

Title: GREAT THINGS, REVELATION 7:9-17
(Chatham, NJ; 04/21/13, AM) [D – Order of Climax]

Theme: War begins when the seals are opened; a great multitude endures the great tribulation; they worship God in heaven and on earth.

Purpose: To prepare us for the war and to exhort us to worship along with the host of heaven.

Introduction:

1. The images of chapters 4 & 5 remain in sight.
2. The Lamb, who is worshipped, opens the scroll.
3. Anticipation is at a fever pitch with anticipation.
4. The scene nonetheless continues to be dominated by worship.

I. The Lamb Opens the Seals

- A. The mysteries revealed (like a crowd awaiting their team to enter the stadium, and an announcer calls them forth; in this case the living creatures are the announcers)
 1. A white horse emerges, the rider carries a bow and wears a crown, he conquers
 2. A red horse gallops from the second seal, his rider wields a sword, he snatches peace from the earth, war and killing ensue
 3. Next is a black horse whose rider holds scales, exorbitant prices are listed for basic commodities indicating famine or war
 4. The progression from conqueror to warrior to famine and plague leads fittingly to a pale horse whose rider is death and who is followed by Hades
 5. The fifth seal reveals those who have given their lives (9), these martyrs cry out for justice (10-11)
 6. The sixth seal opens to sights and sounds of a great upheaval, similar to the language of Joel, Mt. 24:29-31
 7. We see an image of the end times: people running scared and God punishing their wickedness
 8. Heaven is at war with earth; God has launched his D-Day invasion
- B. Four angels
 1. They hold back the four winds that seem determined to damage and destroy
 2. Another angel comes from the rising sun
 3. He prevents the four angels from harming the saints

II. The Great Multitude and the Great Tribulation (a series of questions)

- A. Who are the 144,000?
 1. Probably not a literal number
 2. Since 12 is a complete number in biblical reckoning, this represents complete completeness
 3. The full number of Israel has been sealed, protected
- B. Who is the Great Multitude?
 1. They are without number
 2. Reminiscent of Abraham counting the stars and the sand
 3. From all over the earth
 4. Hold palm branches, clothed in white
 5. They praise the Lamb for his salvation
 6. These are the people who have come out of the great tribulation
 7. They've been washed and made white by the blood of the Lamb
- C. What is the Great Tribulation?

1. Some might suggest a specific period of persecution and suffering
2. Mark 13:19 indicates a time of the destruction of Jerusalem
3. Since then the church has been through numerous persecutions, times of hostility, and periods of heresy
4. As individuals we are called to suffer with Christ (Rom. 8:16-17) and to endure to the end (Rev. 2:26)
5. It may be the entire end times in which we have lived since the coming of Christ

III. The Lamb Becomes the Shepherd (7:17)

A. Heaven at worship again

1. John, 1:10
2. Heaven, chs. 4-5
3. The multitudes, 7
4. John finally commanded to "Worship God," 22:9

B. Heaven and earth coincide in worship

1. In worship we see the invisible heavens
2. We participate with the heavenly beings
3. All our activities grow out of worship
4. It humbles us; it feeds us; it connects us

Conclusion:

1. The seventh seal – silence for ½ hour
2. Can we heed the voice of Habakkuk 2:20? "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him."
3. Is this also a prelude to battle?
4. Fire from the altar creates rumblings, lightning, and an earthquake.
5. God shakes the earth (Heb. 12:26-27) to bring about an unshakable kingdom.
6. Live for the time when our songs blend with the heavenly beings in worship.
7. Endure and conquer that you might be in the great multitude.