



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

### **Worshiping God the Conqueror**

The Revelation of Jesus Christ is a glorious portrayal of a conquering king who has come to share the spoils of victory with the citizens of his kingdom. The vision the Apostle John was given on the isle of Patmos cannot necessarily be put in chronological order. John was in the spirit when he was given the vision where time has no constraints. Though Jesus' finished work was manifest at Calvary we read in Revelation 13:8 that he was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The cross was not something God thought of around 33 A.D.

We learned in chapter 5 that Jesus was revealed as the kinsman-redeemer. Heaven exploded at this revelation and was joined by every being of creation. This divine worship service continues in chapter seven after the sealing of the 144,000. On this occasion another extraordinary group of people join in to exalt the conquering Lamb.

*After these things I looked and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.*

Revelation 7:9-10

Two things stand out about this multitude of people; they were dressed in white robes and they had palm branches in their right hands. The fact that they were dressed in white is significant because white is the color for purity. These people had been washed by the blood of Jesus and cleansed by his saving grace (Verse 14). The Greek word for salvation in this passage means rescue, safety, deliver and health. This great multitude was sharing in the benefits of the victory over sin and death accomplished by the Lamb. They had something to rejoice about.

The palm branches in their right hands were cymbals of their rejoicing. The reason for the rejoicing was the victory of the Lamb. Palm branches were used as an expression of triumph and joy. When kings and conquerors returned from military victories palm branches were laid in the streets and waved in the air as the people shouted for joy. This is how many people responded as Jesus rode into Jerusalem. Many of the Jewish people believed he was going to be the one who would deliver them from Roman rule.

Roman military triumphs were often followed by elaborate processions down the streets of Rome. There were certain criteria by which a conqueror had to comply to warrant such exaltation. Among the requirements was that the victory had to be decisive with a large number of enemy combatants killed. The victory had to put an end to hostilities and extend the territory of the state.

On the day of the procession the people lined the streets to see the grand parade. The conqueror was honored by the town officials by their presence in the parade. The conqueror was dressed in fine apparel and rode in the finest chariot drawn by four horses. Also, in the parade were the spoils of war. All of precious metals and artifacts were displayed for the people to see. Even the prisoners of war were forced to march in the parade.

The temples of the gods were opened and decorated with beautiful flowers and incense was burned from the altars. Fragrant spices were burned in the streets so all the people could smell the odor of victory. The procession ended with sacrifices and offerings being made to the gods. This was followed by

a feast in which the public was invited to attend. It is not too unreasonable to believe that the prisoners of war were made to look on as the people feasted with the king. A table was prepared for the victors in the presence of their enemies. It was a grand celebration.

Maybe this was going through the mind of Paul when, through the Holy Spirit, he penned the words of 2 Corinthians 2:14. *Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of his knowledge in every place.* Through Jesus' triumph on the cross and consequent resurrection he has won a decisive victory over the enemy. We are now partakers with him of that victory and have been made the fragrance of victory.

Paul goes on to write, *For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. . . .* (1 Corinthians 2:15-16) The smell of the burning incense in the streets of the procession was sweet to the citizens of Rome, but to the prisoners of war it meant bitter defeat and death.

The enemy is not alive and well on planet earth as some have written. He may be alive but he has suffered a serious blow. The manifestation of Christ's total victory will come at some point in the future, but the war has been won since the foundation of the world.

Have you been washed in the blood of the Lamb? Has Jesus delivered you from the consequences of sin and death? Then you have every reason to wave your palm branches (arms). Join with the multitude saying, *Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb!* (Revelation 7:10)