

Introduction: What is the most beautiful or heavenly song ever? *Handel's Messiah* would get votes from many people. I have a musical clip that we will listen to for approximately a minute. (*Play clip*)

*(The Royal Choral Society has performed Handel's Messiah on Good Friday at the Royal Albert Hall every year since 1876. The RCS filmed their performance on 6 April 2012 by kind permission of the Royal Albert Hall and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. This clip features the glorious Hallelujah Chorus. For further information on forthcoming RCS concerts please see [www.royalchoralsociety.co.uk](http://www.royalchoralsociety.co.uk).)*

One pastor stated that this is a foretaste of heavenly music. Even this great song suffers from being written and performed in a sinful world. As beautiful as it is, it pales in comparison with the music of heaven.

Why do we struggle to sing with enthusiasm? Why does a congregation struggle to field a choir? Why do some Christians struggle to show up to church at all? Why do we often remain silent instead of singing Christ's praises in the world. He wants us to bring his kindly rule to people's lives, but we struggle.

We need help. We need forgiveness. We need inspiration. We have all of that and more in Revelation, chapter 5. We have a vision of the saints in heaven worshipping around the throne. Their song reminds us that we **Worship the Lamb who Delivers his People**. The vision will lift us up and empower us to worship with our voices and our lives.

### **1. The angels' worship describes our precious Lamb.**

In heaven the angelic chorus has no problems singing. We see them in verse 11. This is more than beautiful music. They are telling us something. The angelic worship describes our precious Lamb.

A. As we take in the scene we see that Jesus is great.

1. We are impressed by the crowds that gathered willingly to worship Jesus on Psalm Sunday. We are amazed that millions of people gather around the globe at Easter to worship Jesus. The scene in heaven takes our breath away.

10,000 X 10,000 angels are worshipping Jesus.

2. They are not alone. There are the four living creatures around the throne who seem to be cherubim if we go with the prophet Ezekiel's vision in 10:20 of his book. Then there are the 24 elders which represents all the believers, Jesus'. Then finally all living creatures are mentioned, all of creation.

B. We ask, “Why is Jesus so great and worthy of praise?” It is because of who he is and what he has done to save us.

1. In front of the throne where God, the Father is seated, John sees one who looks like the **“The Lamb who was slain.”** He is seeing the resurrected Jesus who has ascended into heaven. Perhaps Jesus looks like he was slain because John sees the scars from nail marks in Jesus’ hands and feet. John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as our sin offering when he said, **“Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”** (John 1:29) The people are praising Jesus because he has changed everything.

2. When we were born into the world we wanted all power, wealth and wisdom and strength and honor, because we wanted to survive and be on top. That doesn’t work, because none of us can top death. Now that Jesus has done what we can’t do, we don’t have to focus on ourselves. We can praise him as the one who has all power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor and glory. As the audience in heaven praises him, they are acknowledging that he has these things not just as God, but now the human nature of Jesus has assumed all power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor and glory. He is truly the King of Heaven and Earth. This is why we praise him even now.

C. The people in heaven have a perfect understanding and a clear vision of their Savior. We who live by faith tend to struggle with seeing Jesus. It is so important for you and I to go regularly to God’s word. The reason is not so much that God wants us to know it all or to memorize it, but simply to see Jesus. The more we see Jesus, the more we will understand his power, wealth, wisdom, strength and honor. The more we see Jesus the stronger we will be in our trust in him as our Savior. He is precious.

## **2. The creatures’ worship indicates what we must do.**

If we stand in a large crowd that is cheering here on earth, we feel drawn to join with the crowd. This is very true as we see the crowd worshipping Jesus. What are we to do? The example of those worshipping in heaven help us to know how we should worship.

A. First we see where their worship is directed. It is directed at Jesus.

1. I heard a one of our pastors make a comment once that, many churches today are based on a personality cult. What that usually refers to is the fact that when people are looking for a church, rather than looking at the beliefs they look at the people and particularly the pastor. If they like the people and

the pastor, they join. If they go to church, it is to see the people and hear the pastor. In that case the life and energy of the church comes, not from Jesus, but humans. It is bound to disappoint. Even a gifted man like the apostle Peter, disappointed.

In Revelation we see the crowd gathered around God and the center of attention is Jesus. We focus on him when we gather for worship because he is the Savior of the world. We praise him since we have been washed in his blood. We have been saved. Our faith makes us delighted to praise him.

2. What does all of creation do? They sing words that praise and worship Jesus. **“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”** (13) To creation’s worship the four living creatures speak an, **“Amen.”** (14)

This is what you and I typically think of worship. Singing and speaking. However, we can understand that because this enthusiasm and worship is so real, that worship of Jesus extended into all that they did in heaven. It is the case, however, that God doesn’t show us what they do. Perhaps, life in heaven is too marvelous for us to comprehend.

B. I think the fact that their entire existence is one of worship is seen in the actions of the elders. These are the believers from the Old and New Testament times. We are told that they fell down or bowed down and worshipped. This is what you did in days of old to show a king that you were completely devoted to him and doing his will. The people of heaven have the perfect attitude that leads to perfect service.

We can only contemplate this perfect service. We are not capable of coming close to what they are doing in heaven. But we can learn from them and we can try to imitate the believers of heaven in our attitude and in our actions. Jesus is worthy of our worship efforts.

C. One of the things that scene in heaven reminds us that it is important and meaningful for you and I to gather around the throne of our King. Yet these days even regular Christians miss a Sunday of worship or miss a special holy day like Ash Wednesday or Maundy Thursday. Some miss a lot and even skip Christmas and Easter.

First of all it is a sin to miss worship unless we have a good reason. It is an insult to the king when we don’t show up and don’t give him our best. The church has always struggled, but the norm shouldn’t give us an excuse to slide like some high school senior trying to do as little work as possible right

before graduation.

The scene in heaven helps us. In Revelation the largest crowd ever is gathering and giving glory and honor to Jesus in a loud and beautiful voice. That is our Savior who was slain for us. He has forgiven us for our lax worship. That is our God who rules heaven and earth for us. The more we fix our eyes on these things in God's word, the more we will give pure and joyful worship to the Lamb who had earned it.

Conclusion: What will heaven sound like? (sound clip) WELS National Conference on Worship Music and the Arts, Carthage College, Kenosha, WI.

I am showing this to you for a couple of reasons. You may not be aware that WELS Lutherans can make heavenly music. It is not perfect, but it is beautiful. There are all kinds of beautiful songs that we can sing and present, even if it doesn't match a national choral effort.

We need the encouragement, because we are human and sinful. Scripture gives us clear encouragement. We have it today in the book of Revelation, chapter 5.

A glorious future, filled with beautiful, inspiring music awaits. Heaven is a joyous celebration. Heaven is an encounter with Jesus. He is the Lamb of God who has taken away the sins of the world. We get to be part of the heavenly scene. From Jesus we will ever draw encouragement and joy. It isn't just for eternity. We worship now. With whatever means Jesus gives us. This includes singing his praises, or speaking of his glory here on earth. We are humble servants, but we are happy servants as we worship the Lamb. Amen.

Revelation 5:11-14  
(NIV 2011)

11 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. 12 In a loud voice they were saying:

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

13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
be praise and honor and glory and power,  
for ever and ever!”

14 The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.