Do you like the sound of the organ? Some might say it’s not a pipe organ so it’s not the same. Others might say the electronic sound is a good quality. It’s worked for 25 years. Would it surprise you that not everyone likes its sound. There are those who think that the organ is a little boring. It isn’t the instrument of choice for pop music or music you hear on the radio. Lutheran worship, that’s about the only place you’ll find an organ being used as the primary instrument.

Like it or hate it, it does provide us music. And that music can be really beautiful. The beat and the key of the music can add or subtract from that beauty. Much also depends on who plays it. Our main organist, Sheree Jones, does a great job each week. Her hard work ensures the music made by the organ sounds its absolute best.

In the second lesson we’re seeing with the apostle John a vision. And what a vision it is. We glimpse inside the throne room of heaven, behind the scenes to see what’s happening. And the sight is marvelous. Would you believe even more marvelous was the sound. John doesn’t describe the instruments, the voices, or the tones, but he does describe what this music says. From John’s pen to our ears this is…

**The sweetest music you’ll ever hear**

**In heaven around the throne**

**To the Lamb who we sing to**

The lights went down in the seating area. They were important to get to seats, but the show was about to start. The most important thing was what people came to see, highlight and focus everything on the stage and its actors and actresses. When John received his vision it was much like that. He focused first on the throne. He did get a little distracted by the area around the throne, who was there, and everything else. But once it was important for him his focus was drawn back to the throne.

The biggest crowd I’ve ever been a part of at a game I think probably was around 70,000. It’s really cool to be a part of such a large group, especially if most are cheering for one team. Whenever that team did something good a loud cheer would go up from the fans. The scene spread out before John had a large number of people. Their focus was on one thing, the throne at the center. When the one at the center sitting on the throne did something great the large crowd cheered. In fact they sang. First the saints already in glory; then the angels. Finally the whole group couldn’t contain themselves and broke out into song.

The power in this vision comes from the sheer numbers. First the angels gathered around the throne are said to number, ***“thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand.”*** Does that mean there were 100 million angels? Not necessarily. The idea is not to count. Then add to that the number of believers from the Old and New Testaments. Then the four living creatures representing the entire creation. The number of people and creatures gathered around the throne was a huge number, a tremendous sight. This throng of people and angels gathered to see one thing, the Lamb at the center.

We like the power of numbers. Numbers tell us if we’re doing a good job or not in production. Numbers are used to help determine if we get into college or not. Numbers can show success or failure. So what do the numbers of Christianity show or what about this congregation? Lately the numbers have been going down. Attendance figures down across the board: worship, Bible study, Sunday school. Because people don’t like being part of something that’s failing maybe it’s time for even more to get out before things get really bad. And when looking at the numbers, who gets to determine success or failure? We like that position, judging others by their numbers, flaunting our numbers, showing off our successes, or hiding our failures. Achieve the numbers, make the grades, bring in the profits and everything is okay. Go the other direction and we don’t want anything to do with that.

You’ve probably been to a concert or live show where the person singing had that great voice. Perfect tone, pitch right on, and everything about it just sounded heavenly. There’s power in song and music. The song of the angels and the song creation sings sounded even better and more powerful than the best singer you’ve ever heard. It wasn’t how they sang, but what ***“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!*** This song is the best you’ll ever hear.

With so many singing and the words they sing so powerful we know there’s power in this vision. But it’s not because of the huge numbers of people. It’s not because of great accompaniment. No the power is in the number one, as in one Savior. The power is in the one at the center of the throne. There’s only one, Jesus, the only Savior we need. He was slain so we would live. He rose so we would rise. Power comes from him and flows to us and it’s because of him we’ll be there gathered around his throne someday.

We long to be there. On your worst day God still wants you to hear the music and singing. This vision is for your comfort and assurance. It’s so you know that the only way to be there from here is by connection with the Lamb who was slain. Connect to Jesus who died for you. Connect to Jesus who lives for you. Help others connect to the same benefits of the Lamb that we have. It’s the most important thing in life and there’s only one way, through Christ Jesus.

Music is personal for everybody. It’s okay to like country, jazz, rock, classical, or something else. God made us different. Each of you would have a different answer for the sweetest music you’ve ever heard. But we’ll join together someday in one song, the song we sing gathered around the throne in heaven. There’s only one way to get there and that’s to know what the Lamb who was slain did for you and to trust in him. Then we’ll sing the sweetest music we’ve ever heard to the Lamb who we long to sing to.

What makes someone worthy? It depends. Worthy to receive the Medal of Honor you have to do something brave in battle. Worthy to receive an A+ you have to do outstanding work on your homework assignments. Worthy to receive a piece of bread you just have to be hungry. Worthy to receive the honor and glory talked about here in Revelation you have to be the Lamb who was slain. And Jesus is. Not once, not twice, but three times in succession three different groups sing to him just how much worth he has. Each group builds on the energy of the other until an apex is reached. Then all creation joins in ***“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever!”***

Now remember how poor Jesus looked. How weak and hopeless hanging on the cross. Think about how he didn’t even own anything. Think of the shame, disgrace, and ridicule he faced. How could someone who looked pathetic receive accolades like these? The world wants to know, it likes strength and power. We want to know. We like the same, mainly because we’re too often weak and hopeless. We need someone better than we are to hang on to. All our friends have let us down, our family too. We have nothing and so we reach out for anything. On the outside Jesus doesn’t seem to be what we need.

But now remember the power Jesus showed in overthrowing Satan. Remember Jesus setting aside full use of his divine omniscience and how now all things are back under his control fully. Honor, glory, and praise are his now because of what he suffered. Through all that he came out victorious. The angels rightly sing to this Lamb who was slain because they know who he was and is. They knew what he did to save the world. And so do we. Now we too can join their song and sing to the Lamb who was slain for us so that we might be saved.

What makes music sweet is definitely in the ear of the one listening. Some wouldn’t want anything else on Sunday mornings except the organ while others would certainly like something else. That’s what sin does, it creates disagreement and division. But in heaven everything will be different. In heaven we’ll have one focus, the throne in the center, and the one who sits on it. The Lamb who was slain will be who we sing praise to forever. We’ll add our ‘Amen’ as we fall down and worship Christ our Savior, the Lamb who was slain with the sweetest music we’ll ever hear.