

# The Lamb is a Shepherd

*Revelation: How It All Ends*

By William J. Sturm

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**Bible Text:** Revelation 7:12-17  
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**Berean Baptist Church**  
517 Glensford Drive  
Fayetteville, NC 28314

**Website:** [www.bereanbaptistchurch.org](http://www.bereanbaptistchurch.org)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/bereanbaptistch](http://www.sermonaudio.com/bereanbaptistch)

We're going to look at few things here. I'm going to show you three places in Isaiah that will matter by the time we get back to Revelation 7. So, Isaiah 40 and Revelation 7. While you're turning, one year ago I had to sell some commentaries. I was just drinking from the saucer all week long. One year ago I had to sell some commentaries, some Bible commentaries that were really near and dear to my heart, Calvin's Commentaries, 22 volume, hard cover. They were just wonderful. I just loved it but I had to sell it or trade it in because I was taking a college class and I just didn't have the cash to buy all the extra reference materials I need so I took it to an area bookstore and got some trade and all that stuff and kind of wiped a tear for just about a micro-second from my eye and then moved on. Wouldn't you know that I've got a brother in this classroom that decided he had a set of Calvin's Commentaries he didn't want to haul around anywhere and so I have a set in my office now on the shelf. Joe, thanks a lot, brother. God just smiles sometimes, doesn't he?

Isaiah 40 is where we're at. Let's look at verse 10, "Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." So, we have this idea that the coming King is a shepherd. Do you see that? Isaiah 40:10-11.

Now let's look at Isaiah 49. The reason I'm putting it all up here is because I think when we get to Revelation 7, you're going to want to write these references down in the margin of your Bible. Look at verse 8, "Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed," there is that word "feed" again, the same one that was used in Isaiah 40, "they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places." Look here, "They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them." You're going to need to know that. It's going to show up in Revelation 7 again. That's really important. Isaiah 49:8-10. That is going to be almost quoted in

Revelation 7. So, if you're reading through Revelation 7 this morning, you're like, "Okay, that's nice." But you're going to be reminded again that John is a student of the Old Testament.

The reason I showed you number one is because I'm about to show you Isaiah 53 and we're going to call it number two. Look at Isaiah 53:3, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Look, please, at verse 6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Please, everyone take the time to read verse 7 to yourself if you would and give me some irony. Give me some irony about verse 7 and take it with number one: the King is a shepherd, now look at verse 7 and give me the irony that you see there. In other words, the "Wow, that's funny," or "Wow, they really flipped that around on us. I wasn't expecting that." The shepherd becomes what? The shepherd becomes a sheep. There is the Incarnation right there in Isaiah 53. Now, who are these sheep that went astray? It's us, right? So we're the sheep that have gone astray and the shepherd of Isaiah 40 becomes a sheep and suffers as a sheep for sheep who have gone astray. Isn't that what it says? Isaiah 53:7, the coming shepherd becomes a sheep. This is good stuff. We'll come back to that.

Now look at Revelation 7. We're going to read 9-17 but we're going to teach verses 12-17. If you want to know what we said about verses 9-11, then listen to our lesson from two weeks ago. Last week, of course, we had a missions conference. Verse 9, "9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms," or palm branches, "in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God." Again, those three verses are packed full of cool stuff and we talked about it two weeks ago. Check out the recording.

Verse 12, "Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" Where did they come from? "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." Ready for Isaiah 49? "And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the

Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

Do you see Isaiah 49 there? Almost verbatim, right? So, he's quoting Isaiah 49 but what I want you to see is the irony of number three: you have the suffering Lamb, what is he doing? Look at the terminology used there. The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them. Since when does a lamb feed anyone? A lamb is going to feed them? And then a lamb is going to lead them? Anyone ever seen a lamb lead anything? It's usually a goat, right? Or a sheep dog or a shepherd. But we have a lamb leading and feeding. What do those two things go with? Who does the leading and the feeding of a flock? A shepherd but here in Isaiah 53 we have the shepherd becoming a sheep and now in Revelation 7 we have the lamb becoming a shepherd. It's a complete switch-around. The suffering lamb is a shepherd.

Again, why is that important? Because John wants you to know, “Hey, check this out folks. I'm not giving you any new material. None. Everything that's been spoken of has been spoken of before in the Scripture. Everything.” So, in Isaiah the shepherd becomes a sheep and in Revelation the lamb, or the sheep, becomes a shepherd. Now, that happens again in the Old Testament.

Again, let me give you another example: Psalm 23, “The Lord is my shepherd.” Do you know what happens in Psalm 22? “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Before Christ becomes the shepherd who cares for his sheep, he has to first become a suffering sheep in Psalm 22. Do you see how that works? So, the Psalms, although they stand alone, they don't really because they were constructed, they were written and then they were put inside of this thing called a Psalter, that's what the collection of Psalms is known as, it's a Psalter. The same spelling for the most part. So, Psalm 22 comes before Psalm 23 because Psalm 23 is not necessarily fulfilled right here and now. It is fulfilled in Revelation 20 when the lamb becomes a shepherd to his sheep.

(Isaiah 53:10 would be..) Read it please. (“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.”) Yeah, so you have a sheep dying, being an offering, right? (Being an offering for sin and it pleased the Lord to bruise him.) Yeah, so you have the God crushing the sheep who was before his shearers as dumb in verse 7. So, we have this amazing, remarkable thing consistently from Genesis to Revelation of God becoming a Lamb. God becoming a Lamb. Remember, Genesis 22? Do you remember it? We've talked about it almost every other week: Abraham is about to sacrifice Isaac. Isaac says, “Father, here's the wood, here's the fire but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” Remember, what did God provide in that story? A ram, not a lamb. A lamb was offered, a ram was provided so the lamb is yet to come after Genesis 22. The answer Abraham gave his son Isaac was, “My son, God will provide himself a lamb.” What? God's going to become a lamb? Unheard of and yet we find it in Genesis 22. So, this is not some new material. This is a carry-over of one grand story of which Revelation is a part. So, the main thrust of Revelation 7 and this passage today is: the lamb becomes a shepherd.

Now, I want to show you a few things that are kind of neat, if I could. Look at verse 12, you don't mind brain candy, do you? The word behind "blessing" is the word "eulogia." What does that sound like? Eulogy, right? The preacher gave the eulogy. That's the word behind "blessing." So, eulogy and glory or doxa. What does that sound like? Doxology, right? We all love that song. That's the one where you had to break yourself out of your daydream as a kid to stand for the offering in your church if you were raised in the church and that's usually when your Mom is bumping your Dad and all that stuff. All that stuff takes place in morning service in a building that is too warm. You know. The organist is playing. Maybe some of you didn't have the privilege of that, but doxa is the word behind "glory." Wisdom, the word behind "wisdom" is the word "sophia." So blessing and glory and wisdom.

How many things do you hear ascribed by the angels who are standing around the throne and the elders and the four beasts? How many things do you see ascribed to the Lamb? Seven. Good. Seven. Notice the reference, it's Revelation 7:12. Look back at 5:12 and count how many. You have the voices of angels again and they are saying to the person on the throne, how many? Actually, they are saying seven things but they're not saying this to the person on the throne, they're saying it to the lamb. So, seven shows up again. Seven blessings to the lamb in chapter 5:12 and seven blessings to the one who is sitting on the throne in chapter 7:12. Remember, we have the one on the throne and then we have the lamb who is in the midst of the throne. Remember that? Chapter 4 and chapter 5. Good.

Now, verse 13, "And one of the elders answered." Well, what is he answering? What's there to answer? Who is asking a question? Apparently it's possible to answer something when you're not having a question asked. The elders answering the seven-fold praise of the angels and he says, "What are these folks and where did they come from?" And he describes them as being arrayed in white robes.

Keep your place and look at chapter 6. Remember the fifth seal, verse 9-11? Do you remember that? You might notice that these souls who are martyred for the testimony of Christ in verse 9, you might notice that they are arrayed in white robes in verse 11. Do you see that? "White robes were given unto every one of them and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season until their fellowservants also and their brethren should be killed as they were and that it should be fulfilled." There are a fixed number of people who are going to die for Christ for this period and the crowd that we see in chapter 7:12-17 is the fulfillment of the promise given to the martyrs in the fifth seal in chapter 6:11.

Let me see if I can reconstruct what I had on that slide because I think it's pretty important. Remember, how long is the tribulation period? Seven years. The first part is known as the beginning of sorrows by Christ and in Matthew 24, he calls the second half what? Great tribulation. So, Jesus calls it great tribulation so we have this seven year period and it is known as the beginning of sorrows and it is divided into 3 ½ years and 3 ½ years. This is the beginning of sorrows and this is known as the great tribulation.

We understand that probably because of Matthew 24, remember you need to listen to those lessons if this is cloudy, I'm just reviewing. That the first five seals begin here: seals 1-5 begin somewhere around the beginning part of the tribulation period and continue, it seems like, most of the way through the tribulation period. The sixth seal happens where? That's right. I hear it out there. Someone was bold enough to at least whisper it. The sixth seal, according to Matthew 24, happens after the tribulation. After the tribulation. In particular, according to Matthew 24, after the great tribulation. So, the fifth seal is occurring here. We have a collection or a collecting of souls that have died for the testimony of Christ and we have a promise made to them in chapter 6:11 that more would be joining them and they just need to wait until those join them.

Let us look, please, at verse 13 again, the elder asks John. Why is the elder asking John? This is the second time John gets involved with his own narrative. Did everyone catch that? John is trying to be a good prophet and just report what he sees. This is the second time John becomes involved in what he sees. The first time is found in chapter 5. Look there with me, please. Look at verse 11, "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," so probably in the hundreds of millions. "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen."

Can you imagine being John. John hears hundreds of millions in heaven saying, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sits on the throne." And he says, "And then everyone heard me. I just joined right in and said, Blessing and honor and everyone in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea heard me. And the four and twenty elders said, Amen, John." Can you imagine that? How awesome is that?

Chapter 7:14, we have one of the elders asking John, "So who do you think these folks are that are from every kindred, tribe, people and nation." Verse 9, they are robed in white. He said, "You've got to know." Let's look at verse 14, "And I said unto him, Sir, thou know." Remember: who is asking John about this crowd? One of the elders so these are real men. They're not just 24 representing something because one of them, again, speaks to John. Remember, one of them spoke to John in chapter 5 to show him the Lamb that could open the book. Remember? Now we have another elder, one of the 24, speaking to John and saying, "These are they which came out of great tribulation." Here's where they came from.

Now, I'm going to ask you a question because here is something you're probably wondering: where are we on this timeline? Where are we? Well, if we believe that this is all those who came out of great tribulation, then we have to be after the great tribulation, right? That makes sense. But and then we could think, "Well, this is after the rapture.

They are standing before the throne. It's probably after the rapture," but the word in verse 14 "which came out of great tribulation" is not the best sense of the word. It should be "and they are coming out of great tribulation." Does anyone have a translation that says that? You do? You do? Okay, so these are they which are coming out of great tribulation.

This is what John is seeing in chapter 7, is the continual collection of those who are dying for Christ assembling before the throne. What does that mean about those who die who are in Christ? (...) Immediately, yes. These are they which are coming out of great tribulation, as they're dying, they're appearing before the throne of God with white robes and palm branches in their hands. How awesome is that? So that is happening right here. As they're dying, Revelation 7 is happening. Revelation 7:12-17 is happening. As they're dying, the chapter 6:11 promise is being fulfilled to those who were in the fifth seal and heaven is being populated. There is no soul sleep. What nonsense. As they're dying, they are appearing before the throne.

(To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord...The end of the cross.) That's right, that's 2 Corinthians 5:8, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." Or, you could say, Philippians 1:22, Paul said, "I have this problem. I have to choose between dying and being with Christ or staying with you in the flesh." So, Paul said twice, "To die is to be with Christ. To die is gain." To die is not gain if you're laying in the dirt. Verse 21, "For me to live is Christ. To die is gain." He says, "When I lived down here, I lived with Christ. If I die, I just live with Christ more." What Old Testament character lived that out? (...) That's right. He spent so much time with God, God just said, "Why don't you just come on up here." (Great summarization of Enoch.) Well, twice in Genesis 5 and Hebrews 11, it says, "He walked with God so God took him and he didn't die." That's amazing. That's amazing. Could you imagine looking for that guy? "Has anyone seen Enoch?" "Haven't seen him." Expect him to float up on the river some time soon. No, never did show up. Finally they realized, "I think God just took him. I'm pretty sure God just took him." His picture was up everywhere.

(We've got two folks who didn't die in the Bible.) Yeah, Enoch and Elijah, right? (Correct. It is appointed to man once to die and then judgment. Doesn't it make logical sense that those two may be the witnesses....will be killed after their witness is complete.) Well, the good news is, dear brother, we're four chapters away from the witnesses. We'll get to them. It does make logical sense. Brother Jason, you're looking forward to that chapter, aren't you, brother? It does make logical sense that Enoch and Elijah will show up again. (I didn't bring it up, he brought it up.) Who did? Who is he pointing at? Oh, yeah. It does make good sense that we see Enoch and Elijah in chapter 11 of Revelation. I'm going to share with you why I don't think Enoch is there and why I do think it's Moses and Elijah and I taught that but it was before the SermonAudio days. I taught it in Matthew 14 when we were going through it but you know the way the army is and the way people go on and be with Jesus and the way some people just get angry and leave. Probably we have half a new class since then, so that'll be good material. As a matter of fact, we'll cover why I think Moses and Elijah are at the Mount of Transfiguration, why I believe they are the two in white standing in Acts 11 next to the apostles as Jesus goes into heaven, why I believe they are the two that are in the tomb when they come on

resurrection morning and why I believe they show up again in Revelation 11. So, Moses and Elijah is my guess and I'll give you a good reason biblically why I don't think it's Enoch. Okay? (After the new year?) It'll be probably 2017, I think. Remember, all we have after this is the maps, folks, and I can't teach the maps. I certainly can't draw them, no comments.

You might notice both crowds, chapter 6:12 and here in 7:12, both crowds are wearing white robes. One is already in heaven assembled and the other is joining them. So, that is the story. This is how the great multitude that no man can number arrives in heaven, through great tribulation.

Wow, there is so much to show you. Look in verse 15, "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." So, right away, this is why we know they are not yet in the New Jerusalem. This is how we know they are not yet in the New Jerusalem. They are in heaven and the New Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven. You might want to write down this reference right next to 7:15, write down 21:22. 21:22 says there is no temple in the New Jerusalem. No temple in the New Jerusalem. No need for one but there is one in heaven.

I saw a hand over here. (As we're going through and studying a little more, I don't see how the rapture....) Well, you know, right. I agree. I do agree and there are going to be those who say, "Well, we couldn't possibly be here." As a matter of fact, I'm one of those dudes that would like to eventually find my terminal education and say, "Okay, I'm done going to school." Well, I was talking to a seminary out in Texas, I think it was, and in order for me to be in their doctorate program which I want to be in because I want to learn more Greek and more Hebrew and it's a big part of that program, I have to agree with and be dogmatic about the pretribulation rapture and I had to tell them, I said, "I can't submit this. I don't agree. I can't be dogmatic that we're going to be gone before the tribulation begins." And he said, "Well, if you just take this course, we'll let you take it for free and I'm sure that will fix you." Sort of, pretty much is what he said. Of course, I want to be humble enough to say probably there are many who know more than I do about the Scripture but I think it's pretty presumptuous to just assume that a three credit hour seminary course could "fix me." I didn't know I was broke. So, I'm with you. I don't see yet where we're gone and at the same time, there are people in the room that disagree with us and so I'm going to graciously say, "Yes, I agree. I don't believe we're gone yet," but the questions remains: is there a rapture in the remainder of the book of Revelation. Because, again, if there isn't, then the burden of proof is on either. In other words, if I think it's post-trib and we're teaching Revelation then I have to at least be able to show it in the book of Revelation. The burden of proof is on me as much as it is on the pre-tribulation folks if we're studying a particular book of the Bible. Do I think I can go somewhere else in the Bible and prove a post-tribulation rapture? Of course I do. I do but I'm trying to stay in this book and give a complete picture as John would have us to have so I appreciate that.

Now, I want to talk about this temple that is in heaven. This is the third time that we see temple talk, the third time. Let me give you a few other places. Look at 3:12, "Him that

overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall go no more out and I'll write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God which is New Jerusalem." That's 3:12.

Then I want to remind us that there are seven lamps of fire, 4:5, "Out of the throne proceeds lightnings and thunderings and voices and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne." What does that sound like? Anyone? A menorah, right? Where do we find the menorah? In the temple. Right, so this is more temple talk. We have the Ark of the Covenant being spoken of when we see the hidden manna. Let's see, where did I find that at? It's hard for me to...hidden manna. It's in one of those "him that overcometh." Chapter 2:17, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit says to the churches, to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." Well, where is the hidden manna? Where is the manna stored in Hebrews 9 and in the Old Testament where was the jar of manna? In the Ark of the Covenant.

So, we have speech here of the Ark of the Covenant, we have speech of the temple, we have speech of the menorah. We're going to see the Ark mentioned by name later in another chapter and we have speech here of the temple in chapter 7. They serve God in the temple.

Alright, so let's notice, please, in chapter 7:15, that these are people that are no longer subject to the curse. Do you see something about work in the Bible? It continues after death. In heaven we are working for God in his temple. Let's back up to before the curse. What was Adam doing before the fall? He was working and he found joy in it. It is not the perfect will of God that you hate your job. We've got to do something where we find fervor and fulfillment in our work so something is broken. I'm not saying that you're broken, I'm saying that you need to find a line of work that you enjoy or consciously, if possible, by God's grace, take joy in your labor. It is not a curse. It is a curse to be inefficient. We talked about in our study in Genesis one year ago, part of being cursed was that we work hard and receive less fruit. That is part of the curse, but work itself is not part of the curse. Here it's happening after these people get to heaven.

Verse 16, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." I think I've mentioned just about everything that I need to.

One more thing, let me show you chapter 2:22. I'm going to show you the one and only other mentioning of the great tribulation in the book of Revelation so far. So far. The one and only mentioning of this time period in the book of Revelation by name so far. Chapter 2, notice verse 18, we're talking about the church at Thyatira. Look at verse 22, "I will cast her," that is, that Jezebel of verse 20, "I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds." Here we spoke that not all believers are guaranteed deliverance from the great tribulation. We've been dogmatic about that so far. We have church members here who are seen as servants of God, who are promised great tribulation and here we see a snapshot of people who are brought out of great tribulation as they die.



What kinds of questions do you have that haven't been asked so far? We've covered a lot, you know and that was after my monologue. Go ahead.

That recording should be available to you this afternoon. (...) The date we started revelation. (Approximately.) In my email today, I will send you the link to the whole collection of Revelation so that you can just click on it and get to all the lessons. Isn't that neat? And I'm not even going to charge you a generous donation like they do on tv. So, if you are not getting emails from me for prayer requests because I give my email list to Brother Dick from prayer request, Brother Joe for greeting. If you are not getting emails from me and you wish to be in the know, tell me. Give me an email. Send me an email. Give me your email address before you leave this room. I'll be here for a little while.

Let's pray.

*God, we love you. Thank you for your word. I pray that you would help us to thank you for the light that you give us about these subjects. You didn't owe us anything. You didn't owe us the Lamb dying for our sins. You certainly didn't owe us heaven. We are grateful for that and everything else that you give us in this life. Help us to be thankful people, quick to forgive, quick to overlook the shortcomings of others. By your grace, help us to remember that if we got what we deserved, we would not be very happy so I pray that you'd help us to cut others slack this week. Help us to be slow to anger. Help us to drink in deeply of your spirit of grace and we ask you these things because of the Lamb who is our Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Amen.*