

God Will Wipe Away Every Tear From Their Eyes

7: 9-17

DIG: How does John characterize the number of the multitude here? What are they doing? Wearing? Carrying? What is the significance of the white robes? Palm branches? When the martyrs cry out, how do the angels, elders and four living creatures respond? What does that say about God's Kingdom and Christ's sacrifice?

REFLECT: What is your greatest tribulation of persecution? How difficult does that seem next to the majesty of YHVH pictured here? How will you incorporate this glimpse of heavenly worship into your earthly walk?

It is no coincidence that after seeing the 144,000 Jewish believers who are evangelists, that Yochanan witnesses the fruit of their ministry. These were the ones who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the Word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark or his image on their foreheads. They were no longer seen under the altar in heaven (6:9-11), but before the throne in heaven. Eventually, they will be resurrected at the end of the seventy-five day interval (see Ey - **The Seventy-Five Day Interval**). At that time they will come to life and reign with Messiah for a thousand years (20:4).

After this, introduces a new vision. John looked and there before him was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. There have been great responses to the Gospel in the past. We can think of times like the birth of the messianic community at Shavu'ot (**Acts 2:1-41**), the Reformation in Europe during the sixteenth century, and the Great Awakening in America during the eighteenth century. But the greatest revival the world has ever seen is yet to come. It will not happen during the Church Age, but during the Great Tribulation. Those saved will be Jews and Gentiles, and they will be from every nation, tribe, people and language. All will be martyred.

They will be wearing white robes. These robes were white, symbolizing the purity and righteousness of **Christ Himself**. The long, radiant white robes were the same ones worn by the Tribulation martyrs under the alter in 6:9-11. **And they will be holding palm branches in their hands (7:9)**, because they will be looking forward to the coming of King **Messiah**. When **Yeshua** entered Yerushalayim on a donkey (**Matthew 21:2-7**), the people took palm branches (**Leviticus 23:33-43**) and went out to meet Him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of God! Blessed is the King of Isra'el" (**John 12:12-15**). These are messianic titles and many of the **Jews** at that time believed that **Christ** had come to usher in His Kingdom. The reason they took palm branches out to meet Him was because they knew that the Feast of Sukkot is to be celebrated during the messianic Kingdom (**Zechariah 14:16-19**). These martyrs before the throne in heaven during the Great Tribulation will be holding palm branches in their hands for the same reason. They worship **Jesus** as the **Messiah** and look forward to the building of booths out of palm branches during the messianic Kingdom.

Jewish and Gentile believers who were saved before the Rapture will all be absent from the earth during the Great Tribulation because they will be present with **God** in heaven. But it is important to understand that the **Holy Spirit** will still be present in the world to do His work of salvation (**Ezekiel 37:14; John 3:5-6, 16:5-15**). The only difference will be that **He** will no longer restrain evil (**Second Thessalonians 2:7**). The Great Tribulation will be the Devil's holiday. It will be a period of time when he is going to have the freedom to do as he pleases.²³¹ But a great multitude that no one could count will still be saved.

And they cried out in a loud voice, shouting: Salvation belongs to God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb (7:10)! The reason for their motivation was that **YHVH** had saved them. This may well be the greatest worship service of all time. The crescendo of praise is seen to grow as all the millions of angels were standing around the throne as well as the elders and the four living creatures. Everyone in heaven will worship the Lord. Overwhelmed by **God's** majesty, they all fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped **YHVH**, saying: Amen! Or, "He is worthy." It is the appropriate reaction of all creatures to prostrate themselves before the unquestioned holiness of **God** (**Genesis 17:3; Joshua 5:14; Ezekiel 1:28 and 3:23; Matthew 17:6; Philippians 2:9-10; Revelation 4:10, 5:8 and 14, 11:16, 19:4**).²³² Then the angels will erupt with a sevenfold declaration of worship: Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our **God** for ever and ever. Amen (7:11-12)! If there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents (**Luke 15:10**), how unbelievably great will the praise be in heaven when this great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language stands before the throne and in front of the Lamb?

John became active in the vision himself when **one of the elders** asked: **These in white robes - who are they, and where did they come from (7:13)?** The elder did not ask because **he** didn't know the answer. **He** asked so you and I would know the answer. This is dialogue format used periodically in the Bible to explain a vision (**Jeremiah 1:11 and 13; Amos 7:8 and 8:2; Zechariah 4:2 and 5**). **Yochanan** answered immediately: **Sir, you know.** It's as if **John** kind of lifted up his hands and said, "I don't know." But **he** wanted to know, so **he** said, "You tell me." It is interesting to note that **John** couldn't recognize **them**. I think **he** would have known **them** if **they** were the righteous of the TaNaKh or B'rit Chadashah believers, but **he** didn't. So the elder told him, "These are the martyrs who have come out of the Great Tribulation." The phrase "these who have come out," comes from the Greek verb *erchomai* and indicates a long process. The number of martyrs will keep growing as more and more people are murdered during the Great Tribulation. By their faith in King Messiah they will have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (7:14). They will lay down their lives for Jesus Christ.

As a result: **They are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His Temple** in heaven. The word **serve** is from the Greek *latreuo*, a word often used to describe the ministry of the priests. **Those** who have served well on the earth will have a ministry during the Millennium and in heaven. **And He who sits on the throne will spread His tent over them (7:15).** When **God** put His dwelling place (or the Tabernacle) among His people, **He** was, in effect, spreading His tent over them. **He** promised to walk among them. **He** said: **I will be your God, and you will be My people (Leviticus 26:11).**

Then **ADONAI** makes a very special promise. On the earth, those **martyrs** will not be safe anywhere. **They** will starve, die of disease, or be **beheaded**. Like rabid animals, **they** will be hunted down and slaughtered. There will be no escape from the clutches of the antichrist. But once they arrive in heaven it will be quite a different story. **Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat (7:16).** **God** will protect them (**Psalm 121:5-6; Isaiah 49:10**). **They** will be in the fortress, a place of constant protection that cannot be breached. To those persecuted believers in the first century, this would be a message of great comfort.

For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their great Shepherd; **He** will lead them to springs of living water during the thousand years of the messianic Kingdom. King David said it this way: **The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters. (Psalm 23:1-2).** During the Eternal State (see Fq - **The Eternal State**) the Lamb, who stands in the middle of the throne of **ADONAI**, will provide for the Tribulation martyrs. **He** will feed them from the

tree of life and let them drink from the **springs of living water**. In his vision **John** would eventually see the **river of the water of life**, as clear as crystal flowing from the throne of **God** down the middle of the great street of the city of New Jerusalem. On each side of the river will stand the **tree of life**, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month (22:1-2). Surely this is one of the most gracious promises in **God's Word**.

Not only will the **LORD** remove all **thirst and hunger**, but **He** will also **wipe every tear from their eyes** during the messianic Kingdom (7:17). And so that we will not forget, we are reminded later in the book once again that **He will wipe every tear from their eyes**. **There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things will have passed away** (21:4). These promises apply to all believers and they would have been particularly comforting to the righteous of the first century undergoing persecutions by the Roman emperors. But there is no doubt that they will be especially precious and encouraging to those new, but suffering, believers who will be reading them in the mountains, deserts or huddled in cellars during the **Day of Darkness** (**Zephaniah 1:15; Amos 5:18 and 20; Joel 2:2**), that may soon be coming upon the earth.

The victory of these **martyrs** will come through the **blood of the Lamb**, which washed them, purified them, and sealed them with the promise of eternal life (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Ms - The Eternal Security of the Believer**). The power of this precious blood of **Messiah** is available to us every day by faith. We can turn to **Yeshua** at any moment and ask for **His blood** to cover our sins and cleanse us. The power of the **Ruach HaKodesh** who lives in each and every believer enables us to live as **God's children**. **How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God** (First John 3:1). If you have accepted **Christ** by faith, to take hold of the steering wheel of your life, you are **God's precious child**. **He** has adopted you as **His** very own. Every day, our **Father's** hand is extended to us, and we have the great privilege to take hold of it.

*Let us fix our eyes upon the **Lamb** at the center of the **throne**, the **One** who has promised us **springs of living water**. The **Lord**, who will work in the lives of the **Tribulation martyrs** is ready to work in us if we turn to **Him**. Our **God**, who has chosen us to be **His** very own, is faithful. Amen.²³³*