

# Serving Him Night and Day

Psalm 100, Revelation 7:9–17

The common link between our Old and New Testament texts this afternoon is the word *serve*. Our Old Testament text, in the beloved King James Version, begins: “Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. *Serve* the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.” Here, the people of God are encouraged and urged to serve the LORD, coming into his presence singing his praises joyfully and loudly. In our Revelation text we see a great multitude coming out of the Great Tribulation, converted Jews whose leaders led them astray by rejecting the Messiah; but who, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, came to Christ and were martyred for their faith. They are now in heaven, entering into the joy and worship that all the saints in every age experience. Now, in the words of verse 15, “they are before the throne of God, and *serve* Him day and night in His temple.”

The saints of every age are to serve God. That is our bounden duty. That is why God left us on earth. We serve God two ways: as we gather for public worship, and as we leave afterward and scatter throughout the world, serving with our gifts and treasure with the word of Christ on our lips, endeavoring to spread the light of the gospel wherever he in his providence may lead us.

The emphasis in both of our texts is on serving him through worship. The Old Testament word is *עָבַד*, which, along with its noun form *עֲבָדָה*, can mean either *serve as a slave*, or *serve the LORD in worship*. The New Testament word, *λατρεύω*, has the more specialized meaning the carrying out of religious duties, especially the worship of God with the congregation, by human beings.<sup>1</sup>

I have three points this afternoon: (1) The saints are forgiven; (2) The saints are preserved; (3) The saints worship. First,

## 1. The saints are forgiven.

Note that in our text this great multitude is “clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”

Note that these martyrs are clothed with *white* robes and thanking God for his salvation. One of the elders who spoke with the apostle John explained that these saints had “*washed* their robes and made them *white* in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7:14). Here is the fulfillment of Isaiah 1:18, “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.”

As guilty sinners, all of us are in need of washing.

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<sup>1</sup> Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, *λατρεύω* (Logos Bible Software)

“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 cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Are your sins forgiven? Sometimes even the most sincere Christians struggle with this. I am a great sinner. Has God forgiven me? What does the Bible say? “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)

## **2. The saints are preserved.**

Who are these men and women, now promoted to glory? We are told, “These are the ones *who come 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. *They shall neither 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 living fountains of waters. And *God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*”

It is God’s will to preserve all his saints.

Psalm 31:23, “O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD *preserveth* the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.”

Psalm 97:10, “Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he *preserveth* the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.”

Proverbs 2:8, “He keepeth the paths of judgment, and *preserveth* the way of his saints.”

Ultimately, the reason God preserves the saints is because it is his will to take them safely to heaven.

Hebrews 2:10, “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in *bringing many sons unto glory*, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

John 17:12, “. . . those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.”

The saints are forgiven. The saints are preserved. Thirdly,

## **3. The saints worship.**

They “fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: ‘Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.’”

Their worship both begins and ends with the word Amen! So let it be!

The pattern we see in our New Testament text is a familiar one: we are saved, we are preserved, we worship. This is the regular pattern throughout Scripture. We are not saved just to have assurance of our individual salvation only; we are saved to gather with the saints and worship. “The hour cometh, and now is, when the true

worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him” (John 4:23).

Are you a worshipper? Do you delight to gather with God’s people for worship? Is it something you do from your heart, knowing that it is what you were made for? Do you desire to worship with God’s people more than anything else?

People like to go to a concert and a TED talk. Churches that do that grow and attract a lot of people. But it’s not biblical worship. Biblical worship is rejoicing to hear the pure word of God and responding with heartfelt worship with the congregation of God’s people. We do this in anticipation of eternity, when we will gather with all the elect of God from every age, singing the praises of the Lamb that has been slain, filling the courts of heaven with joyful sounds that will reverberate throughout eternity. What a day that will be, when faith shall be sight, when we will truly begin to understand the great cost of our salvation: that the God of heaven—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—conceived the plan of our salvation in eternity past, the Father sending the Son, the Son agreeing to come to this earth, become a man, and die for his people, and the Spirit empowering the Son and regenerating all God’s elect at the proper time, making them to understand their great need of Christ, and drawing them to the Savior. It took the full energies of the triune God for Christ to save his people from their sins. The realization of the great love of God for his people and the great cost of accomplishing our salvation will only grow in the hearts of God’s people forevermore. In the courts of heaven Psalm 100 will be fully realized:

“Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”

If you belong to Jesus Christ, then you too will be “. . . before the throne of God, and *serve* Him day and night in His temple.” Amen!