

HEAVENLY WORSHIP

BY ANTONIO BALDOVINOS

I. WHY WORSHIP AND PRAY?

1. We pray & worship to an uncreated God that you cannot see. We interact deeply with God's heart in prayer. God speaks and moves our heart. Then we speak and move His heart. The result is that God's resources are released into the earthly realm.
2. We often 'worship' because we are grateful that God has given us all the stuff we wanted and been forgiven the bad things we have done and because the music and the singing stir our emotions and makes us feel good.
3. Often we aren't worshipping simply because He is God – we're worshipping because of what He does for us or what the experience of 'worship' does for us.
4. The real reason we worship is because He is GOD. Because He is majestic, wonderful, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords; for no other reason. We worship God because He is our beautiful God.
5. The beauty of the Lord is why we are amazed by Him- We want to be with Him. And He wants to be with us- *Intimacy*
 - a) Apart from rare exceptions, we behold His beauty by faith through the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
 - b) The day will come when our physical eyes will see Him in His splendor, but for now our pursuit of beauty consists of meditating upon His character, His emotions, and His ways as revealed in Scripture.
 - c) As the knowledge of the glory of Christ and His greatness enters our soul we are fascinated and exhilarated.
 - d) Yet as we stand in the posture of beholding, we begin to learn of His desires and longings for our neighbor and our city. The fruit of intimacy is partaking in the friendship of intercession.

II. WORSHIP AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

1. We need the centrality of worship in the Heavenly Temple crystallized in our minds so that we might have deep convictions in our hearts.
2. Worship, of course, is not an abstract 'atmosphere' – it requires participants. By seeing how angels are clearly presented in a role of worship in Heaven our perspective on what transpires inside the Heavenly Sanctuary will be greatly sharpened.
3. When we think about worship it must evoke a flood of thoughts about a Person, not opinions about an activity that we get something out of.

IV. HEAVEN IS THE STARTING POINT OF NIGHT & DAY DEVOTION

1. FIRST HEAVEN:

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- a) Biblically the first heavens are what we would understand to be the sky and the atmosphere- that which is visible to our eyes.
- b) In the beginning God created the waters (Gen 1:1-8, II Pet 3), and then divided them in a vast circular shape.

Praise Him, highest heavens, and the waters that are above the heavens! Psalm 148:4

It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. Isaiah 40:22

2. SECOND OR MID-HEAVEN:

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Ephesians 6:12

12 Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. 14 Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come.” Daniel 10:12-14

- a) The mid-heavens can be understood not as the dwelling place of God but as the domain of angels (the place of their delegated authority) where both good and evil purposes for the earth are contended for.
- b) Although the mid-heavens are the least defined by scripture it is still presented in profoundly concrete terms.
- c) Gabriel is described as ‘flying swiftly’ in Daniel 9:21 from one location to another then in 10:13 is physically detained by the prince of Persia.

3. THIRD HEAVEN:

Paul writes in II Corinthians 12:1-4: “It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. II Corinthians 12:1-4

- a) There are two very simple, but critical points that serve as the foundation for defining this part of God’s creation. The third-heavens are first, the dwelling place of God, and secondly the everlasting home of the redeemed.

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The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. Psalm 33:13

4. THE NEW TESTAMENT FOCAL POINT ON HEAVEN:

- a) Jesus refers to His Father being “*in heaven*” fourteen times in Matthew alone.
- b) Jesus descends from heaven and is described as ascending to heaven and exalted at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven.
- c) Jesus will come from heaven when He returns.

5. EVERLASTING HOME OF THE REDEEMED (OR THE PLACE OF ETERNAL REWARD)

- a) Treasure is in heaven (Matthew 6:20)
- b) Hope is in heaven (Colossians 1:5)
- c) Reward is in heaven (I Peter 1:4)
- d) Citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20)
- e) Immortal habitation is from heaven (II Corinthians 5:1-5)
- f) Names are registered in heaven (Luke 10:20)

V. INTERCESSION & THE THRONE

- a) The incense of our prayers causes real incense to rise “*before God*” as He sits on His throne. When the body of Christ unites in a city to offer Jesus unceasing devotion there is actually more incense that rises before Him as He is enthroned in His temple. If we actually believed this it would change everything. Oh for a revelation of the privilege and power of prayer!
- b) Prayer, like worship, is personally oriented. Because we are praying to *Someone*, our intercession is oriented around somewhere, because Jesus has an authentic human body and He is in an actual place in heaven.
- c) In intercession we are approaching the supreme Governor in the governmental center of the universe. That is why through faith we ‘come before’ the throne of God (Eph 3, Heb 4). All intercession is oriented around a real throne in a governmental context.
- d) Prayer is not hurling phrases into the air and hoping they are heard in some abstract way. We are making requests that are being considered in a real place by a real Person – the sovereign King of all things.
- e) Right now the LORD is on His throne and His kingdom rules over all. God reigns over all things, He upholds all things, He sustains all things, and He possesses all things. He is GOD!!!!!!

VI. WORSHIP AROUND THE THRONE

- a) This dramatic picture of the vast scale of angelic worship is strikingly echoed in two passages from Revelation:

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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, 12 saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!” Revelation 5:11-12

All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” Revelation 7:11-12

- a) The angelic hosts are ministers in God’s Temple in Heaven who sing to Him and give Him praise.
- b) This worship is ‘continual’, occurring ‘always’, and not ceasing even through the night.
- c) The angels were divided into various ranks and classes and the position in the hierarchy in some cases dictates their role in the worship of Heaven.
- d) There is a fully developed structure in the Heavenly Temple in which the angels participate and lead.

VII. OUR MAKER AND OUR DESIGN

- a) God enjoys music, we are made in His image, and so we have the capacity to enjoy and make music. Zephaniah 3:17 describes how *Yahweh will sing* when He comes to Zion at the end of the age: “*The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.*”
- b) One of the massive applications of this truth is that we do not include music in our worship on earth because it makes it easier or more exciting but because it is integrally woven into the fabric of God’s desire and design for it.
- c) Antiphonally
 1. *Antiphonal* means to answer responsively
 2. There are several accounts of Antiphonal Worship in the Heavenly Temple.

...I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”

3. Here we see that the seraphim are crying out *to one another*. The burning ones utter declarations of His glory responsively as they hover around the throne of God.
4. One thing we can be sure – worship isn’t random. There is a specific *order* of worship in Heaven, and that order has *a design*. Understanding this gives us confidence to reproduce it on the earth even when we have not yet discovered God’s wisdom in ordaining it to the extent we desire.

- d) The Driving Force for Unceasing Adoration:

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1. The 'what' of the worship of Heaven is vitally important, but even more important is the 'why' behind the activity that constantly surrounds the throne in the Heavenly Temple.
2. The Seraphim and the larger angelic host who are enraptured with ministry to Him have **never had a single sin forgiven, never an ailment healed, and never a financial need met** and **yet their testimony is that His unending glory warrants their unending worship.**
3. As they take in the glory of God with all of their eyes, it is so overwhelming and so severe in its magnitude that it necessitates their unbroken adoration. In other words, their ceaseless worship is based **solely upon the glory of who He is**...His Majesty!
4. The only purpose of their worship is to **magnify, extol, and proclaim His surpassing glory.** They are not 'changing the atmosphere' in the Heavenly Temple or doing it so that revival will break out in the Holy City (Lol), nor will they have any change in vocation or personal advancement because of their activity. They don't worship because they want better marriage or better kids.
5. In summary, both the *motivation* (the sustaining force) and the *aim* (the purpose for which it is done) of the unceasing worship of the Heavenly Temple is solely His glory. They worship because He is worthy.
6. We still worship in response to His goodness in our lives, but even if nothing goes right, **He's still worthy!**