

“Worthy of Praises” - A Teaching On the Song

By Lynn DeShazo

I have recommended a steady diet of the Book of Psalms to aspiring songwriters for as long as I can remember. They have certainly provided me with a rich source of song ideas over the years, including “Worthy of Praises”.

The opening verse, written as a call to worship, is drawn from Psalm 24:7-10. This antiphonally sung psalm was used to accompany the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant into the city of Jerusalem and into the sanctuary. The International Bible Commentary with NIV (F.F. Bruce, Zondervan) notes that this psalm may have been written for the occasion in which King David brought up the ark from the house of Obed-edom into Jerusalem (see II Samuel 6:12-19). The ark, of course, is the symbol of Yahweh’s presence. As the ark approached the entrance to the city or the temple, in royal procession, verses 7-10 were sung:

*Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors,
That the King of glory may come in!
Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O gates,
And lift them up, O ancient doors,
That the King of glory may come in!
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory.
(NASB)*

I decided to see how The Message bible (Peterson, Navpress) rendered these verses. I had to laugh when I read the following:

*Wake up, you sleepyhead city!
Wake up, you sleepyhead people!
King-Glory is ready to enter.*

If you've ever been a worship leader faced with the challenge of leading a sleepy-eyed congregation into God's presence on a Sunday morning, then you can truly appreciate those words! Psalm 24 reminds us, however, that we gather to worship the King of glory! We should prepare ourselves to properly receive and honor the Presence of the Lord. Open the gates of your heart and your spirit, and begin to worship Him. Yield your physical posture as well, and bow down.

The song's second verse expands this call to worship the King of glory to the nations of the earth, echoing the words of Revelation 5:9:

*And they sang 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."*

Among the earliest revelations of God found in the Scriptures is that He is *holy*. Then, in the Bible's closing pages, we find the heavenly beings declaring that the Lion of Judah, who is also the Lamb, is found *worthy* "to take the book and to break its seals" because He was *slain*. The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth:

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures," (I Cor. 15:3-4)

Hallelujah! Our Lord Jesus Christ has obtained eternal redemption for us through His own blood. Let's join the myriads of heaven who are "saying with a loud voice,"

*"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches
And might and honor and glory and blessing." (Rev. 5:12)*

He is indeed "Worthy of Praises"!

This article © 2004 by Lynn DeShazo

Worthy of Praises

Lift up Your heads, O ye gates
Be lifted up, ancient doors
People of God, open your hearts
Bow down and worship the Lord
He is the Lord strong and mighty
He is the Head over all

Chorus:

Holy, almighty Yahweh is holy, holy
Worthy, He is exalted and worthy
Worthy of praises

Alternate Chorus:

Holy, almighty God He is holy, holy....

All nations come, worship the Lamb
Join in the heavenly song
For He was slain and with His blood
He has redeemed us to God
He is the Lord strong and mighty
He is the head over all

Bridge:

Worthy the Lamb Who was slain
Worthy of power and riches and honor and praise

Words and music by Lynn DeShazo

© 2001 Integrity's Hosanna! Music/ASCAP

All rights reserved. Lyrics reprinted by permission.