Thursday Bible Class **26th March 2026**

Arrayed in White Robes **Revelation 7: 13-17**



13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 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.

15 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.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

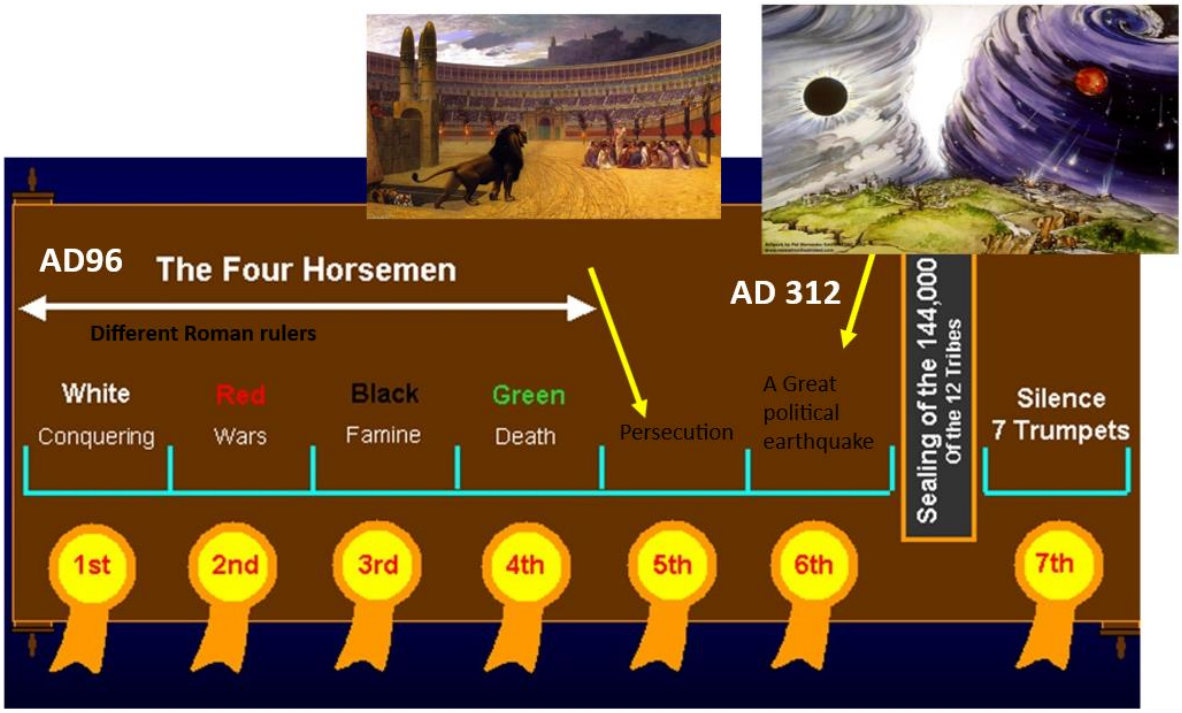
17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

These verses conclude the studies of this chapter 7.

A few thoughts.

This is a useful juncture to remind of overview of this chapter.

Please look at below chart:



The 5th and 6th chapters of the book of the Revelation describe the breaking of the seals, as the scroll is unrolled. The unrolling of the scroll represents the unrolling of history, the fulfillment of prophecy. These two chapters describe the unsealing of the six seals. Before the last and seventh seal is opened, (described in chapter 8) there is a pause, and John is given a glorious vision of the future. This is described in this seventh chpater we have been looking at. In the chart it is represented by the black bar, labelled as “sealing of the 144000, of the 12 tribes”.

Why is this pause, and this vision of the future given at this moment? Why is this pause designed to interrupt the undoing of all of the seals? why not wait until the opening of the seventh seal?

Two reasons (at least):

1) the seventh seal unveils a huge chunk of history from the time of AD324 right up to today and beyond, and is further broken down into smaller parts as we shall see going onto into the book, into seven trumpets and seven bowls (or vials) so before this huge download of information, it is easy to see why the Spirit sees fit to give a pause for reflection

2) The six seals had described step by step progressive developments of society which impacted directly upon the Ecclesia of Christ, the sixth one was the most devastating, which included an earthquake, a turning upside down of the staus quo, - the end of the pagan Roman Empire, and now a christian Roman Empire. Note the small 'c' as opposed to capital 'C'. Now for the first time, since the founding of the Ecclesia of Jews and Gentiles, there was an organised religion which had stolen the identity of the true Ecclesia, taken the Name of Christ in vain. – The christianity of the Roman Empire or Roman Catholicism which it developed into has been the single largest reason for the decline of morals, of the turning away from God, of the persecution of the True Christians, of the rise of False religion, and the confusion of the wider population, the rise of the scourge of Islam, the popularity of atheism, and "don't care and can't be botheredism" in short – this false Christianity introduced at the sixth seal has been the biggest cause of blasphemy against the Name of God. Note the words of the Apostle in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8. So this is why at this juncture the whilst the scroll of history of man had been UNSEALED and broken, the Will of God cannot be broken, and is SEALED in the hearts and minds of TRUE Christians, - as they struggled against the false political Christianity which overwhelmed the empire, they would have been hugely, immensely encouraged by this vision of the future – meant for them – and would have reminded them – as it does us of the words of the Apostle – 2 Timothy 2:19

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

After the sealing process which is described in this 7th chapter from verses 4 to 8, John in his vision is shown a great crowd, an enormous company of people who cannot be numbered, who are praising and paying respects to the Lamb who sits on the throne, because of the enormity and significance of the victory which they have shared in.

They are shown in the vision, of celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles – dressed in white and with palms in their hands in the future Kingdom of God established on earth.

Now in the vision the question is asked, Verse 13: *These which are arrayed in white robes, who are they? And whence are they?* (RV Translation) *where have they come from?* (NET)

Good questions – the question is asked for the benefit of those to whom the vision is given – the servants of Christ (Rev 1:1) persecuted and struggling as mortals against the flesh, against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, (Ephesians 6:12) Staring at failure in the mirror, surveying without the spiritual and moral decline on every level, in filthy garments (Isaiah 64:6, Zechariah 3:3) looking forward to seeing such a glorious throng, in white, in unity and harmony, - such a time, people and place seems unrecognisable and out of reach… seems… but in fact it is NOT out of reach, it is believable, and it can be recognisable. It MUST be.

Just a moment – a step back. The Elder answered, by asking questions. The verse reads:

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

So what was the first question? If the Elder answered… there must have been a question – we don't know exactly, because it was in John's mind. But the Spirit knows the minds of all men. How many questions do we have in our minds, but are afraid to ask? Don't want to feel silly or look stupid. Silly and stupid in front of whom? Other people? They are the bigger fools, for making others feel uncomfortable, let them reflect on their pride and pomposity. But it is vital we ask questions! Understanding is key to our salvation! If we are afraid, pray for courage, and pray for the answer. John reflects in the vision accurately the natural reaction to such a wonderful

glorious vision, he did not recognise the wonderful Ecclesia in glory, and was afraid to ask. So the answer was given…

The answer shows exactly who they are and how they got there.

Verse 14 …*These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

Yes. John could relate to those words. They were rooted in his own days. They are not speaking of a future tribulation – please note that Pentecostals, and many other churches speak of a Great Tribulation that will precede Christ's return which will last seven years etc… we have to ignore what these churches teach – they are all daughters of the Roman Catholic Church.

No, this tribulation is something that all who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb go through. (As I type this, the song that came onto my phone is Nothing but the Blood of Jesus – *Oh! precious is the flow that makes me white as snow; no other fount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus*…a nice coincidence?) But far more relevant are these verses:

Hebrews 9:14: *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

1 John 1:7: *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

The first passage gets to the core issue. The cleansing takes place in the head. Revelation talks about washing robes in the blood of the lamb. This is clearly not literal language. John in vision could see the Lamb on the throne, he is described as the Lamb that was slain, so alive again – so the blood of Jesus is not literal – (unlike what the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the wine transubstantiates into the very blood of Christ and that to believe otherwise is blasphemy).

Nor are the robes literal. We recall how Adam and Eve tried to cover their sins- their awareness of their nakedness and awareness of disobedience and exposure of their shame with fig leaves. But God taught that without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins. Why not? Because the penalty of sin is death. That cannot change. It is the curse of sin. The soul that sinneth he shall die. But God provided clothes of skins to cover Adam and Eve, animals were slain to provide them a cover for their literal shame, and God vowed to provide the Seed of the Woman as covering for their corrupted minds. Adam and his wife believed, and Eve became the Mother of all Living.

The natural man always tries to cover himself with fig leaves, and ducks responsibility for his wickedness, such characteristics – human nature is described as dirty clothes: Isaiah 64: 6 *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

See also Jude verse 22-23, the clothing stained and spotted by the flesh. Washing clothing in red blood again cannot be literal, but symbolic. Clothing is naturally our outward identity, what covers us, what we are seen as. It is a symbol for our character

Our characters washed in the blood of Jesus, begins at baptism where symbolically it we acknowledge publicly we need to be cleansed, and washed. Bapto – from which the word baptism comes from actually means to dye – to change colour. It signifies a new life which will be influenced by the life of Jesus Christ, and that by identifying with the life of Christ, he becomes their covering – Galatians 3:27: F*or as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have* ***put on*** *Christ.* (And Romans 13:14) This new way of life, despite the best of intentions is sometimes stained and spotted by the flesh because of sin. But belief in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the desire to be like him, the confession of those sins, and repentance means that God who is faithful will forgive us our sins

and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9) This continued state of alertness and maintaining the clean garment – through the mercy and grace of God – is a work of continued application.

It is hard work. Even washing clothes in a washing machine is hard enough, let alone washing by the riverside as they were wont to do (Acts 16:13) let alone washing our charactors in the blood of Jesus. There are so many reasons for the garment to be spotted by the flesh. This is a constant battle.

This is the great tribulation that John speaks of.

The Greek word used for tribulation is thlipsis and it means to 'press' or 'pressure'. Years ago to dry clothes, womenfolk used to use a mangle. To large wooden rollers, and a handle turned them and pulled the wet clothes through, and it would squeeze out all the water. We find that life in Christ can feel like we are being squeezed through the mangle. But we read that this pressure is a necessity, to wring our characters out of all unwanted remnants of uncleanness. In Acts 14:22 we read that *we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*

The more we try to keep our clothes clean, the harder it is to keep them clean, as we notice marks and blotches more, as we are looking harder. So it is with our charactors. The harder we try to combat the flesh, the harder the battle becomes, because the more we notice our own faults and failings. This is not a bad thing at all. But is is one reason why we have difficulties with each other in the Ecclesia, why we notice faults and failings more (in others than ourselves sadly) and why things do not seem to be improving. God is the judge. No one can see the cleansing process within. Only the Spirit can read minds. But at times the tribulation does seem very hard. Link this to the persecution that many have suffered and suddenly we can see why visions of the glorious future are introduced in the book of Revelation. In comparison, the tribulation suddenly becomes smaller

- 2 Corinthians 4:17: *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;*

Brother Terry