



Sons of Saint Joseph tm

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SOSJ – 5 – The Last Things I: Heaven Saturday, December 16, 2023

Revelation 7: 9-17

After this I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb, wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation comes from our God, who is seated on the throne, and from the Lamb.” All the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They prostrated themselves before the throne, worshiped God, and exclaimed: “Amen. Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving, honor, power, and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” Then one of the elders spoke up and said to me, “Who are these wearing white robes, and where did they come from?” I said to him, “My lord, you are the one who knows.” He said to me, “These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. “For this reason they stand before God’s throne and worship him day and night in his temple. The one who sits on the throne will shelter them. They will not hunger or thirst anymore, nor will the sun or any heat strike them. For the Lamb who is in the center of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Questions

1. What were you taught about heaven as a child? Did that understanding change after growing into adulthood?
2. How would one describe heaven to children, when we do not really know the experience of heaven, except what Scriptures tells us? How can one convince a ten year old, a fifteen year old and a skeptical 25 year old in today’s world that staying devoutly committed to the Church in this world is the actual path to Heaven?
3. There are many erroneous ideas about heaven, how do we combat false ideas of an easy way to heaven? (the.... I am a good person philosophy)? Or why is the image of an eternal barbecue or carnival a terrible way to describe heaven?
4. How can heaven be hierarchical (in other words, greater happiness for some?) if God loves everyone equally? Does that defy some of the parables, especially the Laborers in the vineyard who received the same recompense despite starting different times? Does God love some more than others?