

Revelation 7:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

Analysis

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robe... This verse from Revelation's vision of sealed servants and innumerable multitude - god's protection and salvation employs apocalyptic imagery rich with Old Testament allusions and symbolic meaning. The Greek text uses vivid apocalyptic language characteristic of Jewish prophetic literature, drawing heavily from Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Zechariah.

The symbolism must be interpreted within its first-century context while recognizing timeless spiritual realities. The imagery would resonate powerfully with persecuted believers facing Roman imperial cult worship, providing hope that despite present suffering, Christ reigns sovereign and will consummate His kingdom. The apocalyptic genre uses symbolic numbers (seven, twelve, 144,000), colors, beasts, and cosmic imagery to convey theological truth rather than photographic descriptions.

Christologically, Revelation consistently exalts Jesus as the victorious Lamb, the faithful witness, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Every vision ultimately points to Christ's supremacy, His finished redemptive work, and His certain return to judge the living and dead and establish the new creation.

Historical Context

John received this revelation circa AD 95 during Domitian's persecution, exiled on Patmos for his testimony. The seven churches of Asia Minor faced increasing pressure to participate in emperor worship and pagan religious practices. Refusal meant economic hardship, social ostracism, and potential martyrdom. Understanding this context illuminates Revelation's encouragement to faithful endurance.

The apocalyptic genre was familiar to first-century Jewish and Christian readers. Rather than newspaper-style predictions, apocalyptic literature uses symbolic imagery to reveal spiritual realities behind earthly events, encourage the faithful, warn the unfaithful, and assert God's ultimate sovereignty over history. Parallels with Daniel, Ezekiel, and intertestamental apocalyptic writings would help original readers decode the symbols.

Rome's imperial cult demanded worship of Caesar as divine, placing Christians in impossible situations—compromise their faith or face persecution. Revelation identifies Rome as "Babylon" and assures believers that despite appearances, the Lamb conquered through His death and resurrection, and all earthly kingdoms will submit to His reign.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 7:9 reveal God's character, particularly His sovereignty, holiness, and justice?

2. What specific encouragement or warning does this verse offer for maintaining faithful Christian witness amid cultural pressure?
3. How does this passage point to Christ's victory and the hope of new creation, and how should that shape your present priorities?

Interlinear Text

Μετὰ	ταῦτα	εἶδον	καὶ	ἰδοῦ,	ὄχλος	πολύς	ὃν
After	this	I beheld	and	lo	multitude	a great	which
G3326	G5023	G1492	G2532	G2400	G3793	G4183	G3739
ἀριθμῆσαι	αὐτῶν	οὐδεὶς	ἠδύνατο,	ἐκ	παντὸς	ἔθνους	
number	their	no man	could	of	all	nations	
G705	G846	G3762	G1410	G1537	G3956	G1484	
καὶ	φυλῶν	καὶ	λαῶν	καὶ	γλωσσῶν	ἑστῶτες	ἐνώπιον
and	kindreds	and	people	and	tongues	stood	before
G2532	G5443	G2532	G2992	G2532	G1100	G2476	G1799
τοῦ	θρόνου	καὶ	ἐνώπιον	τοῦ	ἀρνίου	περιβεβλημένοι	
G3588	the throne	and	before	G3588	the Lamb	clothed	
	G2362	G2532	G1799		G721	G4016	
στολὰς	λευκάς	καὶ	φοῖνικες	ἐν	ταῖς	χερσὶν	αὐτῶν
robes	with white	and	palms	in	G3588	hands	their
G4749	G3022	G2532	G5404	G1722		G5495	G846

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 5:9 (Parallel theme): And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

John 12:13 (Parallel theme): Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Psalms 2:8 (Parallel theme): Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Zechariah 2:11 (Parallel theme): And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.

Revelation 3:18 (Parallel theme): I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

Revelation 6:11 (Parallel theme): And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

Revelation 11:15 (Parallel theme): And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Psalms 22:27 (Parallel theme): All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.

Jeremiah 3:17 (Parallel theme): At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.

Romans 11:25 (Parallel theme): For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.