



Heaven's Silhouette. Revelation 7:9 – 17

A silhouette can help us understand the relationship between the Church as it is now and what it will be when Christ has completed his glorious work in us. This image is formed when a backlit object produces a dark one-dimensional outline on a translucent screen. But to understand the real nature of the object behind the representation we need to remove the screen that obscures our view. Paul had this sort of image in mind when he wrote,

“Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! But when full understanding comes, these partial things will become useless...Now we see things imperfectly as in a cloudy mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. (1Cor 13:9 – 12 NLT)

The title, ‘Revelation’ tells us that this final book of the Bible was written to give us a peek through the screen that separates what we know now by faith from what we will see with our own eyes one day. Take time to consider these four glimpses into our future glory:

1. **The Church will be vast:** *“After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb” (Rev 7:9)*
2. **The Church will be holy & joyful:** *“They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. And they were shouting with a mighty shout, “Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!” (Rev 7:9 – 10)*
3. **We will worship with angels and heavenly beings:** *“And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living beings. And they fell before the throne with their faces to the ground and worshiped God.” (Rev 7:11)*
4. **We will be done with sinning, suffering, and dying:** *“Then he said to me, ‘These are the ones who died in the great tribulation. [But now] the Lamb on the throne will be their Shepherd. He will lead them to springs of life-giving water. And God will wipe every tear from their eyes.’”*

In regard to this glorious hope the Apostle Paul has written, *“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.” (Philippians 3:12)* Therefore, take some time to go back and contemplate each of these pictures of our future glory. How does each one inspire you to keep pressing on toward the glorious goal of our faith?

Below is the final paragraph of the poem from which I borrowed the name for this study:

*When the weight of many days had finally closed the old man's eyes
The truth of childhood day dreaming was finally recognised.
Sin's shadowy screen had obscured his scene as when the day is overcome by night;
His whole world had been a silhouette shaped by Heaven's light.
But now passing beyond the obstructing veil as death's stone was rolled away;
God's glory was revealed more brilliantly than his dream's most vivid day.
(Heaven's Silhouette, by Chadd Hafer 1990)*