

Worship: A View from Heaven

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In our day, church people often get emotionally upset about styles of worship. Some want worship to be what they experienced as a child. Others feel worship is experienced by use of modern instruments and newer songs. A look at heaven's worship can give us a better view of the real nature of worship from God's perspective.

Revelation 5:6-14 NIVO

⁶ Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

⁷ He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.

⁸ And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

⁹ And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.

¹² In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

¹⁴ The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

In heaven, Jesus, the Lamb of God, is the center of worship by all persons, angels and other beings.

The apocalyptic vision of John's Revelation is preparing to give a series of visions regarding Christ's victory over evil in the world. The visions have various interpretations through the ages. Our purpose today is not to focus on the end-times visions. Rather, I think it would help us in worship if we know how worship happens in heaven. So, we will be looking at the elements of worship in this heavenly scene.

1. The heavenly worship is centered on the throne of God and Jesus' triumph over the cross, sin and death.

- a. **Jesus is the Lamb who was slain, yet stands in the center of God's throne.** God the Father is pictured as the one who sits on the throne. Jesus, the Lamb, takes the scroll from His hand V. 6. The image is of Jesus' victory over death by his resurrection.
- b. **Jesus is pictured as having seven horns and seven eyes (seven Spirits).** Here, seven is a concept of holy, and perfect. The theme of seven churches, suggests that seven is used as a thematic element. Horns speak of authority and power. Eyes speak of ability to see and discern.
- c. **Jesus is surrounded by the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders.** With these, innumerable angels also join the worship.
- d. **The worship responds to Jesus' ability to take and open the scroll.** The scroll will open the rest of the vision of God's victory over Satan and sin. Jesus is able to open the scroll, when no one else could because of victory over the cross and death.
- e. **The scroll is the revelation that now Jesus will complete the victory over Satan, sin and death.** He will defeat the enemies of God. He will protect his church until Christ returns. He will bring in the kingdom for those who are purchased by his blood.

2. The heavenly worship is composed of seraphim, elders, and angels who surround God's throne.

- a. **The living creatures, seraphs, are the angelic and unique spiritual beings that surround God's throne.** These angelic creatures are seen in Isa. 6: 23-, Eze. 1:5-14, and now here.

They are always around the throne of God giving constant praise to God.

b. The twenty-four elders represent the leaders of both the Old and New Testaments. Twenty four a number based on twelve tribes and twelve apostles.

- 1) They wear crowns, indicating they have responsibility and authority in heaven.
- 2) They have a harp for making music before God.
- 3) They carry bowls representing the prayers of the saints on earth before the throne of God.

c. Innumerable angels also surround the throne in worship.

d. In addition, other creatures on earth, beneath the earth and in the sea join in the worship.

3. Those in heaven worship in prostration, song and proclamation.

- a. **The living creatures and the elders fall down before the Lord as the first indication of worship.** Worship in the Bible is often associated with prostration before God.
- b. **They sang a new song to the Lord.** The song was not any song that had been sung previously, because God had accomplished a new work. A new act of God requires a new song to remember what God has done. Ps. 98:1
- c. **The song was a proclamation that Christ is worthy to open the scroll and complete the work of the kingdom of God.**
- d. **The song was sung in the presence of God.** God is represented by the trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (represented by seven spirits of God). A key element to consider is that they were before the throne in their worship.
- e. **The angels join in loud singing.**

- f. **The angels shift the song to Christ's worthiness to receive glory.** Glory = power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise. Every accolade of greatness is included in the concept of Christ's glory.
- g. **The praise song was joined by all the animals on earth, beneath the earth and in the sea.** Redemption moves beyond the salvation of human souls. It includes the redemption of the earth to God. All living things which are not involved in the Fall are included to the restoration of the new earth. Here, they are seen joining in the song of God's redemptive glory.

The heart of this worship is Jesus' victory over sin, Satan and death by his resurrection from the dead. Through his victory, Jesus has purchased souls who were once dead. He makes them to be a kingdom of priests to live on earth forever.

Heavenly worship is focused on giving honor to God for His redemptive work.