



Music is powerful. Music is an influencer. Music is a messenger telling a story, conveying an emotion, bringing a memory. Music is transcendent and illuminating. It possesses the power to pierce otherwise impenetrable walls, scale endless heights and fathom deepest depths. Music is a bearer of secrets and a guardian of endless mysteries not yet explored.

Music is divine in its origin and spiritual in its nature. God Himself is musical. Is it any wonder that humanity is utterly captivated with such an enigmatic expression of creative genius -profoundly real, nearly tangible, yet somehow baffling and barely out of reach? Music is a gift. Music is a dynamic spiritual portal, an invisible highway transporting the glory and the purposes of God into created order. Music, celebrated and revealed in worldwide, is one of Heaven's best kept secrets.

In case you didn't know it, God is a singer. ¹⁷ *The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, **He will rejoice over you with singing.***" (Zeph.3:17). God didn't just sing, He sings now. God is musical in nature. He gives expression to His delight through what must only be described as indescribable and experiential -the deep inner workings of the intricate complexity of God's emotional and intellectual makeup fashioned into chorus and paired with sound, rhythm, light, beauty, color, movement and power.

A central component in the heavenly exaltation of Jesus, the Risen One, over death includes His song of praise to God, His Father. *"I [Jesus] will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."* (Ps.22:22; Heb.2:12). Jesus leads in song and sings together with His brethren, redeemed humanity, both Jew and gentile. It is the redeemed who sing to God as a reflection of His own glory hidden within them as echoes of joyful refrain wash over the throne of God by a ransomed people of the Spirit.

Isaiah 42 looks ahead to a time when all of creation will sing together because of the wonders of God's purposes being birthed into the earth, finally freeing creation from its long imprisonment to decay and entropy. ¹⁰ *Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you coastlands and you inhabitants of them!* Harmoniously, Arab peoples burst into soulful rapture along with their Jewish brethren as Messiah, the Warrior-King, the son of David triumphs over the works of darkness, abolishing the hostility and animosity of the peoples toward one another and reconciling in Himself the two, Jew and gentile, into one new man in Him (Is.42:11-12).

Throughout history the song of the Lord has waved victoriously as the banner over His people. In scripture's first recorded human song, Moses declares the high praises of God as the covenant-Lord triumphs mightily over Israel's enemies. David, the man after God's own heart, the ruddy warrior from the tribe of Judah, was also the sweet psalmist of Israel (2 Sam.23:1) composing nearly half of the book of Psalms. He was given to music, to lyric and stanza, and to the creation of musical instruments (1 Chron.23:5) as an expression of his devotion to the Lord. The book of Revelation boasts the last recorded song in the Bible as the redeemed who have come out of the great tribulation rejoice as the judgments of God will liberate the nations that they may come and worship before the Great King over all the earth!

Song has always found place in the culture of the peoples no matter how diverse they may be. It is no different in the culture of the Kingdom of God. In a most beautiful statement of creativity and humility, God has hidden dimensions of His power within the realm of music. We see an early example of this in the story of Israel's conquest of Jericho, chief city of Canaan. While the priesthood sang at the front of the army God toppled the massive walls of that ancient fortress. In David's day, God made a radical change to the priesthood, introducing both singers and musicians to accompany the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem. Day and night worship teams shifted in and out of scheduled rotations in order to maintain the watch of the Lord. Season after season, as the presence of God was attended to by worshipful melody, the Bible records that David and his armies subdued the enemies of Israel until there was peace in all of the land. Solomon's reign subsequently ushered in an unprecedented time of peace and prosperity for Israel and the glorified temple with its gilded inner sanctum became the figurehead of its golden era. Throughout the generations, as the reign of Israel's kings marched on, seasons of great national and spiritual calamity would usher in the prophetic mandate to restore the house of the Lord and re-institute its Davidic ensemble. Seven leaders, in fact, undertook the task in their generation to establish the divine order of priestly ministry and music given to king David. Each time this happened, spiritual breakthrough, deliverance and military victory followed (2 Chr. 8:14-15; 2 Chron.20:20-22,28; 2 Chr. 23:1-24:27; 2 Chr. 29:1-36; 30:21; 2 Chr. 35:1-27; Ezra 3:10; Neh. 12:28-47).

In approximately 765 BC, the prophet Amos declared that one day in the future God would again raise up the foundations of David's tent and restore the dynasty of David to Israel. Filled with the glory of the future Davidic King, Israel would become chief among all nations possessing even the lands and hearts of their enemies, winning them to the God of Israel. But David's reign wasn't just national, it was spiritual. God chose David, a singing shepherd to lead His people. God re-ordered the priesthood, uncovered the Ark of the Covenant and surrounded it with musical intercession. God filled David with zeal (Ps.69:9) and understanding (1 Chron.28:19) to begin plans and preparations to build Him a house (1 Chron.29:1-6) where He would dwell. God did all of these things because, through David, He would not only institute a new worship order, He would outline a pattern of the reign of His Son who would one day sit on the throne of Israel forever. The musical order of worship during David's tenure laid the foundation for what is to come -a musical priesthood filling the earth with singing and intercession (Mal.1:11). Upon this

foundation the government of God will sit, enthroned, establishing righteousness and justice for the peoples and realizing the brilliance of His glory manifested (Hab.2:14).

Almost 800 years later, at the great council of elders in Jerusalem, the apostle James makes this statement regarding the inclusion of gentiles into the Messianic community. *“Men and brethren, listen to me: ¹⁴ Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. ¹⁵ And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: ¹⁶ ‘After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; ¹⁷ So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord who does all these things.’”* (Ac.15:13-17). Here James quotes directly from the prophet Amos with some obvious modifications intended to emphasize particular aspects of the text related to the current situation. James recognizes that gentile converts, filled with the Spirit, are being drawn into God’s Kingdom as a partial fulfillment of Amos’ prophecy. He recognizes the application in his day of a divine promise that will be fulfilled completely one day when Jesus sits as King in Jerusalem.

The concepts of worship as warfare and worship releasing a great harvest of souls are clear biblical doctrines when we have eyes to see them. The Psalms declare that the throne, or power of God’s rule, is released as worship ascends. *“³ But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.”* (Ps.22:3). This truth is echoed in the New Testament as the apostle Paul exhorts the Ephesian believers to resist sin by pursuing the power of the Spirit released through the singing of the corporate church. *“¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”* (Eph.5:18-19). The book of Revelation is replete with testimony of the saints in heaven singing to God -rejoicing in His judgments, lauding His worth and glorying in His might and beauty. When the excellencies of the Godhead are on display creation sings. It’s our most innate response. God sings, we sing, creation sings.

Throughout the Bible, the power of song so often reflects the joy of knowing and experiencing God. *“¹² Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, streaming to the goodness of the Lord for wheat and new wine and oil, for the young of the flock and the herd; their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, and they shall sorrow no more at all.”* (Jer.31:12). In the book of Hosea, God speaks tenderly through the prophet to His wayward people saying, *“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her. I will give her her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.”* (Hos.2:14-15). This is an interesting text because this restoration of singing is linked to the time and song of Moses. There, at the beginning of Israel’s nationhood she rejoiced in the power and provision of the God of Abraham as He drew her toward Himself in love. As both her betrothed and her covenant-Lord He worked wonders that shook and fascinated Jacob’s descendants. Awed, they responded and expressed their gratitude through songs of joy. It was this fascination with Him that God longed to restore to His people in Hosea’s day. It is this fascination that the saints will experience on the sea of glass before the throne of God in Heaven (Rev.15:2-3). The song of the Spirit sung by the people of God reflects their utter fascination with Him. Songs of fascination inspired and fueled by a movement of the Holy Spirit at the end of the age will be the hallmark of revival in the nations -*a revival of singing.*

One of the primary battlegrounds on which the allegiance of the sons of men is warred over is the battleground of music. Spiritual forces contend for the souls of mankind and music is their weapon. Stirring the heart and inspiring the mind, ideals, narratives, thoughts, suggestions and conclusions are neatly packaged in clever stanzas and wrapped in chords, melodies, rhythmic beats and sublime electronic

arrangements. *“Americans streamed a record of nearly 1.15 trillion (!) songs during the past 12 months. That equates to roughly 3,500 songs for each of the country's 327 million inhabitants and marks a 29 percent increase of the 2018 total. At 746 billion, the number of on-demand audio streams grew by 24 percent in 2019, while on-demand video streams (think YouTube) jumped 41 percent to 401 billion. The number of songs streamed over the internet has increased more than tenfold between 2013 and 2019.”*¹

Though it's not quite as easy to quantify the number of Christian worship songs streamed or viewed over the last 12 months it is still relatively easy to see that these songs are following the same trend as other music during this time. Platforms like YouTube record numbers of viewed music videos. One of the most popular worship songs of the last two years has over 25 million views alone from just a single performance at a weekend conference! That's just one song from one artist sung at one event. This doesn't include the number of listens for that same song from on-line streaming services around the world, radio and live versions sung at church services and worship concerts. There are more Christian music artists and worship leaders writing, producing and singing more God-centered songs over the past 10 and 20 years than in all of church history combined! These trends in music are telling. They reveal the hunger of humanity to be captured in the beauty and message of song and to drink deeply of its supernatural properties. Because God has designed for music to be a conduit of the supernatural it is a critical medium to guard. Unguarded, it becomes a highway for darkness to ensnare and indoctrinate its captive audience, but when the music industry yields to the Kingdom of God the power and message of the gospel travels at a light-speed around the globe. Technological advancement has created a capacity for gospel saturation never before imagined in the minds of any other generation in world history. Carrying the message of the glory and power of Jesus around the earth, music and technology together comprise an element of the missions-movement that is hard to duplicate. But the sound of singing isn't only reflective of an industry, it also encapsulates the sincere response of those that have become utterly fascinated with God. As we anticipate revival in our cities, regions, and nations may we have understanding of the nature of what is to come, and may we make room God to move as He longs to do.

“Yes, they shall sing of the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord.” -Psalm 138:5

¹ <https://www.statista.com/chart/14647/music-streams-in-the-united-states/>