

# Heaven: The Throne Room of the Universe

## **A Theology of True Worship**

### Revelation 4

Towering over all our daily lives and worship we offer as believers: is the Throne of our God the King.

When we pray it's to the Throne of our Hallowed Father who is King in Heaven that we are to address our prayers.

When we struggle it is to the Throne of our King of Grace and Mercy that we cry to out for help in time of need.

When we serve it is our King who tests all our good works by His refining fire, and then passes out all rewards, that we prepare to stand before.

When we worship it is the Throne of God our King, surrounded by the numberless hosts who join with us, that we sync our worship with.

## **We Worship our King on The Throne**

As we open to Revelation 4, we find that the last book of the Bible merges the Throne of our God the King with our worship.

The only people who get to enjoy God forever are worshippers; and the only way to become a worshipper is to become God's subject, surrendering to His Rule.

God's servants worship Him now because we forever will bow in submission and adoration before Him.

A Biblical Theology of Worship is that we are true worshippers who serve God because we have bowed to Him as King, and He has given us a new heart.

The whole book of Revelation revolves around the facts of seeing and responding to our God on His Throne. Jesus gives us this last book to get us ready to meet and bow before Him as our King.

Please join me as we stand to read Revelation 4. As we do so we enter the Throne Room of the King of the Universe; and we see and feel the wonder of worshipping the King who sits upon that Throne.

Revelation 4:1-11 (NKJV) After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard *was* like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

<sup>2</sup> Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and *One* sat on the throne. <sup>3</sup> And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. <sup>4</sup> Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. <sup>5</sup> And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire *were* burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

<sup>6</sup> Before the throne *there was* a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, *were* four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. <sup>7</sup> The first living creature *was* like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature *was* like a flying eagle. <sup>8</sup> *The* four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:

"Holy, holy, holy,  
Lord God Almighty,  
Who was and is and is to come!"

<sup>9</sup> Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, <sup>10</sup> the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

<sup>11</sup> "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."

What response should we offer to our God the King, after this scene? How about the action that fits with these words:

## **O Worship The King**

Reach down with me and get a hymnbook. With that scene upon our hearts, join me in a response to our God on that Throne, as we turn to Hymn # 10, and sing to our King, enthroned in the Heavens:

### **O Worship the King**

*O worship the King all glorious above,  
And gratefully sing His wonderful love;  
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,  
Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.*

*O tell of His might and sing of His grace,*

*Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space;  
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,  
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.*

*Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?  
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light,  
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,  
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.*

*Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,  
In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail;  
Thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end,  
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer and Friend. Amen.*

**—Robert Grant**

## Pray

The worship of the King of the Universe is the message given to us directly by God who alone is that self-existent King of Kings from eternity to eternity.

The theme of the Bible, the activity of Heaven, and the purpose of our salvation is, that we Worship and bow, and adore our God, the King upon His Throne.

As we enter Revelation 4 we must first ask ourselves:

## What is Worship?

The simplest definition of worship we can derive from God's Word is: **worship is honor and adoration directed to God.**

Using that simple measure we will find that God's Word overflows with illustrations and explanations of how we pour out our honor and adoration upon our Lord, the King.

There are 7 different Old Testament words translated "worship" in our English Bibles and 10 different New Testament words that are translated "worship"<sup>1</sup>. Of all the words in the New Testament two of the words dominate the pages reflecting the life of the early church.

1. The first is *proskuneo*, a commonly used term that literally means "to kiss toward," "to kiss the hand," or "to bow down." It is the word for worship used to signify humble adoration.
2. The second word is *latreuo*, which suggests rendering honor, or paying homage.

<sup>1</sup>The English word "worship" comes from: 8 to 11 different Greek words ( only 4 are in all 5 top versions: latreuo, sebo, proskunetes, proskuneo). In the ESV 81x from 11 different Greek words: latreuo, sebo, latreia, sebasma, proskunetes, theosebep, leitourgeo, eusebeo, sebadzomai, threskeia, proskuneo is the main word occurring 51 of 81x; In the NASB 70x from 9 different Greek words: sebo, latreia, latreuo, sebasma, proskunetes, eusebeo, sebadzomai, threskeia, proskuneo is the main word occurring 52 of 70x; In the NIV 78x from 11 different Greek words: latreuo, sebo, latreia, sebasma, laos, proskunetes, leitourgeo, phobeo, eusebeo, sebadzomai, proskuneo [51 of 78x]; In the NKJV 77x from 10 different Greek words: sebo, latreuo, sebasma, proskunetes, theosebep, eusebeo, therapeuo, sebadzomai, threskeia, proskuneo is the main word occurring 58 of 77x; In the KJV 79x from 8 different Greek words: sebo, latreuo, proskuneo+enopion, doksa, proskunetes, theosebep, proskuneo is the main word occurring 58 of 79x.

Worship always conveys the idea of giving something to God. The act of worship ascribes to God that He is worthy of our adoration, He is worth our devotion, and He is the delight and desire of our hearts.

Although we may offer worship as a group, for us to have participated in true worship: we each must have given something to God. In the Old Testament God told His people not to come before Him "empty-handed".

Modern worship often centers on a feeling that worshippers hope to get, instead of an offering that only true worshippers can give. So whenever we talk about Biblical worship, the first lesson is that worship can only be something we GIVE to God.

Much of the modern confusion in the church is about the preoccupation by many upon what they want to get from God rather than upon what they are to give to God.

The essence of worship is selfless giving: first we give ourselves as His servants, then we give our adoration as sacrifices to God, then we give of our possessions as gifts to God. Biblical worship is a way of life, serving our King.

There is no subject more important to us as God's servants than worship. Worship of the True God is the mark of true believers.

Those who live forever are those who have responded to the Gospel. Those who respond to the Gospel become true worshippers of their true God and King.

Revelation gives us what can only be called:

## **A Theology of How to Truly Worship the King of Heaven**

Revelation portrays for us the Heavenly pictures of worship that God desires, ordains, and sends as instructive portraits for us. Remember that Revelation was given to us as God's servants so that we might understand God's plans and desires.

In Revelation 1-5 we see God illustrating for us the elements of true worship.

### **1. True Biblical Worship: Starts with the Words that God Gave to Us (Revelation 1:1)**

- God's Word is vital to us, and the pathway God left for us to approach Him in our worship.
- In John 4:24 Jesus has already said that we are to worship God in Spirit and in truth: "God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."
- Here in Revelation 1:1 we see that the truth is based upon the revealed Word of God. Worship is Word-prompted, and Word-based.

- So first, True Biblical Worship: Starts with the Words that God Gave to Us (Revelation 1:1).

## **2. True Biblical Worship: Is Only for Those "in the Spirit"(Revelation 1:10)**

- John was able to see God in His Glory, worship Him as King, all because of the power of the regenerating, indwelling Holy Spirit.
- Paul says in Philippians 3:3 that those who are saved worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no hope of salvation by fleshly efforts.
- The Spirit quickens the flesh profits nothing John 6:63, only spiritual worship prompted by the Spirit can please God.
- True Biblical Worship: Is Only for those "in the Spirit"(Revelation 1:10)

## **3. True Biblical Worship: Involves Seeing & Falling Before Christ (Revelation 1:17)**

- When John turns and sees Jesus as the Risen King of Kings, he falls before Him.
- John falls before Christ just like Peter. When the huge school of fish were caught, in Luke 5:8-9 "When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; Peter fell on his face like John.
- John falls before Christ just like just like the disciples when the sleeping Christ was awakened and stilled the storm. Mk. 4:39-41 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"
- 3. True Biblical Worship: Involves Seeing & Falling Before Christ (Revelation 1:17)

## **4. True Biblical Worship: Is Always Being Watched and Tested by Christ (Revelation 2:1)**

- Jesus reminds us that He walks about the Church as we gather (Rev. 2:1)
- Jesus is examining our hearts and minds as we live, work, and worship. Jesus declares in Rev. 2:23: "and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works."
- 4. True Biblical Worship: Is Always Being Watched and Tested by Christ (Revelation 2:1)

## **5. True Biblical Worship: Rises to Merge with the Worship Around the Throne of our King (Revelation 4:1)**

- The 24 elders hold the bowls of collected prayers (Rev. 5:8) of the saints that have been offered in worship; and later (Rev. 8:3) angels mix those prayers with incense and coals from the altar, and pour them out.
- Only this worship scene around God's Throne explains why God waits so long. He waits to combine our prayers with His plan and pour them out together.
- 5. True Biblical Worship: Rises to Merge with the Worship Around the Throne of our King (Revelation 4:1)

## **6. True Biblical Worship: Is Focused upon, Directed towards, and Targeted at God (Revelation 4:2-7)**

- Everything above us is pointed at the King of Heaven's Throne.
- Our King is the Supreme Attraction up there. For of Him, through Him, and to Him are all things in Romans 11:36: For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.
- God said on the Mount of Transfiguration to focus on Christ, nothing else. While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"
- 6. True Biblical Worship: Is Focused upon, Directed towards, and Targeted at God (Revelation 4:2-7)

## **7. True Biblical Worship: Declares that the Character of God is Holy & Eternal (Revelation 4:8-9)**

- The very first words heard in Heaven from those around the Throne are Holy, Holy, Holy (Rev.4:8).
- Only the "pure in heart" can see God (Mt. 5:8); and also those who are characterized by pursuing holiness (Heb 12:14). Thus the citizens of Heaven are seen in Heb. 12:28-29 as holy subjects of the King: Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.
- 7. True Biblical Worship: Declares that the Character of God is Holy & Eternal (Revelation 4:8-9)

## **8. True Biblical Worship: Prompts True Believers to Respond with Giving to their King (Revelation 4:10)**

- David said not give to God that which costs him nothing (II Samuel 24:24).
- Moses recorded God's voice telling His people to not to come to the three annual feasts at Jerusalem, and appear before Him "empty" handed (Ex. 23:15; 34.20; Deut. 16:16).

- 8. True Biblical Worship: Prompts True Believers to Respond with Giving to their King (Revelation 4:10)

## **9. True Biblical Worship: Centers Upon the Cross of Christ's Redeeming Sacrifice (Revelation 5:1-8)**

- Jesus as a substitute that was sacrificed. Rev. 5:6 And I looked, and behold,<sup>[a]</sup> in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.
- 9. True Biblical Worship: Centers Upon the Cross of Christ's Redeeming Sacrifice (Revelation 5:1-8)

## **10. True Biblical Worship: Understands God's Wrath is Against Un-Confessed, Un-Forsaken, and Un-Forgiven Sins (Revelation 5:9-14)**

- The worship of the King flows out and explains His wrath against sin. Paul explains the wrath of God in Romans 1:18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."
- Jesus returns in the blazing fire of wrath against sin in II Thessalonians 1:7b-8 when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, <sup>8</sup> in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Revelation 6-20 completely fits as a result of the finished work of Christ upon the Cross. He stands with His arms open to the world and pours out His righteous and holy wrath against sinners who will not turn to Him away from their sins.
- 10. True Biblical Worship: Understands God's Wrath is Against Un-Confessed, Un-Forsaken, and Un-Forgiven Sins (Revelation 5:9-14)

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When we pray it's to the Throne of our Hallowed Father who is King in Heaven that we are to address our prayers.

When we struggle it is to the Throne of our King of Grace and Mercy that we cry to out for help in time of need.

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