

## Revelation 7:9-17 Worship and Hope after the great ordeal

### Intro to the Book of Revelation

Revelation in 15 minutes max! That is quite a challenge  
Apocalyptic - about the end times, about the end of the earth as we know it today, Jesus 2nd coming, New Heaven & New Earth  
Symbolic - full of images and symbols  
A vision that God gave to His disciple John who was constantly told to 'WRITE!'

So need your best imagination!!

### Multitude

What is the largest crowd you have ever been a part of?  
Nairobi... 1000's of people at a Christian Rally  
At some point in the day I realised that I was the ONLY white face there... literally  
London underground in rush hour when there has been a delay  
People of many different languages, nationalities etc

This is closer to the image described here in Revelation 7  
GREAT MULTITUDE that no one could count  
From every nation tribe & people speaking all languages

What are they doing?

STANDING before the throne and the Lamb  
That is in front of God the Father and God the Son  
Easter poster - Jesus Lamb of God  
The Lamb being Jesus who was hung on a cross to die, crucified by the Roman occupation  
WEARING white robes  
WAVING palm branches  
CRYING OUT IN A LOUD VOICE  
As one they are worshipping the Lamb

What are they saying?

That Salvation belongs to God salvation being rescue from danger  
who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb

You'll remember from Easter that we celebrated just a few weeks ago that The Lamb - Jesus - was betrayed, deserted, humiliated, ridiculed, beaten, crucified on a cross  
Hardly what we would think of as victory As salvation As rescue  
And yet as one voice that is what this immeasurable crowd is crying out

Never been to a football or rugby match but heard them on the telly and I can imagine what the sound must be like when with one voice the fans chant a song. It must make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up

This image is of even more people, too many for anyone to count crying out in one voice in worship of God!

Celebrating the victory worshipping the one who rescued them, who provided the means for salvation through the shedding of His blood on the cross that first Good Friday  
BUT also through His resurrection... no beating no dying no huge boulder no Roman centurion could stop him!

The multitude in robes made white and pure because of the sacrifice of the lamb of God united in worship glad recipients of the rescue... the salvation that belongs to God

## Angels

And then there are the angels standing around the throne  
Who then fell on their faces before the Throne and worshipped God  
This time SINGING

Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might  
Be to God forever and ever..... AMEN!

How is your imagination doing???? Can you picture the scene?

It is good sometimes to go to a big celebration with other Christians where we put aside any differences and focus on God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ and worship Him because of what He has done for us

Could be Spring Harvest, or Big Church Day Out Could be a big celebration service in one of our nearby Cathedrals Pentecost on 15th May in the evening at Winchester Cathedral  
But to be part of the bigger body of Christ Worshipping Him the provider of our salvation

## Conversation

And then John records that there is a short conversation between him and one of the elders, one who is there worshipping

The conversation addresses just who these people, the multitude dressed in white, are.

The answer is that they are those who 'have come out of the great ordeal, who have washed their robes and made them pure white in the blood of the Lamb'

And we are reminded that this multitude, this inconceivably large crowd are there worshipping day and night within the temple.

In fact it says this great multitude have come out of the great ordeal and are worshipping because they have been made white - Pure - through the sacrificial blood of the lamb

vs. 15 For this reason they are before the throne of God and worshipping him...

The reason that there is this amazing crowd, all united in amazing worship is because of what they have been through and because they are cleansed and able to wear white robes representing purity because of the Lamb

Because Jesus was crucified on the cross and shed his blood in order that we may be made clean

There is suffering, our salvation came about because of the horrendous suffering that Jesus, Lamb of the God endured on our behalf

And there will be even more suffering to come

Revelation has incredible images of both the amazing New Creation but also the times of trial and tribulation

But those who stay faithful to God will come through, will overcome

And as it says in the Gospel reading from John 10:28+29 no one will be able to snatch us away from the hand of Jesus - the Lamb

No one!

The worship that we read about here, is possible because of Jesus and so powerful because of what the Lamb and the people have been through.

## Eddie the Eagle

Last weekend went to see film Eddie the Eagle honestly - I was not expecting too much!

Some of us may remember the 1988 winter Olympics and this random, seemingly eccentric English guy who represented Britain as a ski jumper

He didn't really look the part, his style was less than perfect and his jump less than spectacular BUT did you know that

as a child he had spent a year in hospital having surgery on his knees

had worn leg braces for much of his younger childhood

trained as a skier but was rejected from the team because he was a bit uncouth and did not fit the mould

switches to ski jumping a sport in which the UK had not participated in for more than 60 yrs he self trains and funds himself

he is belittled, ridiculed, ostracised

the target needed to qualify is changed at the last minute

his fellow team mates, when he finally does get to Calgary get him so drunk he misses the opening ceremony

He finally finished last in the event

but through sheer grit and determination

amazing perseverance in the face of incredible adversity and discrimination

having overcome hostility and prejudice

he reached his goal of competing in the olympics

I am sure that the Gold, Silver and Bronze winners celebrated their victories and remember the day well

But I am even more sure that Eddie Edwards, a plasterer from UK

celebrated harder and remembers even more clearly the details of that day

He came out of the incredible ordeal a far greater winner than the others in that competition

Not the sort of victory that the elite athletes and even the Olympic officials were looking for

But his sense of achievement and celebration were deeper than any of the other competitors

Go and see the film!

Why have I mentioned that story this morning?

Eddie the Eagle's sense of celebration and achievement was far higher because of what he had been through

The worship and singing described in this part of John's vision in Revelation 7 are deep and united and come from hearts full of praise

Because they are responding to the love of God that has enabled them to be cleansed through the sacrifice of Jesus - the Lamb

and because they have been faithful, endured, persevered and overcome the great ordeal.

This world is full of ordeals

Things are going to get worse before they get better

The book of Revelation describes all sorts of vivid trials and tribulations

But the promise is as it says in the reading from John, that all of us who are faithful to Christ cannot be snatched from His hand

If we stand firm in the face of persecution and come out of the great ordeal what joy shall then be ours

## Hope

And the last 3 verses give us an incredible promise of hope

We will be sheltered

We will hunger and thirst no more

We will not be struck down by the sun or scorching heat - chance would be a fine thing! :-)

We will be led to the springs of living water

Every tear will be wiped away from our eyes

The Lamb who was sacrificed on Good Friday - Jesus - and rose from death on Easter Sunday makes our salvation possible

and also gives us an incredible hope for the future

The promise of shelter and protection, provision and life

I give them eternal life and they will never perish!

Amen