

The Vision of John

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Revelation 7:9

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The passage of Scripture that I have chosen for my message today is very special to me. A little over five years ago my only daughter died of cancer and she requested that I preach her funeral. And I chose this Scripture as the text for that message a little over five years ago at her memorial service. And it is found in Revelation seven. I want you to look at it with me this morning. I want to talk to you about the vision of John. That is the topic. That is the title of the message: “The vision of John.”

And it is found in Revelation seven. We will begin reading with verse nine. And John wrote, “After this I beheld and lo a great multitude which no man could number of all nations and kindred and people and tongues. They stood before the throne and before the lamb clothed in white robes with palms in their hands and cried with a loud voice saying, ‘Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and to the lamb.’ And all the angels round about the throne and the elders and the four beasts about the throne, fell on their faces and worshipped God saying, ‘Amen.’”

And then the seven fold blessing. They said, “Blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power and might be unto our God forever and ever amen.”

Now, the apostle John is on the isle of Patmos in exile. He is the last of the apostles. All of the apostles were dead at this time we believe. John is in his 90s. And the Lord God is pleased to give him a revelation. It is called in your Bible, in the King James translation, “The Revelation of John the Baptist.” But really it is the revelation of Jesus Christ.

God is pleased to give John a revelation of Jesus Christ, a revelation of the glories of his eternal kingdom and a revelation of the joys of heaven. I believe this Scripture can be better understood, I believe I will be able to help you with it if I divide it into three parts, under three headings. First of all, let’s talk about what John saw. What did John see? And then I want to talk about what John heard. John heard something. And then I want to speak on what John learned.

So, first of all, let’s talk about what John saw. He said, “After this I beheld and lo a great multitude which no man could number of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues stood before the throne.” John saw a great multitude, a great multitude, he said, “Which no man could number.” Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands and thousands; someone said, “That is a definite number for an indefinite number.”

Here on the earth John saw a small number of believers, probably on the isle of Patmos he was the only one.

In 1 John 5:19 this is what John wrote, “And we know that we are of God and the whole world lieth in wickedness.” And then we know there were but 12 disciples. And at the cross there was no one to declare his generation. All men forsook him. He walked the winepress of God’s wrath alone. And then after our Lord died and was buried and rose again it says in Acts 1:15, “In those days Peter stood in the midst of the believers, the number and names were about 120.” But in heaven there is a great multitude which no man could number, so many you can’t count them.

God showed this to Abraham, that the people in glory would be more than you could number. He took Abraham out under the stars one night and he said, “Count the stars. Can you count the stars?”

Abraham said, “No.”

He said, “That’s how many seed you will have.”

Well, he wasn’t talking about the Arabs and the Jews and all these people that descended from Abraham, he was talking about believers. He was talking about believers because in Galatians 3:29 it says, “If you belong to Christ then are you Abraham’s seed.” If you don’t belong to Christ you’re not Abraham’s seed. In Galatians 3:16 he says, “The promise of God was not to seeds, but to seed which is Christ.”

So we are children of Abraham by faith in Christ Jesus. So God showed Abraham. He said, “There are going to be as many people in heaven as there are stars in the sky.” That’s right. And in Psalm 24 our Lord is called the Lord of hosts. A host is not a few. A host is not a handful. A host is many, many, many. And John, listen to this, he said, “I saw a multitude. I beheld and I saw a multitude which no man could number of all nations, of all kindreds.” How many kindreds? Of all people, of all tongues. How many...the Bible has been translated into over a thousand tongues. There are tongues, tribal tongues and dialects all over this...there is going to be somebody out of every tongue in heaven.

How can this be? How can this be? Why the gospel hasn’t even been preached to every tongue or every kindred or every people.

I was in a meeting some time ago, it has been several years ago, and a man, a school teacher, an older man came to me and told me a story and then he asked me a question. Well, here is the story. He had one daughter and she had one son. His little grandson was two years old. And his little grandson was the apple of his eye. His little grandson died and it devastated him. He said, “My little grandson never joined a church, never made a profession, never confessed Christ. Is my little grandson in heaven?”

I said, “Well, would you take the word of a man whom God called, a man after his own heart? Would you take the word of a man whom God designate as a writer of Scripture? Would you take the word of a man whom God called the sweet psalmist of all of Israel?”

He said, “Yes.”

I said, “Well, David is that man. And David had a little baby boy born to him and that little baby boy died. And David washed his face and David says, ‘Let’s have a feast. This little boy is with the Lord.’ And David said, ‘He can’t come back to me, but I fully intend to go to him.’”

So that’s the words of David. David got his comfort straight from God almighty and he passes it on to us through the Word.

The old timers call them elect infants, elect infants. And I am telling you this. Think of the millions and millions and millions of infants. There is not a tribe, a nation, a tongue or a people or a kindred that hasn’t had babies die. Every one of them are in glory. That is what I am saying. And I have never known one preacher, evangelical preacher or one writer—and I have done some studying of all the old writers—not one has ever said that those who die in infancy perish.

There is a lady in Virginia, a lady who lived in a log cabin where the Blue Ridge Parkway now stands. Her name was Orleana Pucket, Orleana Pucket. She lived in this little log cabin up there where the Blue Ridge Parkway now is located. And she delivered, she was a midwife, she delivered babies. And she, herself, gave birth—listen to me—to 22 babies and they all died, every one of them was born dead or else died about shortly after birth. I’ll tell you. I’ll tell you this. More babies have died than have ever survived. And John said, “I saw a multitude composed of every nation, tribe, kindred, tongue, people under God’s heaven.” That’s right.

And then something else John saw. He said they stood before the throne. They all stood before the throne, before the lamb.

You know, Psalm one says the ungodly shall not stand in God’s judgment. Psalm 24 says this, “Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord. Who will stand in his holy presence? Who can stand in God’s holy presence?”

David, in Psalm 130 said, “Lord, if you would mark iniquity nobody could stand.”

But John said, “I saw him. I saw a multitude which no man can number. And they were standing before the throne of God.” They were standing there. They were standing.

But here is the key. Here is the key word, “Before the throne of God and before the Lamb.” You see, God’s throne is a throne of judgment and a throne of majesty and a throne of power. Bu the Lamb through his precious blood, through his death on the cross has tuned God’s throne into a throne of grace. If you have a lamb, if you have the blood

of the Lamb you can stand before God. You can stand before the throne. Abel, he came to worship God and he brought a lamb and slew that lamb and God had respect to Abel and his offering, Abel and his offering. God received him, welcomed.

Abraham told Isaac, "God will provide a lamb, welcome."

Moses and Israel slew a lamb, put the blood on the door and God said, "Welcome. I'll pass over you. I see the blood. I see the blood. I see the blood of the lamb."

John the Baptist said, "There is the lamb of God that taketh away our sin."

These people stood before the throne and before the lamb. Without a lamb you don't stand there. Without a lamb you don't come there. Without a lamb you are not accepted. You are not welcome because the Lamb of God has died God's throne of judgment and holiness and majesty becomes a throne of grace, a throne of mercy to all who believe.

I tell you this. If God should bring an unrighteous, unholy man, an unwashed person before his throne that person would perish at the sight of God. No man can look on God and live. He would perish at the sight of God.

You see, God doesn't have to put forth an effort to destroy evil. His presence destroys evil, his very presence destroys evil. As light dispels darkness...turn on the light. Where does the darkness go? The light blew it away and before God's awesome holiness you bring your sins in yourself and not on Christ. He will blow you away. You won't even be seen. Darkness disappears in the presence of God like heat melts ice. The ungodly shall not stand in his presence. But you can stand there if you have got a lamb.

Jesus the Lamb of God has died opening the door of heaven wide. All who believe are justified, freely, from all sin.

Listen to me. The Word of God declares plainly, Leviticus 17:11, "The life of the flesh is in the blood." The life of this man here is in his blood. Take my blood out, I'm gone. Infect my blood, I die. And my blood is permeated with sin. I die. The life of the flesh is in the blood and the life of the spiritual man is in the blood of the Lamb. That's right. You can't live without your blood. And you can't live spiritually without his blood.

God said, "The life of the soul is in the blood of Christ. I have given it to you. I gave you this blood on the altar. I gave my life a ransom for many. I put the blood on the mercy seat. I gave my blood as a ransom, as an atonement for your souls."

Hebrews 9:24 says, "Christ has not entered into the holy place made with hands, not into an earthly temple or tabernacle, but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us. Not with the blood of an animal, but with his own precious blood."

And Peter said, "For as much as you know you are not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without spot or blemish."

What did John say? "A multitude no man could number of all nations, kindred, people and tongues, stood before God, before the Lamb, accepted in the beloved, received, dwelling in the presence of God."

And he said...what did he see secondly? They were clothed with white robes. They were all dressed alike. They were all clothed alike in the robe of his perfect righteousness. They were clothed with white robes, white signifies purity, purity, perfection. They were clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Everybody had on the right wedding garment.

They were from different nations, same garment. They were different ages, some died young, some died old. But they had the same garment. They were different years of service. Some of them knew the Lord for a long time. Some, like the thief on the cross, a very short time, same robe. There are no degrees in glory. We wear the same thing. We wear his robe of righteousness. We are accepted in the beloved. We are all loved alike. No rewards for special service. Christ is our reward.

It says in Isaiah 61:10, "I will greatly rejoice in my Lord. My soul shall be joyful in my God for he," I didn't do it, he did it, "he hath clothed me with the garment of salvation. He hath covered me with his robe of righteousness."

John said, "I beheld, I saw a multitude which no man could number of all nations, kindred, people and tongues. And they stood before the throne of God and before the Lamb and they were clothed with white robes. And they had palms in their hands, palms in their hands."

"What does this mean, preacher?"

Well, these are palms of victory. For years and years and years and years way back yonder palm branches from the palm tree has been an emblem of victory. The conquerors wore crowns of palms. And they carried palm branches, the victors, the conquerors. And when our Lord Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem, what does the Scripture say? The people met him with palm branches, palm branches, and they threw them at his feet. And our Lord rode over them. And they cried, "Hosanna to the king who cometh in the name of the Lord." The white robes signify holiness, clothed in his holiness and righteousness.

The palms signify victory. The war is over. The battle is won.

"Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Oh death, where is your sting? Oh grave, where is your victory?"

All the conquerors bring their palms to the Lamb on the throne and proclaim in joyful songs, victory through the blood alone. This is what John saw, a multitude which no man could number from every tribe, kindred, nation, tongue under heaven, standing, accepted before the throne of God, accepted in the beloved because of the Lamb, clothed in perfect holiness, unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight. In his righteousness, victorious forever through the blood of the Lamb.

Well, what did John hear? And he said this multitude before the throne cried with a loud voice, a loud voice. Did you notice that John didn't say they cried with loud voices? He said this multitude cried with a loud voice. They had one song, one song. "Unto him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and made us kings and priests unto our God, to him be the glory both now and forever." They had one song. They had one message. They had one voice. John said it sounded like one voice in perfect unison, in perfect harmony. They all sang the same song. "Salvation to our God. Salvation is of the Lord which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb."

That is what John wrote in Revelation 1:5. He said, "This is a song of heaven. Unto him who loved us, to him who washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him who made us kings and priests unto our God, to him be the glory both now and forever, Amen."

The multitude cried with one voice, "Salvation is of the Lord."

And then he says all the angels around the throne and all the elders joined with them and they all fell before the Lamb, every knee bowed and every tongue confessed, "Salvation is of the Lord." Every knee, every tongue, the multitude, the angels, the elders all cried with one voice, "Worthy is the Lamb."

You know, God hath given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus Christ every knee will bow and every tongue will confess he is the Lord.

Now, there may be people on earth now who brag of their own righteousness, but nobody there, nobody there. They are singing about the Lamb. There may be people on earth who boast of their religious works and what they are doing for God, but not in heaven. That is not the song of heaven. There may be people on this earth who do not believe that salvation is the gift of God, but everybody there knows it is. There may be people here who do not rest in the blood, trust in the blood, preach the blood of Christ, but there, "Unto him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

It is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.

There may be people on earth who believe there is a way to heaven other than through the Lord Jesus Christ and his cross, but not in heaven, not in heaven. The Lamb who was slain, slain before the foundation of the world, slain and nailed to Calvary's cross. There may be people on earth who believe that his death is not effectual and not sufficient, but not there. Listen to their song.

“Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb who loved us.” We love him because he first loved us. He loved us. He called us. He sought us. He saved us. Not according to our works, but according to his own purpose in grace which was given to us in Jesus Christ before the world began. He loved us. And he washed us. He cleansed us. He made us kings and priests unto God. To him be the glory.

All hail the power of Jesus’ name let angels prostrate fall and bring forth the royal diadem and crown him, crown him Lord of all.

What did John hear? He heard that multitude in one voice He heard them say, “Salvation is of the Lord.’ And then he heard a seven fold blessing. I told you that just a moment ago when I read verse 12. The multitude, the angels, the elders all gave the glory to God, all the glory to God.

Here is the seven fold blessing. They said, “Blessing.” God is the source of all blessings. They said, “Glory.” All that God does is to the praise of his glory. If you will read Ephesians one it talks about the work of the Father, what he did for us, chose us, redeemed us, accepted us to the praise of his glory. It talks about the Son enlightened us, illuminated us, forgave our sins to the praise of his glory. I talked about the Spirit to the praise of his glory. All glory to God. All glory. Wisdom, divine wisdom displayed in salvation. Christ is the wisdom of God. Thanksgiving. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. Honor. He that honoureth the Son God will honor. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father that sent him. This is so powerful. Honor. Honor God. Power. Christ is the power of God. Paul said, “I am not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.” And strength. The strength is in Christ.

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hid myself in thee. Let the water and the blood from thy wounded side which flowed be of sin the double cure. Save me from wrath. Make me pure.”

That is the seven fold blessing. If you are going to sing it there you have got to learn it here. Now, that is just the fact. If you are going to sing it there you are going to learn it here. Blessing to God. Bless God. Glory, all the glory. Wisdom, God’s wisdom. Don’t match wisdom wits with God. Don’t bring your natural wisdom to God’s Word. Wisdom, Christ is wisdom. Thanksgiving, honor, power, strength.

Well, what did John learn? This is the last point. We know what he saw. We know what he heard. What did he learn?

“And one of the elders said to me,” verse 13, “Who are these? Who are these, this multitude of every nation, people, kindred, tongue arrayed in white robes with the palms of victory? Who are they? Where did they come from?”

And I said, "Sir, you know. And so does everyone up here know who they are and whence they came. Here is who they are. Here is who they are. They came out of great tribulation."

Now, that is not talking about the seven years tribulation folks talk about. That talks about in this world you will have tribulation. Everybody listening to my voice if he is a believer he has had tribulation. They lived on this earth and all of them had their particular life story and history, but they have two things in common. They knew trial. They knew sorrow. They knew pain. They knew tears. And they learned something about death. All of God's people know something about those things. They came through great tribulation.

Here is the second thing they have got in common. They washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. They all heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, believed the gospel of Jesus Christ and washed their robes in the blood of Jesus Christ. Who are these? This multitude? These are folks off the earth who came through great tribulation, but they washed their robes in the blood of the lamb.

And now, their future. He said, "They are before the throne of God. They dwell there. They serve God daily in the new heaven and the new earth in his temple."

The Lord dwells with them. God said, "I will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more sorrow, no more death, no more crying, no more pain. The former things have passed away. They will be my people and I will be their God. They will never hunger and thirst. The sun, the heat of trial, labor and toil will never light on them and God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth and the old earth shall be remembered no more."

What a joy. What a blessing.

If you want this tape, "The Vision of John," write for it. Send two dollars. We'll mail it to you. Until next week, God bless you.