

## **THE MULTITUDE BEFORE THE THRONE**

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**A SERMON  
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*“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; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”*  
*Revelation 7:9-10*

IT seems as though a dash of wonderment thrilled through his soul, and a flame of admiration burst from his tongue, when John exclaims, “After this I beheld, and, lo!” He had already seen much. His attention was fixed. His thoughts were strained. Of a sudden then a fresh scene breaks on his view, and he betrays his surprise. At what, you say? Evidently he was astonished that the vision was not yet complete.

Ah! brethren! In order to understand the deep things of God, we need to be patient in our contemplation. Had John turned away his eyes, relaxed his study, or withdrawn his gaze from the marvellous panorama, he would not have seen the better part of his vision. As a Jew, when he had seen the twelve tribes pass before him, he might have been tempted to say, “It is enough, there is a remnant, according to the election of grace in Israel, Lord, thy servant is content! I would now open mine eyes again to earth and forget these mysteries.”

This is what many have done practically when they have been looking at a Gospel truth. They have not been desirous to see it all, though glad enough to see some part of the truth which seemed to suit their prejudice, they have taken their eyes away from the excellent glory before they have seen the whole of the truth, as though they were afraid of discovering too much, as though they were always glad not to learn anything beyond, for fear it should not square with what they had learned before.

John, however, being patient and taught of God, continued still to look, and when the august assembly of the hundred and forty and four thousand had passed before him, he saw a far greater multitude of the Gentile race, and he heard from them a louder song than he had heard from the chosen multitude before, as they said, “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb.”

Be stedfast, then, ye searchers into truth. Look long, look earnestly. Ask the Lord to let you see as much as you may here. Then that petition being granted, comfort yourselves with this reflection, “What ye know not now ye shall know hereafter.” Some things He will not tell unto you, because ye cannot bear them now, but let there be nothing hid from you because your interest flags, and you do not wish to see it. Be willing to learn, and let your eye be open to see the whole of the truth which Jesus would reveal.

Turning, then, to the vision described in our text, the first thing in it that we ought to meditate upon is—

#### **I. THE GREAT CENTRE OF THE HEAVENLY WORLD.**

It seems that all the saints and angels that John saw surrounded one common rallying place—the throne of God and of the Lamb. They were not broken up into groups, some of them considering this subject, and others investigating that. They were not divided into parties, some calling themselves by one name, and some by another. All in one group they stood, though their number was beyond all human count, and every eye was directed to one common object—ay, and every heart went with every

eye—and every tongue sounded the selfsame song, and that a song of adoration to the selfsame One who was the centre of all.

Does not this teach us *that God is the very centre of heaven*. We might have guessed this, for He is centre of all the new creation. Even now all those that are born again live in Him, inheriting all the blessings of eternal life in their union to Christ, and their fellowship with Him. From Him they derive all their light, to Him and upon Him they reflect all the light again, giving all the glory unto Him from whom they received all the grace. He who builded heaven, He who supports heaven, He who chose every inhabitant in heaven, He who fashioned every inhabitant for heaven, He who bought every inhabitant of heaven with His precious blood, He who is the Father of all and the Friend of all, may well be the centre of all joy, of all observation, and of all worship in the eternal world.

Note, however, particularly, that the centre of the heavenly worship is not God in the act of creation, but *God upon the throne*. Divine sovereignty is the very centre of heaven. John saw God on the throne. Here, below, if we speak upon divine sovereignty too plainly, we have to encounter the objections of many who pronounce it a hard saying, and ask who can bear it? That the potter shall have power over the clay to do as He wills with each lump, that He should have mercy upon whom He will have mercy, and do as He wills with His own, grates harshly on their ears. I know it is because hearts are hard upon earth, for in that place where every heart is right with God, they are all too glad to let Him sway the scepter.

This is the very crown of their song, “The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.” His will is their supreme delight. They understand that His will, despotic as it may seem, and unquestioned by any creature, is a will of mercy, of tenderness, of wisdom, of holiness, and of truth, therefore, they pay their adorations to Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. This is a peculiar subject of their joy, that God has a throne, that He sits upon it, and that He ruleth over all things, and all things do His bidding. The central thought of heaven, then, is divine sovereignty.

You will remark that we are told *there was also the Lamb upon the throne*, as if to teach us that, even in heaven, the glory of the reigning God, working all things according to the counsels of His will, were a sight all too bright even for those pure spirits, unless they saw side by side with Him the Substitute, the Lamb of God. They see Jesus still under the form of a Sin-bearer, Jesus represented by the symbolic emblem of a Lamb, a Lamb that had been slain, Jesus the sufferer, Jesus the crucified, Jesus who once died for sin, and hath for ever put it away by His blood.

Oh! my brethren, how I love these two doctrines as I see them side by side—God, a sovereign, makes me tremble, Christ, the Lamb, makes me rejoice with trembling. God, a sovereign, overawes me, I put off my shoes from off my feet, like Moses, at the burning bush, but the Lamb has a voice that bids me draw nigh and have fellowship even with the God who is a consuming fire.

Oh! how much this ought to be the object of our thoughts on earth, seeing that it is the main object of their thoughts in heaven! We have often heard statements made by persons of what they mean to do in heaven. I read in a biography the other day of one who had not told another person certain feelings of his, as he meant to tell them in the other world. Believe me, we shall have something better to do than discourse of trifles in that upper sphere. We may even dismiss that stanza of Dr. Watts—

***“And with transporting joy, recount  
The labors of our feet.”***

It is but a poetic fiction. What are “the labors of our feet” that they should engross our attention? The reigning God will absorb our thoughts. How we can serve Him, the Supreme, will occupy our minds. The Lamb who once upon the cross was slain, but now upon His throne doth reign—how we can make the universe resound with His praises, how we can fly at His bidding, if He wills, from world to world, and tell out the matchless story of His love, how we may be able to make known to angels, and principalities, and powers in the heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God—this, it seems to me, will

engross our attention far more than any of the trifling circumstances of time, or any of the occurrences that were connected with our pilgrimage here below.

Oh! dear brethren, let us, whilst we are sojourning on earth, keep God upon the throne uppermost in our hearts, and so school ourselves in heavenly contemplation. Let us keep Christ uppermost with us in our meditations, in our conversations, and in our actions. Let us be God's men, let us be Christ's men. God upon the throne, for Christ the Lamb upon the throne be this our central attraction. Let us count it to be our pleasure to live here, as it will be our superlative pleasure to live forever hereafter, as worshippers who do homage before the throne of God and the Lamb.

We have seen the Divine Centre, now, let us carefully mark—

## II. THE DIVINE CIRCLE—the living throng that surrounded the throne.

They are mentioned as “a multitude that no man can number.” This leads me to remark—although I cannot find words fitly to express the thought—that I will call it *the sociality of God*. He was God over all blessed forever, self-existent, independent, needing no creature to assist Him, or to add to His glory or His happiness. But He chose to create worlds—how many we can never guess. The revelations of astronomy seem to tell us that He made them as lavishly as men might cast seed when they sow it broadcast many acres.

There they glitter in the expanse of space, for aught we know, every one of them filled with happy beings. We cannot tell. But God would not be alone, He willed not to be alone, He delighted in the habitable parts of the worlds that He chose to make. If you confine your view but to this world, you may discern that He would not be alone. He made this planet, He fitted it up to be the abode of living creatures.

The Divine Being has been pleased to create all sorts and forms of beauty and of life, from the tiny animalcule that finds an ocean in a drop of water, up to the leviathan that makes the very deep to boil like a pot, and causes the waves thereof to be hoary with his mighty lashings. God was pleased to make the eagle to fly aloft in the heaven, and the fish to cut the deep. All these creatures He has fed for many generations, upon all these He looks with interest and compassion, He hears the young ravens when they cry. What a boundless creation!

If every separate world that He has made has such an amazing catalogue of life, what multitudes of creatures now cluster round about the great Eternal One! He dwelt alone, but He chose not to be alone, and now He has built His house and filled His mighty chambers with many mansions into which He has been pleased to put a thousand forms of life.

And then He said within Himself, “I will make a creature different from all the rest I have made as yet, it shall be a spirit that can converse with me—intelligent, immortal,” and He created those firstborn sons of light. I know not how many they may be, but our covenant God, Father, Son, and Spirit formed servants suitable for the higher will and loftier behests in the cherubim and seraphim whom He made to be like flames of fire, and who cheerfully flash to do His bidding.

And then, last of all, He said—and here the Divine Unity comes into counsel with itself—“Let us make man after our own image,” and He made a strange creature, matchless and altogether unique—part of which was taken from the ground and kindred with the soil, which might die if it sinned, but another part of which was immaterial fitted to tenant any of the spheres in the great universe, and should exist forever—a spirit made in the image of God. So He made us, and at this day, despite sin, which seemed to rob God of all His newborn servants and sons whom He had created in the loins of Adam, He has a multitude that no man can number, who are nearer to Him than even angels are, with Christ, His Son, associates and friends, brought into conjugal union with Christ, married to Him.

Is it not a marvelous subject if one could dive into it, this social character of the Divine Being, that He willed not to be alone, that He still continues constantly to surround Himself with ten thousand times ten thousand spirits whom he ordains to bliss? Oh! that I might be among them! Doth not each one of you say so?

Oh! that I might tread the courts of His house! To be but a hired servant within His gates might well content me, but oh! if I might be His son, and as His child, might draw near to Him!—how would I bless that glorious Being from whom I sprang, and into whose bosom I would leap back again—the source of my life, the sum- total of my bliss, my God, my all! Think that thought over another time. I leave it with you.

Another thought rises out of the text. If there shall be in heaven a multitude surpassing all human arithmetic, out of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, *how certain the Gospel is to achieve yet a great success*. We are always fretting, we are in a great hurry for results, we are impatient of the issue, for we cannot see how the kingdom of God will come, and fain would we want to hasten the wheels of our Lord's chariot. Well, but our fears may be put aside, and our disquietude may be allayed, when we remember that as surely as JEHOVAH liveth, Christ *must* see of the travail of His soul, and He shall see of it in the ultimate salvation of a number out of all nations that are beyond all human count.

Patience, my brethren, patience, but diligence withal. Let us work at the same time that we wait. Let us serve, for the cause is in good hands. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in the hands of Christ, He shall not have died in vain, He shall not lose the purchase of His blood. A countless multitude must be saved. As surely as He bought them, so surely will He wash them in the blood which he shed on their behalf. Perhaps the day of the church's great growth will come when she returns to something like her primitive mode of warfare. Those who first went out to convert the world were but a handful of men, one room contained them all, yet within a few years there was not a nation upon earth that had not heard the Gospel. Even to the remotest isles the truth of Jesus had been carried, and who were the men who carried it?

Brethren, they were men who never framed a syllogism—men who never embellished a sermon with rhetorical art. For the most part they were men who spoke only the language of the common people—spoke it, I doubt not, earnestly, but certainly not according to the lordly rhetoric of the schools. They were not men who strove to be intellectual, they were not deep thinkers, they were not profoundly learned. They were men who knew but this one thing, that a Savior had come into the world, and that they were intent to tell men about Him. They spoke of this, and of this only, in burning words with tender feelings and fervent appeals to the conscience.

But nowadays, forsooth, we are told that the world is to be converted by logic, is to be reasoned out of its sins, is to be enlightened by the tapers of human intellect until the darkness of hell shall be scattered. Believe me, we are on the wrong tack if we think this. It is not so. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts," and the Spirit works with the simple Gospel, and only with the simple Gospel. When we get back to this conviction and return to this practice, we shall begin to see the countless multitudes flocking first to the church on earth and afterwards to the church above.

I will ask you, my brethren here who have been converted, how were you saved? how were you converted? Was it by learning? Was it by the flash of some glorious peroration of some mighty master of rhetoric? I confess that if I was converted to God—and I trust I was—it was through the ministration of a very simple, humble, uneducated man. I believe the confession of the most of God's children will be such as gives the glory to the Gospel, and not to the preacher's skill, and art, and intellect. If you have received comfort, and if you have received light, these things have come to you by the means of one who could not claim the glory, for he was but an earthen vessel, and the excellency of the power was conspicuously of God and not of him.

Oh! Spirit of God, bring back thy church to a belief in the Gospel! Bring back her ministers to preach it once again with the Holy Ghost, and not striving after wit and learning. Then shall we see thine arm made bare, O God, in the eyes of all the people, and the myriads shall be brought to rally round the throne of God and the Lamb. The Gospel must succeed, it shall succeed, it cannot be prevented from succeeding, a multitude that no man can number must be saved.

Kindly allow me to continue on the same point the divine circle in heaven. Notice *the variety*. “Out of every nation and kindred, and people, and tongue.” How did John know that? I suppose as he looked at them he could tell where they come from. There is individuality in heaven, depend upon it. Every seed will have its own body. There will sit down in heaven not three unknown patriarchs, but Abraham—you will know him; Isaac, you will know him; and Jacob, you will know him.

There will be in heaven not a company of persons, all struck off alike so that you cannot tell who is who, but they will be out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue. I say not that they will speak the language they spoke on earth, but I do say that there will be certain idiosyncrasies and peculiar marks about them that will permit the onlooker to know, as John knew, that they are not all of one nation, but of all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues.

I like this. The very charm of nature is its variety. If all flowers were alike, where were the glorious crown of summer? And if all bodies in the resurrection world, or even all spirits in the disembodied state, could all be precisely one like another, the very beauty of heaven were extinct in a degree. Nay, there they are from different kindreds, and nations, and peoples, and tongues, and this betokens individuality, and gives us hope that we shall know each other in heaven even as we are known.

Yet a *unity* about them, for they all wore white robes, and they all carried palms, and they all sang the same song. There are twelve gates to the New Jerusalem, but they all lead to the same city, and there is the same centre. There were twelve foundations, but they were all laid on the one foundation. So they may be many views and notions of truth that we may hold, but they must all be bottomed on Christ Jesus, and founded there, and if they be, we shall all meet in the better land. There is a variety in heaven, yet there is a unity of experience, and a unity in the gratitude they feel. May you and I be there to help to increase the variety, and to certify the unity of the heavenly throng.

And now for a few words of running comment on the description given of—

### III. THE SACRED COMPANY THEMSELVES, which will supply us with a third point.

They “stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.” That *they stood* is not meant to teach us that they do not sit or rest in heaven, for they always rest in heaven, but they stand, that is to say—they are confirmed, they are established, they are secure. Their feet shall never slide, they stand in no slippery places.

They stand before the Throne. It is the posture of action, they stand like soldiers ready for the march—like servants who but need to have it said to them, “Go,” and they go. Oh! that we could on earth realize this posture of heaven! The Lord hold us up that we may stand, may our feet never slide, and oh! that we might stand with loins girt ready for whatever He shall bid us do. Alas! we do need often to shake ourselves, for we lie upon the bed of sloth, and we are given to slumber. If we would be like those are who see His face, we should always stand and watch, that whatsoever the Master saith unto us we should be ready to obey.

That they stood “*before the throne*” shows that they are in the immediate presence of God. They are not excluded from His presence, they are not at a distance, but they behold His glory to peculiar advantage, and He is near to them in a remarkably gracious and glorious manner. They stand before the throne. Yes, and this is the charm of heaven, to dwell in the presence of God. You have tasted, then, something of what heaven means, my dear brethren.

Sometimes you have been near to Christ, and in full fellowship with Him you have sipped of the golden cup, from which you shall drink for ever. You have tasted of fruit immortal that shall furnish your everlasting food. This is heaven—forever to behold His face, forever to stand like a courtier in the very court itself, like a favorite before the throne, not in the outer courts—not in the court of the Gentiles, but inside the veil, before the throne, within the glorious mystery, the *sanctum sanctorum*, in the Holy of Holies, right in where God Himself is. There shall we stand forever and for aye.

That they were “*clothed with white robes*” is not a little significant. Nakedness was revealed to man by sin, before the time when he sinned he was naked, and not ashamed, and then he strove to make himself a dress, and the fig leaf was the result. But Christ has come in and clothed us—clothed us

completely. The raiments spoken of here seem to have vested them from head to foot. They were “clothed with white robes”—not partly clad, but altogether clad in them. Oh! how comely that righteousness of Christ which He hath wrought for us and wrought in us wherewith we shall be invested when we stand before the eternal throne! Brethren, rejoice to put it on tonight. Rejoice to feel that His blood and righteousness even now—

*“Your beauty are, your glorious dress.”*

Anticipate the time when you shall be admired of men and of angels, attired in that complete garment. These robes are said to be “white robes”—white, to indicate purity, and “they are without fault before the throne of God.” White—as distinctive of their priestly order, for they are “kings and priests unto God for ever and ever.” *White*—as an emblem of triumph, for now they are victors over every foe.

But why and how came those robes white? Their robes are white, because His robes were red—His robes I say. Oh! how the angels gazed with astonishment, and asked with eagerness, as they saw Him come back from Calvary, “Why are Thy garments red? Why art Thou red in Thine apparel as one that hath trodden the wine press?” And He answered, “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me.” Because the Savior bled and dyed His garments with His own blood for us, therefore, filthy as the saints’ garments once were, they are now robed in pure immaculate white, whiter than any fuller could make them, glistening like the sun.

Oh! the joy of being there! May it soon come to us! It will, it may come now, while yet we are talking here.

*“Soon may the hand be stretched,  
And dumb the mouth that lisps this faltering strain.”*

But if it were so, then sudden death would be sudden glory! Are you sure, each one of you, that it would be so? Would your departure out of this life be your entrance into the life eternal? Would the shutting of these poor eyes be the opening of nobler optics upon a brighter scene? Believer, it would be so with thee. Then why art thou afraid to die? Nay, rather, be willing at any time to gather up thy feet into the bed, and die, thy father’s God to meet, where the white-robed company see His face.

To complete the description, we will only remark that *the palms in their hands* may refer to their observing that great feast of the Lord, the feast of tabernacles, when the harvest of the earth is complete, when the sabbathism that remaineth to the people of God is attained, and the pleasures which are at God’s right hand for evermore are realized, for so of old it was ordained, as we read in Leviticus, that at this festival the Israelites should take palm branches in their hands, and rejoice before the Lord their God. This seems to have been the acme of felicity in their sacred year.

I wish I had the power so to describe this glorious circle—those bright ones before the throne, that you could see them! I think, as I look upon them, that I can see even now the apostolic band. I mark the goodly fellowship of the prophets. I think I see the martyrs with their ruby crowns. Do not I see the ministers and confessors of Christ, some of my own kith and kin that have gone before me—the Covenanters who bled in Scotland, and the heroes of Smithfield? There they stand, and hark!—how they sing! None shall excel them in their song of praise.

You have got a mother there, perhaps—a sister, or a brother, or your grand sire, who years ago “went over to the majority” to sing amongst that countless multitude. Oh! if I could but have a vision of all that will be there within the next hundred years, should I see myself, and should I see all this company there? Oh! if it were possible, I would fain translate you all to heaven at once—from the Tabernacle to the Temple, from this place where we sing His praises at His footstool to the place where we will sing them to His face more sweetly and more loudly far. Not one of you, oh! not one of you, would we have absent.

Though, friend, you may be out of sight, and almost out of hearing, one who has just managed to crowd in amongst the multitude that throng this house, oh! may you with all the rest of us have a place amongst His chosen, and none of you find your name left out when He, for them, shall call! Are you believing in Jesus? If so, you should be there. Are you an unbeliever? If you die as you are you must be driven from His presence, you must be destroyed from the glory of His power, all the joy and bliss that make up life must be crushed out of you, and you must live banished from Him forever.

And now to close. It seems that—

**IV. THIS GOODLY COMPANY, WHO SURROUNDED THE CENTRAL THRONE OF GOD, WERE ENGAGED IN SONG.**

They “cried with aloud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb.” I was reading the other day a book containing the life of a very excellent Primitive Methodist minister, and I was greatly amused to find in his diary an allusion to myself. He says, “Went to Stroud to hear Mr. Spurgeon, he is a rank Calvinist, but a good man.” I was pleased to find that I was a good man, and I was equally pleased to find that I was a rank Calvinist, and when I came to review the book I was obliged to say that our brother was quite correct about my being a rank Calvinist, and we believed that he was one too, now that he has gone to heaven.

They are all Calvinists there, every soul of them. They may have been Armenians on earth, thousands and millions of them were, but they are not after they get there, for here is their song, “Salvation unto our God which sitteth upon the throne.” That is all my Calvinism. I am sure that is what Calvin preached, what Augustine preached, what Paul preached, what Christ would have us preach, and this is what they sing in heaven, “Salvation unto our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

They sing in heaven that it was God that planned salvation, ’twas God that ordained *them* to salvation, ’twas God that gave them salvation, ’twas the Lamb that brought them salvation, ’twas all of God that that salvation was carried on, and all of God that their salvation was ever perfected. They do not one of them say, “Stop, now, salvation unto our God. Yes, but still, freewill had a hand in it.”

Oh! no, no, no, there never was a soul in heaven that ever thought that. They all feel, when they get there, that although God never violated their freewills, yet He made them willing in the day of His power, and that it was His free grace that brought them to come and love the Savior. I am sure, if the verse were given out in heaven, that we sometimes sing at communion, they would sing it there—

*“’Twas all of Thy grace we were made to obey,  
While others were suffered to go  
The road which by nature we chose as our way,  
And which leads to the chambers of woe.”*

And I think they would sing that other verse that we sing at the Lord’s table—

*“Why was I made to hear Thy voice,  
And enter while there’s room;  
While thousands make a wretched choice,  
And rather starve than come?”*

*“’Twas the same love that spread the feast  
That kindly forced me in;  
Else I had still refused to taste,  
And perished in my sin.”*

This is how they sing in heaven, then. It is salvation—salvation all of grace, salvation of which the glory, from first to last, must all be given to God, and to God alone. They exclude themselves. They give

no boasting to themselves. They do not say, “Salvation unto our better nature, salvation to our choicer grace.” No, no, but all unto the Lord, all unto the Lord from first to last. Well, brethren, some of us will not have to change our note much when we get there, for that has been the burden of our song here, it has been the theme of our ministry from our youth up, “Salvation is of the Lord.”

We have learned it somewhere in the same college as that in which Jonah learned that old Calvinistic theology. He had to go into the whale’s belly to learn it, and when he came out he said, “Salvation is of the LORD,” and we too, in sharp afflictions, and pains, and griefs have had to learn it, and have it burned into us, and we never believed it more thoroughly in our lives than we do now, that if a sinner is saved, it is God’s work that saves him, and God must have all the glory of it.

I pray the Lord to convince any poor needy soul that there is salvation in Him and enable that poor soul now to come and take it, take it by a simple act of faith. You have not got to save yourselves, Christ has saved you. You have but to trust Him, and you are saved. There is nothing for you to do nothing for you to be, but simply to be nothing, and to let Christ be all in all to you, to look and live, for—

*“There’s life in a look at the Crucified One.”*

God grant that you may look, and so be amongst the countless throng who shall sing His praises forever and ever. Amen.

## EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON

### REVELATION 7

**Verse 1.** *And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.*

A perfect calm there must be till God’s people are saved. Not a leaf shall stir to do them damage. Not a dash of foam upon the waters—no movement of wind, or sea, or tree.

**2-3.** *And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with aloud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea. Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.*

Everything exists for the servant of God. Creation is but a scaffold for the church, and when God’s church is finished, then all may be taken down, but not till then.

**4-5.** *And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand.*

The order is not that of nature, but of grace, else Reuben would have come first. And the election of God is not according to birth or blood, but according to His sovereign will. Judah, then Reuben.

**5-8.** *Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand.*

And of the last and least tribe still the same.

**8.** *Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.*

Methinks many believers belong to the tribe of Benjamin—doubting, fearing, little in faith and confidence, but Benjamin still has his men.

**9.** *After this I beheld—*

The Gentile church.

**9.** *And, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,*

It will do some people good to see that sight, for they fancy that all the saints go to their place of worship. There are no good people anywhere, except those that think exactly as they do. So they seem to fancy. Oh! that their eyes were opened a little, for I am afraid that some Christians are very like the mouse that had always lived in a box, and on some grand occasion climbed up to the edge of the box. He looked over and saw the vast area of the cupboard, and said, "I had no idea the world was so big as that," and yet it had never seen outside the cupboard even then. Oh! for eyes that could see a sight like this. "After this, I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number" (we can count pretty high too) "of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues."

**9.** *Stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes.*

Perfectly pure—perfectly happy—arrayed like priests and conquerors, for they had "palms in their hands."

**9-11.** *And palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne,—*

In the outer ring and about the elders that represent the church, who stand in the inner ring, nearest to Christ, and nearest akin to the Son of Man.

**11-12.** *And about the elders and four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God. Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.*

Grand ascriptions of praise to make the worship perfect, as all worship should be which is presented to God—as all worship will be when we shall once get to heaven.

**13.** *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these—*

This vast crowd—what are these?

**13-17.** *Which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

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