



## The Great Multitude

Revelation 7: 9-10

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, **from every nation, tribe, people and language**, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

Dear Opal,

Countless times during my work as a volunteer with the elderly at the nursing home, residents have asked, "What will heaven be like?" This question that forms a sentence using only five words is truly the most difficult one for a human being to answer due to the fact that no one has ever been there and returned to describe it to others.

Yet, when one thinks about the very principle our faith is built on, not only are those who believe called Christians, but are also referred to as resurrected people. This synonymous usage of words announces clearly that there is truly life after death. Then, adding to this verbiage the words that Jesus declared when he spoke about going ahead to prepare a place for believers clearly points toward eternal life.

Still, these beautiful promises do not seem to paint the picture in its entirety for the mere human mind; especially to those that are detail oriented; a dilemma that may be brought about by our senses; especially that of vision. The bottom line is, if humans cannot see, feel, hear, smell, taste, or touch something, it automatically falls into the realm of two challenges, that being, the **unknown** and **change**; two conditions that absolutely terrify human beings.

Certainly, Psalm 65: 12 that reads, *"The grasslands of the wilderness overflow, the hills are clothed with gladness. The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain, they shout for joy and sing"*, makes one look forward to heaven with great anticipation.

Thus, through the act of contemplating these words from Psalm, I was prompted to pause and visualize the most beautiful landscape imaginable, thoughts that brought forth images of angelic children's' faces filled with love and adoration as well as that of an old saint now asleep in Christ reflecting peace because of having reached the celestial shores with all earthly toils and burdens shed.

Actually, the words straight from the lips of an elderly resident that knew her earthly journey was quickly reaching its conclusion formed the concept perhaps most succinctly by stating, "If this side of heaven is this pretty, just imagine what the other side must be like."

Yet, when we read the words from 1 Corinthians 2: 9, However, *as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived,"* ---the things God has prepared for those who love him---their meaning lets us know that try as we might, we cannot ever imagine the glory and beauty that awaits us. After all, when we focus on the magnificence of nature alone, we are given only a preview of what is in store for us in our eternal home.

However, our Great Promise Keeper goes way beyond the landscape in which we will find ourselves on the other side by progressing to the very heart of the promised land in Revelation 7: 15-17 with the words: *"Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor the scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

Opal, even though we have reached the point of being awestruck because of the indescribable future that awaits us in heaven, there is another aspect that must be brought to the forefront regarding who will be among God's welcomed guests.

Referring back to the Scripture from Revelation 7: 9-10 beneath the photograph above that reads: *"After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, **from every nation, tribe, people and language,** standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb,"* it is imperative that we focus on the yellow highlighted phrase that lets everyone know that heaven is for sure an inclusive home for peoples everywhere.

Timothy Keller, author, minister, and Bible Scholar states it best by saying, **"We must prepare our heart for the rich diversity of heaven by showing love for all, and especially those of God's people on earth who are far from us socially, economically, racially, politically, or any other way."**

Ouch! These words smack right where it smarts, don't they? It does not say things like, only those wearing my skin color, from my race, or these that attend

my chosen church denomination/ non denomination! Actually, since the word denomination cannot be found in Scripture, church members should not expect to see the name of their place of worship on buildings or signs in the promised land. In other words, it is God's decision who gets to live with him in heaven, not mans. So, judge not lest ye be judged.

Opal, in today's world where man seems to have trouble with the concept of agreeing to disagree agreeably, this may present a giant hurdle even for believers because it means listening to others that have differing opinions with great respect. With all the diversity God has planned in heaven, are you as happy as I that our Lord has it all figured out? I am, indeed!



My friend, as we conclude our thoughts regarding heaven, let us once again center on a sentence from the earlier quote from Revelation 7: 15-17 that states: ***“For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water.”*** (Meaning eternal life)

In so doing, I would like to lean on W. Phillip Keller who described beautifully in his book, “A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23”, why those who have put their affairs in the hands of The Good Shepherd feel such an enormous level of contentment.

***Keller writes, “He is the owner who delights in His flock. For Him there is no greater reward, no deeper satisfaction, than that of seeing His sheep contented, well fed, safe, and flourishing under His care. This is indeed His very “life.” He gives all He has to it. He literally lays Himself out for those who are His.***

*He will go to no end of trouble and labor to supply them with the finest grazing, the richest pasturage, ample winter feed, and clean water. He will spare Himself no pains to provide shelter from storms, protection from ruthless enemies and the diseases and parasites to which sheep are so susceptible. No wonder Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."*

*From early dawn until late at night this utterly selfless sheepman rises early and goes out first thing every morning without fail to look over his flock. It is the initial, intimate contact of the day. With a practiced, searching, sympathetic eye he examines the sheep to see that they are fit and content and able to be on their feet. In an instant he can tell if they have been molested during the night--- whether any are ill or if there are some which require special attention. Repeatedly throughout the day he casts his eye over the flock to make sure that all is well.*

*Nor even at night is he oblivious to their needs. He sleeps as it were "with one eye and both ears open," ready at the least sign of trouble to leap up and protect his own.*

*This is a sublime picture of the care given to those whose lives are under Christ's control. He knows all about their lives from morning to night."*

Opal, just think about another detail in Scripture that adds to Keller's marvelous description of our Lord's care for those who have chosen to submit their lives to him; that being as our Creator, he knows what we are thinking before we have one thought. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts.

Given this commentary on the care our Good Shepherd offers to his flock both on earth as it will be in heaven, the first sentence in Psalm 23 says it all with the beautiful words, ***"The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want."*** Just because we cannot see him with our earthly eyes at this moment, means nothing regarding his plan for our well-being.

So, let us complete the journey he has laid out for us accepting through faith that he is right by our side both day and night. Then, when the last step has been taken on our journey and our time on earth is no more, with unveiled faces, we shall literally be enfolded in the arms of our Great Shepherd and look deeply into his eyes for evermore. Amen!





**Savior Like A Shepherd Lead Us**



**1 Savior, like a shepherd lead us,  
Much we need Thy tender care;  
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us,  
For our use Thy folds prepare:  
Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus,  
Thou hast bought us, Thine we are;  
Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus,  
Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.**

**2 We are Thine, do Thou befriend us,  
Be the guardian of our way;  
Keep Thy flock, from sin defend us,  
Seek us when we go astray:  
Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus,  
Hear, O hear us when we pray;  
Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus,  
Hear, O hear us when we pray.**

**3 Thou hast promised to receive us,  
Poor and sinful though we be;  
Thou hast mercy to relieve us,  
Grace to cleanse, and pow'r to free:  
Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus,  
Early let us turn to Thee;  
Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus,  
Early let us turn to Thee.**

**4 Early let us seek Thy favor,  
Early let us do Thy will;  
Blessed Lord and only Savior,  
With Thy love our bosoms fill:  
Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus,  
Thou hast loved us, love us still;  
Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus,  
Thou hast loved us, love us still.**



*Love,  
Colene*