

**Revelation 7: 9-17; "The Victorious Multitude", Sermon # 63**  
**in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness",**  
**Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall**  
**on July 8th, 2007, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

The verses that I have just read to you are verses which show the triumph of the Church of Jesus Christ over all of her adversaries. They are placed here in order to encourage those who are passing through afflictions, trials, and persecutions; that they will also triumph, even though it does not look like it, as they look at the next great opposition of Satan which was coming to them; the beginnings of the rise of the antichristian powers. For that is what Christ's Church is being told to anticipate in the first 9 verses of Chapter 7. The Pagan Roman Emperor's persecution of countless thousands of Christians, even to the total of some millions of people in the years 97-323 A.D., has come to an end with Constantine. The 4 winds of angelic judgment on the Empire are being held back. There is peace for a time from severe systematic persecution. But something just as insidious is coming to take its place. Satan will bring his own winds and storms of false doctrine. This inundation will be so great that it will seem that the cause of Christ and His Church fulfilling the great commission, must come to an end. These verses, however, picture in a visionary form, the triumph of those who have suffered and died in the blessed cause of truth and the gospel; not only to those in the past, but these words of triumph also tell those in the 2nd period of the Roman Empire, which falls under the Trumpets and those in the 3rd period, which falls under the Vials, that every suffering saint will triumph. Every person suffering for the sake of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus shall triumph. They shall be victorious. Those saints who were and are going to suffer, to see the cause of Christ progress in the earth, need to know how great their triumph will be, even though now, they are overwhelmed with opposition. So we want to ask, "What are the causes of rejoicing that are being proclaimed by this vast multitude and how can we rejoice with them?" As we study these verses we find that there are 3 causes of rejoicing by God's saints; those who have suffered and those who will yet suffer tribulation under the persecution brought to them for Christ's sake, by the antichristian powers. Let's look at them together.

**1st- All of God's saints being persecuted by anti-Christian powers should rejoice that Salvation belongs to God.** (Verses 9-12)

"After these things I looked," says John, "and behold, a great number which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb. Salvation is a matter of greater rejoicing than anything else in this life, or in the next. The saints of our text have proved this. They have proved that God is faithful to all of his promises. Turn with me to Psalm 34: 11. Here we find a psalmist full of joy. He is rejoicing and tells us the reasons for it. He also has a desire for you and me. "Come you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord." "Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good?" "Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit." "Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it." This is what most people desire. They desire a life of peace and blessing. God would have each Christian to learn the principles of righteousness in their life. The Christian says to himself, "Perhaps I will not find peace living in this way." "I will suffer many afflictions if I live these principles out. But to convince him to go forward in his obedience, the Psalmist says, representing the faithfulness of God to us, "Come you children, listen to me and I will teach you the fear of the Lord." The fear of the Lord is to depart from evil no matter what the cost. But "the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry." God is expecting you, O Christian to realize that the Lord is watching over you, in the many situations of life, and He is expecting you to pray to Him; to cry to him. "The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles." It does not say, "out of some of their troubles". It says, "out of all of their troubles." And furthermore, it says, "The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit." Is this you O Christian? Have you been brought to this most holy of places, where being broken by the many situations in life that threaten to bear you down, that you bring all of your sin, all of your inability, all of your pain which others have put you through for Jesus sake, to God? In the case of those who suffered in the days of the persecuting Emperors, many of them were put through the most frightening and exquisitely painful tortures. But they were delivered, unless our text in Psalm 34 is false. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all," it says in Psalm 34: 19. And now, we have the picture of their victory, their triumph, in that they were delivered from the hands of their enemies, and placed in a situation in which they are fully and forever made aware of their triumph. This is why they cry, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne

and to the Lamb. It is the holy and wonderful purpose of our God and His Christ for His people to triumph in the lamb. In Psalm 34, once again, after telling us that God will deliver us from all our afflictions, it says in verse 20, "He guards all his bones; not one of them will be broken." Now this cannot refer in a direct sense to many of those tortured and killed in the times that we are speaking of. Some of them were ripped limb from limb and many of their bones were broken. But it must refer in the first sense to Christ Jesus Himself who suffered on the cruel cross for our sins, and when the Roman soldiers came to break his legs, so that death would come more quickly, they found that He had died already. It says in John 19: 36, "For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Not one of His bones shall be broken.'" So we see from this that the primary sense of our being "delivered out of all our afflictions has to be found in Christ. "Evil shall slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous shall be condemned, it says in verse 21 of Psalm 34. "The Lord redeems the soul of His servants and none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned." This is the Salvation that belongs to God. All deliverances that are lasting come from Him. If we are not delivered physically to live one more day here upon the earth, let us rejoice, for it is far better to "depart and be with Christ." We will find that truly, God will cause us to rejoice that it is so.

**2ndly- All of God's saints being persecuted by anti-Christian powers should rejoice that they shall come through and out of all tribulation through the power of the blood of Christ.** (Verses 13-15)

Verse 13 says, "Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, 'Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?' "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." We have spoken of how the saints come through and out of the great tribulations that they experience while in this world, but we have not spoken of the basis that they were able to endure these things, and come to this blessed place of reward. They have been given white robes; they have palm branches in their hands, and they are going to "serve God day and night in his tabernacle." One might be tempted to think that it was because of their sufferings that they were given all these things. But it is not the case. Our text specifically says, "they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." This washing is their action and it needs to be made ours as well. This washing is when we deliberately bring all the best and greatest works that we do for God and for Christ and we "dip them in the blood of Christ." The reason that this is done is because our righteous works, even the best of them, still falls

woefully short of the perfection that God expects. In Revelation 19: 8, at the marriage supper of the Lamb, which is the time of the greatest triumph of Christ's Church, the Church triumphant in heaven, composed of those who had suffered for Christ's kingdom to go forward are said to "have been granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." The reason that they are clothed in fine linen is because of their righteous deeds, but their triumph to be able to wear such garments is from Christ. In verse 14 when Christ goes forth to battle against the final manifestation of the anti-Christian powers it says that "the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses." The saints are dressed in fine linen, which is bright and clean, not because of their own finest efforts, but because they have washed these garments in the blood of Christ, as it says in the text that we are studying. Christ's blood, that is His sufferings on our behalf, is what makes up for all of the deficiencies which the best of our deeds and works will have. This is how we triumph over anti-Christian powers; through the death of Christ. Those who oppose our Christ can find a thousand things wrong and incomplete with our obedience. Sometimes they know better than we do, what a true Christian should look like. If the ungodly are like this; how much more our God, who has defined what a true Christian should be like in their heart as well as in their actions, and by His Holy Spirit sees our hearts at all times! No, the blood of Christ is the only reason that we are rewarded, that even the finest martyr is rewarded for his service to God. And the angels who have been those who have rendered service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation say the same thing. In Verse 12 they say, "Amen!" "Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever." "Amen." The rejoicing of the saints being brought out of great tribulation is exuberant, but it is also careful to give the glory for everything brought to them and all the rewards of their service, unto the Lord Jesus Christ. Truly, they desire it to be this way. This is the how and the why of "God's coming to dwell among them." It will always be the case in regard to God who sits on the throne, coming to dwell with His saints in a greater sense than they have ever known before. It is when they have been humbled to the dust by the greatness of all that God and Christ have done for them.

**3rdly- All of God's saints being persecuted by anti-Christian powers should rejoice at the eternally blessed condition that they will come to because Christ the Lamb will lead them there.**

(Verses 16 and 17)

Sometimes I think that we think that all the blessings of eternal life come to us as blessings given apart from the One who gives them. We have food and we are thankful. We have shelter from the sun not striking us and we rejoice because we find ourselves receiving the blessing of shade. We think that we will be glad when we come to heaven because it will be such a beautiful place. No doubt, but that it will be. But these people of our text, this triumphant multitude, have found that it is not just the state of being in heaven that made heaven so wonderful. It was that "the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters." "He would be the One who would "wipe away every tear from their eyes." It is Christ's shepherding and leading us into all the blessings that He has died to purchase that is the cause of all of our rejoicing and our greatest rejoicing. This is also how we come to triumph in all of our "hungering and thirsting" after righteousness in this life as well. This is how we come to triumph in all of our difficulties and trials and persecutions in the here and now. Our great Shepherd Jesus Christ shepherds us and leads us. He knows exactly what we need to experience in all of these areas, in order for us to grow to the place where we can face whatever God has purposed for us to endure and to suffer. This is how Paul could say in Romans 8: 35 - "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" "As it is written; 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.'" "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors." How? "Through Him who loved us." It is Christ Himself who loves and guides us into all of the blessing that He died to purchase for us. He also applies all of these blessings to us in just the right time and in just the right way. The question is; will we acknowledge this and rejoice it, even as these saints of our text did? We need to come to that place. The Apostle Paul did. He had a thorn in the flesh, he said in 2 Corinthians 12: 7. And concerning that thing he pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from him. And Christ said to him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." "Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake." "For when I am weak, then I am strong." How can Paul take pleasure in these things? It is because he had come to know the reality of Christ leading him into the rich blessings of grace in an experiential way. This is a reality for every true Christian. Is it a reality in your experience? Is it a reality in your afflictions and distresses.

Then take heart Christian; for the good work that God has begun in you, He will complete. He will perfect it until the Day of Christ.