

Awaken: Diversity

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[0 : 00] Good morning again. I'm so excited to be with everyone this morning, and we are here again today talking about worship. And I bet you didn't know that we could sing in Spanish, right? Well, maybe Jeremy can sing in Spanish. I can't.

But talking about our diversity, and that's what we'll be dealing with this morning as we think about worship, and as we think about our lives, all of our life is marching toward the end time where we will stand before our Heavenly Father.

And the picture that we're going to see this morning is before the throne of grace, a multitude that no one can count from every people, every race, every language, every land, is going to be worshipping God forever.

So don't get used to our little comfortable existence where everyone around us might be just like us. Sometimes we get frustrated when someone won't learn our language.

Think about it. They're just as frustrated when we don't know their language. So what we're going to be looking at this morning is hopefully getting in on God's program.

[1 : 12] And God's program is that every nation, every tongue, every language, every race would come to know Jesus Christ. As their Savior. And those were alarming statistics this morning.

Less than 5% of children around the world have heard about Jesus. And as we have been looking these last five weeks at worship, we began with Nehemiah 12, as we realized that we are not just individuals worshipping together.

We are a family, the body of Christ. We are the body of Christ worshipping together as community. And we're here for one another.

Yes, we can worship alone in the boat on Tilly to Bend as we're fishing. But we were designed to worship together as well as a community.

We look in Revelation 19 the next week at everything in heaven is praising God for, and everyone in heaven, praising God for who he is and his greatness and his glory.

[2 : 16] And we need to come to him and empty ourselves. And we need to understand and realize that we need to get over ourselves. Because really everything in life revolves around us.

What we want, what we like. I told a story this morning in Sunday school about a rabbi that I heard speak and talked about that much of our love is fish love.

And if you want to know what that means, ask me after the service and I'll tell you about it. But much of our life and what we love revolves around what others can do for us. Humility.

Then, the next week, we were in John chapter 4, and we listened in on a dialogue between Jesus Christ and the woman at the well. And we saw how over and over again she tried to not tell the truth to Jesus.

He talked about going and getting her husband. And she didn't say that she wasn't married at the time. She just says, I don't have a husband. And she kept trying to shift the conversation over to things that weren't about her.

[3 : 26] And so we talked about our honesty in our worship, that we need to be honest with God. We also need to be honest with one another as we worship. And then in Psalm 19, we looked at clarity.

The word of God needs to be the foundation of our worship. Everything we do, it's not how we feel. And we talked this morning about the love of God.

Did you realize that a lot of people have skewed understandings of the love of God? Some people say, well, God is love, and so therefore God would never send anyone to hell. And what that means is I can do whatever I want to do.

God will just love me and accept me just like I am. He accepts us just like we are. But we have to come to Jesus and realize that the way we are is nasty and sticky and sinful.

And the only way for God to accept us just as we are is to come to Jesus and accept him as he is. And how do we know that? Based on the truth. How do we know who Jesus is?

[4 : 33] Because God told us and God revealed to us in nature his greatness and his glory, but also he has revealed to us specifically in his word what he wants us to know about him.

And then this morning we're going to be back in the book of Revelation as we look at diversity. And as we said, everything is marching toward that time when all the earth will bow their knee to Jesus Christ.

But this morning we're going to be looking. This morning, if you have your notes, and if you're taking notes this morning, the biblical truth is this, and it's all throughout Scripture, is that corporate worship reflects the unity, and corporate worship reflects the diversity of heaven.

Think about it. We are worshiping here today in Lake Charles at 1056, and everyone around the world on either side of the dateline who follow Jesus are worshiping him in every conceivable language, different people groups, different races, geographically separated, and you know what? We're in on the same worship. It's not just us here in America, in South Louisiana, praising and worshiping him, and we're doing this on our own.

[6 : 08] If we stop and think about it, this is a global experience. Every believer around the world who worships together corporately, we are brothers and sisters in Christ.

And what unifies us is what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross for us, and we are in the same family. So this morning, if you have your Bibles, limber up your fingers, because we're going to be letting our fingers do the walking this morning.

We're going to be looking at a lot of Scripture, but we're going to begin in Revelation 7, verses 9 through verse 17. Revelation 7, beginning in verse 9.

And what I want us to look at is the worship that's taking place in heaven. And I want us to see the participants of those who are worshiping in heaven.

Verse 9, After these things, John says, And I said to him, Sir, you know.

[8 : 00] So he said to me, These are the ones who came out of the great tribulation and 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 dwell among them. Neither shall they hunger anymore nor thirst anymore. The sun shall not strike them nor any heat, for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to the living fountains of waters.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And what I want us to see here is the diversity and the praise. He says there's a multitude that no one can count.

They're from every nation, all peoples, every people group with different languages. And there is the diversity. But what we see in the unity is they're all singing the same song.

And they're all wearing the same thing. White robes, which we're going to look at, indicate they're being covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. So they're all there from as much diversity as you can imagine.

[9 : 11] Imagine polar opposites, every extreme you can imagine, and they're together, unified by the blood of Jesus Christ and singing the same song glorifying God.

And what's amazing is they're understanding each other. God is going to allow that to happen. So what we're seeing is we're seeing unity in diversity. Unity in diversity.

And what we see here as we look at this is we're seeing that we've all been purchased to praise Him.

We've been bought by the blood of the Lamb and we're all purchased to praise Him. That's why God loves us. That's why Jesus died for us because God wants ultimate glory to come to Himself. And we looked at that a few weeks ago. And that God is a self-centered God. And it's not negative. What it means is everything in the universe centers around God.

[10 : 22] Because what else would God be centered around other than Himself? Because He is supreme. And everything that God does and everything that God has done is so that everyone, every nation, every being, every language, the rocks, the angels, even Satan himself would have to say, God is a great God.

And God deserves glory and God deserves praise. So we see in verse 9, after these things. Well, what are these things that John says is after?

Well, in order for us to see that, we have to look at what went before after this. And that is Revelation 7, verses 1 through 8. The context we see in verses 3 and 4.

Let's look at Revelation 7, 3. And what we see there in Revelation 7, 3 and 4, saying, Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. And I heard the number of those who were sealed, 144,000 of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed. What I want us to see is the connections.

[11:37] So what we have here, Revelation is a difficult book for us to really unpack and understand everything. There's a lot of different thinking about the book of Revelation.

Is 144,000 a literal number of people? Or is it? We don't know. I think it's a literal number. But nevertheless, what I want us to see is there is a direct correlation between God's people, the Jews, and the multitudes that we see praising God in heaven.

And what we're going to look at this morning when we allow our fingers to do the walking is this is not just something we see in Revelation with the multitude. It's something we've seen all the way back to the book of Genesis.

I want to see the connection that the multitude that is beyond any number is something that started in Genesis. And kind of like, I'd like to look at what I really picture is Revelation and Genesis being bookends.

Revelation 7 being one side of the bookend and Genesis was the other bookend. And what I want us to do is turn to Genesis chapter 12 and verse number 1.

[13:00] Genesis 12 and verse number 1 through 3 and we see how the very, very beginning what we see taking place and one thing that took place in Genesis 11 if you go back there and look at context the Tower of Babel.

The Tower of Babel transpired or took place in Genesis 11 and so what we have is people separated by language and distance. And Genesis 12 comes in and the Lord had said to Abram verse 1 of Genesis 12 get out of your country from your family and from your father's house to a land that I will show you.

And here is the promise. I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing.

Excuse me. I will bless those who bless you. I will curse him who curses you. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

So what I want us to do is see the promise that God made. See the promise that God made that the multitude beyond number in Revelation chapter 7 that are before the throne of God that are more numerous than anybody could number all praising God and Jesus were part of the promise given to Abram in the book of Genesis.

[14:40] Let's look at Genesis 13 go over a chapter Genesis 13 16 and it is said again verse 16 and I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth and who could number the dust it's a way of saying it's innumerable so that if a man could number the dust of the earth then your descendants also could be numbered the idea is you can't so your descendants will be more than anyone could number so that's to Abraham again to Abraham reiterated in Genesis 15 let's turn over again a few more chapters a couple of chapters to Genesis 15 4 and 5 again to Abram and behold the word of the Lord came to him saying this one shall not be your heir talking about Ishmael Isaac he says and behold the word of the Lord this one shall not be your heir but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir then he brought him outside and said another object lesson obviously this was in the evening he says look now toward heaven and count the stars if you are able to number them and God said to him so shall your descendants be what is God saying to Abram again you're going to be a great people you're going to be the father of a great nation and your descendants are going to be innumerable let's go to 17

Genesis 17 verses 3 and 6 then Abram then Abram fell on his face and God talked to him saying as for me behold my covenant is with you and you shall be a father of many nations no longer shall your name be called Abram but your name shall be called Abraham for I have made you a father of many nations I will make you exceedingly fruitful and I will make nations of you and kings shall come from you you see the connection yet over and over and over again God's saying I'm going to bless you with a whole bunch of people and kings will come from your lineage from your descendants let's go to Genesis 22 22 to Abraham 22 17 and 18 Genesis 22 17 and 18 blessing I

will bless you and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies in your seed what does he say what does he reiterate again to Abraham in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because you have obeyed my voice again to Abraham is it almost like God is trying to make a point Abraham you follow me you obey me and I'm going to bless you but through you and your descendants I'm going to bless the entire world let's go on Genesis 26 4 Abraham had a son Isaac now this time it's to Isaac that God is speaking Genesis 26 and verse number 4 to Isaac and I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of the heaven we've heard that before I will give to your descendants all these lands and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed so he's blessing Isaac so that ultimately all the nations of the earth would be blessed let's turn to

Genesis 28 now Genesis 28 verse 14 Isaac had a son this time to Jacob also excuse me 28 14 and also your descendants shall be as a dust of the earth you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east to the north and to the south and in you and in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed same thing same message and what's interesting is that this time Jacob was single he was looking for a wife now that's good news to a young man who's looking for a wife God said you're going to have kids and as a matter of fact you're going to have a bunch of them and they are going to have a bunch of kids and you are going to replenish look at chapter 35 verse excuse me chapter 35 verse 11

Genesis 35 11 also to Jacob Genesis 35 11 also God said to him I am God Almighty be fruitful and multiply a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you and kings shall come from your body let's go now to Genesis 49 Genesis 49 verses 8 through 10 Genesis 49 8 through 10 here's where God is providing the blessings their blessings are being given to the to the to the sons and so all these tribes of Israel are receiving their own blessings now to Judah verse 8 49 to Judah you are he whom your brother shall praise your hands shall be on the neck of your enemies your father's children shall bow down before you and Judah is a lion's whelp from the prey my son you have gone up he bows down and he lies down as a lion and as a lion who shall rouse him the scepter shall not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh comes and to him shall be the obedience of his people and it's interesting when we get to Revelation 5 and how is

[21 : 31] Jesus referred to he is referred as the lion of the tribe of Judah all the way back from Genesis he's saying Judah from your lineage will come Jesus and Jesus is referred in Revelation 5 as the lion of the tribe of Judah it's interesting when you get to Revelation that Judah is mentioned first and so here we have God promising to bless his people so that his glory his salvation and his blessing would remain known among the nations of the earth is it only in Genesis not let's go now to Isaiah Isaiah 49 this plan of God to bless all the nations through his people that we see again said in Revelation chapter 7 verses 3 and 4 and

Revelation the whole chapter 7 of Revelation this is not a first thing Isaiah 49 6 indeed he says is it too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel I will also give you as a what is he saying to Israel I will give you as a light to whom come on speak to me to the Gentiles that means everyone who's not a Jew so why did God bless the Jews to bless the Gentiles but all too often Israel thought God we are so special wow we are special you love us and so therefore we look down our noses on everybody else but God said over and over and over again Israel

I'm blessing you so that my blessing wouldn't stop with you I'm blessing you so that you could bless the rest of the world with the truth of who I am and we fall prey to that too we think that God blessing us is because of us God doesn't bless us because of us God blesses us so that his blessing wouldn't stop through us but that we would be a conduit just like Abram Abraham was that conduit of God's blessing so that God because he loved the Jews the Jews could then share the truth of God to everyone else in the world and so the whole world could march toward Revelation 7 and stand as a multitude that nobody could number from every people every language and worship and praise him so the Jews are connected to the multitude in Revelation so let's go on as we go let's continue on with verse 6 he says

I will also give you as a light to the Gentiles that you should be my salvation to the ends of the earth you catch that the Jews were meant to be the conduit through which God's truth could be could be proclaimed to the rest of the earth again Isaiah 49 10 Isaiah 49 10 they shall neither hunger nor thirst neither heat nor sun shall strike them sound familiar this is what we see taking place at the in

the throne room of God in Genesis excuse me in Revelation chapter 7 neither heat nor sun shall strike them for he who has mercy on them will lead them even by the springs of water he will guide them and so we see a quote in Revelation 7 here from Isaiah those who were tortured and killed for their faith that the elder said these are the ones who have died they've dipped their robes in the blood of the lamb and they're here because of the based on the righteousness of Jesus Christ the lamb is going to be their shepherd he will protect them he will give them living water Revelation 22 rivers of living water that's Jesus those flow from the from the central part of heaven also Isaiah 66 verses 18 and 19 we're almost done with our whirlwind tour of the Old Testament Genesis excuse me Isaiah 66 18 and 19 Isaiah 66 18 for I know their works and their thoughts it shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues sound familiar and they shall come and see my glory I will set a sign among them that those among them who escape I will send to the nations to Tarshish and Poole and Lod who draw the bow and Tubal and Javan to the coastlands afar off who have not heard my fame nor seen my glory and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles so why does God disperse his people around because of persecution why did [27 : 03] God spread the early Christians in the first century because of persecution because when we're not persecuted we tend to kind of clump together we kind of want to stay in the salt shaker but what God does is send some persecution and he shakes us out all over the world why well he says it here for those who have not heard my fame nor seen my glory and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles he dispersed the Jews so the Gentiles all around the world could hear about God he has us go to foreign lands he has he has Gideons all around the world so God so people can hear about God's love for them missionaries are sent all around the world so that God so the world can hear about the love of God God is in the business of blessing his people so that they could in turn go out and bring blessing and salvation to all the nations around them but see the Old Testament Jews missed out on this they thought his blessing was for them and was to remain with them and subsequently they engaged in self-centered worship this is just for me this is just for us and we don't need no Gentiles around us to mess up this thing and so it's really just about us and we can sometimes fall prey to that same type of thinking but what we see here is that as we see the promises of God we see the price that Christ has paid Christ paid a price so we could see what takes place in Revelation 7 all these multitudes praising it's not because of these multitudes are worthy it's because of the price Jesus paid for us repentance so repentance and forgiveness could be preached to all the nations look at Luke 24 Luke 24 verses 47 to 49 and see what is being taught here in the beginning of the New Testament Luke 24 beginning with verse 47 he says and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to whom all nations Jesus Christ paid the price so that our sins could be forgiven and we could be part of the body of Christ and he says now our responsibility is to take that message and to go present it to all the world should be preached in his name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem and you are witnesses of these things behold I send the promise of my father upon you but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are due to power from on high and so we see in Acts we see the Holy Spirit being given the power to proclaim the message of the gospel and then his people take the message of the gospel all around the world so when we see Jesus Christ paying the price what we see as part of that is Jesus shed his blood for everyone Jesus shed his blood for every race every race every race of people and as we think about we are still part of a segregated country whether we like to believe it or not where we don't think it is or whatever we tend to segregate ourselves we tend to think about other individuals other races sometimes we lump them together we need to understand that ultimately those who know Jesus Christ as their Savior are going to be worshiping together forever so God's plan was so that every race would come to know Jesus as their Savior he also shed his blood for every people for every people you say well pastor what does that mean I thought we just mentioned race well peoples are different from race there are people groups all around the world people who are either geographically or ideologically are clumped into a people group it might be a group of of 4,000 people in a tribe up on a mountain somewhere that nobody else can get to that's considered a people group and we're told that there are roughly 16,000 differentiated people groups in the world 16,000 people groups in the world Jesus died for every single one of them and what we're told now this this number may or may not be accurate right now I got my figures they may be a little old but what we're told is there are now roughly still around 6,500 people groups that are still unreached these are groups of people in

Burma groups of people in Africa Mali there are people groups in on the border there between China and India India and China and different places these people groups sometimes it's because they're so the people are so evil that nobody wants to go there and so they're isolated as people groups sometimes they're isolated on top of a mountain that it might take days and weeks and risking your own life to get up to them and so people don't go there so there's roughly 6,500 people groups think about that over 6,000 people groups and we're told this is roughly 2 to 3 billion people that have not been reached yet that don't know that the whole population of that people group have never even heard the name of Jesus we need to be on mission but also

[33 : 19] Jesus Christ shed his blood for every language we see that here back in Revelation great multitude all nations verse 9 of Revelation 7 all nations all tribes all peoples and tongues all languages Jesus died for people of all language groups and he died for them and also what we're told there are about 7,000 different languages around the world today and this is also an astonishing number we're told that roughly this may be a little different now because the Bible is being translated in a number of different languages even as we are here this morning roughly around 2,286 languages still have no Bible so those are people groups 6,500 people groups and nearly and over 2,000 languages that still do not have God's word some may be orally but do not have God's word that they can put in their hands

Jesus died for all of these so that in Revelation 7 we see people of all nations all tribes all people groups and all languages worshipping him so we've been purchased to praise him we've also been sanctified to serve him we've been sanctified to serve him look at verse 9 what are they wearing white robes and that speaks to their having now righteousness the righteousness of Jesus Christ we are sanctified to serve him because what happens for eternity people are praising him for eternity and through Jesus look at verse 10 crying out with a loud voice saying salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the lamb through Jesus Christ we have victory salvation another word for victory here salvation belongs to God and his son very quickly

Genesis 49 11 let's go back there very very quickly to kind of give a little bit of an understanding of what we're seeing here Genesis 49 11 Genesis 49 11 talks about binding his donkey to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine he washed his garments in wine and his clothes in the blood of grapes talking future about the Messiah Jesus Christ when he died on the cross of Calvary shed his precious blood for you and for me and isn't it amazing that when we think about making our white clothes white what do we think about throw them in the washing machine right well you would not think of to make your clothes white dip them in blood well that's kind of paradoxical but when we're talking about righteousness righteousness only comes through the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ so it's a picture of us being washed clean through

Jesus Christ death and resurrection on the cross of Calvary and in verse 9 in Revelation 19 verses 12 and 13 Revelation 19 12 and 13 is talking about his eyes were like a flame of fire and on his head were many crowns he had a name written that no one knew except himself he was clothed with a robe dipped in blood and his name is called the word of God Jesus Christ did all of this for you and for me so we have his victory but also we have a new vocation we see that in verses 11 to 15 the angels stood around the throne the elders fell on their faces before God they worshipped and it says that this took place verse 15 serving him how long day and night forever think about that we have got a new vocation our job is going to be praise and worship you know the praise and worship team thought you know they had you know the corner on the praise job we will all be praising and worshiping our heavenly father and our lord Jesus Christ forever and forever and forever we've been purchased to praise him we we have been sanctified to serve him and the next what we see is we have been led to love him we see that in verses 16 and 17 of revelation chapter 7 he says they shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore these are the ones who've been persecuted these are the ones who died for their faith he says they shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore the sun shall not strike them nor any heat remember that was back in Isaiah for the lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and will lead them to fountains of waters and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes we've been led to love him and what we see here in verse 15 he who sits on the throne will dwell among them we serve him day and night he is our ever present protector because to what is he referred he's referred to as a shepherd he was a lion of the tribe of Judah he is a lamb that was slain and it's kind of interesting lambs are not normally shepherds but Jesus who was the suffering lamb becomes the protection providing shepherd and so we have his protection day and night says verse says that they are before the

throne of God serve him day and night in his temple he who sits on the throne will dwell among them and says that he spread his tent over them and that's a reference back to Leviticus the feast of tabernacles the feast of tabernacles had two parts to it one it commemorated the people of Israel wandering around the desert when they lived in the wilderness for those 40 years they lived in tents and so the feast of tabernacles that the Jews celebrate therefore seven days during that period they leave their homes and they go live in booths or tabernacles or tents if you will and it talks about them wandering around the desert living in tents and the feast of tabernacles was also right around the time of harvest and so it was also a time where they praised God for it was a celebration of the harvest and so the Bible talks about them coming out during this feast of tabernacles and waving palm branches this is what's going to be happening in heaven a picture of what happens in heaven and in verse 17 we see

he's also our eternal provider he's our eternal provider for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of water see it all it's all revolves around our heavenly father and Jesus Christ we are not blessed for our benefit we are blessed so that we could then share we talked about sharing earlier sharing the blessings of God with those who don't know Jesus Christ and so that they too in turn can take part in the book of Revelation in this worship around the throne he is our eternal provider so as we end this what's the bottom line well I think the bottom line is this we need to get in on a global perspective of worship realize we're not alone we're not God's special people just here God has his children his people all over the world every race every language every people group and we're going to praise and worship him forever and ever and ever and ever when we worship we join believers all around the world it's a global picture not just us and then secondly how does this 6500 some odd people groups still have not been reached 2286 languages who still do not have

[42 : 00] God's word in their language I think that should spur us to have some compassion on them so the next bottom line is we need to get on with a global mission that God has called us to and that starts here what did he say in Luke remember it starts in Jerusalem starts in Lake Charles but as we go out in our daily routine we share the gospel as we send out missionaries we send the gospel and God may be calling someone here as a missionary somewhere let's get on with that global mission this morning as we have the opportunity to give our tithes and our offerings that is to further the work of God starting here going out from here but also as we have the opportunity as you take those Gideon's International envelopes and if God moves you to provide an offering to the Gideon's ministry that also will be providing

God's word because what is it that changes men and women and boys and girls it's God and it's the word of God that's living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword able to pierce even through the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart that is what God has promised that will not return to him void without accomplishing his purpose that he intended it to have so let's get on with it let's continue being who God wants us to be sharing his word and getting this global mission around the world let's pray father this morning as we've come together and as we think about what you have provided for us your love your mercy and your grace and you've blessed us and and since we are we have been grafted into the nation of Israel we know Lord God that that what you told us in Genesis about blessing Abraham and blessing Isaac and blessing Jacob we're part of that blessing although please let us not allow that blessing to stop with us but that we would in turn share that blessing with the rest of the world so that we could all stand before your throne of grace one day and say amen blessing and glory and honor and praise be to the Lamb where we will praise you forever and forever thank you father help us to be a blessing to those around us we pray in Jesus name amen you