

## The Book Of Revelation Study 38

*Revelation 7:9-17 (NKJV)*

<sup>9</sup> *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,*

<sup>10</sup> *and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*

<sup>11</sup> *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,*

<sup>12</sup> *saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."*

<sup>13</sup> *Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"*

<sup>14</sup> *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.*

<sup>15</sup> *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.*

<sup>16</sup> *They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat;*

<sup>17</sup> *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."*

### TRIBULATION SAINTS

There have been many times of great response to the gospel throughout history, including the church's birth on the Day of Pentecost, the reformation in Europe in the sixteenth century, and the Great Awakening in America in the eighteenth century.

During those powerful movements of God's saving grace, thousands came to faith in Jesus Christ.

It has ever been the prayer of God's people that God would bring in such great harvests of souls and often He has answered.

**But there is coming a time in the future a worldwide response to the gospel that will far exceed any other in history and maybe all others combined.**

It will sweep the globe in just a few short years and produce a vast multitude of redeemed people from all the nations, making it the greatest movement of God's saving power the world will ever see.

Anticipation of that great "revival" is consistent with the fact that God is a merciful, gracious God who is by nature a Savior and desires people to be saved.

*1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NKJV)*

<sup>3</sup> *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,*

<sup>4</sup> *who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

*2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)*

*<sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

The common Biblical designation of God as Savior reflects His desire that people be saved.

*[Psa 106:21; Isa 43:3, 11; 45:15, 21; 49:26; 60:16; 63:8; Hos 13:4; Luke 1:47; 2:11; 1Tim 2:3; 2Tim 1:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6; 2Pet 1:1]*

God is designated as the "Savior of all men, especially of believers."

*1 Timothy 4:10 (NKJV)*

*<sup>10</sup> For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.*

He is the Savior of all men in a temporal, physical (common grace) sense; that is, He allows sinners deserving of instant death and hell to continue to live on earth.

The fact that He does not destroy them in hell immediately when they sin indicates His saving disposition. He is the Savior of believers, however, in an eternal and spiritual sense. To those who receive the gospel He gives eternal heaven and existence in its glories forever.

In the future, God will put His spiritual and eternal salvation on display at the most unexpected time.

He will do so during the worst time in all of human history.

It will be the time of Satan's fury, as he and his demon hosts ravage the world. It will be the time of unparalleled wickedness, as the Holy Spirit removes His restraining influence.

*2 Thessalonians 2:7 (NKJV)*

*<sup>7</sup> For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.*

It will be a time when Anti-Christ's worldwide reign of terror is occurring alongside the pouring out of God's wrath and the Day of the Lord in a historically unequalled series of powerful, devastating judgments.

It will be in the midst of the time of horrors and fear that God will save people to an extent previously unknown.

God's saving work during that future time will be twofold.

First, it will be the time of Israel's national salvation which Zechariah in the Old Testament and Paul in the New Testament predicted.

*Zechariah 12:10 (NKJV)*

*<sup>10</sup> "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.*

*Romans 11:24-27 (NKJV)*

<sup>24</sup> *For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?*

<sup>25</sup> *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

<sup>26</sup> *And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;*

<sup>27</sup> *For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."*

The first fruits of Israel's salvation will be the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, seen in chapter 7:1-8. They will preach the gospel both to their countrymen and to the Gentiles.

It is the salvation of those Gentiles that is in view in chapter 7:9-17, this is the salvation promised in Scripture.

The Abrahamic Covenant, in which God promised to bless Israel, also promised salvation to the Gentiles;

*Genesis 12:1-3 (NKJV)*

<sup>1</sup> *Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.*

<sup>2</sup> *I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.*

<sup>3</sup> *I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

God from the beginning chose Israel to be a channel through which His blessings of salvation would flow to the whole world.

This truth is affirmed in many Old Testament passages.

*Psalms 67:1-7 (NKJV)*

<sup>1</sup> *To the Chief Musician. On stringed instruments. A Psalm. A song. God be merciful to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us. Selah*

<sup>2</sup> *That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations.*

<sup>3</sup> *Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You.*

<sup>4</sup> *Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, And govern the nations on earth. Selah*

<sup>5</sup> *Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You.*

<sup>6</sup> *Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us.*

<sup>7</sup> *God shall bless us, And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.*

*Psalms 98:3 (NKJV)*

<sup>3</sup> *He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*

Chosen to be the instrument of God in the salvation of the nations, Israel tragically failed in that mission. The Church has intervened and is that channel in this age.

In the future, God will graciously grant Israel a second opportunity to be His witness nation, and at that time they will not fail.

Led by the 144,000 evangelists, Israel will be a light to the nations during the darkest hour of earth's history.

God's promise to bless the nations of the world through Abraham's descendants will be fulfilled on a massive scale.

Speaking of that future time of Gentile salvation Isaiah wrote;

*Isaiah 11:10 (NKJV)*

*<sup>10</sup> "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."*

Isaiah also said;

*Isaiah 49:6 (NKJV)*

*<sup>6</sup> Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.' "*

*Isaiah 45:22 (NKJV)*

*<sup>22</sup> "Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other."*

*Isaiah 52:10 (NKJV)*

*<sup>10</sup> The Lord has made bare His holy arm In the eyes of all the nations; And all the ends of the earth shall see The salvation of our God.*

In a familiar passage quoted by Peter in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost

*Acts 2:17-21 (NKJV)*

*<sup>17</sup> 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.*

*<sup>18</sup> And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.*

*<sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.*

*<sup>20</sup> The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.*

*<sup>21</sup> And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.'*

He quoted;

*Joel 2:28-32 (NKJV)*

*<sup>28</sup> "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.*

*<sup>29</sup> And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.*

*<sup>30</sup> "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.*

<sup>31</sup> *The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.*

<sup>32</sup> *And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the Lord has said, Among the remnant whom the Lord calls.*

Jesus taught that before His return at the end of the Tribulation;

*Matthew 24:14 (NKJV)*

<sup>14</sup> *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

John records one of the most unusual prophecies in Scripture, because it was revealed through a bitter enemy of Christ, the high priest Caiaphas:

*John 11:47-52 (NKJV)*

<sup>47</sup> *Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.*

<sup>48</sup> *If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."*

<sup>49</sup> *And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all,*

<sup>50</sup> *nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish."*

<sup>51</sup> *Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,*

<sup>52</sup> *and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.*

*Romans 3:27-29 (NKJV)*

<sup>27</sup> *Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.*

<sup>28</sup> *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.*

<sup>29</sup> *Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,*

Rev 7:9-17 describes that vast multitude of people from all the nations of the world who will be saved during the coming time of tribulation.

This could include those of Israel who are saved during the preaching of the 144,000. There is nothing in the terminology of the passage that excludes Jews. Rather, the phrase "every nation" certainly must include them.

**Eight key words introduce this group:**

- 1. Their description,**
- 2. Their location**
- 3. Their Action,**
- 4. Their Association,**
- 5. Their origination,**
- 6. Their function.**
- 7. Their protection,**
- 8. Their Provision.**

## THEIR DESCRIPTION

*Revelation 7:9 (NKJV)*

*<sup>9</sup> After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, -- clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,*

They were a people from every tribe, people, and tongue, from among all nations of the world.

They were from the mass of humanity, crossing all barriers and dividing lines.

This group was beyond all persecution now as they are found in heaven.

These many people's came out of the great Tribulation, and they have washed their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The redeemed were **clothed in white robes**. *Leukos (white)* describes a dazzling, brilliant, shining white.

In ancient times, such clothing was worn for festivals and celebrations.

**Robes** is from *stole*, which depicts a long full-length robe.

These long radiant white robes are the same ones worn by the martyrs in:

*Revelation 6:9-11 (NKJV)*

*<sup>9</sup> When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.*

*<sup>10</sup> And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"*

*<sup>11</sup> Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

This fact suggests that the group in view in this passage is part of that earlier group of martyred believers.

As the tribulation wears on, the number of martyrs will increase, as will the number of believers who die naturally or violently, eventually accumulating into the vast, uncountable multitude depicted in heaven in this passage.

The white robes are symbolic rather than literal, since the saints do not as yet have their resurrected bodies.

The robes picture their exaltation, victory, and rejoicing.

Such white robes also symbolic of holiness, are reserved for Christ and the angels, and the glorified church.

## **Remember the mount of transfiguration!**

*Matthew 17:1-2 (NKJV)*

<sup>1</sup> Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;

<sup>2</sup> and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

*Mark 9:2-3 (NKJV)*

<sup>2</sup> Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them.

<sup>3</sup> His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

## **And the angel at the tomb where Christ was resurrected;**

*Matthew 28:2-3 (NKJV)*

<sup>2</sup> And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.

<sup>3</sup> His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.

*Mark 16:5 (NKJV)*

<sup>5</sup> And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.

## **And then the Church, the Bride of Christ;**

*Revelation 19:7-8 (NKJV)*

<sup>7</sup> Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

<sup>8</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Such are the robes of Heaven distributed;

Note something else about these saints in heaven, they held **Palm Branches, in their hands.**

Palm Branches are associated in Scripture with celebration, deliverance, and joy.

They were especially prominent during the Feast of Tabernacles. (*Feasts of Booths*)

This was the Old Testament commemorative celebration of God's provision for Israel during their wilderness wanderings

*Leviticus 23:39-43 (NKJV)*

<sup>39</sup> 'Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the Lord for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest.

<sup>40</sup> And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days.

<sup>41</sup> *You shall keep it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month.*

<sup>42</sup> *You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths,*

<sup>43</sup> *that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.' "*

Here we see that palm tree branches were employed in the construction of the booths the people would dwell in during this feast. It was a feast of remembrance.

*Nehemiah 8:14-17 (NKJV)*

<sup>14</sup> *And they found written in the Law, which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month,*

<sup>15</sup> *and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the mountain, and bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written."*

<sup>16</sup> *Then the people went out and brought them and made themselves booths, each one on the roof of his house, or in their courtyards or the courts of the house of God, and in the open square of the Water Gate and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim.*

<sup>17</sup> *So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness.*

During Jesus Triumphant entry the joyous crowd waved palm branches as they welcomed Him into Jerusalem shouting;

*John 12:12-13 (NKJV)*

<sup>12</sup> *The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,*

<sup>13</sup> *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!"*

*The palm branches in the hands of these saints is a fitting celebrative symbol of the unequalled provision of salvation from the world, Satan, Anti-Christ, sin, death, and hell provided for them by the Lord Jesus Christ.*