

## ARRAYED IN WHITE ROBES

"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 one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these 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" (Rev. 7:9, 13, 14).

Heaven is the inheritance of saints. It is a place prepared for happy living. In heaven there is perfect joy and everlasting bliss. We must confess that the joy which God gives us upon the earth is not perfect. We will have perfect joy only in heaven. All our songs of praise are exercises preparing us for heaven. If we are properly exercised in offering praises and worship to God, heaven will not be new to us. We will not need angels to teach us the manners and customs of heaven. If we really love Jesus, we will not be strangers in heaven. There is no angel in heaven who can sing the song we sing. The Bible gives some description of the condition of people in heaven. Just as parents explain things to children through pictures, God uses earthly things to describe heaven. For instance, one of the glories on earth is a bride on her marriage day. Every one looks at the bride. God tells us that the great multitude of the redeemed people are like a bride, dressed in white robes. Now let us see what the white robes indicate.

Every Roman family had slaves. After many years of slavery, when the master set his slave free, he gave him a white robe. It signified perfect freedom. Now the white robes worn by the saints of God in heaven, speak of perfect freedom. On this earth we are in bondage. Many saints have all kinds of troubles, sicknesses and sorrows. We have to fight against many evils. We face many temptations from the Devil. But the day we enter heaven, we will enjoy perfect freedom. No more sickness, no more pain, no more sorrow, no more death; just perfect freedom. That is why saints in heaven are given white robes.

Secondly, a white robe is a sign of purity. In heaven we shall be without any spot or wrinkle. Here on the earth our garments get defiled. Every-day we need to be washed in the blood of the Lamb. Heaven is a place of spotless purity. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21: 27). There will not be any disorder or division among the saints there.

Thirdly, white robes speak of priesthood. In the olden days a priest had to prove that he was a descendant of Aaron. If he could prove that, he was counted worthy to wear a white robe and minister to God. Every saint is a member in the family of God, by being born again through faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is clothed in white. He is called a priest. Saints are not only priests, they are kings also, who will reign forever. Peter says, "...ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood..." (1 Pet. 2: 9). We will enter heaven as kings and priests.

Fourthly, white robes speak of victory. In ancient days when a captain returned to his home-town after winning a battle, he would be dressed in white and would ride on a white horse. That is what we read in the Bible; "And the armies

which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Rev.19:14). For saints in heaven, warfare is over and victory is won. There is no more allurements of the world, no more temptations of the flesh. The devil is defeated and the victory is celebrated. Here on earth we have to fight always with spiritual enemies, but in heaven there is victory.

Fifthly, white robes speak of a festival. Jews wore white robes on holidays. In heaven saints enjoy eternal holiday and eternal rest. They have finished their work. They put off their working garments. There is no more manual work for them. They have entered into their rest. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Rev.14:13).

These saints, who were given white robes, had come out of tribulation. For us, tribulation speaks of original and habitual sin. Even from the day of our birth, we are filthy. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa.51: 5). From the very beginning of our life we are cursed. Those whose sins are forgiven and who are sanctified in the Name of Jesus Christ, have a right to receive a white robe. Tribulation also speaks of the pressures of the world. The enemy occupies our mind with the world, and defiles our heart with the attractions of the world. Because of that, we find it difficult to pray, read the Bible, and make sacrifices for others. Those who overcome the World will wear white robes. Also the tribulation refers to remembrance of our past sins, the depth of sin in which we were found before the Lord saved us. The Devil is always active to remind us of our failures. But we have to put our faith in the precious blood of the lamb and overcome the enemy. "And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev.12: 11). The Lord Jesus Christ encourages us by saying, "My reward is with me". "...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"(Rev.22:12; 2:10). Those who overcome will receive from His hands a white robe and a crown.

You, who claim a right to go to heaven, have to prove your right. What is your proof? Are you born again of the Spirit of God? Are you washed in the blood of the lamb? Do you bear the image of God? If not, humble yourself at the feet of the lord Jesus, Who died a cruel death as your substitute. He was "delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom.4:25). The Word of God says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1: 9). "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa.1 :18). If you repent of your sins and receive the lord Jesus as your personal Savior, you too will have a white robe, and will join one day, the redeemed throng in heaven, who adore the Lord Jesus Christ. D.S.