



**The Oaks
Baptist Church**
Grand Prairie, Texas

Lesson Leaders:

James Haymon

Class Leaders:

Inreach: Pat Hester

Deacon: C M Hester

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

We keep unity by being united in the Spirit

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Heavenly Father, help me to grow in gentleness and patience toward others. Show me how to love others, even when we may have differences

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace
(Eph 4:3 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Dec 07, 2016)

Series: Celebrating God

UNIT 3: Visions of Praise

NEXT WEEK

God of Power
(Rev 11:15-19)

United in Praise Revelation 7:9-17

Lesson Background and Introduction

Some Christians believe the book of Revelation speaks only of the future. Others believe the book speaks in coded language about the people and events of the first century AD. Still others believe the book is figurative or symbolic, using vivid imagery to teach spiritual lessons. No matter the interpretive perspective, Revelation combines elements of ancient letters, prophetic texts, and apocalyptic literature. It is considered partially a letter because of how the book opens with a greeting (Revelation 1:4-7) and is addressed to specific churches (see chapters 2 and 3). Revelation is considered a form of prophecy (1:3), given to John in order that he might declare the "testimony of Jesus Christ" (1:9). Revelation is also considered an apocalyptic text. Today's passage continues John's vision of Heaven. Several startling events have occurred: the glorious entry of the Lamb into the throne room (Revelation 5:6) and the introduction of a sealed scroll and its opening (5:1; 6:1-17), leading to the dramatic gathering of the servants of God (7:1-8). John then turned his attention to the great multitude of people and witnessed their worship. Revelation 7 is a high point in the Bible concerning worship and praise. This passage is timely for all audiences. It acknowledges that although suffering occurs, confident hope is always called for because of the salvation bought and brought by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus. In times of joy or suffering, that fact should unite us in praise and worship. May we be a people who live in hope as we await the day when we will hunger and thirst no more, the day of no more tears. Until that day, may our lives be marked with praise and worship to the God who sits on his heavenly throne and to the Lamb who brings salvation.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Revelation of Worship - The apostle John, the author of the Book of Revelation, recorded his vision of future events. He observed a numberless multitude of worshipers before the throne of God and the Lamb. The individuals represented a variety of nations, tribes, and tongues. This crowd praised their redeemer for His sacrificial blood on the Cross on their behalf. Other beings in heaven, including angels, elders, and the four living creatures, also joined in with choruses of praise.

Cleaned for Worship - The people John saw in white robes are symbolic of freedom from sin, no spot nor wrinkle, or any such thing before God's throne. This kind of cleansing became a reality by the believers depending on the blood and the righteousness of Jesus Christ. How dare any individual believe his own merits and works will allow him to stand in the presence of God! Self-effort is useless in the face of God Almighty and His perfect Son. The palm branches usually indicate a symbol of victory, joy, and triumph. The overcomers are celebrating their salvation and complete deliverance.

Permanent Praise - Finally, this population stands in the very presence of God. They permanently enter the throne room—no barriers, no waiting, no pressing. They now have triumphed over the afflictions on earth. As a result, day and night, they bow before Jesus in gratitude. He is at the center of the throne, the slain sacrifice now recognized as the risen Redeemer. He takes His place as the ultimate Shepherd over the entire flock of sheep. Jesus guides the sheep to the water, symbolic of abundance and eternal life. Every tear is wiped from their eyes, with no more sorrow or pain. The struggles of this world are gone forever.

Our Worship - In more than one place in Scripture we read of multitudes gathering together to praise and worship God. If circumstances temporarily prevent us from experiencing such community worship, we can bring favorite worship songs to mind. As we gather for worship with other believers in the here and now, we praise God in song. We also look forward to worshipping God in heaven, knowing we will each be there at that magnificent celebration.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Praising Through Acknowledgement of Jesus (Rev 7:9-12)

Acknowledgement from the multitude (9-10)

Acknowledgement by bowing down before God (Ps 22:27)

Acknowledgement by many people coming to the mountain of God (Isa 2:3)

Acknowledgement by inhabitants of many cities coming to entreat God (Zech 8:20-22)

Acknowledgement by Gentiles singing praises (Rom 15:8-11)

Acknowledgement from the angels (11-12)

Acknowledgement from the angels who are present at the assembly (Heb 12:22)

Acknowledgement from the angels who obey God's word (Ps 103:20-21)

Acknowledgement from the angels singing about the worthiness of Jesus (Rev 5:11-12)

Acknowledgement from the angels whom God commanded to worship Jesus (Heb 1:6)

Praising from the Blood-Washed Witnesses (Rev 7:13-17)

Washed in the Blood (13-14)

Washed in the blood to make them holy (Heb 13:12)

Washed in the blood for redemption (1 Peter 1:17-19)

We were purchased by the blood that is used for the washing (Rev 5:9)

Washed in the blood to overcome Satan, the accuser (Rev 12:10-11)

Washed in the blood for sanctification (1 Cor 6:11)

Washed in the blood to cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death (Heb 9:13-14)

Washed in the blood to obtain fellowship with God (1 John 1:7)

Blood of the Lamb (15-17)

Blood of the Lamb that paid the guilt offering (Lev 14:25)

Blood of the Lamb that takes away sin (John 1:29)

Jesus is our Passover Lamb who was sacrificed for us (1 Cor 5:7)