

PART THREE: VISION OF THE CHURCH // REVELATION 7:9-12

From the sermon series, "The Big Picture"

In light of Part I (Purpose of the Church) and Part II (Mission of the Church), we need to ask ourselves what the Vision of the Church is...In other words, *where are we going?*

Churches have often answered such question of vision in two extremes: 1) a static vision – example, to build a building; or 2) a kinetic vision – that is, an active vision – example, to promote a ministry. As exciting as those objectives may be, neither suffice as a biblical vision for the church. Buildings, programs, ministries, etc, are *strategies* of the mission and towards the vision, but they are not the vision of the church. What then is the vision? People. It's a redeemed *people* gathered around the throne of God in Heaven, worshipping Him forever.

We make disciples, (what we do), in view of our vision (where we are going) – heaven.

John the apostle recorded what he saw we have seen a vision of *heaven* – “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.” (Revelation 7:9)

What can we say about this vision?

1. It is a holy vision.

It's understood that John “looked” into heaven. It is a place of holiness, without spot or blemish. It is designed by God and fixed before the foundation of the world. It is not stained by the snares of this world, nor the corruption of the mankind. It is a pure, spotless vision secured forever in heaven.

2. It is a numbered vision.

John describes a multitude that “no one can count.” It is an overwhelming number, far past our accounting. And yet, we know that God counts them one by one. He But God can. God knows the number and the name of every redeemed person. God's vision of the church is a numbered vision. He knows who are his (John 10:14; 2 Tim. 2:19).

3. It is a lasting vision.

Buildings have shelf lives. Programs have expiration dates. Ministries have diminishing returns. All things of this world are temporary. But not this vision. It is eternal. It is an everlasting vision. Disciple making has eternal rewards. The people cried out, “forever and ever, Amen!”

4. It is a gospel vision.

The shed blood of Jesus, his accomplishment on the cross, his penal substitutionary atonement – only the work of Jesus makes this vision possible. The text tells us of people “clothed in white robes.” Yes, clean indeed. They are the forgiven, washed, saved, redeemed people of God. It's all by the gospel.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How am I currently making disciples? How does the worship of God drive the mission of God?
2. In what ways can I stay focused on Revelation 7:9-12 as I make disciples?
3. What are steps that I need to take in order to keep God's vision of the church before me?