

Lesson # 18 Universal Praise

Revelation 5:11-14

Date: July 18, 2010

¹¹Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹²saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" ¹³And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in 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!" ¹⁴And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.

I. The Angels

vv. 11-12

It is fitting that we linger over these last 4 verses of chapter 5, because once we leave this chapter, the onslaught of God's vengeance as described in the scroll is now in the hands of Jesus Christ, Lion, Lamb & judge & begins to unfold on the earth.

The praise & worship began & was described in Rev. 4:11; 5:9-10 by the 4 Living Creatures & the 24 Elders...called a "new song" in 5:9a; and it now swells to a mighty crescendo as John's vision takes in an unforgettable, breathtaking scene. He says, "Then I looked", a phrase he often uses to start a new scene in Revelation, and he also adds, "I heard", so this continues to be a multi-sensory experience for John. ①

As he lifts his eyes to take in this scene of majestic grandeur, as far as he can see are first of all, myriads & myriads & thousands of thousands of angelic beings, and he can hear their thunderous voices as they join in the praise, saying with a loud voice...*"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"*

This verse not only inspires our thoughts as it brings us to lofty, unimaginable heights, but it also presents us with an idea of the scope of the vast empire inhabited by the heavenly host. When Christ, in Gethsemane, in Matt. 26:53 said... *"Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?"* Twelve legions of angels – 12 x 6,000 – would not even have made a dent in this crowd! In Heb. 12:22, the number of angels is said to be innumerable – no one could ever count them. Rev. 12:3-4 tells us that when Satan fell (12:9), his angels fell with him, and the number of them was 1/3rd of the whole number. The ones John sees here are the 2/3rds that remain in heaven, the holy angels, those loyal to God. See also Dan. 7:10; Ps. 68:17-18.

We can decipher thousands of thousands = millions, but myriads is a more archaic word that we are less than familiar with. Myriads means 10,000's x 10,000's. Myriad was the largest specific number the Greeks had at that time. So, the innumerable number of angels in this scene is known only to God. Even with

the extent of this crowd, many angels would be on earth performing their assignments so not even every angel is represented here.

These angelic beings certainly do interact with humans in numerous ways, all at the behest of God and throughout history. The bible is extremely clear as it presents for us various times when angels came into contact with people. In fact, the presence & actions of angels as expressed in the bible leaves us with no uncertainty that they carry the weight of history as God has no doubt used them throughout history where no biblical record exists, as in wars, certain battles, political results, etc. Here is one biblical example of how that might look...**II Kings 6:14-18**.

Here are some other brief reminders of angelic action in God's wordⁱ:

- 2 angels deliver Lot & his family from Sodom – Gen. 18-19
- Angels protected Jacob as he went to meet with Esau – Gen. 32:1-32
- An angel calls Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt – Ex. 3:2,10
- An angel blocks Balaam's way – Num. 20:16; 22:22
- An angel smites Israel in judgment over David's sin – II Sam. 24; I Chron. 21
- An angel slays 185,000 Assyrians in one night – II Kings 19:35
- An angel protects Daniel in the lion's den – Dan. 6
- An angel (Gabriel) delivers a prophecy to Daniel of Israel's future – Dan. 9:20-27....and as an answer to prayer – Dan. 10:12-13
- Angels protect us – Ps. 34:7
- An angel frees Peter from prison – Acts 12:7-11
- An angel strikes Herod dead – Acts 12:21-23
- An angel rolls back the stone that covered Jesus' tomb – Matt. 28:2
- Angels at Jesus' tomb announce His resurrection – Matt. 28:1-7; MK 16:5-7; LK 24:4-7; JN 20:12
- Angels at Jesus' ascension announce that His return will be in the same way – Acts 1:10-11
- Angels announce Jesus' birth to a bunch of shepherds – LK 2:8-15
- An angel announces Jesus' birth to Mary – LK 1:26-37 & Joseph MT. 1:20-21, and to Zacharias – LK 1:11-20
- Angels long to look into salvation – I Pet. 1:12
- Angels have appeared to people and the people have not known they were angels – Heb. 13:2
- Angels neither marry nor procreate – MK 12:25 (& likely do not age)
- Angels oversee the well-being of children – MT 18:10
- When people do see angels, they are compelled to worship them – Rev. 22:8; although angels do not accept the worship of people – Rev. 22:9
- Angels carry out much of the judgment that takes place during the Tribulation in Revelation.
- Angels battle demons in the heavens – Eph. 6:12; Dan.10:12-13; Jude 9
- Angels are sent by God to minister to the saints – Heb. 1:14; & to minister to Christ – MT 4:11; LK 22:43

- Angels are sent by God to lead some astray by deceiving them – I Kings 22:19-23
- Jacob saw angels ascending & descending on a heavenly ladder – Gen. 28:12
- An angel directs Philip to the wilderness & whisks Philip away after the Ethiopian eunuch is converted and baptized
- An angel is instrumental in the conversion of Cornelius in Acts 10:3-7
- Angels carry dead believers into heaven – LK 16:22

Angels are heavily involved in history and are found throughout the bible in various roles either directly or indirectly. It should come as no surprise that in the book of Revelation, they are front and center in both worship & praise, and in carrying out God's orders with success and passion.

Back in Revelation 5:12, notice what the angelic host are saying about Christ - "*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!*" The worthiness of the Lamb is again related to the fact that He was slain – the central key to all of history and creation – and as a result, the benefits due Him are voluminous...power, wealth, wisdom, might, honour, glory & blessing! These angels are enraptured by what they know about God & Christ and by what they've seen take place throughout human history...and remember, this scene is yet future, so they've seen much more than we know, even if we had a vast knowledge of history.

II. Every Creature

v. 13

This statement by John seems completely universal – “every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them...”. How are we to understand this? Is this praise by everything that draws breath throughout creation at this particular time, or is this a prophetic scene even to John when Christ will have fully conquered and the wicked have been eradicated? Does it include fish, spiders, flies & bugs, elephants, monkeys, birds & giraffes? What about the demonic angels locked away in the Abyss already (II Pet. 4; Jude 6)? Are they joining in this praise? How about the people on earth, about to experience great tribulation – are they joining in this chorus of praise too?

It is certainly appropriate that all of creation would rejoice and sing praises to Christ as a result of His worthiness to take the scroll & open it. Romans 8: 20-23 says...

²⁰*For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*

Now this hope has arrived and salvation, final & full & the redemption of creation is at hand. Psalm 148:7-13 presents a glimpse of this:

⁷*Praise the LORD from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all deeps,*

⁸ *fire and hail, snow and mist,
stormy wind fulfilling his word!*

⁹ *Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!*

¹⁰ *Beasts and all livestock,
creeping things and flying birds!*

¹¹ *Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!*

¹² *Young men and maidens together,
old men and children!*

¹³ *Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted;
his majesty is above earth and heaven.*

However, we have to think that it is unlikely that, if this is happening at this point in time, that the wicked on earth, Satan, the demons, and the angels jailed in the Abyss are joining in.ⁱⁱ It is more likely that the animate creation and the redeemed are joining in. The others, the wicked, are the very ones from whom creation is being redeemed! This divinely empowered response, perhaps audible only to those God wills it to be heard by while the wicked remain “in the dark” & without “ears to hear”, blissfully unaware of their impending doom, is a blessing to those who love and revere God.

The praise going up is directed to God the Father & to the Lamb – an ascription of blessing, honour, glory & might forever. Judgment is about to unfold as God wraps up history to complete His purpose for creation in the first place – that He might receive full orbed glory and praise along with Christ. Thousands of years of history – of war, disease, famine, genocide, floods, earthquakes, volcanoes, typhoons, hurricanes, tsunamis, death, murders, lies, deceit, pride, etc. will finally & eternally be brought to cessation, and the created order, sensing the proximity of righteous vengeance cannot hold back. If they did, it is certain that the rocks, trees, plants and oceans would cry out in praise to God.

④

III. Amen

v. 14

Finally, after an indeterminate season of creation-wide praise, those closest to the throne – the 4 Living Creatures sound the Amen & the 24 Elders fall down and worship. The destruction of the wicked is finally at the door.

Next lesson – Lesson # 19

Rev. 6:1-2...The First Seal Judgment / Rider on a White Horse

ⁱ Source for most of this – C. Fred Dickason; Angels: Elect & Evil; Moody Press; 1975; pp. 17-23. I have added some examples of my own.

ⁱⁱ Henry M. Morris, The Revelation Record; Tyndale; 1983; pp. 105-106