

# The Experience of Praise

Thomas Robinson, "Lost in Praise 4," September 5, 2010

## Revelation 5:6-14

<sup>6</sup> And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup> And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.

<sup>8</sup> And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. <sup>9</sup> And they sang a new song, saying,

*"Worthy are you to take the scroll  
and to open its seals,  
for you were slain, and by your blood  
you ransomed people for God  
from every tribe and language and people and nation,  
<sup>10</sup> and you have made them  
a kingdom and priests to our God,  
and they shall reign on the earth."*

<sup>11</sup> Then 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, <sup>12</sup> 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!"*

<sup>13</sup> And 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!"*

<sup>14</sup> And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.

## Colossians 3:16

<sup>16</sup> Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, instructing and counseling one another in all wisdom through Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, singing with grace (*charis*) in your hearts to God.

<sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

## Psalms 98:1-9

<sup>1</sup> Oh sing to the LORD a new song,  
for he has done marvelous things! ...

<sup>3</sup> All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God.

<sup>4</sup> Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;  
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!

<sup>5</sup> Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre,  
with the lyre and the sound of melody!

<sup>6</sup> With trumpets and the sound of the horn

make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD!

<sup>7</sup> Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;  
the world and those who dwell in it!

<sup>8</sup> Let the rivers clap their hands;  
let the hills sing for joy together

<sup>9</sup> before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.  
He will judge the world with righteousness,  
and the peoples with equity.

## Psalms 150:6

<sup>6</sup> Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

1 Corinthians 14: 26

<sup>26</sup> What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? **When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.**

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## **Worship in the Heart of Creation**

Revelation takes us into a vision of God and the world, past and future. It articulates in vision the New Song revealed in Jesus, anticipated in the OT. The Lord comes to judge the world and His face is Jesus, the self-giving, ransoming Lamb, who draws the whole world into a renewed, responsible, sacred relationship to the whole creation.

Worship is celebrating God, the central value/worth in existence, around which everything finds its true place. Humans are a part of all creation, whose origin and goal is God.

## **Songs of Praise: Physical and Spiritual**

Singing combines, thought, inspiration, poetry, theology, musical creativity, physical sound, movement. It is a wonderful manifestation of the combination of body and spirit that God loves, and in which He reveals himself. With breath we combine poetry and faith while becoming musical instruments: strings, percussion. We need sense of balance.

Worship is a personal and community expression, a judgment of what is appropriate in uniting physical and spiritual. The NT specifies values and goals, not exact regulations. Throughout church history and before, worship has been an area of strong dispute.

## **Songs of Praise: Ritual and Spontaneity**

A few basic elements (word, supper, prayer, praise) make up the elements of worship. They leave great freedom - seen in early portrayals of worship. But a desire for unity and exclusion of misuse, led to strict formulation of liturgy by the 7th cent. Acts performed by clergy for God while people watch. Reformers tried to give worship back to the people: Luther: Inclusive. Calvin: Exclusive. Anglican: High Liturgy. Anabaptist: Free church.

Our tradition has been free church, non-liturgical, but often rigid. The restoration of NT Christianity opens us to evaluate all kinds of worship styles in the light of NT teaching.

## **Songs of Praise: A cappella and Instrumental**

Our tradition has been a cappella (non-instrumental), as a distinct commitment to be like the early church which was non-instrumental for many centuries. It was defended with reformation arguments, but for many the issue has become more about the most effective modes of worship and an affinity for the simple worship in the early church. It should not be a source of division. It is a tradition shared by other traditions.

A cappella singing emphasizes participation by all in music. It is enhanced as the congregation takes the music seriously on all levels, learns to sing better in all ways. It provides a basic foundation for worship but is open to special music by individuals or groups that minister to the congregation - all that truly builds up the community.

## **Songs of Praise Shaping All of Life**

Our music flows into “whatever we do in word or deed” all expresses God’s worth-ship.