



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Revelation 21

Why worship song in Heaven?

Revelation 4:8-11

Revelation 4:1-11, *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." ²Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. ³And 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. ⁴Around 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. ⁵And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. ⁶Before 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. ⁷The 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. ⁸The 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!" ⁹Whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰the 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: ¹¹"You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honour and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

This is the second vision.

The first one was a vision of Christ in chapter 1.

Letters to the churches in chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 4, the scene changes.

We go from earth to heaven and the throne of God.

The theme in **chapter 4 and 5** is worship in heaven.

For us to understand the essence of worship.

This is about heavenly worship which is perfected worship around the throne of God.

Now when we talk about worship it is very familiar to Christians.

We don't always understand the essence of worship.
Worship in heaven goes from **Revelation 4:8-5:14**.

The vision that John has in chapters 4 and 5 is really a vision of God beginning to crank up the wheels of His wrath.

Incredible look at worship in heaven and the worship of God for His creation in chapter 4.
For His redemption, in chapter 5.

This worship is because God is about to unleash His judgment from chapters 6 to 19.

The hosts of heaven, both angels and glorified saints, worship God for His coming judgment. That's not something normally brought up in an expression of worship.

It would be a very rare occasion for the average evangelical congregation to even imagine that God is to be worshiped for His judgment, for His wrath, for His fury, for His vengeance on those who reject Him.

But that is exactly what the book of Revelation is all about. Judgment from **chapters 6 to 19**. Prelude to that is the throne of God getting ready for judgment in chapters 4 and 5.

Worship:

Day and night they do not cease to say, and this is their occupation at all times, and this is angelic worship.

It is angelic worship.

For the first time the Lord Jesus Christ came to earth, He came as a baby. He came as a human being and lived a human life. He came to not only live a righteous life, but to die on the cross as a substitution for those who are the elect of God.

He came to save the sinners.

That is why His name was Jesus.

Call Him Jesus and He will save His people from their sins.

He came to save sinners, to live, to die, to rise again for salvation. That is the powerful message, the only hope and the only transforming message for sinners that we call the good news, the gospel.

Jesus came to provide salvation to sinners.

Luke 2:13-14, *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:*

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

The angels were offering their praise and worship at the first coming of Christ. There were also some saints who were praising God at the first coming. We would recognize them from the accounts of the birth of Christ.

Anna, Simeon, Mary, and their testimonies as to the wonder of the arrival of Christ is the testimony of saints.

We have saints and angels hailing the arrival of the Son of God the first time He comes.

The next time He comes is exactly where we are in **Revelation 4**.

In anticipation of that the angels, again, are worshiping, and they are not worshiping alone.

***V 10**, 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:*

We have angelic and saint worship the first time He comes. We had the same thing the second time.

- The first worship was angels in heaven, saints on earth.

- The next time will be both saints and angels in heaven.

They are worshiping God for His judgment, for His judgment.
They worship for the outpouring of His wrath.
They worship Him for vengeance.

Even Mary, in her hymn of praise to her Lord, acknowledged that the Lord was coming to destroy the proud and to dethrone world rulers.

We can't understand the purpose of Christ in the world unless you understand that He came the first time as a sacrifice for sin.

Jesus comes the second time as a judge.
The judgment is unleashed from **chapter 6 till 19**, when it presents the return of Christ Himself.

Here is the worship that is brought to God on His throne in heaven. Four living creatures. They begin the worship.

V 8, *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!"*

The heavenly worship focusing on God on the throne.
At this picture on God about to unleash judgment.

The angels are very much involved in this vengeance, this wrath.

Revelation 6:1, *Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see."*

That unleashes seven seals of judgment, and it's inaugurated by that declaration by an angel.

After the seven seals are opened, the seven trumpet judgments follow.

Revelation 8:6-8, *So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. ⁷The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. ⁸Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. ⁹And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.*

The angels are the ones who announcing each of these judgments from God.

The final series of judgments are described as bowls of judgment on the earth. This is also the work of angels, to call these judgments into reality.

Revelation 15:1, *Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.*

Revelation 15:7-8, *Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. ^sThe temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.*

When the bowls are poured out, “the first angel,” “the second angel,” “the third angel,” “the fourth,” “the fifth,” “the sixth,” and “the seventh”. All these judgments literally are carried out to some extent by angels.

This is consistent with what we know in **Matthew 13 and 24** about angels participating in judgment.

So, the angels are worshiping God for the judgment of which they will be a part.

It will be part of their angelic service. They are praising God and worshiping God for final judgment.

All the sentient beings of heaven are celebrating judgment.
God is to be worshiped for His judgment.

One of the elements of God's character and consistent with His nature is His judgment.

God is to be praised for His judgment.

Christ is to be praised for His judgment.

The Holy Spirit is to be praised for the role He plays in judgment.

It is the glory of God in final judgment.

This is in line with the word of God which revealed in our Bible. We will find in psalms what are called imprecatory prayers or imprecatory praise. That is a term that means to pronounce the judgment.

It is all through the Psalms.

There are hundreds of references for that.

The Psalms are prayer and praise.

Part of the prayers of the ancient saints was to pray that God would bring judgment on the ungodly.

Psalm 69:22-28, *Let their table become a snare before them, And their well-being a trap. ²³Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; And make their loins shake continually.*

²⁴Pour out Your indignation upon them, And let Your wrathful anger take hold of them. ²⁵Let their dwelling place be desolate; Let no one live in their tents. ²⁶For they persecute the ones You have struck, And talk of the grief of those You have wounded. ²⁷Add iniquity to their iniquity, And let them not come into Your righteousness. ²⁸Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous.

Amazing prayer. But that is exactly what the inspired psalmist prayed. He prayed for judgment to come on the ungodly, start even in their life in this world, and then the judgment to follow.

Psalm 109:8-13, *Let his days be few, And let another take his office. ⁹Let his children be fatherless, And his wife a widow. ¹⁰Let his children continually be vagabonds, and beg; Let them seek their bread also from their desolate places. ¹¹Let the creditor seize all that he has, And let strangers plunder his labour. ¹²Let there be none to extend mercy to him, Nor let there be any to favor his fatherless children. ¹³Let his posterity be cut off, And in the generation following let their name be blotted out.*

This is a serious prayer. I wonder if you have ever prayed like that against the wicked.

Psalm 5:10, *Pronounce them guilty, O God! Let them fall by their own counsels; Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, For they have rebelled against You.*

Psalm 35:4-8, *Let those be put to shame and brought to dishonour Who seek after my life; Let those be turned back and brought to confusion Who plot my hurt. ⁵Let them be like chaff before the wind, And let the ⁶angel of the Lord chase them. ⁶Let their way be dark and slippery, And let the angel of the Lord pursue them. ⁷For without cause they have hidden their net for me in a pit, Which they have dug without cause for my life. ⁸ Let destruction come upon him unexpectedly, And let his net that he has hidden catch himself; Into that very destruction let him fall.*

Psalm 40:14-17, *Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion Who seek to destroy my life; Let them be driven backward and brought to dishonour Who wish me evil. ¹⁵Let them be confounded because of their shame, Who say to me, "Aha, aha!" ¹⁶Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; Let such as love Your salvation say continually, "The Lord be magnified!" ¹⁷But I am poor and needy; Yet the Lord thinks upon me. You are my help and my deliverer; Do not delay, O my God.*

The psalmist is talking of Babylon and calling on God to reciprocate to Babylon the terrible atrocities they meted out

against Israel when they destroyed the land and the city of Jerusalem. It's like payback time.

Psalm 137:8-9, *O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed, Happy the one who repays you as you have served us! ⁹Happy the one who takes and dashes Your little ones against the rock!*

God is a God of vengeance.

This does not call for personal vengeance.

If anybody offends us, we are to pray for them. We are to forgive them.

Romans 12:19, *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*

But our responsibility is to praise the Lord for that vengeance and to make sure we warn the people of its reality.

In **Matthew 23**, when our Lord addressed the leaders of Israel, He gave them curses after curse.

1 Corinthians 16:22, *If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!*

Galatians 1:8-9, *But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to*

you, let him be accursed. ⁹As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Saints are offering prayers in this section.

Revelation 6:10, *And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"*

These are the prayers of the ones who are martyred during the Tribulation. They are praying for divine vengeance to requite those who took their lives.

Revelation 18:4-8, *And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. ⁵For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. ⁶Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. ⁷In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.'⁸Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.*

Again, praise to God for His judgment.

Only when we understand judgment, only when we understand being cursed, having damnation pronounced on us, we can understand Galatians chapter 3.

Galatians 3:10-13, *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." ¹¹But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." ¹²Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them." ¹³Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),*

If we don't understand what it is that humanity faces because everyone who has ever broken the law of God is cursed, then we don't understand the full undergirding reality of the sacrifice of Christ.

A curse is a terrible thing. It's the worst thing possible, to be cursed by God. Everyone who's ever broken His law is cursed by God.

Curses all through the Scripture are promised and given to those who reject Him. If it's horrible to think about that, then think what the cross is, where Christ became a curse for us.

He bore all the judgment of all those who were cursed and who believe in Him.

A theological warrant for this, for God's judgment, for Him to be praised.

God's judgment is based on His Word.

God's judgment is based on the Scripture is true.

Scripture promises repeatedly He will judge.

There was a judgement in Genesis for the sins of Adam and Eve.

In Genesis in the Flood, when God drowns the entire population of the world except for eight souls.

All throughout His Word, He pronounces the promise of judgment.

Deuteronomy 28, God lays it out before the children of Israel going into the Promised Land, *"If you obey Me, you will be blessed. If you don't, you will be cursed."*

The Old Testament's largely the history of the few who were blessed and the many who were cursed.

God must judge because He pledged to do that.

His Word demands it.

His covenants demand it.

In **Deuteronomy 28** He says, “I have not forgotten My covenant. I have compassion on you. But My covenant of protection for you also incorporates My judgment on those who would destroy and harm you.”

God protects His people, as a part of His covenant, by punishing and destroying their enemies.

God’s nature is that He is righteous.

He is just.

He is holy.

Righteous, holy, and just perfection such as He possesses demands that sin be dealt with.

God’s power.

His judgment is based on His Word, or His promise, on His covenants and their fulfillment, on His nature, and on His power.

God possesses the power to judge sin completely, totally, finally, and forever.

The Lord keeps the unrighteous under punishment to the day of judgment, **2 Peter 2**. The Lord knows how to meet out judgment, and no one can stand against it.

All throughout the Old Testament and the Psalms that contain mercy. Reminding us that the throne of God is a throne of mercy but when that mercy is rejected, one is left with nothing but divine judgment.

With this in mind let us come to the throne.

V 8, *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!"*

They start to worship.

It is a quartet.

Four cherubim, four angelic beings.

But it swells in with twenty-four elders in **V 10**.

Revelation 5:8, *Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*

Four living creatures, twenty-four elders and each one with a harp, golden bowls full of incense.

So now we have twenty-eight and the harp.

Revelation 5:11, *Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,*

Incalculable angels.

Revelation 5:13, *And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:*

Everything is praising God.

So, there are **five hymns** of praise starting in **Revelation 4:8 – 5:14**.

Chapter 4 praise is focused on the redemption of creation.

Chapter 5 is focused on the redemption of man.

The redemption of creation, a positive thing, requires the destruction of the ungodly.

The redemption of men requires the destruction of the ungodly.

We are going to have a redeemed earth and a redeemed humanity. Therefore, the ungodly must be dealt with.

There is no one like our God. God must be worshiped for His wrath.

Three things that are contained in that statement of worship.

a) Holiness:

God's holiness, like in **Isaiah 6**, "Holy, holy, holy," three times, a Trinitarian reference, the only attribute repeated three times.

The summation of all that God is, meaning completely separate from sin, separate from evil in any form and every form. He is free from, untouched by any mixture or presence of evil error or wrong.

Exodus 15:11, *"Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders?"*

Psalm 47:8, *God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne.*

Psalm 27:4, *One thing I have desired of the Lord, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the Lord, And to inquire in His temple.*

Holiness is the beauty of the Lord. It is His shining glory and majesty.

Psalm 111:9, *He has sent redemption to His people; He has commanded His covenant forever: Holy and awesome is His name.*

God's holiness incorporates His fury over sin.

1 Samuel 6:20, *And the men of Beth Shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? And to whom shall it go up from us?"*

Psalm 89:7, *God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, And to be held in reverence by all those around Him.*

Job 13:11, *Will not His excellence make you afraid, And the dread of Him fall upon you?*

Isaiah was struck with his own sinfulness, and the fear was so overwhelming that he pronounced a curse on himself and said he was a man of unclean lips.

Worship recognizes God's holiness.

All His judgment is predicated on His holiness.

If God is absolutely holy, then He must judge all sin.

b) Powerful.

The angels recognize that, and they also recognize that He is powerful, that He has the power to do it.

God is called by the angelic worshipers “*the Almighty*” this word has to do with conquering, prevailing strength in a superlative sense.

God is most powerful.

God is El Shaddai.

None can stand against His power.

Genesis 17:1, *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.*

Job 9:19, *If it is a matter of strength, indeed He is strong; And if of justice, who will appoint my day in court?*

Daniel 4:35, *All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, “What have You done?”*

We can see God’s strength in creation.

We can see it in God’s miracles.

We can see it in God’s providence.

We can see it in salvation.

But it also must be seen in judgment.

God has the power to do what His holiness demands.

God is not at all restrained.

God has all power to do what perfect holiness demands.

God controls everything.

1 Chronicles 29:11, *Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, And You are exalted as head over all.*

Aren't you grateful that He has power not only to create, redeem, but power to destroy sin.

God has the power to judge in such a way that literally puts an end to sin.

Nahum 1:6, *Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, And the rocks are thrown down by Him.*

But on the other hand, if you think about it, you ought to be thankful for that otherwise you have no guarantee that sin will ever be destroyed.

Third characteristic.

Holiness,
Power, and
Eternality.

c) Eternal.

V 8, *“Who was and who is and who is to come.”*

As we saw a couple of times in chapter 1. “From everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”

Psalm 90:2, *Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*

There are some beings who had a beginning and will have an end animal. There are some who had a beginning but will not have an end, angels and people.

But there is only One who had no beginning and no end that is God.

1 Timothy 1:17, *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Identify Himself as the eternal King.

Why is that important?

Because it means that forever and forever and He will sustain His will. Great comfort to believers, that He will get us to heaven and keep us there forever.

It is terrifying to nonbelievers because He will send them to hell!

God by His eternal life will guarantee their eternal destruction.

God is eternal and so is hell.

As long as God lives, the damned are punished.

Revelation 14:11, *And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”*

We worship God for His holiness, for His power, and for His eternality—holy wrath, powerful judgment, eternal punishment. That leaves no other possibility, but that God will do what is right and sustain it forever.

V 9, *Whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever,*

They are thanking Him for His eternal being, His eternal holiness, His eternal power, His eternal sovereignty. That is the worship of the angels.

V 10, *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:*

A continual reference to Him living forever and ever, so important to the reality of eternal blessing and eternal punishment.

The twenty-four elders “cast their crowns before the throne.” This is another indication that this represents believers, because only believers are promised crowns.

The saints who have been given their reward look at their reward and have only one response, and that is to put it at the feet of the One who is holy, powerful, and everlasting.
No thought for their own glory.
No concern for themselves.

Perfect, holy reverence.
Profound, supernatural gratitude focuses all the adoration, all the praise on God.

All they must give is their crowns.
They immediately throw their crowns before His throne, and they join the oratorio of worshipers.

V 11, *“You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honour and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”*

Why the focus on creation?

As a final recognition that everything belongs to God.

God is not stepping out of bounds by doing what He is doing in judgment, it is His creation.

Worshipping God for judgment. Seems like such a rare reality. But in the doing of that, you are worshipping God for His holiness and His power and His eternity.

We are worshipping God for the glory of salvation that will be everlasting.

When we investigate the picture of heaven and toward the end of the book of Revelation, we find that in the final new heaven and new earth, no sin, no evil and it is gone forever.

What should be our reaction to this?

When **Ezekiel** saw God in His glory, he fell on his face in fear.

Isaiah bowed down in fear.

John in that first vision back in chapter 1 fell over like a dead man.

Paul was speechless.

But that's not our permanent posture.

What is our permanent posture?

Worship, not fear.

Worship we can fall before Him contrite and broken, sensing our sin and our unworthiness.

But soon you must rise up and talk about His worthiness.
This is what we will do forever and ever with the holy angels.

This is just the first hymn of praise.
Four more in the next chapter.