

7:9

After these things I looked, We need to first of all point out that this is not necessarily the order in which these things occur, but rather that these things are seen by John in particular order. **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,** This appears to be the crowd represented by 24 elders of Revelation 5:9-10. In other words, those 24 elders said “you did redeem us to God by thy blood out of “every kindred, tribe, people, and nation” and we know that elders represent those whom they oversee. For example, if you are an elder of the city and perform the elder of the city in the gates of the city, you speak for the city. These, then, are the people for whom those 24 elders speak. I think I can back this up when we consider verse 11. The “elders” are, in fact, present.

Furthermore, if the halls of heaven are populated with people of all colors, we find out that we will probably not all have the same skin color in Heaven. Secondly, if we truly want God’s kingdom done on earth as it is in Heaven, then we need to desire that God would send us at Sandy Ridge some Heavenly reality. “Send us people of more ethnicities to preach the Gospel to, to share the Gospel with, to show hospitality to, to share oversight of the church with. Imagine a day when we have Hmong and Native Americans and Spanish men sitting on the board of deacons. Imagine when we have committee members of both Black and White, Yellow and Red skin. I know! Scandalous! Yet, it is the Heavenly reality.

This has been God’s plan for a long time. Do you remember God’s Word in Genesis 12: “In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed?” Galatians 3:8 calls this the “Gospel to Abraham.”

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and crying out with a loud voice, saying, Please take note that as it describes these men and women, boys and girls of all ethnicities, they cry out that all “**Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!**” It always has; it always will. Don’t forget to pray for God to give salvation to your loved ones. They are offering extravagant, loud, intelligent praise. They are doing so to the point where it is called **crying** and to where we are told they are waving **branches**. Perhaps it is at this point where we should consider why it is we raise our hands when we worship? Perhaps it is because we are signifying what it will be like when we do so around the throne.

to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” This is the reality of chapters 4 and 5 and Daniel 7. There are two in the scene. Furthermore, we find them both promised in Revelation chapters 21 and 22.

Lamb!” Here again we find a reference to Genesis: Genesis 22:8, that is where God promised Abraham that He would provide a Lamb. So, the 2nd time in Genesis, and the 2nd time a promise to Abraham.

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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, 12 saying:

“**Amen!** They agree with the multitude! **Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,
Be to our God forever and ever.
Amen.”**

I will furthermore and finally say that these saints in white and angels and elders are not looking around for something to do. Rather, instead of somehow dreading they have nothing else to do but worship the One on the Throne, they fall to their faces—demonstrating to us that there is need for both joyful praise, and for somber adoration.

13 Then one of the elders answered, Is this the same “elder” that offered clarity to John’s consternation in 5:5? And what is he “answering?” Who asked anything? Is he answering the inquisitive thoughts of John?¹ It must be that He is answering the loud worship of the angels, elders, and four living creatures. Versions that ignore this terminology of “answer” (or exchange it for “ask” as the HCSB does) do so without manuscript support.² **saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?” 14 And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “These are the ones who come present tense... translated so by the NKJV. As they die, they show up in Heaven. out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.** It is at this point that I will mention that if you are of the persuasion that the church will not be those “coming out of great tribulation,” you must at least admit that there are, in fact, saints... who are “coming out of great tribulation.” While we are playing around with this conundrum, I should point out to you that they are talking about “salvation” (7:10) and that this “salvation” is through **the blood of the Lamb.** If, somehow, these are a different group of saints **coming out of tribulation,** we must see the principle that there are those in Heaven today just as there are those who will be in Heaven when this passage actually occurs, and that their behavior will be much the same as these.

Are you having a hard time with this? Do you think God is any less worthy of Worship than He will be on this future day? Do you think that those in Heaven today are there because of some action other than God’s salvation through the blood of Jesus? Do you think that we should do less today in His presence than we will do that day when we stand before the throne? If your response is “No,” then you will have no problem with what we’re about to read.

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Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. As John relays the elder’s explanation of the condition of those multitudes, he starts off by giving their location. Then, he completes the description by giving their function. And he starts off this three verse function with an immediate description: **they serve Him.** Isn’t this wonderful? Actually, some folks think that “work is a curse,” but then we see that it is the fruitfulness of man’s work, not work itself, that is the result of the curse in Genesis 2 and Genesis 3. It is not the will of God for you to hate your work. Now, I am not interested in confusing this place **around the throne** with our forever home in the New Jerusalem found at the end of the book, in which we’re told “there is no temple there” (Revelation 21:22). Consider, though, that Heaven is the beginning of our eternal state and people are... what?...they’re working!

Furthermore, Revelation 22:3 says that those in the New Jerusalem are doing the very same thing. “And there shall be no curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him. This is exceptionally good news for those among us who thought Heaven would be boring with nothing but choir practice and harp recitals. Then, there are those of us who actually enjoy our work. Imagine **get a few arguments from the congregation**

Imagine being “useful” forever.

We know there is certain work that will not be needed: Takuji Yamazaki, for example, will not need to help his Buddhist converts to the Gospel of Christ burn their old shrines and altars to their false gods!

We have established many timeless truths about this great flashing forward to eternity and establishing norms for us today such as worship. We have enjoyed learning that work and labor and love of labor and accomplishment and creativity will be a reality in the future, and so we think about them now.

More than that, think about working in God’s temple now. We are told in 1 Corinthians 3:15 that the “temple of God” is this body of believers. We are even told that 1 Timothy 3:15 calls this body of believers the “house of God.” If those are not enough, we consider that Jesus says he is going to be in and among His people in Matthew 18 when they meet together—drawing the disciples memories back to the temple of the Old Testament when God descended in the glory cloud.

¹Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 570.

² <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G611&t=KJV> [accessed June 14, 2016]

If the New Testament believers are the temple, then the timeless norm is that we can properly set our minds on the wonderful and noble work of working in God's temple in Heaven upon death or the rapture by working in and among His temple here and now. Loving God's people and serving God's people and enjoying God's people in labor and doing the work of the Lord, or as Paul says "always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Well, when it comes to working in the temple of the Lord, What better thing to think about than the work of being a Father? And, on this Father's Day, what better work can we discuss than you, the Father's work, in the temple? There are many, many men among our 12 deacons, and many, many men in our committees and in our Sunday School classes who are serving. Of course, I don't dare discount the great work that is happening among our dear ladies. Countless hours and great extents have gone out in the form of work from our dear ladies here at Sandy Ridge. Today, though, I am sure you understand if I speak to the men, and not just men, but Fathers.

1. Become Respectable
Dependable
2. Become Available
Hobbies
Needing to be needed
3. Become lead-able
Learning skills of talking to others about their faith
Open your heart to works of compassion to others
Find a team of which to take part.
4. Become a Christian.

And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. This translation is a little weak. For while the English here can put someone in mind of John 1:14 and the "tabernacling" of Christ "among us",³ The Greek in this same John's writing here is more "on us."⁴ Therefore, while we are there, there is no sun crushing our souls with its relentless heat (referenced in the next verse). So in this passage we have reference to both the tabernacle and the temple. At any rate, the Lexham English Bible references this as "the one seated on the throne will shelter them." This, as one might expect, reminds the reader of another Old Testament Scripture: Psalm 91:1 and the sheltering of child of God under the Almighty.

16 They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them Not only do we find that this **Lamb** is a lion (5:5), but we also see that this **Lamb** is a **Shepherd**. This is the opposite of Isaiah 40:10 & 53:6-7 where the shepherd becomes a lamb. At any rate, nobody is expecting a "lamb" to do anything mighty. This is captured in songs like

*Wonderful, merciful Savior, precious Redeemer and Friend;
Who would have thought that a Lamb could rescue the souls of men?
Oh, You rescue the souls of men.*⁵

More could be said about the shepherding character of Jesus? Is this not what He does? Does He not minister to your hearts that He is both guiding you from behind and leading from before? Does He not whisper to your soul that while the shadows lengthen, they do not even faintly touch the extents of His piercing watch? Consider the contemplations of John Newton, author of *Amazing Grace*.

³ https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/jhn/1/14/t_conc_998014 [accessed June 14, 2016]

⁴ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G1909&t=KJV> [accessed June 14, 2016]

⁵ Philip Webb, ed. *Hymns of Grace* (Los Angeles: Master's Seminary Press, 2015), 162.

“...the wise and good providence of God watches over his people from the earliest moment of their life, overrules and guards them through all their wanderings in a state of ignorance, leads them in a way that they know not, till at length his providence and grace concur in those events and impressions which bring them to the knowledge of him and themselves.”⁶

to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

To the believer: May I share with you a verse from Charles Wesley

*Come, Almighty to deliver, Let us all Thy grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never, Nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing, Glory in Thy perfect love.*

To the lost: As a final warning, I am compelled to say that those who are, in this passage, “day and night serving in the temple” are placed in juxtaposition to those who suffer “day and night forever and ever” (14:11).

⁶ John Newton *The Works of John Newton, vol 1* (Carlisle PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2015), 7.