the vision of this chapter as the only possible solution to the unity of man and the Kingdom of god under the One Ruler, Jesus Christ. Today the church is being beset by an old enemy claiming to be Christian but is a deception. That enemy is what is called the social gospel. The social gospel are those beliefs that as man gets progressively better, enlightened by various competing worldviews, and ruled by superior intellects by a worldwide set of elites, educated at the most prestigious halls of learning, are capable of bringing this about if we would just play along. They see the inequality in the world as the fault of governing systems and particularly Christianity and Christianity's God. The Social gospel is that salvation is defined as economic and social equality and can be achieved here by the smart distribution of resources and ruled by this elite.

The reason I am preaching this sermon is that last year a resolution was adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention. It is called resolution 9. It is attempting to address social ills such as racism by accepting Critical Theory as a tool to judge our progress. It is a Marxist theory that was the basis of the Marxist revolution. Its main idea is to deconstruct political and religious structures to eliminate power inequalities and reconstruct them on Marxist philosophy. As we know by history it never works out the way Marx envisioned.

I am not going to in this message attempt to critique CRT against the Gospel. But to demonstrate through scripture that God has an unfolding plan to build out of Jew and Gentile alike a new Human race delivered from sin and standing together at the Throne of God not based upon Human means but joined together by the blood of Christ in a brand new chapter in the only true story by the Gospel which tears down the walls. The social gospel is gnostic and is not gospel at all. It has no power to free man from our biggest oppressor, the Dragon, sin, and the grave.

Read: Revelation 7:9-17

Introduction: Please remember that it was the Trinity which separated humanity at Babel for our own good. Nations, borders, tribes, languages are His gift to humanity for our good to restrain man's rebellious, violent intentions. This scene in Revelation 7, demonstrates that Babel is reversed by God and the new humanity standing together in righteousness with Christ and giving God the glory, He is entitled to and answers the question that closes chapter 6, **Revelation 6:15-17 (ESV)** ¹⁵ **Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains,** ¹⁶ **calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,** ¹⁷ **for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"** The question facing the persecuted church and the world is, " who can stand?"

This chapter has two visions of the same group of people from different perspectives. Verses 1-8 describes True Israel, the church, comprised of redeemed Jews and Gentiles protected from God's wrath by being sealed as God's property. They are the saints on earth living in the times of tribulation standing firm by faith in Christ and His gospel against the powers of the dragon and his instruments. With the opening of the sixth seal we see the foundations being shaken in a preview of the destruction of this old order. The world's elite refuse to repent and call on creation to take them out so they do not have to face the wrath of the Lamb. Little do they realize their true condition. What we see in verses 4-8 all of God's elect alive at that point on earth under divine protection of their souls. That vision takes us back to the exodus and the sealing of Israel by the blood of the pascal Lamb on the door facings. God is comforting the persecuted church that their souls are in His care, so don't fall into the deception of the enemy, but stand firm in Christ's work. This to me is true Israel, the church on earth militant, organized into twelve battalions of 12,000 or divisions/ tribes going out to fight the dragon. This arrangement of 12 tribes comes out of the march of Israel into battle in the wilderness. The picture here is of a church assaulting the gates of Hell by making disciples of all nations through the real gospel. The church militant needed the comfort to know that while engaged in this holy war, that they are safe until the consummation of the Kingdom. Thus they are sealed, marked with the name of The Father and the Son,

Revelation 14:1 (ESV) ¹ Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.

Transition: In this Spirit delivered second vision to the Apostle John we see a church victorious in heaven and unified in three ways, In Christ, in worship, and in Service. First, we see the one, united new humanity as:

1. One in Christ: Revelation 7:9-10 (ESV) 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, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in

their hands,¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

In this scene, John takes the reader back to the throne of God. Our minds are immediately reminded of the throne scene in chapter 4 and 5. In that scene, we see the Lord surrounded by His heavenly court with a scroll in his hands. John began to lament that no one present was qualified to open the scroll until the Lamb of God stepped forward to take the scroll of God’s divine decree, the plan to bring all things in heaven and earth under Christ, **Ephesians 1:9-10 (ESV)⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.**

In our text, this vision is a much different audience summoned to the throne, a great multitude described as being from every nation, all tribes, and peoples, and languages. This group is the same group described differently in the first eight verses. The difference between the two is location and time. The first group is on earth before the Lord returns and the second group is in heaven before the throne after the Lord returns. Both of the scenes are being fulfilled. The first vision’s location was on the earth, depicting all of God’s elect as the church militant or the church at war faithful in its mission to wage war against the Dragon by making disciples of every nation. Our theme text, the second vision, we see the same group of people now in heaven gathered before the throne.

Please notice the unity of the redeemed in the kingdom of God. This vision describes the fulfillment of Jesus prayer to the Father in John 17 that all of His redeemed may be one. This is the reason Jesus taught us to pray “for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever amen.” This is the goal of the biblical metanarrative. It is this vision towards which the church on earth faithfully using the means of grace calls God’s redeemed out of the world and into the kingdom. It is this vision that energizes all of the other competing metanarratives in history with one noticeable wicked exception. The unity of the new human race is achieved by the power, the

love, of God through the work of the Last Adam Jesus Christ. It is this part that the world rejects. Fallen man's vision is not to the praise of God but to the praise of man.

Our national motto *e pluribus unum*, out of the many one reflects our own desire for a united country. All of the competing metanarratives, false religions, governing philosophies as possible by human means, by the right type of government in the hands of the right person or even of the people themselves. All of these systems fail due to ignorance of man's fallen sinful condition. This was the dream of all the world's mighty dictators and kings and powerful men such as the Caesars, Alexander the great, Genghis Khan , Chairman Mao, Hitler, the communists, and the very first dictator Nimrod.

What these saints all had in common were white robes and palm branches and they were all standing. They could stand because they are now accepted by God. These white robes reflect the righteousness of God and holiness. These saints stand before the throne, notice they are standing, sanctification complete, perfected in righteousness and holiness. These white robes were promised to all believers who persevere and are faithful to the end

Revelation 3:5 (ESV) ⁵ The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. As we confess his name, He will confess ours. All of the praise and worship will be Christ directed. Under the last Adam, the new human race will be united has adopted sons of God in Christ.

The question we must ask is how did they get there? They are there by the grace and mercy of God drawn to the means of that Army being obedient in the declaration of the gospel by making disciples of all nations. Apart from Christ and His gospel a united humanity and a new Jerusalem are pipedreams.

Transition: The palm branches or reminders of Christ trample entry in the feast of Tabernacles which celebrated God's provision in the wilderness marching to the promised land. I can almost hear them scene while waving

the palm branches, marching to Zion! The second aspect of this united humanity is that we are:

2. One in Worship: Revelation 7:11-12 (ESV) ¹¹ And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

Here we see the rest of the heavenly company, all the angels are present. They are worshiping God along with Christ’s redeemed. The heavenly host are praising God for His work in saving this an innumerable multitude of human beings. Contrast the way man praises God in verse 10 with the way angels praise Him. Note the seven praises, blessing, glory, wisdom, Thanksgiving, honor, power, and might. The saints, the people whom God saved, praise Him for saving them while the Angels praise God for saving us. How does this not speak sinful practice of being cavalier with God’s name and the lack of seriousness in worship.

Transition: As a church, as a redeemed people, none of this is to accrue to our glory but to the glory of God alone. But as the scene depicts, we have eternal rest but not eternal retirement. We have been saved to be:

3. One in Service: Revelation 7:13-17 (ESV) ¹³ Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” ¹⁴ I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ “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 shelter them with his presence. ¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to

springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Now we see in exchange and an angelic elder. The elder address is John as to his understanding of the vision and the meaning of the identity of these wearing white robes. John defers to his angelic questioner, you know.

His answer these are those who have spiritually persevered and survived the great tribulation. They are the ones whose person has been baptized into Christ and into His death on the cross. Their sins have been washed away.

The great tribulation in my understanding is the whole period of time between the two comings of Christ. I believe this because Dr. Luke firmly declares that the last days have already begun at Pentecost, **Acts 2:16-17 (ESV)** ¹⁶ **But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:** ¹⁷

“And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

At the beginning of this book John writes to the seven churches, **Revelation 1:9 (ESV)** ⁹ **I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.**

The first casualty of the great tribulation was Stephen. Thus, the whole of the the church history should be viewed as being during the great tribulation. This view does not prevent an increase in tribulation at various times especially those who are standing there are the ones I have been a part of that people, the church militant and the church vigilant who are now the church triumphant. These are all of the believers in Jesus Christ.

And what are they doing, they are serving God day and night. This is what redeemed saints do even while on earth. This vision of the end is the antitype of what the true church on earth practices by emulating what the triumphant church is seen doing in heaven.

Conclusion: I must take us back the question that this chapter answers, **Revelation 6:17 (ESV) ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"** The question we must ask ourselves will we be standing in this scene? And we must ask ourselves if we believe we are on what basis will we be standing? We must ask ourselves as a church with the adoption of anti-God Christ denying human philosophies achieve what we have seen? Can critical theory achieve this vision? Can Marxism achieve this vision? This text declares that salvation belongs to the Lamb. No one can stand before God on their own. Salvation is the Lamb's to give and not give. We do not see any of the saints crediting themselves for their wise choice to accept Christ. Their salvation was not due to the right choices that they made. Salvation belongs to Christ.

So what should be the church's answer to the social issues of our day?. Into the water. Let this church stand upon the gospel why because it is **Romans 1:16 (ESV) ¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**