

Worthy To Worship

Revelation 4:8-11

I. Worship Recognizes God's Attributes (8)

A. God Is _____

^{8a} *And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,*

B. God Is _____ (Ps 90:1-2; Dt 33:27; Isa 40:28)

^{8b} *who was and is and is to come!"*

II. Worship Offers Personal Sacrifices (9-10)

A. The Sacrifice Of _____ (9)

⁹ *And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever,*

B. The Sacrifice Of _____ (10a)

^{10a} *the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever.*

C. The Sacrifice Of _____ (10b, cf. 1 Cor 9:25; 2 Tim 4:7-8; 1 Th 2:19-20; 1 Pt 5:4; Ja 1:12)

^{10b} *They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,*

III. Worship Contrasts Divine Significance (11)

A. Recognizing God's _____ Through Our Humility

"Worthy are you,

B. Recognizing God's _____ Through Our Servanthood

our Lord and God,

C. Recognizing God's _____ Through Our Praise

to receive glory and honor and power,

D. Recognizing God's _____ Role Through Our Appreciative Creation Role

for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." (cf. Col 1:16-17)

Conclusion:

1. Why have some not yet received Christ? What's the first step to worship? (Rom 1:21)
2. Why do we make Church about us? How will our worship change? (Ps 8)

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B. God Is Eternal (Ps 90:1-2; Dt 33:27; Isa 40:28)

^{8b} *who was and is and is to come!"*

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A. The Sacrifice Of Praise (9)

⁹ *And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever,*

B. The Sacrifice Of Posture (10a)

^{10a} *the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever.*

C. The Sacrifice Of Rewards (10b, cf. 1 Cor 9:25; 2 Tim 4:7-8; 1 Th 2:19-20; 1 Pt 5:4; Ja 1:12)

^{10b} *They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,*

III. Worship Contrasts Divine Significance (11)

A. Recognizing God's Worth Through Our Humility

"Worthy are you,

B. Recognizing God's Titles Through Our Servanthood

our Lord and God,

C. Recognizing God's Glory Through Our Praise

to receive glory and honor and power,

D. Recognizing God's Creator Role Through Our Appreciative Creation Role (Col 1:16-17)

for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

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Introduction:

1. The Focus Of Worship Has Several Distractions:

a. The Distraction Of Entertainment Over Worship

- Ed Hayes: "Confusion over worship clusters around the words *style* and *substance*. Our world is shaped more by the first than by the second. Advertising and marketing appeal to what people want and like. The whole point of marketing is to discover a need and to fill it by shaping people's wants and wishes. Advertising creates cravings. It molds our preferences into ostensible necessities, compelling us to buy more products. Worship, however, is not a product to be advertised or marketed. It is the supreme activity of the redeemed, intended to bring glory to God. It is to be God-focused rather than person-centered or, to use a term currently in vogue, 'user-friendly.'" (*The Church*, p. 154)
- In worship, the goal is not to satisfy the customer or consumer. The goal is to satisfy the Lord.

b. The Distraction Of Human Emotion Over A Divine Focus

- Some think that emotions must be stirred before one can worship
- The human soul must be stirred, but that embraces more than just emotions – it embraces mind, will and emotions
- The danger is when we become uni-dimensional, thinking emotions is the only part of worship to aim at

John 4:24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

- spirit without truth is imbalanced

c. The Distraction Of Intellectual Fact Over A Wholistic Response

- Preaching has to be more than a dispensing of fact
- God must be worshipped in preaching

- W. Wiersbe (*Real Worship*): "There is much more to preaching than passing along religious information. It must reveal, not mere facts about God, but the Person of God Himself...When preaching is an act of worship, the outline is to the text what a prism is to a shaft of sunlight: it breaks it up so that its beauty and wonder are clearly seen"
- John 4:34 - truth without spirit is imbalanced
- Mt 20 – Love God with all your heart, soul and mind

d. The Distraction Of Aiming At Unbelievers Over Aiming At God

- The purpose of worship service is not to evangelize, but for believers to worship God
- Why? Because unbelievers can't worship God
- John 4:22ff – Samaritans did not worship the True God (their religion was a hybrid of Judaism & paganism)
- God's proper focus for man is to worship in truth of the knowledge of the right God
- Unbelievers don't possess the truth, thus they cannot worship

John 4:23-24 "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

- Unbelievers are invited and can be blessed
- This does not negate the power of the Word, song and Body Life that can influence an unbeliever to come to Christ
- But the primary focus of worship must be on God, not the unbeliever

Ie/ We have "Friend Days", outreach days and holiday outreaches. I'm not negating the effectiveness of those ministries. My point is that the worship should not be centered around man, but God.

2. D. A. Carson helps us to sharpen our focus:

- "We do not meet to worship (i.e., to experience worship); we aim to worship *God*. 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only': there is the heart of the matter. In the area, as in so many others, one must not confuse what is central with by-products. If you seek peace, you will not find it; if you seek Christ, you will find peace. If you seek joy, you will not find it; if you seek Christ, you will find joy. If you seek holiness, you will not find it; if you seek Christ, you will find holiness. If you seek experience of worship, you will not find them; if you worship the living God, you will experience something of what is reflected in the Psalms. Worship is a transitive verb, and the most important thing about it is the direct object." ("Worship the Lord Your God: The Perennial Challenge", *Worship: Adoration and Action*, ed. by D.A. Carson, p. 15)

I. Worship Recognizes God's Attributes (8)

A. God Is Holy

^{8a} *And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,*

- The 4 living creatures with eyes all around are able to see things much more accurately than we can
- With a clearer picture and perspective of life, what is most significant to them is the holiness of God
- **What do we think the most important thing in the universe is?**
 - ❖ Football?
 - ❖ Fashion?
 - ❖ Bacon?
- These multi-eyed creatures spend day and night continually in awe of God's **holiness**
- James M. Hamilton Jr.: "They praise God because they have all the facts. What keeps us from praising God? We don't have all the facts. We don't see God the way these living creatures see him. We don't know all there is to know about the past, present, and future. And I suspect that it is our *ignorance* of God and reality that keeps us from praising him the way these living creatures praise him. Here's my question for you right now: will you accept their testimony, will you take them at their word?" (*Revelation: The Spirit Speaks To The Churches*, Preaching The Word series, Crossway, 2012, pp. 148-149)
- **"Holy, holy, holy"** is a hymn of praise
 - ❖ Other hymns of praise in Revelation: Rev. 4:11; 5:9-13; 7:12-17; 11:15-18; 12:10-12; 15:3-4; 16:5-7; 18:2-8; 19:2-6
- "Holy" is used over 900x in the Bible
- "Holy" = lit. "to separate", "to divide"
- The opposite of "holy" is "profane" (common or ordinary)

Ie/ The "Holy" Bible – it's a book separate and above all other books

Ie/ The "Holy" Church – a group of believers separate from the world

Ezekiel 22:26 Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.

- "Holy" = Heb. *Qodes* = separate (Lev 20:26)
- "Profane" = Heb. *Hol* = commonness (Lev 10:10; Ezek 22:26)
- To profane God is to make Him commonplace.
- To worship God in His holiness is to exalt Him as transcendent to anything created.

Isaiah 6:2-3 ² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

- Steve Lawson: "My heartfelt concern for the church today is that God's holiness is a forgotten attribute. I believe this because I am convinced that there is too much shallowness and irreverence these days regarding God. If the user-friendly god falls short anywhere, it is in regard to divine holiness. To hear many people talk today, God is a *happy* God, a *helpful* God, a *laughing* God. But a *holy* God? Hardly! Turn on the average Christian broadcast; read the average Christian book; listen to the average Christian speaker – you will probably not be awestruck with a sense of God's holiness." (*Made In Our Image*, p. 77)
- No other attributed is ascribed to God in triplicate than "holiness"
 - repetition in Hebrew literature is a form of emphasis
 - This triple reference to God's holiness is called the *tris-hagion*
 - The angels not say "Faithful" 3x, nor "Omnipotent" 3x, nor "Eternal" 3x but Holy Holy Holy (Rev 4:8; Isa 6:3)
 - R.C. Sproul "The Bible says that God is holy, holy, holy. Not that He is merely holy, or even holy, holy. He is holy, holy, holy. The Bible never says that God is love, love, love, or mercy, mercy, mercy, or wrath, wrath, wrath, or justice, justice, justice. It does say that He is holy, holy, holy, the whole earth is full of His glory." (*The Holiness Of God*)
- **When we see how holy and separate God is, we shrink in in comparison to Him.**

B. God Is Eternal

8b who was and is and is to come!"

Psalm 90:1-2 ¹ Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. ² Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arm

Isaiah 40:28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth

- **God knows your future like the past and present (Ps 90:4; 2 Pet 3:8; Isa 46:9-10)**

Psalm 90:4 For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night.

2 Peter 3:8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

- J. Carl Laney: "He sees the past and the future as if they are the present. And while human beings are limited in their knowledge by succession of events, God knows no such limitation....Nothing ever takes Him by surprise." (*God*, p. 75)
- we're linear creatures - see things in succession of events

ie/ see parade - from one point on the street, one side of the street, occasionally see down both sides of the street, but can't see around the corner

- From the ground, we can only see beginning and end of parade as separate events
- If we were in a Goodyear blimp, we get a perspective of whole parade
- From up high, we can see the beginning and end of parade at same time

Rev 6:9-11 - martyrs ask Lord how long to wait to be avenged - God looks to the future and pinpoints specific effects

Isaiah 46:9-10 Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,'

- **When we think that God is in control of all past, present and future, we don't need to worry about our stresses and trials. We just praise Him.**

II. Worship Offers Personal Sacrifices (9-10)

A. The Sacrifice Of Praise (9)

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever,

- **Four Living Creatures – were like worship leaders**
 - "Like" these animals, not actual animals
 - Lion – sovereignty
 - Ox – servanthood
 - Man – sinless humanity
 - Eagle – supremacy (eagle, most majestic of birds)
 - They reflect or manifest the glory of God
- Reminiscent that Israel had 4 banners that flew over them
 - Reuben – depicted by a man
 - Dan – depicted by an eagle
 - Ephraim – depicted by ox or calf
 - Judah – depicted by Lion
- Reminiscent of the 4 Gospels

- Mt – Lion (King)
- Mark – Ox (Servant)
- Luke – Man (Perfect Man)
- John – Eagle (Sovereign)

B. The Sacrifice Of Posture (10a)

^{10a} *the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever.*

• The 24 Elders respond to the worship leading of the 4 creatures

- They are more likely the Redeemed, the Saved
- **24** symbolizes completion and representation
- Some think 24 represents 12 sons of Israel and 12 Apostles
 - How could it represent the 12 Apostles if John is there? – it is a representative number
- In the history of Israel and the Church, they have been led by Elders.

Revelation 21:12-14 12 It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— 13 on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

- This is the first of 6x they bow to God (5:8,14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4)

C. The Sacrifice Of Rewards (10b)

^{10b} *They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,*

- "In Paul's day, crowns and decorations were given to athletes and soldiers. It is possible that in the spring of 51 A.D., Paul attended the Isthmian Games held every two years at a site about ten miles from Corinth. There he would have seen the winners of athletic contests receive crowns or wreaths made of withered, wild celery. Thus he could write in 1 Corinthians 9:25, 'they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we, an incorruptible.' Crowns were also awarded to heroic Roman soldiers. There was the '*corona obsidionalis*, a grass crown given to the deliverer of a besieged army...[and] the *corona civica*...an oak leaf crown awarded to a soldier who saved the life of a fellow. There were also two gold crowns: the *corona muralis*, awarded to the first man over the wall in a siege, and the *corona vallaris* for the first man over the rampart during a siege' (Peter Connolly, *The Roman Army*, p. 68)." (Scott, Bruce – "The Judgment Seat Of Christ ," Israel My Glory, Vol. 55:4, 1999)

1. The Imperishable Crown

1 Corinthians 9:25 ²⁵Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a **crown that will last forever.**

- The crowns given in the Olympic games and the Isthmian games in Corinth were made of olive branches or holly or some other plant.
- This crown is for faithfulness in your spiritual life, but is more enduring than a holly wreath

2. The Crown Of Righteousness

2 Timothy 4:7-8 ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Now there is in store for me the **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

- Looking forward to Christ's coming is motivation for living a life of righteousness

3. The Crown Of Rejoicing

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 ¹⁹For what is our hope, our **joy**, or the **crown** in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰Indeed, you are our glory and **joy**.

- This crown is tied in with the "joy in faithfulness"

4. The Crown Of Glory

1 Peter 5:4 ⁴And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the **crown of glory** that will never fade away.

- This crown is for those who faithfully shepherd people
- Not just pastors, but disciples, parents, leaders who shepherd

5. The Crown Of Life

James 1:12 ¹²Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

- This crown is for those who love the Lord and endure temptation
- "Casting Crowns" – a Christian band, got their name from this passage in Rev 4 when they formed in Daytona Beach, FL. They were also singing Chris Tomlin's song "We fall down, we lay our crown" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ryrrkvyc9tY>)
- John MacArthur: "They are not concerned about their own holiness, honor, or reward. All those things pale into insignificance and become meaningless in light of the glory of God." (*Because The Time Is Near*, Moody Publishers, 2007, p. 116)
- **Why are we doing what we're doing at Church? For ourselves, our ego, our glory? Casting crowns realizes that even our reward is given in joyful offering to CHRIST because HE is so amazing and gracious to us.**

III. Worship Contrasts Divine Significance (11)

A. Recognizing God's Worth Through Our Humility

"Worthy are you,

- **The Meaning Of Worship**
- English Origin - Anglo-Saxon word - "ascribing worth to someone or something" (Psalm 96:5-8), "Worship"
 - Martin Luther: "Worshipping God is nothing else than glorifying God." (*The Theology Of Martin Luther*)
 - Assigning value
 - Ebay – how much is that worth?
 - Hiring at work – how much will this person add to our company?
 - Math – assign a value to x or y
- Greek Origin - *leitourgia* = "service" (Romans 12:1-2)
- Hebrew Origin - Heb. *Abad* = "tend it" or "serve it" = describes worship and service to God (Gen 2:15)

WORK = WORSHIP

- for Adam to take care of God's garden was His worship

B. Recognizing God's Titles Through Our Servanthood

our Lord and God,

- Personal recognition of His Lordship
- As our Lord, we serve Him
- Church and worship is not about having our needs met – it's about worshiping God by serving His people

C. Recognizing God's Glory Through Our Praise

to receive glory and honor and power,

- Hebrew: ***kabod*** – "glory and honor"
 - Origin of the word has to do with "a heavy weight"
- Ie/ A rich man was measured by how heavy his bag of gold was
 - "He's worth his weight in gold" – I would have the advantage over most of you because I weigh more, if I was given gold for my weight
 - The richer the man was in ancient times, the greater influence he had on his community
- expressed God's luminous manifestation of Himself, particularly in the temple

- when the ark was stolen by the Philistines – the event was described as **Ichabod** “the glory of the Lord has departed” (1 Sam 4:21)
- Glory is not necessarily an attribute, but an accolade
- Glory is an honor conferred upon God for who He is

Ie/ “MVP” of a sport’s league is a honor based on the athletic attributes

Ie/ Oscar statue is an honor based on excellence of acting attributes

- God’s glory is a honor bestowed upon God for who He is in His character and works

Exodus 33:18 And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.”

- Moses is asking for God to reveal His greatness over Israel’s problems and superiority over Israel’s enemies
- **God’s Glory Is About The Brilliant Light Of His Reputation** (Greek: *doxa*)
- Greek: ***doxa*** – “honor, fame, repute”
 - 165x in the NT
 - *doxa* basically means “to seem, or appear”
 - for the Greeks, fame & glory were the most important values in life
 - Jews highly esteemed men with great honor
 - 1 Cor 11:5 – glory of the woman is her hair

ie/ America places a great deal on fame

Revelation 4:11 “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”

Q: How does God appear to us?

- Church Father Clement of Alexandria describes worship as celebration: “all our life is a festival: being persuaded that God is everywhere present on all sides, we praise Him as we till the ground, we sing hymns as we sow the seed, we feel His inspiration in all we do.”

D. Recognizing God’s Creator Role Through Our Appreciative Creation Role
for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”

Colossians 1:16-17 ¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

- 3 prepositional phrases: by Him (lit. in Him), through Him and for Him
- “Paul’s use of three different prepositions is one way of refuting the philosophy of the false teachers. For centuries, the Greek philosophers had taught that everything needed a primary cause, an instrumental cause, and a final cause. The primary cause is the plan,

the instrumental cause the power, and the final cause the purpose. When it comes to creation, Jesus Christ is the primary cause (He planned it), the instrumental cause (He produced it), and the final cause (He did it for His own pleasure)." (Wiersbe, *Be Complete*, p.49)

1. Christ is the realm of creation

- "by Him" = *en autoi* = lit. "in him"
 - Gnostic heretics taught that angels were the center of creation – Paul clearly taught that creation centers around Christ
 - not only does Christ have the power to create, but all of creation resides in His domain
- "all things" = *ta panta* = totality of the universe
 - from the electron to the black hole
- "visible and invisible"
 - false teachers taught dualism (material bad, spiritual good) and denied that God created a physical world
 - Paul contradicts the false teachers directly – all things visible
- "throne...dominions...principalities...powers" = angels and demons
 - Gnostics believe that a superior being created an inferior creature, then the inferior created something more inferior, and so on...
 - Paul taught that Christ "created all spirit beings instantaneously, directly, and out of nothing." (Gromacki, *Stand Perfect In Wisdom – Colossians*, p. 64)

2. Christ is the source of creation

- "through him" = *di autou* – Christ is the active participant

John 1:3 "Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made."

Hebrews 1:2 His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God (*Elohim* = plural oneness) created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:26 Let *Us* make man in *Our* image, according to *Our* likeness

Proverbs 8:27-30 ²⁷When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep, ²⁸When He established the clouds above, When He strengthened the fountains of the deep, ²⁹When He assigned to the sea its limit, So that the waters would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth, ³⁰Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before Him,

3. Christ is the goal for creation

- “for Him” = *eis auton* = lit. “unto Him”
- all of creation, from microbes to galaxies point to Christ

Q: How should our appreciation of creation/nature bring glory to Jesus Christ?

Conclusion:

1. Why have some not yet received Christ?

- Romans 1 points out that we the unsaved don't want to worship God.

Romans 1:21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

- Trusting Christ as our Savior is our first act of worship – obeying the command of the Lord of the Universe to believe/have faith in the Savior He sent to reconcile a sinner to the Holy God.

2. Why do we make Church about us?

- Our perspective of God and Church is skewed towards us, not God
- It becomes about self-needs, entertainment, intellect or emotions – not about God
- Oh, that we might have the heart of David

Psalm 8

¹ O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

² Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?