

## Worthy is the Lamb <sup>1</sup>

✠ **Sacrificed for us to adore (vv. 11,12)**

✠ **Worshipped as God forevermore (vv. 13,14)**

In the name of Jesus, the Lamb once slain now ruling in Victory, dearly redeemed believers:

Are you fascinated as I am by stories of angels? Maybe you've even had experiences you can only explain by God sending an angel to help you out of an impossible situation. The Bible tells us that angels were created along with everything else during the six days of creation. (Genesis 2:1; Exodus 20:11) Some angels rebelled with Satan and were cast down to earth. That explains so much of the suffering in the world and troubles for the visible Christian Church. Imagine what it was like for the First Century Christians when there were so few of them. Fierce persecutions would focus the cruel might of Rome on destroying all who refused to worship the Emperor – along with Jesus Christ. Like today! Movies about angels don't mention Jesus Christ. Who will praise and sing? **Worthy is the Lamb.**

✠ **Sacrificed for us to adore (vv. 11,12)**

This fifth chapter of Revelation contains the first of at least thirty-three times that John is inspired to write, "***And I saw....***" In his series of seven visions Jesus is using John like a high definition camera to point heavenward for encouragement and earthward for warning about the future. Christ's Church militant was facing severe persecution. Only one apostle was still alive. John alone of the Twelve was not martyred for his faithful witness, but now John was exiled. Their eyes saw confiscation of their property, arrest and imprisonment of their leaders, gladiatorial execution of men, women and children for pagan entertainment – all their visuals screamed *Defeat!* "***We walk by faith, not by sight.***" (2 Corinthians 5:7) God upholds our faith in promised triumph by our victorious Lamb of God **Sacrificed for us to adore.**

Beyond time and space, God's camera reveals "***many angels... ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands upon thousands.***" More than one guardian angel, their numbers are beyond count. And we're told "***all angels [are] ministering spirits sent out to serve for the benefit of those who are going to inherit salvation***" (Hebrews 1:14 EHV). In other words, God created and preserved the good angels in their holiness to serve all believers as God works night and day to bring us safely home to heaven.

God's throne in the center is encircled by four ***living creatures*** described as cherubim (Ezekiel 1:5-22; 10:15-20). The twenty-four elders picture for us the Old Testament and New Testament Church of God – all saved by the same faith, trusting in Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Everything about Him was foretold in hundreds of prophecies and foreshadowing sacrifices and ceremonies. **Worthy is the Lamb.**

Notice this is **the Lamb who was slain**. He's not shown here as the righteous, wrathful Judge of all the living and the dead on the Last Day. This is still the time of grace; who would run from a **Lamb**? Yet because He is risen indeed, Jesus is **worthy** to literally take His **power** and reign. This is the Gospel **power** (Romans 1:16) that opens your eyes to see, ears to hear, heart to beat in joyful praise to God. "***Although he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that through his poverty you might become rich.***" (2 Corinthians 8:9) He has the **wisdom** to know what to do and the **strength** to do it. In the shame of His Humiliation Jesus walked this earth; now He is exalted to receive all **honor and glory and blessing**. We also bless Him with praises and prayers for the success of His Gospel preaching worldwide.

See how Jesus rescued Saul from blindness? Ananias kindly described "***the Lord Jesus, whom***

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<sup>1</sup> The service theme for this week: **Light Marches Victorious Over Blindness.**

*you saw on your way here, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”* Baptism empowered Saul to proclaim Jesus as the Son of God with strength waiting for him.

“Providence means that God sees beforehand what is going to happen to us, what need is going to arise in our lives, and He makes provision accordingly so that when we arrive at that point of need, the provision will be waiting for us. Think of it! Long before the need appears in your life, God has already made provision....There was a Garden of Eden before there were a man and a woman. There was Adam’s rib before Eve was needed. And there was a cross on Calvary before there was a tree in the midst of the Garden. There was provision for sin before there was sin, for Christ was ‘slain from the foundation of the world’ (Rev. 13:8 NKJV).”<sup>2</sup> **Worthy is the Lamb** to be...

### ✠ **Worshipped as God forevermore (vv. 13,14)**

*“I also heard every creature that is 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 blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.”* From Genesis through Revelation the fact of God’s creation is proclaimed and taken to be true. There was only one Eyewitness. You can’t prove creation or evolution in a laboratory. *“By faith we know that the universe was created by God’s word, so that what is seen did not come from visible things.”* (Hebrews 11:3 EHV) *Who are you going to believe? Man with only a heartbeat, or one more breath if God gives it to him? Or God who sent the Lamb to be your Savior from sin, death and hell?* All creation shouts **Worthy is the Lamb** to be **Worshipped as God forevermore**.

All of earth’s history records kingdoms and empires that have crumbled into dust. Some like that of Alexander the Great or the Third Reich could not even survive the death of their founder. Eventually all have collapsed no matter how powerful they once seemed. But the Kingdom of Christ, founded on God’s power and established by His sacrificial death and glorious resurrection will never fail even when all the “natural” forces of earth and heaven do. He who created and sustains nature will finally make it the home of righteousness He desires. Far better than a kingdom without end, *“Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.”* (Isaiah 9:7 NIV84) **The Lamb** is the LORD of red hot love for us.

*The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders bowed down and worshipped.* (Revelation 5:14 EHV) Notice, no one is worshipping the angels. Twice John tried, and twice the angel said emphatically, *“Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and also with those who hold on to the words of this book. Worship God!”* (Revelation 22:9; 19:10 EHV)

WELS Administrator of Ministerial Education, Paul Prange described the angel’s joy in heaven at his baptism. “Worship began for me before anyone knew my name. In that adoption agency, eight days after I was born, someone put water on a baby without parents, a baby with quite an uncertain future, and said the words, ‘I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.’ I doubt that an outsider would have observed any high drama. There were no sponsors or cameras of any sort. I doubt that they used one of those fancy, starched white linen napkins. They did sign a certificate – I’ve seen it. Then they whisked me off to – well, I don’t actually know where. But despite the shadowy vagueness of the earthly scene in my imagination, the heavenly reality of what happened there is clear.

“Angels sang. The angels present in that room shouted ‘Amen’ and broke into a perfect song of rejoicing that another sinner had been brought to repentance and faith. The earthly child may have felt only a bit of moisture on a very bald head, but the heavenly reality is that he was submerged, gasping, into water of death and blood, and then raised overhead, cleansed, to be placed as a trophy on a mantle where only holy things can be displayed.”<sup>3</sup> So great God’s love for you because **Worthy is the Lamb!** Amen.

<sup>2</sup> Dunn, Ronald. *Surviving Friendly Fire*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> Prange, Paul T. “Things Are Not Always What They Seem,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Spring 2003, p. 108.

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