

Perseverance

Revelation 7.9-17

John sees a vision of the throne of God, surrounded by a multi-cultural gathering of worshippers. An official in the vision explains to him that these people have been tested and suffered for their faith, but that throughout it all, Jesus has guided and protected them.

Now read **Revelation 7.9-17** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

The churches in Asia Minor for whom John was writing were experiencing persecution because of their faith – it must have been tempting for them to give up and try to fit in with the world around them. The vision John shares is an encouragement to keep going. The reference to the crowd of worshippers reassures them they are not alone and the image of Jesus, which draws on Psalm 23, comforts them in their times of hardship.



Have there been times in your life where you have had to just keep going?



God has given each of us different skills and we sometimes need others to help us through when a task seems too big for us. This week, offer your skills to someone who is struggling and needs help. Think about the times God has provided another person to help you through something difficult.



In the reading, God promises to shelter and protect his worshippers. Make a simple umbrella using a cup-cake holder, a pipe cleaner and PVA glue. Simply flatten the cup-cake holder and then fold it in half. Fold it in half again and then open it out. Make a small hole at the centre of the cross you have created with your folds and push the pipe cleaner through the hole, so that only a few millimetres poke out on the other side. Shape the pipe cleaner to look like an umbrella handle. Glue it into place. Umbrellas can protect us from both the sun and the rain. How does God protect us from the difficulties of life?



Not everything that God asks us to do or to face is easy. It is through the hard times that we have to persevere. One of the ways we do this is to learn to put our failures behind us and try again. Set a bowl on a table and see whether you can bounce a ping pong ball into it. If this is too easy, try using a smaller bowl or a cup. How many times in a row can you bounce the ball into the container?

WATCH



VE (Victory in Europe) Day is on 8 May. Watch the video: <https://www.ssafa.org.uk/support-us/our-national-campaigns/ve-day-76/ve-day-stories/norman-lewis-ve-day> or read Norman Lewis' story. What was it that kept Norman going during the war? Can you imagine what his parents felt on his return home?

God gives us hope that our future will be better than our present, so that we can persevere when times get tough.



Some problems in the world won't be solved overnight, but in Psalm 122 we're encouraged to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. God wants us to persevere in prayer, even if we don't see immediate results. Think of a difficult situation and commit to praying for it at the same time every day this week. Perhaps set a reminder on your phone. Does praying this way change the way you think about prayer, or yourself?

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

In an inspired vision, John sees people from all over the world worshipping God in heaven.

I saw God on the throne of heaven, glowing like precious jewels. Around the throne were angels and officials, and four incredible creatures, covered in wings and eyes, like all the animals of earth rolled together.

In front of the throne was the Lamb and in front of the Lamb was a huge gathering of people, from all the countries, cultures and languages in the whole world. These people were dressed in robes and holding palm branches in their hands. They shouted, 'God who is seated on the throne, and the Lamb will save us!'

The angels, officials and creatures all fell to the ground in worship, singing, 'Amen! Blessing, glory and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honour, power and might be to our God for ever and ever!'

As I watched, one of the officials came over and asked me, 'Who are all these people? Where have they come from?'

I said, 'Sir, you are the one who knows.'



After I had said this, the official explained, 'These people have come through great testing and suffering. They washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and made them clean. That's why they're here, worshipping God all day and all night.'

'God will shelter and protect them from hunger and thirst and the burning heat of the sun. The Lamb will be their shepherd and guide them to where the water of life springs up. God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'

Revelation 7.9-17

Did you know?

- The officials represent spiritual leaders, like priests or the leaders of our churches today.
- The Lamb represents Jesus, who is sometimes described as 'the lamb who was slain' because he died on the cross to save people from their sins.
- Jesus described himself as the 'good shepherd' and said that he would give his followers 'living waters.'

Revelation 7.9-17 (NRSV)

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!' And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.'

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?' I said to

him, 'Sir, you are the one that knows.' Then he said to me, 'These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'