



# Swept off your Feet

## Beyond Worship-as-Usual

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### CHAPTER 8

#### Worship and Praise Converge In Heaven

Worship in heaven coincides with praise eight times, three in the same context with singing and/or music and five in a context of spoken praise. When describing gestures of worship along with praise, heavenly narratives slightly outnumber earthly ones six to five.

Worship or Bowing with Singing, Music, and/or Praise—In Heaven				
Worshippers	Times	Greek	Association	NAS Verse
24 Elders	1	Proskuneo	Fall facedown and worship God, then cast their crowns and speak praise	Rev 4:8-11
Living Creatures and Elders	1	Proskuneo	Fall down and worship God singing praises	Rev 5:8-14
Angels, Elders, and Living Creatures	1	Proskuneo	Fall facedown and worship God saying praises	Rev 7:9-12
24 Elders	1	Proskuneo	fall facedown and worship God saying praises	Rev 11:13-17
24 Elders	1	Proskuneo	Fall down and worship God saying, “Hallelujah”	Rev 19:4
Heavenly Host	1	Shachah	Levites exhort Israel to praise stressing that the heavenly host bows down	Neh 9:5-6
Angelic Exhortation	1	Proskuneo	Multitude sings praise as an angel exhorts people on earth to worship	Rev 14:7
Proclamation	1	Proskuneo	Multitude sings praise proclaiming that all nations will worship God	Rev 15:3-4

Five times, John saw elders in heaven fall down and worship God.<sup>1</sup> Each celestial narrative portrayed by John includes expressions of praise without using a specific Greek word for praise. In addition to John's descriptions in The Revelation, Nehemiah depicts eight Levites exhorting Israel to praise God while stating that the heavenly host bows down.

## **Worship and Praise in Heaven**

### **1. 24 elders (Revelation 4:8-11)**

After falling facedown in heaven to worship God, 24 elders cast their crowns before His throne and then speak praises.

*Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship [shachah] him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."*  
(Rev 4:9-11 NAS)

### **2. Four Living Creatures and 24 Elders (Revelation 5:8-14)**

The 4 Living Creatures and 24 Elders worshiped the Lamb in heaven. They sang praise and asserted distinctions about God's worthiness as multitudes praised the Lamb along with many angels and elders who fell down and worshiped.

*When He [the Lamb] had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down [pipto] before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang [ado, a song of praise] a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." And the four living creatures kept*

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<sup>1</sup> Revelation 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4

*saying, “Amen.” And the elders **fell down** [pipto] and **worshiped** [proskuneo].*  
(Rev 5:8-14 NAS)

### **3. Angels, elders, and living creatures** (Revelation 7:9-12)

After an innumerable multitude in heaven stood and shouted praise, the angels, elders, and living creatures fell facedown and worshiped God speaking praise.

*And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they **fell** [pipto] **on their faces** before the throne and **worshiped** [proskuneo] God, **saying**, “Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”* (Rev 7:11-12 NAS)

### **4. 24 Elders** (Revelation 11:13-17)

Twenty-four elders **fell facedown** in heaven and **worshiped God** while **speaking** thanks and **praise** in response to an angel sounding the seventh trumpet after a great earthquake as loud voices announced, *“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.”*

*And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, **fell** [pipto] **on their faces** and **worshiped** [proskuneo] God, **saying**, “We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign.”* (Rev 11:16-17 NAS)

### **5. 24 Elders and Four Living Creatures** (Revelation 19:4)

Hallelujah makes its biblical debut in the New Testament near the end of Revelation. This Hebrew word literally means, “Let us praise the Lord”. In the Psalms, most translators render Hallelujah as, *“praise the Lord”*, or *“praise God”*. Without ever mentioning a Hebrew word for worship, various Psalms use this exclamation in songs of praise and expressions of gratitude.<sup>2</sup>

Revelation 19 repeats *“Hallelujah”* four times in verses 1, 3, 4, and 6. In a praise-charged atmosphere, multitudes in heaven shout *Hallelujah* three times while the 24 elders and four living creatures fall down and worship God saying, *“Amen. Hallelujah!”*

*And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures **fell down** [pipto] and **worshiped** [proskuneo] God who sits on the throne **saying**, “Amen. **Hallelujah!**”* (Rev 19:4 NAS)

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<sup>2</sup> See Psalm 106:1; Psalm 111:1; Psalm 112:1; Psalm 113:1; Psalm 117:1; and Psalm 135:1

## 6. Proclamation by Levites (Nehemiah 9:5-6 NAS)

After confessing and worshiping God for a fourth of the day, 8 priests exhort Israel to **stand up** and praise the Lord for His creative and life-giving accomplishments. They also proclaim that, “*the heavenly host bows down*”. The NIV translates this phrase, “*the multitudes of heaven worship you.*” The 8 Levites Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah praise God saying:

*“You alone are the LORD. You have made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host, The earth and all that is on it, The seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them. And the heavenly host bows down [shachah] before You.”* (Nehemiah 9:5-6 NAS)

References to praise and worship converge two other times in heaven where the Bible mentions a word for worship but does not describe a gesture associated with it.

## 7. An Exhortation by an Angel (Revelation 14:2-3,7 NAS )

Jesus stood on Mount Zion as 144-thousand saints sang a new song accompanied by a harp with thunderous voices from heaven. In this context, an angel flying in mid-heaven issued an exhortation with a loud voice saying,

**“worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters”.** (Revelation 14:7 NAS)

## 8. Proclamation by a Victorious Multitude (Revelation 15:2-4 NAS)

A multitude, “*victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name,*” stood on the sea of glass. They held harps and sang the praise-filled song of Moses and the Lamb saying,

*“Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For all the nations will come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed”.* (Rev 15:3-4 NAS)

Previous Chapter: Worship and Praise Converge on Earth

Next Chapter: Worship and Praise, David and Psalms