

## Voices from Heaven #1: Adoration of Our King

Apart from the relatively perplexing portions of the book of Revelation, we can glean a lot of helpful understanding from the frequent utterances quoted by John throughout the book, heard from various speakers. These I have categorized by common themes:

1. Utterances of praise or acknowledgement of God's attributes and works
2. Utterances concerning God's righteous judgments to be manifest in the earth
3. Praises of God at the victory of his kingdom
4. Rest and comfort to God's people

This study will concentrate on the first in the above list, adoration of the Father and the Son. Not surprisingly, many of these quotes have been used in hymns and spiritual songs.

### God is Holy

Rev. 4:8 – “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” There are four “living creatures” in heaven whose only revealed purpose is to cry “Holy, Holy, Holy” before the throne of God. In the book of Isaiah, these creatures are identified as seraphim, with descriptions matching that in Revelation – six wings, two to fly, two to cover face, and two to cover feet, and ministering constantly before the throne of God.

Isa. 6:1-4 – “... And one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

Actually the whole universe is full of his glory, but this revelation is to us who live on the earth, and we are to recognize his glory around us.

Why the emphasis on his holiness? Holiness seems to be his overarching attribute, and it speaks of how he is so utterly set apart and above all creation (including the angels) that nothing can compare to him. He is holy in ALL his attributes – holy in his omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, holy in justice, holy in mercy, holy in love, etc.

This should affect the way we address and relate to God. He is not “the man upstairs”, or a heavenly “buddy”. He is our Father, but we should not address him as “pop”, “dad” or “daddy”, etc. We have the great privilege, as Abraham did, of being his friends (Jn. 15:14-15), but it is definitely a subordinate type of friendship. We are not his equals; he condescends to call us friends, if we obey him. So we should not treat that friendship or our sonship in a flippant or light-hearted manner. He is a holy God, and we should always remember that. Even the phrase “the good Lord” seems to me to betray a lack of understanding of who he is. He is the Lord, and is certainly good, but the way people use that phrase seems shallow, to me.

### God is Worthy

Rev. 4:10-11 – “The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, 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.”

The 24 elders also sing a song in 5:9-10 to the Lamb, saying “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” I believe they are not speaking merely of themselves (24 elders), but as representing all believers.

Why do they stress his worthiness? Because the holy Son of God became a man, and the Lamb. He lived his whole life without sin, and gave his life for us, that we could be forgiven and live. He was so holy and pure that even death could not hold him, and his resurrection is the proof of his worth. Isa. 53:10-12 – It pleased the Father to bruise the Son and put him to grief to make his soul an offering for sin. The Father saw the travail of his soul (v. 11) and was satisfied. God's justice was satisfied. No sacrifice on earth could satisfy God

against our sin, but the life of his own eternal Son bearing the penalty due unto us. That life was worthy, and purchased our redemption!

He also is worthy because he is the only God who exists. All others are dumb idols, incapable of speech, sight, or action. He is the one who created and sustains all, and is therefore worthy of all praise and thanksgiving from his creation, especially of man, who is created in his image.

### **Honors that are attributed to God**

Because Christ is worthy, all the heavenly hosts unite in proclaiming the many honors due unto him:

Rev. 5:11-13 – “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.”

Rev. 7:9-12 – (a great multitude from all nations standing before the throne) “And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” And then all the angels, the four “beasts”, and the 24 elders – “Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.”

We cannot really bless God (the less is blessed by the better, Heb. 7:7), but we declare him to be blessed. We recognize and acknowledge what he is. We cannot give him power, but we declare and magnify his power in the sight of his creation. Likewise for glory and honor and strength, wisdom, might, and riches. 7:10 – says that our complete salvation is due to him alone, and that is one reason he is worthy of all our thanksgiving.

### Hymns/songs

4:8 - Holy, Holy, Holy (hymn)

4:11 – Thou Art Worthy

5:12-14 - Worthy is the Lamb that was slain; Amen (in Handel’s Messiah)

Blessing, Glory, and Honor; Power and Might and Dominion, ...

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