

Revelation 7:9-17

**“A Glimpse of What is to Come”  
All Saints’ Day (Observed)**

November 3, 2024

**Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, West Salem, Wisc.  
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Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

***“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (Revelation 7:9-10).***

This vision is for us. It’s the revelation of Jesus Christ to St. John. Jesus revealed. John looked. And today, on this All Saints’ Sunday, we receive a glimpse of what Jesus revealed to John.

This vision helps us see the goal of every Christian currently striving in the Church Militant across the earth today. The goal to be part of this great multitude for eternity that no one can number from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before God’s throne, standing before Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain for our sin, clothed in resurrected glory for eternity.

This vision answers so many questions. Like: why do we establish Christian congregations? Why do we seek our prodigal sons and daughters? Why do we seek the unbelievers? Why do we call pastors? Why do we teach the one true Christian faith? Why do we give offerings sacrificially each week? Why do we plan for the future?

We do all those things so that we and many others from Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, West Salem and the Coulee Region, can be part of this great multitude before the throne of the Lamb!

Now, I’d like to give you some background on what led Jesus to reveal this vision to John.

When John wrote Revelation, it was a tough time to be a Christian. If you think today is tough, you have no idea. You see, for just being a Christian, many endured unimaginable pain. They were thrown to lions while onlookers cheered. They were set on fire. They were hurled down cliffs. They were skinned alive. And they were even boiled in oil.

If they would have *only* denied their Christian faith, life would have been so much easier. They would have been liked. They would have been approved of by society. They would have been approved of by this fallen world's prince. They would be the ones sitting in the stadium seats, rather than the ones facing certain death below.

So, Jesus revealed this vision to John. Jesus knew that the faithful saints had struggles in the past, and they were going through struggles in the present, and that they would encounter more struggles in the future. Sin was certainly alive and well in these pagan cities of ancient Rome.

To the seven churches of Revelation, Jesus warns John of the forsaking of truth, of false prophets, of false teachings, of sexual immorality, idolatry, death of true faith, Jesus meaning little, going through the motions of religion, refusing to evangelize Christ to others, spiritual lukewarmness, and only finding security in possessions and wealth.

This sounds like what we face today. In fact, this is what we have always faced. The Church faces persecution from the outside and the Church faces persecution from the inside. The fallen world and its prince attack us from the outside. And our sinful nature attacks us from the inside.

The fallen world and its prince use approval and deception to lead us away from Christ. Our sinful nature enjoys being puffed up. Our sinful nature enjoys being among the crowd. And this fallen world, and its prince most certainly knows that. So, they lead us to deny Christ and His teachings. We get ourselves caught up becoming worldly minded as we may even find ourselves mocking Christ and His teachings.

Today, so much of Christ's bride – *the Church* – is confused on what marriage is, how sexuality should be experienced, and who created this world in the first place. We begin to doubt Christ's love for us. We question each other on where our own prodigals have gone, instead of reaching out to them personally to welcome them back into Christ's flock. The Church is very much confused.

And Jesus did promise that we would face challenges. As we heard in the Beatitudes: ***“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven”*** (Matthew 5:11-12).

Jesus gave this vision to John – *for us*, so that we would be encouraged! For we will rise from death, live forever, worship and sing, ***“Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”*** (Revelation 7:10).

We will do what every human was created to do: worship the one true God! Sin has disrupted this natural response. As, often, we would rather have nothing to do with God, since by our own flawed reason, we cannot believe in Jesus Christ or even come to Him. But God doesn't just leave us in this state, so the Holy Spirit calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts of Word and Sacrament, sanctifies us and keeps us in the one truth faith, so that in our resurrected state, we continue this pattern of worship already begun on earth, but now is done perfectly and without interruption as we sing, ***“Salvation belongs to our God ...”***

But how do we receive this future? Is it from service to our neighbor? Is it for our service to the church? No, but those are good things. Things that support our neighbor in his body and soul. The only reason for saints being in heaven is this: ***“They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”*** (Revelation 7:14b).

You see, your future is based solely on being clothed in the righteousness of Christ! Your future is based solely upon the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, who shed His blood for you and your sin! You and I are saints, holy ones, now and forever, solely through the shed blood of Jesus that was spilled for you as He was nailed to a cross.

Now, there is some irony to this. What happens when you nick yourself and you have blood over your clothes? Or what happens if you accidentally spill red wine on yourself? You try to get it out, since it will stain permanently. But the blood of Jesus cleanses permanently, because it is a payment in full for sin. It is a blood that continues to cleanse you from sin today as you hear of it here and as you drink it at this altar.

Listen to your future:

***“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 shelter them with his presence.  
They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;  
the sun shall not strike them,  
nor any scorching heat.  
For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,  
and he will guide them to springs of living water,  
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes”* (Revelation 7:15-17).

Each of our years here on earth has been filled pain and struggle. And you can be sure that you may have many more years left filled with pain and struggle. You and I have shed tears saying our temporary goodbyes to saints who are now with their Lord.

But as God’s sure and certain Word proclaims, *“We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 8:37-39).

Here, in the foretaste of the feast to come, in this Divine Service, Jesus refreshes us in His Means of Grace – *His Word and Sacraments* – for our work in this fallen world and in our service to Him in His Church.

But one day, our struggle with sin will be no more – and we will no longer hunger and thirst, since the Lamb will guide us to *“springs of living water”* (Revelation 7:17b) as He meets all our physical and spiritual needs. Our baptismal garments will be exchanged for the permanent robe of resurrected glory, and He *“will wipe away every tear from [our] eyes”* (Revelation 7:17c).

On All Saints’ Sunday, we receive a glimpse into the bliss of heaven of our ultimate and certain future as forgiven saints through the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ! Death will be no more! Mourning will be no more! Pain will be no more!

This is our bright and glorious future as saints, who come out of this great tribulation – *our life now* – arrayed in robes made white through the blood of the Lamb! Amen.

*The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.*

**+ SOLI DEO GLORIA +**