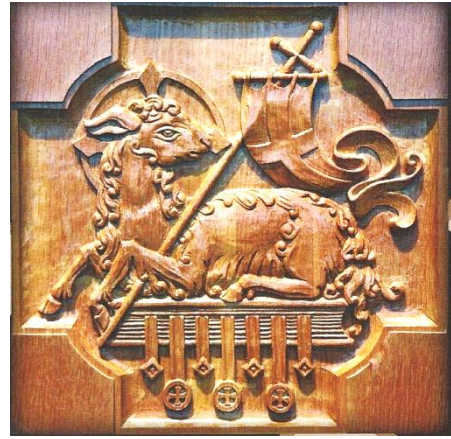


**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran
Church
November 6, 2016
All Saints Day WELS
Lectionary
Revelation 7:9-17**



The Great Multitude in White Robes

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” ¹¹ 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, ¹² saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!” ¹³ Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes – who are they, and where did they come from?” ¹⁴ I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁵ 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 shelter them with his presence. ¹⁶ ‘Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them,’ nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷ 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.’”

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Back in 1986 Prof. David Vallesky and Prof. Forest Bivens of our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon wrote an Adult Confirmation Book called New Life In Christ! It is a very thorough study of the basic truths of God’s Word. It involves looking up lots and lots of Bible passages – what you call proof passages. So that when you are through what you know is God’s Word – not what some pastor thinks or even what some Church body or denomination thinks. This book has extra information about things like infant baptism – 5 pages of Bible passages that talk about how we are sinful from birth – **sinful from the time my mother conceived me.** The Bible says **the wages of sin is death.** It talks about the jailer at Philippi who cried out in fear, **“What must I do to be saved?”** The Apostle Paul said, **“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.”** The jailer and his whole family were baptized. When our family gathers at Aunt Kathleen and Uncle Marty’s for Thanksgiving – there are people of all ages – grandmas and grandpas and babies and everyone inbetween! Last Sunday – *Reformation Sunday* – Pastor Gartner explained how Martin Luther discovered from the pages of Scripture that believing is not something *we do* – to deserve to be saved. Faith is a *gift* of the Holy Spirit – worked through the means of grace – the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. Remember? That’s how we know we are saved for sure!

Near the end of the book “New Life In Christ” – there is a very brief outline of Church History. Early attempts at reform were stifled. And then it says *Hus burned at the stake.* And then it

says “*Savonarola hanged.*” Do you know who Savonarola was? Do you understand why his name is there? Savonarola – was a priest who was put to death the day after my birthday back in 1498. His crime? Again seeking the truth from God’s Word in a world that was gross in its wickedness and wretched sinful excess over 500 years ago. This world took away his priestly garments – and dressed in a night shirt to shame him as they walked him to a gallows – where they put him to death with intentionally maliciously excruciating slowness – while they set a fire beneath him – where they threw rocks at his body even as he was already dead – while little people danced around him – before throwing his ashes into the river! It is tempting to think some times that our world is more wicked than ever before. King Solomon was right when he wrote a thousand years before baby Jesus was born – *there is nothing new under the sun!* This horrible hateful wickedness will continue – until Jesus returns in power and great glory with all his holy angels to take us to our forever home in Heaven. As we celebrate all the Saints – all the believers called to Heavenly glory – God’s Word encourages us today:

Behold Our Home In Heaven!

1. How we will get there...

2. What we will enjoy there!

The part of God’s Word we are concentrating on – the last of 66 books of the Bible – the Revelation to the Apostle John! The Revelation to St. John came when the apostle John was in exile on the Island of Patmos – near the end of his earthly life. Sometimes it’s tempting to think – the Revelation to St. John is so complicated – it will only confuse and perhaps even mislead me – so I will just avoid it! The fact is – very much of the Revelation to St. John is very simple, clear and to the point! We

had church on August 3, 2007 at the gymnasium at our Luther Preparatory School. The funeral for Corporal Matthew Zindars who gave his life in Iraq. Matthew's confirmation verse was Revelation 2:10 "**Be faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life!**" How clear and powerful is that Gospel promise? Jesus gave Matthew faith at his baptism. Jesus preserved and protected that faith. And Jesus brought Matthew safely home to Heaven!

Dr. Sigbert W. Becker – professor at our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary used to teach us Revelation is not linear. It doesn't go from chapter one – and then comes chapter two – and then everything in chapter three happens – followed eventually by what is talked about in chapter 21 – and finally chapter 22 – and then the end! It's not linear. Dr. Becker used to say Revelation is kind of like a kaleidoscope. Remember kaleidoscopes? You look in one end – and you turn the other end – around and around and around and around – and the same little pieces of stained glass – fall in different combinations – and multiplied 360° and it makes this wonderful pattern! Revelation is like that. It takes a hand full of powerful Gospel truths and looks at them again and again – in different combinations from different aspects and angles! As judgment day draws closer and closer – there will be a tremendous battle – good against evil – Jesus and His Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit – and His holy angels and believers – will continue to do battle with the devil – the murderer from the beginning – the ruler of the kingdom of the air – that is the ruler of nothing! The devil is not the ruler of Hell. He is not! Hell was created by our Heavenly Father – as a forever prison for the devil – the demons – the angels the devil led into rebellion against their Heavenly Father – the forever prison of those who die in blasphemous rebellion against their Redeemer! The devil is the

lord of the flies – always present where there is death and decay and the most gross waste and crud! God’s Word says, “**Resist the devil and he will flee from you!**” James 4:7b Jesus has crushed the power of the devil. Martin Luther wrote and we sang last Sunday, “*One little word can fell him.*” One word like Jesus or grace or faith or forgiveness or Scripture! The devil cannot harm us when we are safe in the powerful arms and nail marked hands of our Good Shepherd!

The Revelation to the Apostle John is also in part a letter to seven churches – seven congregations in Asia Minor. What John wrote to them is in many respects simple, clear and to the point, too! John wrote to Churches in Ephesus, in Smyrna and Pergamum, the believers in Thyatira and Sardis, in Philadelphia and in Laodicea. Perhaps the most stinging rebuke was saved for last. **To the angel – the pastor – the preacher of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful self...He who has ears let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Hot or cold – love Jesus or hate Him. One or the other would be better than *I just don’t care...* Complacency – I have nothing against religion – or I’m very spiritual – I’m just not religious – or I feel closer to God when I’m out in the forest looking at the beautiful leaves instead of reading**

God's Word. There is danger when hearing and reading and studying God's Word is just not very important at all!

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¹³ Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes – who are they, and where did they come from?" ¹⁴ I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁵ 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 shelter them with his presence. *Jesus is coming! Jesus is coming! Jesus is coming soon!* When you go home this week – open your Bible to Matthew chapter 24 and read about *Signs of the end of the Age!* Jesus said watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in Jesus' name – claiming to be the Christ – the Messiah –

the promised one – and will succeed in deceiving many! Did you catch that? Many will be fooled and misled! You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. Again – if you watch the news – there are all kinds of rumors! This Thanksgiving – when more and more people will be traveling – will terrorists attack? Where is the enemy coming from next? Will it be that pudgy guy from North Korea who keeps testing missiles aimed at California? Will it be the Iranians with nuclear weapons – or the Russians attacking our fellow believers in Ukraine? Or will it be the Chinese – attacking our Sailors from man-made islands? Again the Son of God says, **“But see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ..Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold...** Not lots or many but the love of **most** will grow cold. We will not be afraid – when the Holy Spirit fills our ♥ with a child-like confidence in Jesus’ never failing forgiving love!

¹⁶ ‘Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them,’ nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷ 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.’” I have talked about tears at more than one funeral. I think it’s interesting – Heaven is so beyond our experience it’s almost impossible to explain it in positive terms. It’s beyond our experience to say it feels like this or smells like this or tastes like this. So more often than not God’s Word tells us what Heaven is not! **“Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst!”** Go to Nigeria and you see hunger. Go to Nigeria and you will see people eating malnourished chickens. Some of the chickens are literally skin and bone. They are fried in palm oil – and you can bite into a

chicken wing – and the skin and bone is so hard – you can't break through. You see hunger when people eat the chicken and the bones – chewing and grinding the splinters of bones because they contain protein. Go to Haiti and see little children at their Frisbee of rice and beans at noon – and that's pretty much the only food they get all day! And we in America enjoy snacks – and sweets and treats from now through Thanksgiving, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent and Easter and more! We have **green pastures and still waters** – nourishment for our faith in Scripture. We have nourishment in Lord's Supper! We have nourishment for faith in Bible Class and personal devotions and chapel services. It has been said Disney World is *the happiest place on earth*. It is nothing – absolutely nothing – compared to the never ending joy and peace and wonder and happiness that will be ours – when we see Jesus face to face and join the angels singing Jesus' praises forever. I can only imagine. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony P. Schatt

