



“Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them” (Revelation 7:15).

The Person of Worship

Central Truth: Worship responds to the person and work of God.

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Worship is an emotional experience, but it is more than emotion. It is a sense of awe at the presence of God or at seeing the work of God. He is the center of attention.

Worship involves an element of “fear,” deep reverence for God (Amos 3:8). It is not fun. To say, “I had a good time at church” is not the same as saying, “I had a good time at the ball game.” In true worship, John “*fell at his feet as dead*” (Revelation 1:17). What better response could one give when he is in the presence of the “*Lord God omnipotent*” who reigns (Revelation 19:6)? The human element in worship produces joy; but the divine element produces reverence, fear, and wonder at the sense of the majestic person of God. There is always a feeling of profound respect or wonder which is inspired by the greatness and grandeur of Him whom we worship. To lose that is to lose a major element of biblical worship.

Our current worship expresses too much familiarity with the Divine. God is not “the man upstairs” or “somebody up there who likes me.” He is GOD! Even when He is in heaven and we are on the earth, we are to speak few words before Him (Ecclesiastes 5:2). Fellowship with one another is important, but there should be a quiet reverence when we appear before God. Worship is response to the person and work of God.

The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ pictures worship in its purest forms. The text for this study examines the believer's response to God as Creator, as Redeemer, and as King. It teaches us how to make our

worship personal, and it will promote the experience of true worship in our churches.

I. WORSHIP THE CREATOR (Revelation 4:1-11)

A. The Creator is in heaven (verse 1). That is why John was invited to “*Come up hither.*” Worship always rises above earthly things. To worship creatures of earth is sinful idolatry. We worship God and Him only. As Moses was called up to the heights of Mount Sinai to commune with God (Exodus 19:20, 24), so we are called to rise upward toward God. The Creator is not one of the creatures. He is exalted high above all, and, we turn our attention upward toward Him in true worship.

B. The Creator is on His throne (verse 2). That does not surprise us. The picture of God ruling from His throne in heaven is regularly expressed in the Old Testament (Psalm 47:8). He is God with power over all. He governs among the affairs of nations and people. None has power equal to His. We are not surprised to see Him pictured as sitting on a throne. Do you get a little tense when you approach a judge or officer who has authority over you, as in a court of law? Of course you do. Then feel that sense of awe when you would stand before Him whose sovereign power controls the whole universe. God is on His throne!

C. The Creator is glorious in appearance (verse 3). The Bible says that God dwells in unapproachable light, and no one has seen Him or can see Him (I Timothy 6:16). How, then, can He be described? He is pictured in terms of the flashing rays of brilliant light reflected from precious stones — jasper, carnelian, and emerald. Jasper light could be reddish, yellow, or brown. Carnelian is red. Emerald is bright green. Imagine the picture as flashes of red, yellow, brown, and green burst forth from the throne of God. How glorious He must be to be described in such glowing terms. No wonder the face of Moses shone with the reflected glory of God when he came down from meeting God on Mount Sinai.

D. The Creator is honored by His creatures (verses 4-9). First, there are twenty-four elders who are before the throne. They represent the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles, the Old Covenant and the New Covenant saints. They are those who are of the new creation in Christ Jesus by faith in Him (II Corinthians 5:17). Then there are four creatures (called “beasts” in the King James Version) before the throne. They look like a lion, calf, man, and eagle. They represent animal life which God created on the earth. Together the whole natural creation and spiritual creation are engaged in the worship of God. The living creatures do not cease to cry day and

night, *“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come”* (Revelation 4:8). At their words of glory and honor and praise, the twenty-four elders fall down before the throne, worship Him who sits on the throne, and cast their crowns before Him. They join their voices in song, saying, *“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created”* (Revelation 4:11).

Thus the whole creation worships the Creator. As a creature, is that the spirit in which you come before your Creator?

II. WORSHIP THE REDEEMER (Revelation 5:1-4)

The picture changes between chapters 4 and 5. In chapter 4, God is pictured as the sovereign Creator, ruling over and receiving the worship of His creation. In chapter 5, God is pictured as the Redeemer who is a sacrificed Lamb, still bearing the marks of His sacrifice. So the emphasis shifts from creation to redemption.

Christians worship God as Creator. But they worship Him also as their Redeemer through Jesus Christ. Read Revelation 5:1-14 before you continue with these comments; then pause to worship Him who has redeemed you.

A. He is the unique Savior (verses 1-5). John saw a scroll in the hand of Him who sat upon the throne. It was a strip of papyrus, which had writing on both sides and was rolled on a spindle. (Bound books as we know them were not invented until the second century A.D.) The scroll was sealed with seven seals. A search was made throughout heaven and upon earth for one who was qualified to open those seals and reveal the contents of that scroll. No one was found who was worthy. John wept.

One of the elders informed John that the Lion of the tribe of Judah had prevailed and could open the seals and read the scroll. John looked to see that Lion, and he saw *“a Lamb as it had been slain”* (verse 6). The Lamb walked right up and took the scroll from the hand of Him who sat on the throne. Then all of heaven's inhabitants broke out in songs of adoration, worship, and praise of the Lamb. Who was the Lamb? He was the one who was slain to redeem us to God. The Lamb is Jesus!

In all of heaven and earth, only Jesus is worthy to take the scroll, open its seals, and reveal its contents. He is a unique person. He is the only Savior. Worship Him!

B. He is the sacrificed Lamb (verse 6). The Greek text uses a term which means “little pet lamb” in reference to Jesus. It pictures His meek and gentle spirit by which He loves the unlovely. He came to power through His

death, for He is pictured with the marks of sacrifice still upon Him. In Him all the sacrifices of the Old Testament, which were mere symbols, were fulfilled. Who can understand the grace involved in the testimony of Revelation 5:9, 10? His blood redeems all who come to Him.

C. He is empowered with authority (verse 7). Notice that there is no hesitation as He walks right up and takes the scroll from the hand of Him who sits upon the throne. When all the creatures of heaven are bowing, ascribing honor, and laying down their crowns before the throne (as a sign that He who sits there is more powerful than they), the Lamb walks up without hesitation and takes the scroll from His hand. This is the very Jesus who said, *“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth”* (Matthew 28:18). Worship before His authority.

D. He is adored by all (verses 8-14). The inhabitants of heaven fell before the Lamb in worship as they had fallen before Him who sits on the throne. They presented the prayers of the saints before Him. They sang a song which began, *“Thou art worthy”* and whose second stanza was *“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing”* (verses 9, 12). And the song concluded with *“Amen”* as its affirmation.

Who made up the host that ascribed worship to the Lamb? They were the four beasts and the twenty-four elders, representing all nature and all the redeemed. They were angels which do God's bidding. And they were the creatures in heaven, on earth, in the sea, and under the earth. All creation joined in a unanimous ascription of worship to the Lamb. They worshiped Him as Savior (verses 8-10), as Lord (verses 11-13), and as the eternal God (verse 14). Do you join their worship as you read these words?

III. WORSHIP THE KING (Revelation 11:15-17; 19:6, 7)

The vision is still in heaven, though we have moved six chapters forward in the Revelation of Jesus Christ. As He is worshiped as the Creator (Revelation 4:1-11) and as Redeemer (Revelation 5:1-14), He is to be worshiped as King.

A. He is the eternal King (Revelation 11:15-17). All the kingdoms of the world will become subject to the authority of God. He will reign as king over all nations. Since He will reign forever and ever, He will rule for all time. Since the inhabitants of heaven fell on their faces and worshiped God, He will reign in great majesty. Since He takes His great power and reigns, He will reign in all sovereignty. The nations of earth may not prefer to submit to His rule, but they have no choice. He is King over all kings and

Lord over all lords. Do you join with the heavenly hosts in bowing before Him now?

B. He is the Lord God omnipotent (Revelation 19:6). The voices of a great multitude bear testimony to it: *“Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”*

Omni means “all”; potent means “power.” So omnipotent means to have all power. It is just as Jesus testified: *“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth”* (Matthew 28:18). He was claiming omnipotence! We do not see it manifested in His incarnate ministry on earth, but it will certainly be shown in the future.

God is the king over all the earth today. He is doing His will among the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. We do not see His work except in glimpses. But He is King nonetheless.

In ancient courts the subjects stood, bowed and / or knelt in the presence of the king. How much more should we be filled with reverence in the presence of Him who is *“KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS”* (Revelation 19:16). Look beyond these human words and see the King sitting upon His throne. Then worship Him.

Make your worship personal. Worship God. Do not be distracted by ministers who lead in worship or by methods through which we express worship. Worship God by a personal encounter with Him.

Practice deep reverence. Bow down before Him. Cast before Him your crowns (all pretensions or evidences of self-importance and authority). Worship Him with songs of praise. Feel, act, and speak as to the Lord. Worship Him in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks that kind of worship.

Questions

1. How is worship a response to God himself?
2. In what way is worship an expression of biblical “fear”?
3. How do we worship God as our Creator?
4. How does Revelation 4 picture Him as Creator?
5. How is Jesus unique as the Savior?
6. How is His worship reflected in Revelation 5?
7. How would you describe God as King over all?
8. How can you make the worship of God very personal?
9. How can you make the worship services of your church more meaningful?
10. How can you share this study with others?