



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

Worship and God's Holiness

In the not too distant future we are going to find ourselves in eternity. The way we prepare now is vital in determining our status when we are in the presence of the God of the universe. The popular song "I Can Only Imagine" probably best describes our human capacity to grasp what it will be like then and the way in which we will respond.

What is going on in heaven right now? I've never been there so I can't speak from experience. My guess is most of you haven't been there either. The Apostle John went there though, and we have his first hand account in the Revelation of Jesus Christ. He not only described for us things that are to come but gave us a description of the worship taking place in heaven.

After the letters to the seven churches in Asia John begins to record what he saw in his heavenly vision. In chapter four he gives a description of the throne room and tells of the four living creatures who do not rest day and night saying, *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is and is to come.* I don't pretend to understand exactly what these creatures are or what they may represent. The question I have is, "What revelation did these creatures have that prompted their "non-stop" worship?"

To begin to answer that question we don't have to look much further than their first three words, "Holy, holy, holy." The number three in scripture is often used to signify that something is full or complete. For instance we have the Trinity that consists of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Trinity is the fullness of God. By repeating holy three times these creatures were beholding something that is completely holy.

The Greek word used in Revelation 4:8 is *hagios*. *Hagios* means sacred, physically pure and morally blameless. God may be more holy than he is anything else. There is no evil, corruption or sin neither in him nor around him. Wherever his presence resides is holy.

We get a picture of God's holiness in Exodus 3:5 when Moses encounters a burning bush that is not consumed. As Moses approaches the bush he is instructed to remove his shoes because the place where he is standing is holy ground. What made that ground holier than any other? God was there in his manifest presence. And where God is, is holy, because God is holy.

The psalmists were aware of the holiness of God having written, *You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.* (Psalm 22:3) They also understood that God's holiness was an attribute which entitles him to be worshiped. *Let them praise your great and awesome name--He is holy.* (Psalm 99:3) *Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool--He is holy.* (Psalm 99:5) *Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy.* (Psalm 99:9)

Could it be that today's church has lost its sense of awe at the holiness of God? Could that be the reason that in so many places ritual has taken the place of relationship and true worship? For not only is God holy, he expects holiness from his worshipers. King David wrote, *Give unto the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.* (Psalm 29:2)

In the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples he began, *Our Father in heaven, hallowed (holy) be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* (Luke 11:2) I believe God's will is that he be worshiped on earth as he is in heaven. To enter heaven's worship we must have a revelation of the holiness of God and be in pursuit of holiness in our personal lives. Hebrews 12:14 says, *Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.* We must remember that worship is much more than a declaration; it is a way of life.