

# Why Should I Join the Crowd?



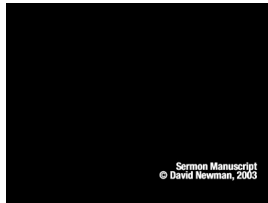
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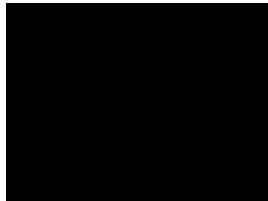
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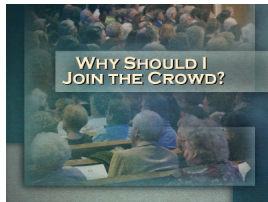
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## “Why Should I Join the Crowd?”

## Why Should I Join the Crowd?



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Have you ever stood face to face with royalty? In 1953 the world was caught up in royalty as Elizabeth II was crowned queen of England. The coronation ceremony in Westminster Abbey was aired live to millions of people over the new medium of television. Every day during the next week the queen held a banquet at Buckingham Palace. Each evening after the banquet the queen with other members of the royal family would appear on the balcony of the palace and wave to the crowd.

A little boy visiting London at the time was caught up in the frenzy and begged his parents to take him to go see the queen.

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The parents succumbed to the pleading and took the little boy to the palace. When they arrived at 6 p.m. they found that half a million people were there ahead of them. A sea of people stretched over every available piece of space in front of the palace. They were way at the back and had no binoculars.

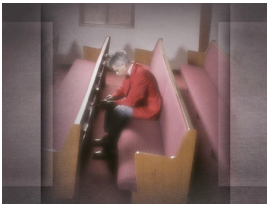
Because he was only a boy he wasn't tall enough to see over the heads of the crowd. So he began worming his way toward the front.

His parents were frantic about losing us so they followed apologizing at every step as they elbowed their way through trying to keep up with him.

Finally he arrived at the front of the crowd pressed up against the iron fence that ringed the palace.

There they waited and waited for the queen. Finally at 11:30 p.m. she came out and waved to everyone for about five minutes then went back inside.

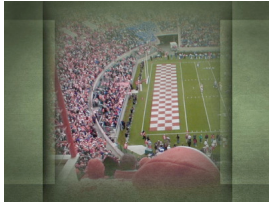
What a thrill it was for that little boy to see the queen. And what made the thrill much bigger was being part of more than half a million people all anticipating the arrival of the queen on the balcony. There is something about being part of a huge crowd that you lose when you are by yourself or with just a few people.



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There is something exciting about being a part of a crowded event and something equally depressing about attending something where hardly anyone shows up. Have you ever attended a big church where only a few people show up each week? Its demoralizing. There is a psychology of space, of crowds. Fifty people in a room built for sixty feels very different than fifty people in a room built for one thousand people.

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Have you ever been to a huge sporting event like a professional football game? It's quite an experience to share the stands with 50,000 other people all shouting your heads off. When you are with a group of people something happens to you. The enthusiasm of the crowd begins to infect you. You become involved. Now you could sit down at home watching on television but it's not the same. Being part of a crowd with a common purpose inspires you and lifts you up.

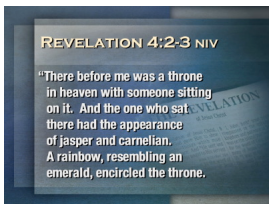
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Today we are talking about building a biblical community, about why we should join the crowd, why we should come together en masse, in a group. Joining the crowd today is part of the preparation for joining the crowd before the throne of God. Let's take a peek at what worship is like before the throne of God. John describes what he sees in vision as God takes him into heaven. We find this description in Revelation chapters four and five.

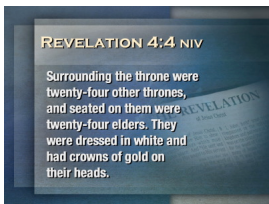
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(verses 2-3) "There before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.

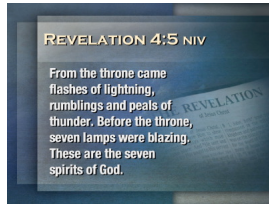
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(verse 4) Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.

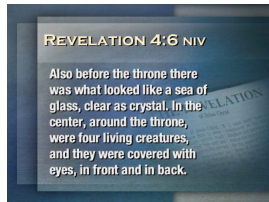
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(verse 5) From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.

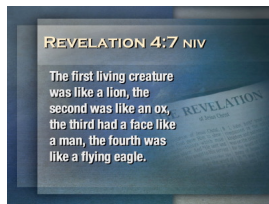
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(verse 6) Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.

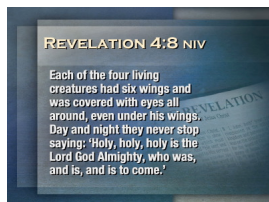
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(verse 7) The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.

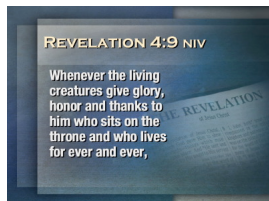
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(verse 8) Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

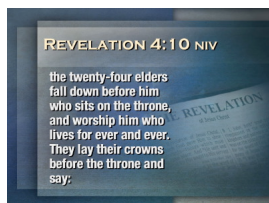
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(verse 9) Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever,

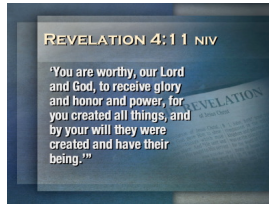
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(verse 10) the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

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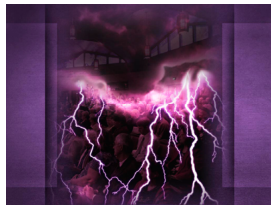
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(verse 11) "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

(Revelation 4:2-11 NIV)

The scene John describes is full of movement, sound, and praise. As you look at God's throne you see coming from it and surrounding it "flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder."

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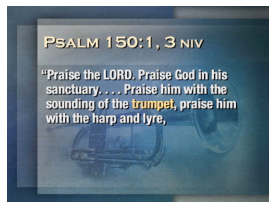


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What would you think if coming to church here at \_\_\_\_\_ you found the sanctuary filled with a cloud, lightning flashing all around you, thunder crashing into your ears? You would be filled with awe, maybe even a little fright. You would certainly be paying full attention to what was going on.

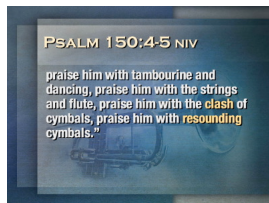
Worship of God is not something done quietly, in a whisper.

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21

As the Psalmist tells, "Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary. . . . Praise him with the sounding of the **trumpet**, praise him with the harp and lyre,



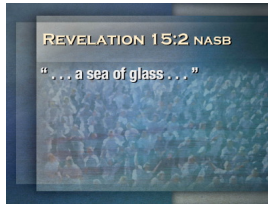
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praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the **clash** of cymbals, praise him with **resounding** cymbals."

(Psalm 150:1,3-5 NIV)

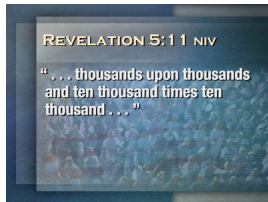
The trumpet is not a quiet instrument. Cymbals are not a quiet instrument. When you come before almighty God our worship is to be inspiring and full of vigor.

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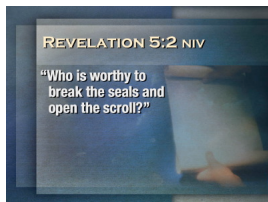
Before the throne of God there is a “sea of glass,” and according to Revelation 15:2 (NASB) standing on it are all those who have gained the victory in Jesus, a crowd of countless millions.



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In chapter 5 we find in verse 11 that “thousands upon thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand” of angels surround the throne singing praise to God. And why is there so much praise going on? Why so much joy? Why so many Hallelujahs?

Before all this joy erupted we find much sadness. In chapter five God, sitting on his throne, holds a scroll in his hand, sealed with seven seals. This must be a very important scroll because a mighty angels proclaims,



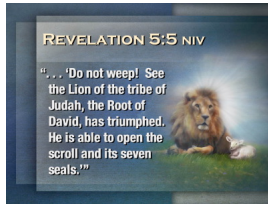
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“Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?”

(Revelation 5:2 NIV)

John looks and looks and sees that not one person among those 24 elders, four living creatures covered with eyes, the billions of angels, not one can break those seals. John is full of utter sadness and he sheds copious tears.

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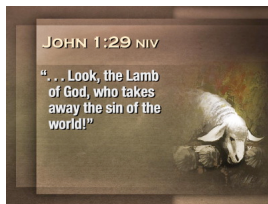


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In the middle of this cessation of joy one of the elders says to John “Do not weep! See the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

(Revelation 5:5 NIV)

John looks and instead of seeing a majestic Lion he sees a bleeding lamb—a lamb standing in the middle of the 24 elders and the throne looking as if it has been killed. This lamb takes the scroll and opens it. At that moment everyone falls on their knees and worships.



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What is the meaning of all these symbols? The key symbol is the lamb. John the Baptist announced to the people as he sees Jesus coming “. . . Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

(John 1:29 NIV)

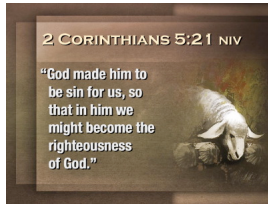


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The Jewish people were used to sacrificing a lamb every time they sinned. Every day at morning and evening the priests killed a lamb, pointing forward to when the Lamb of God would give his life. Because of sin everyone in this world is under sentence of death. There is no way that we can escape this sentence unless—Jesus offers to take our place.



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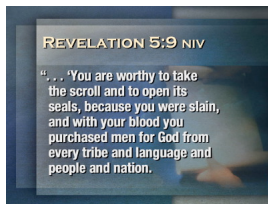


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"God made him to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."  
(2 Cor. 5:21).

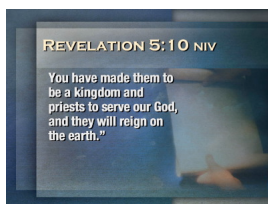
We who are under sentence of death find that our sentence has been remitted. That not only will we not die but we will live forever.

This is what brings us to pour out such praise to God. The unfallen beings from heaven and other worlds praise God too when they see the supreme sacrifice and his awesome love displayed on the cross. Then three groups fall on their knees to praise God. The first group is the 24 elders and four living creatures.



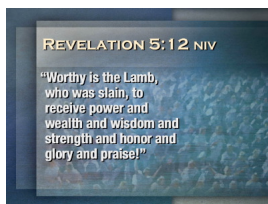
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"... You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.



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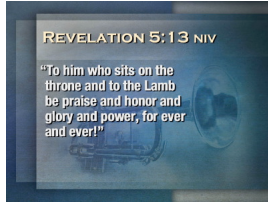
You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."  
(Revelation 5:9-10 NIV)



32

The billions of angels then add their glorious exclamation.  
"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"  
(Revelation 5:12 NIV)

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The third group are the redeemed of all ages including you and me.

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

(Revelation 5:13 NIV)

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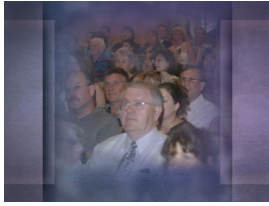


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Now please notice something very important about worship. Most of us come to church, to the worship service, expecting to be blessed, inspired, encouraged, by the praise team, and the preacher. Is that not the case? But you will find no choir singing to us in heaven, no praise team lifting us up and certainly there is no preacher.

Henry Ward Beecher, the most famous preacher, and one of the greatest orators, of the 19<sup>th</sup> century went away on holiday and his brother took the pulpit. When the people discovered that their favorite preacher would not be there that day some of them began to make for the exit. Beecher's brother suddenly stood up and in a loud voice said, "All of you who came to worship Henry Ward Beecher may leave. But all who came to worship God may stay."

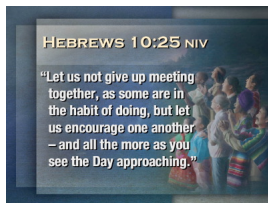
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Worship is not entertainment although it should be interesting. Worship is not being passive, sitting in the pew, or listening to the music. Worship is not feasting on the words of the preacher. Worship is not something we receive but something we give. Worship is each one giving God His worth, praising God for what He has done for me. God is the audience and everyone in this room is a performer before God. Yes, you and I are on the stage and God is sitting in the audience to receive our praise, our thanks, our congratulations.

That is why we join the crowd, the group, that is why it is so important to come together. Hear what the writer to the Hebrews says,



36

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”  
(Hebrews 10:25 NIV)

We meet together to encourage each other by giving to God in united form our praise and our thanks. When you come to worship remember that you will receive to the extent that you put something into it.

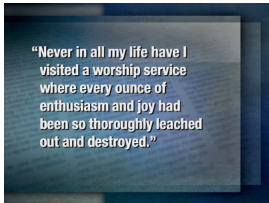
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We have received the most wonderful gift that has ever been given. All the gold in Fort Knox cannot buy it. All the power from the highest position cannot obtain it. All the knowledge and degrees you might receive cannot find it. Almighty God, the King of the Universe, the Creator of all life, who with one breath could vaporize this world into nothing, this God, loves us so much that He gave His life that you and I might live for ever, that you and I might never hurt again, that you and I will never suffer anymore, that you and I can enjoy the ceaseless ages of eternity forever and ever.

And best of all we will be with Jesus, face to face, always with Him, always looking into His kind face, His tender eyes, looking at His inviting smile. This is what we look forward to and shout to the heavens. Why should we not rejoice with our loudest voices?



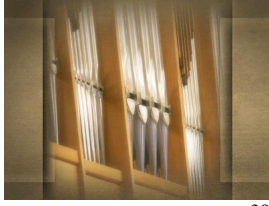
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A newspaper reporter in Texas would visit a different church each week and write a report in his weekly column. One Sabbath he visited an Adventist church in rural Texas. This is what he wrote,

"Never in all my life have I visited a worship service where every ounce of enthusiasm and joy had been so thoroughly leached out and destroyed."

How sad. But this happens when all we want is to receive and we have nothing to give.

## Why Should I Join the Crowd?



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Imagine right now that you are seated at The Royal Albert Hall in London, England, which seats more than five thousand people for concerts. Now imagine that somehow you are given a ticket to attend Handel's oratorio *Messiah*. There before you sings a 500 voice choir accompanied by the London Philharmonic orchestra and the second largest pipe organ in Britain. When you come to the Hallelujah chorus you stand with 5,000 others. There you experience the words of this majestic paean of praise to God which come from three sections of the book of Revelation.



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“Hallelujah: **for** the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.  
(Rev 19:6 NIV)

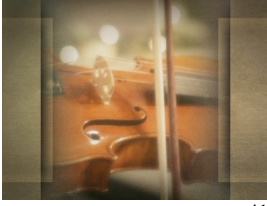
The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, **and** of his Christ; **and** he shall **reign for ever and ever**.

(Rev 11:15 NIV)

**KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**

(Rev 19:6 NIV)

## Why Should I Join the Crowd?



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You just can't help yourself and you sing along. Your spine tingles as mighty choir, the orchestra, and five thousand voices shout out their praise to God.

I end this message with the London Philharmonic Choir and the London Philharmonic Orchestra leading us in this mighty chorus of praise and worship to our God. You may sing along as well.

(If you have a recording of the Hallelujah Chorus it might be nice to play it right now)

Why join the crowd? Why participate in worship with others? So we may be encouraged and filled with hope, with joy, and most of all, with Jesus.



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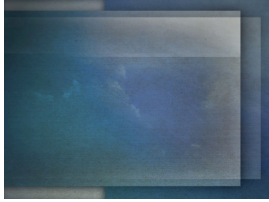
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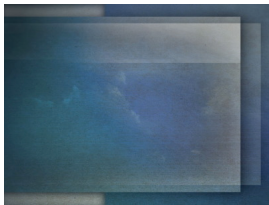
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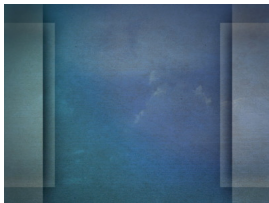
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