

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and
strength and honor and glory and praise!

Revelation 5:11-12

Heaven's Worship

with Pastor Steve

Casting Crowns

When I was growing up I had a pet dog named Snoopy. He was a mix of Hound and German Shepard. Snoopy and I were best friends. We spent a lot of time together especially in the summer when school was out. We went hunting together, and he always followed me wherever I rode my bike.

Snoopy was very protective of me and my brother. He always went with me to take out the trash or to the mailbox. Once my granddaddy and I were wrestling in the yard and Snoopy, thinking I was in danger, jumped up and almost bit my granddaddy in the face. I believe he would have given his life to protect me. Of course there were those times when we rolled around in the grass and he would pretend to bite me. Though I would be more hesitate now to let a dog lick me in the face, at that time it seemed only natural to let Snoopy give me all the licks he wanted. I returned his affection with lots of hugs and kisses.

In Revelation 4 the Apostle John shares with us what he saw when the throne room of God was revealed to him. Besides his description of God's throne he also saw twenty-four other thrones. Sitting on these thrones were twenty-four elders dressed in white robes and wearing gold crowns. Whenever the living creatures gave thanks to the One on the throne, the elders fell and cast their crowns before the throne.

Six times in the book of Revelations we read that the twenty-four elders fall down and worship. The fact that these elders were sitting on thrones brings us to the conclusion they had some power to render judgment. However, with each new revelation of God and the Lamb they quickly deserted their place of judgment and took the proper place of worship. I believe this should serve as an example for church elders today. The first position an elder should hold is that of worshiper. It is from that position wisdom is gained to judge.

The Greek word used for worship in Revelation 4:10 is proskuneo. Proskuneo is the Greek word most translated worship in the New Testament. It means to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand; to fawn or crouch; to prostrate oneself in homage, do reverence to, adore. Though I didn't recognize it at the time, Snoopy gave me one of my first examples of worship. In our worship of the Father we take the place of the pet as we stroke our master with love licks.

Another interesting act by these twenty-four elders in verse 10 is they cast their crowns before the throne. In ancient times crowns were given to rulers or athletes; individuals who had conquered something. A good example of this can be seen in the movie Ben Hur. Judah Ben Hur (Charlton Heston) is presented with a crown by Pontius Pilate after winning the chariot race.

Paul makes reference to the presentation of crowns in his letter to the Corinthians. He said, *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.* (1 Corinthians 9:24-25) In 2 Timothy 2:5 Paul writes, *And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.*

In his letters to the Philippians and Thessalonians Paul says the believers living in those cities are his crown. Other crowns are mentioned in scripture such as the crown of righteousness (Timothy 4:8), crown of life (James 1:12 and Revelations 2:10), and the crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4). All of these crowns are rewards for obedience to the call of God.

In Revelation 19:12 John writes that the rider of the white horse, which is Jesus, is wearing many crowns. In "Manners and Customs of the Bible" James M. Freeman writes that monarchs who claimed authority over more than one country wore more than one crown. The vision of Jesus wearing many crowns establishes the truth that he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The twenty-four elders took the glory they had received for their work and threw it before the throne of God. They understood that the only one worthy to receive glory was the one who sat on the throne. Jesus was their King and Lord and they adorned him with their crowns. To enter into heaven's worship we must have a revelation that Jesus alone is worthy of glory and lay our crowns (glory) at his feet. We must prostrate ourselves before his presence and lavishly worship our master.

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