

December 14

Scriptures: Read Revelation 7

Key Verse: “For the Lamb at the center 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.” (Revelation 7:17)

Overview

Reading Revelation is like looking through a kaleidoscope. The colours, the patterns, the overall picture keeps changing — it seems in constant flux. Suddenly, the martyrs “under the altar” of 6:9 are now “a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb” (7:9). Numbered among them are “144,000 from all the tribes of Israel” (v.4). — I say “numbered” loosely, for we’re reading about an apocalyptic vision here, and any number’s value is symbolic. (Even the naming of “all the tribes” bows to symbolism in this case, for the tribe of Dan is not mentioned. Instead of Dan is Manasseh —see Genesis 49.)

As the martyrs glorify God — “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb” (v.10) — the angels “around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures” (v.11a) fall down and worship (v.11b, 12).

In the middle of all this, a dialogue occurs between two people: John and “one of the elders” (v.13a). The elder asks John if he knows who these countless thousands are. Then he answers the question himself, telling John that “these are they who have come out of the great tribulation” (v.14a). They “have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (v.14b). And now, “the Lamb...will be their shepherd” (v.17). That first martyr, Jesus, who gave His life that they might live “will lead them to springs of living water” (v.17b). The Lamb is a Shepherd.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb, that cleanses us from all sin. And thank You for our Good Shepherd and our Great High Priest, Jesus, who cares for us, His sheep.