

Read: Revelation 7:9-17

Life is Hard

Revelation 7:9-12

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 around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying:

“Amen!
Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honor
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen!”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“Mom...I’m hungry.” “Dad, I’m so thirsty!” “It’s so hot outside. Can we go to the pool?” Every kid listening to this has said something that sounds like that. The right response from Mom or Dad is a good dad joke (“Hi Thirsty, I’m Dad.”), but those questions are getting at something true and important to understand: life is hard. You eat a good breakfast, but then you’re hungry again before lunch time. Drink as much chocolate milk as you want; you’re going to be thirsty again before you know it. Summer means time off from school and fun, but then it’s 100 degrees outside and you can’t do the things you planned on doing.

That’s just scratching the surface though. Then you remember there’s pain, like when you scrape your knee on the sidewalk. There’s frustration that you can’t get the hang of riding your bike or your best friend is hanging out with her other “best friends.” We cry because things hurt; we are sad because we lose things and people we love. No wonder the angel in Revelation calls this time on earth “the great tribulation!” Life is hard sometimes!

But the picture in Revelation 7 is one of joy and praise. The angel tells John that this huge group of people in heaven, so big you could never count them, have come out of the great tribulation. Now they get to shout a song about God’s victory. They are wearing pure, white robes. Robes

they washed in the blood of Jesus, our Lamb, who felt the pain, frustration, and tears we feel. He experienced those things so we could look forward to standing in that choir, singing this glorious song, washed clean of every sinful stain! He gave up his life for ours, like a shepherd for his sheep, so he could be our shepherd forever in heaven.

Yes, life is and will be hard sometimes. But eternal life isn't hard. Because your Lamb, Jesus, is at the center of it all... and he will keep you fed, satisfied, and safe. The tears he wipes away from your eyes will be the last tears you ever cry... forever!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What is the name of this special place described in the story?
- Everyone in heaven was wearing white robes. How did those robes become white?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- How could you use this part of the Bible to comfort someone who's going through a tough time?
- Explain what a "great tribulation" is in your own words.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Why do you think now is called the "great tribulation"?
- What kind of things does earth have that heaven won't have?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, sometimes this life is hard. It is filled with pain, loss, and hurt. But you promise that someday you will bring us out of this great tribulation and into the joy of heaven. Thank you for washing us clean in your own blood so we could join you in that joy. Amen.