

The lamb is all the glory

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 October 2020

Preacher: Douglas Cranston

[0 : 00] Our reading this morning is from Revelation chapter 7, verse 9 to 17. 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 before 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.

All the angels were standing round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures.

They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying, Amen.

Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God, forever and ever.

Amen. Then one of the elders asked me, These in white robes, who are they and where did they come from? I answered, Sir, you know.

[1 : 20] And he said, These are they who have come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

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 shelter them with his presence.

Never again will they hunger. Never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the centre 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. Well, it's a special privilege to be here this morning.

And thank you to your minister for the very kind invitation of inviting me to preach God's word to you. In what is for all of us very strange and peculiar circumstances.

[2 : 28] But it's a special privilege to gather in these circumstances. Because we have access to your homes in a way that we seldom have.

And these days have provided that access. And you have been prepared to allow us that access into your homes. And therefore, in the intimacy of your own home, It is an extra privilege to be able to share God's word with you.

And so, before we turn to God's word to consider that passage in more detail, Let's ask God's help in our endeavours. Let us pray. Our gracious God and loving Heavenly Father, We ask you to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

And that is that the words of a mere man might indeed become the very word of God. And that those words will penetrate our hearts and our lives and our very being To the glory of God and to the advancement of his purposes.

And so we ask for your promised gift of your Holy Spirit That will lead us and guide us and prompt us And help us to understand and know the truth of your word.

[3 : 45] And so this day, Heavenly Father, our prayer is that You will show us yourself, You will show us ourself, You will show us the Saviour, And that your word will speak to us, O Lord.

Amen. Well, if you can, and I do encourage you to do so, Turn in your Bibles to that passage that we read from the book of Revelation, Chapter 7.

I'm reading there from verse 9. As I've already said, these are very strange and peculiar days that we live in.

As you go about, as you listen to the media, As you listen to our politicians, There is a great deal of confusion around, A great deal of uncertainty around, A great deal of toil and trouble around, And if we are to be perfectly honest, There is a great deal of fear around.

People are very afraid. And the truth is that many of us who are believers are also afraid, And find ourselves confused and uncertain in these days.

[5 : 04] Well, I think it's very clear from the Bible that the last thing that God wants His people to be is fearful or indeed uncertain about the days.

God is a God who throughout His Word shows us that He is faithful and that He is true. That there is nothing that happens in this world that is not happening according to His sovereign will or purpose. And we thank God for that and for the assurances that He gives us in His Word. That He is God. That none of these circumstances are confusing Him.

He is not having to react to something that He didn't expect. But that day by day, we have the assurance that God, who is all-powerful, who is sovereign, is working out His great and saving and sovereign purposes.

From beginning to end. From the first days until the last days. Indeed, even before the foundation of the world. God has been working through His great salvation plan.

[6 : 24] And God then wants us to live not by circumstances that prevail in against us, But by promise.

And where we could turn to many places in the Bible To consider what the promises of God are And what He wants us to believe in and trust in Him to accomplish.

The book of Revelation provides, I think, a unique insight Into giving believers that confidence That God is working towards His ends With almighty power And He will not be distracted from those ends.

He has made a promise to us That He will accomplish all things According to His will And His purpose.

Now, the book of Revelation is a book that many Christians are hesitant about turning to it.

[7 : 30] Kind of one of those books that a lot of us avoid Because we find it difficult We find some of the language there hard to understand And certainly it is a book that has caused great confusion And great uncertainty over all the ages of Christendom.

Indeed, if you were around in the 19th and 20th century This book of Revelation has in many ways divided the church Doctrinally and theologically.

If you went to some parts of the United States Your understanding of the book of Revelation Would determine your orthodoxy.

But as we, I hope, over these next two weeks Begin to look at two specific passages In this book of Revelation I'm hoping that it might help you To come to this book with a fresh understanding And indeed with a fresh enthusiasm For what this book is saying to us What God is saying to us Through His servant, John I think it's helpful for us To understand the book of Revelation In this way And you can see this for yourselves If you just turn back Before we get into the substance Of what we're looking for To the opening chapter Of the book of Revelation And indeed at verse 1 The revelation of Jesus Christ Which God gave Him To show His servants The things that must soon take place

Now there's a little word in there That would be so easily passed over And yet I think it's one of the keys That helps to open this book of Revelation And that is it uses the phrase To show And therefore It is helpful I think To remember That what the book of Revelation contains Indeed it's obviously words Because it is written down But it is words Which describe A picture A picture And indeed A series of pictures That is being described For us By John One of the great privileges I've had in life Is travelling extensively Across the world And when I'm allowed time away

[10 : 18] From doing various things In my work Or in my leisure time I love to go to The great art galleries Of the world And as you go into These great art galleries You will see that There are different rooms That are there And sometimes These rooms are dedicated To one particular picture That is very very famous And that this museum Happens to be very proud of That it's given us Pride of place Within that museum Or you go into Rooms that contain The work of various artists And particular artists Where there may be A number of paintings That that museum Has secured And in these rooms You will see seats Where people can sit down And sometimes For certainly many minutes Sometimes many hours People can sit And just look at The one painting Trying to absorb

Everything that that painting Contains And looking at Every nuance of Brush stroke And I think it's helpful To think of The book of Revelation As walking in To a great art gallery Of the book Of the Bible And seeing various rooms With all those books Identified in it And walking in To the book of Revelation And seeing A room full of pictures That John Through the ministry Of the Holy Spirit Has indeed described For us And that's how I want us To think of This passage That we're looking at

This morning This passage In the seventh chapter Of the book of Revelation And if you turn with me You'll see that We're We're kind of On the right track Here Because in verse nine It says After this I looked So again

We're seeing something That first and foremost Came to John Through the eye gate And not first and foremost Through the ear gate Or through the written word This was something That he saw And if we were sitting On the bench In that room Before this great picture Then we wouldn't have To look too hard To see I think Two things Coming out Very clearly From this book Two things That would stand out In this photograph And the first is The Lamb And the second Is the multitude That were gathered Around the throne Where the Lamb sat Next Sunday God willing We're going to Be looking at a passage That engages With the second Of those pictures

But this morning I want us to Specifically focus On the Lamb And we can see Very clearly That this passage Is packed full Of references To the Lamb Verse nine They are Before the Lamb Verse ten They cried out To the Lamb Verse fourteen They are made white Through the blood Of the Lamb And in verse seventeen We see that the Lamb Sits in the midst Of his throne Having established That the Lamb Is key to understanding What is being portrayed To us in this picture And what is being conveyed To us by this Description of the vision That John has given us I want to draw out Two things That this passage Very clearly identifies

About the Lamb And the first of these Is that the Lamb Saves by substitution Verse fourteen We read I said to him Sir you know And he said to me These are the ones Coming out of the Great Tribulation They have washed Their robes And made them white In the blood Of the Lamb So we have in the picture A description of people Who have been clothed And those clothes Have engaged in A process of cleansing Through the blood Of the Lamb Now This Lamb If you like Is no rabbit Out the hat Because Throughout the whole Of the Bible There have been Consistent And constant References Made

[15 : 21] To the Lamb Turn with me back In your Bibles To the book Of Genesis Genesis Chapter 3 And reading there From verse 21 And again This is a useful Reminder That if we are Ever to properly Understand the whole Of the Bible Then we have to Understand properly These opening Three chapters Of the book Of Genesis Because If we get them Wrong Then there is A good chance We will get The rest Wrong Because this Is the very Specific Context In which The rest Of the Bible Is set And I have Often said That Genesis 3 15 Where we are Told that God put Enmity Between you And the woman And between Your offspring And her offspring He shall Bruise your head And you shall Bruise his heel That everything Else that

Follows in the Bible Is indeed A footnote To that Single verse An unfolding Of what Happens as a Result of The enmity That has been Put between You and the Woman Between your Offspring Satan's Offspring And her Offspring He shall Bruise your Head and You shall Bruise his Heel But in That same Chapter In verse 21 We read There that The Lord God made For Adam And for His wife Garments Of skin And clothe Them And there We have An insight Into a God Who is Providing The initiative To clothe Adam And Eve There is a Provision Of clothing That is made For Adam And Eve By God's Grace He provides

That clothing And in Verse 22 And this Helps us In our Specific Passage About the Lamb We have That famous Story that Many of us Will know About Abraham And his Son being Taken Up the Hill The son Of God's Promise And the Sacrifice That at the Beginning of The story Abraham had Been told to Prepare for And to Make of That son Of God's Promise And we Have those Very poignant Words and the Pathos that Is around That story Chapter 22 Verse 7 Where the Boy says We have Fire and Wood But where Is the Lamb And again The very Moving reply In verse 8 God will Provide for

Himself The lamb And then Moving to the End of that Story where Abraham is Brought under The conviction That God no Longer requires Him to go Through with This and Look to the Bushell and There was a Ram God's Provision For the Sacrifice But notice A ram Not yet The lamb Because as Is always The case In the Old Testament All these Pictures And all These Foreshadowings That we Find in The Old Testament Only serves To provide An expectation And a Deep longing Of the People of God For the Lamb that Would Eventually come That would Ultimately Take away The sins Of the World One that They learned To long For and To wait For That God Would provide In His Good time And in

Due course That theme Of course Runs all Through the Bible But we See it Again brought Up very Vividly in The Exodus Story and The book Of Exodus Where we Have the Passover Regulations

And how They had To slay The lamb And shed The blood Of the lamb On the Lintels of Their houses And that Way the Angel of God's wrath Would pass Over those Homes where They had The symbol Of the Shed blood Of the Lamb The great Prophet Isaiah As he Looks forward In expectation To the Coming of The Lord Jesus Christ The very Saviour of The world The suffering Servant In chapter 53 verse 7 He describes Jesus as The one who Would be led Like a lamb To the Slaughter In verse 10 The one who Would make An offering For guilt

[20 : 23] And so And we Could look at Many more Passages But that I think Serves our Purpose Here We ask Who is This lamb When will The lamb Come That will Take away The sins Of the world Because that's How the people Of God In the Old testament Were left With that Deep longing And that Sense of Expectation Of one That would Come Who would Be that Lamb And the Ultimate High priest And the Great prophet Who would Not only Proclaim God's word But would Be the Very word Of God And of Course a King Who would Stand in The line Of the King of David But would Be the Ultimate King of Kings And Lord Of lords And then Isn't it Interesting That 400 Years later After a

Great Hiatus We see The Lord Jesus Christ As a Man coming On for The first Time as a Man to The scene Of the World And how Is he Identified Behold The Lamb Of God Who takes Away The sins Of the World In a Very Biblical Way John John John there Is Saying Here he Is Here's The one That you Have been Waiting For This is The guy And of Course We know That that Same Jesus Christ Dies As The Substitute He saves By substitution He dies A saving Death He dies For Sinners And that Friends and

Brothers and Sisters in Christ That is our God That is the Means by Which we Are put Right With God Not by Any other Means or Mechanism Not by Good works Or good Intentions What was it The Spurgeon Described them As damnable Good works We are put Right On account Of the Sacrifice Of the Lamb This is Our God Not one Who is A cheerleader Not One who is Some Life Coach Not one Who is Some Therapeutic Moral Philosopher Not a Casual Friend Sitting On the Park Bench But a God Hanging Crucified On A Cross The

Lamb Who Saves By Substitution But you Will notice Two And again This hinges On one Of those Little words That Becomes The key To opening Our Understanding Of just The totality And fullness Of what is Being said Here In verse Fifteen You will Notice 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 Shelter Them With his Presence He Sits Again So easily We could Pass over That and Yet It comes With Enormous Significance Turn back With me In your Bibles To the Book of Hebrews And we Will see This Explained

For us And we Are given A greater Insight Here In this Chapter of This great Book of Hebrews Remember Remember that The book of Hebrews Is a book That is Really Contrasting The Old Testament Understandings And the Old Testament Ways And mechanisms And laws And indeed Ultimately The Old Testament Sacrificial System Is being Contrasted With what Is declared To us In the New Testament As the Sacrificial System Now The Contrast Here Could not Be more Clearly Outlined For us We have Here The Description Of the Burnt Offerings That Took Place The Sacrifices And The Sin Offerings Now These Were

[25 : 28] In Old Testament Times Perfectly Legitimate Mechanisms For Engaging With God They Were Rules And Regulations That Had Been Given By God But And it Is A Huge But Those Sacrifices And those Rules And Regulations Again Only Served To Create In the People Of God An Expect Of One Who Would Come Who Would Fulfill These Fully And Ultimately And Completely And That You Will Notice Is Exactly What The Writer To The Hebrews Is Saying To Us In This Tenth Chapter And Notice In Verse 11 And Every Priest Stands Daily At His Service Offering Repeatedly

The Same Sacrifices Which Can Never Take Away Sins So There Is The Picture Of The Old Testament Priest Offering Daily Sacrifices Repeatedly Doing The Same Thing Over And Over And Over Again And Yet There Is No Ultimate Dealing With Sin Itself And Man Is Left Having To Engage Over And Over And Over Again In The Same Routines And The Priest Over And Over And Over Again In Making The Same Sacrifices That Can Never Ultimately Take Away Sins Now Verse 12 But When Christ Had Offered Notice For All Time In Contrast To

Repeatedly Having To Do It A Single Sacrifice Rather Than Over And Over And Over And Over Again He Sat Down At The Right Hand Of God You See The Sitting Is The Picture Of One Whose Work Was Finished The Job Was Done The Task Had Been Accomplished And The Lord Jesus

Christ Uniquely Finished That Task And Accomplished That Work And That Was Jesus Very Own Testimony You'll Remember On The Cross As He Died His Final Words It Is Finished The Work Is Done And Now He Sits At The Right Hand Of God The Father Now You See Friends There Is A Relevance To This To West Of Scotland Culture We Have A Concern Over Roman Catholicism And That Concern Should Not Be Born Of Bigotry But It Should Be A Concern That Is Born Of An Understanding That What The Roman Catholics Do By The Priest Offering Mass Daily Where The Roman Catholics Believe That He Is Literally Re Crucifying Christ Breaking His Body Literally And Shedding His Blood Literally For The Forgiveness Of Sins That That Is An Old Testament Understanding Of Sacrifice That Has Been Done Away With By The Completed Work Of The Lord Jesus Christ He

He Saves He Saves And Therefore He Sits In Victory And Part Of That Sitting In Victory You Will Notice Is That He Will Be Their Shepherd What a Beautiful Thing That Is The Lamb Becomes The Shepherd A Great Exchange Of Language Again This Is Nothing New Or Novel Jesus Said I Am The Good Shepherd I Will Lay Down My Life For The Sheep And So We Have Here Before Us This Glorious Picture Of A

[30 : 32] Lamb Who Saves By Substitution The Lamb Who Sits In Victory And The Shepherd Who Lays Down His Life For His People But Although We'll Focus On It Next Time Friends I Think It's Fitting To Just Allude To That Second Picture Those People Who Are Gathered Around The Throne That Great Multitude That As We'll See Next Lord's Day God Willing No One Can Number From Every Race And Tribe And Creed And Imagine We're Sitting In Front Of That Picture And We Look At That Great Multitude I Wonder If We Could Spend Time Just Looking Into That Picture And Now Not Looking At The Big Picture But The Minute Details Of

The Faces Of Those People The Whole Company Of The Redeemed Of God Gathered Around The Throne Crying Worthy Is The Lamb And Here Is The Question Friends Do You See Your Face Among That Number Let's Pray Gracious And Loving God We Just Take A Moment As We Have Been Challenged To Consider Before Us The Great Picture Of Your Saving Death On The Cross And Your Son And Of The Great Salvation That He Brings And More Importantly We've Been Challenged About That Multitude And Whether Our Faces Amongst Them And In The Quietness And Privacy Of Our Own Homes We Just Answer The Question As To Whether We Are Numbered Among Them As We Stand Today Not On Any Righteousness Of Our Own Upon A Life I Did Not Lead Upon A Death I Did Not Die In Another's Life On Another's Death I Stake My Whole Eternity But Please Make It Your Own Prayer This Day By Crying Out To God If You've Never Done So Before For That Saving Faith That Allows You To Be Numbered Among That Great Multitude Of The Redeemed Through Faith And By His Grace Through Jesus Christ Our Lord We Ask This Amen