

A LifeGuide® Bible Study
SONGS FROM SCRIPTURE
9 STUDIES FOR INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS
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Getting the Most Out of *Songs from Scripture*

To get the most out of *Songs from Scripture*, imagine yourself in the audience listening to the climactic choral segment of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. As you study these biblical songs, imagine how the music would sound if written to match the theme of the lyrics. These themes have not been set to music, but they come down to us as powerful expressions of personal faith at critical junctures in the story line of the Bible from creation to redemption.

“Sing praises to God, sing praises; / sing praises to our King, sing praises. / For God is the King of all the earth; / sing to him a psalm of praise” (Psalm 47:6–7). Songs lift our hearts and minds. They powerfully convey truth poetically and musically. God commands us to love him totally and exclusively with the union of our emotion, intellect and will. That’s why he included songs when he inspired the words of the Bible.

Some biblical songs are lyrical, and they fit our desire for the symmetry of words and music. The psalms, for example, fit admirably as hymns, even today. But the Bible’s songs also include stunningly simple and classic summaries of foundational

truth. Genesis 1, for example, was not composed to be set to music, but in the larger sense the majesty, beauty and power of the creation story have served to inspire countless songs of praise.

Because songs were the major means of teaching and transmitting God's truth in earlier centuries, the New Testament writers did not teach truth in poetry to the same degree we find in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, apart from straight narratives, songs in the broadest sense illuminate the pages of the Gospels, Epistles and Revelation. Apostolic declarations constituted the early church's repertoire of songs.

Hebrew poetry does not fit the literary formats of historic English poetry. Worshipers of the God who inspired the Old Testament are therefore required to do more thoughtful reflection than usual. But to be quiet before God and meditate on his songs brings immense spiritual dividends.

This work is not a textbook about or guide to biblical poetry. It is intended to spark communion with God through our emotions, making for truly inspiring worship. Biblical songs inspire both meditation and celebration. This study guide is intended to call God's people to find eternal truth in new and fresh ways so their worship experiences are more satisfying personally and more pleasing to God.

Suggestions for Individual Study

1. As you begin each study, pray that God will speak to you through his Word.
2. Read the introduction to the study and respond to the personal reflection question or exercise. This is designed to help you focus on God and on the theme of the study.
3. Each study deals with a particular passage so that you can delve into the author's meaning in that context. Read and reread the passage to be studied. The questions are written using the language of the New International Version, so you may wish to use that version of the Bible. The New Revised Standard Version is also recommended.
4. This is an inductive Bible study, designed to help you discover for yourself what Scripture is saying. The study includes three types of questions. Observation questions ask about the basic facts: who, what, when, where and how. Interpretation questions delve into the meaning of the passage. Application questions help you discover the implications of the text for growing in Christ. These three keys unlock the treasures of Scripture.
5. Write your answers to the questions in the spaces provided or in a personal journal. Writing can bring clarity and deeper understanding of yourself and of God's Word.
5. It might be good to have a Bible dictionary handy. Use it to look up any unfamiliar words, names or places.

6. Use the prayer suggestion to guide you in thanking God for what you have learned and to pray about the applications that have come to mind.

7. You may want to go on to the suggestion under “Now or Later,” or you may want to use that idea for your next study.

Songs from Scripture

1 Song of Creation *Psalm 8*

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+8&version=NLT>

For the first time, a litter of four infant star siblings have been seen gestating in the belly of a gas cloud. Researchers say the finding supports the theory that most stars do not begin their lives alone. In the Perseus star-forming region, four stars are emerging from a single parent filament, and have been observed moving together as a family. Three of the siblings are balls of gas (within the larger gas filament) that researchers say are on the cusp of collapsing into stars, while the fourth sibling has already become a star.

Scientists estimate that more than half of all stars like our sun live with a partner star, and yet scientists have little observational evidence to suggest whether these stars are born together, like twins, or come together later in life. Double-star systems affect many areas of astronomy, including the search for black holes and for habitable exoplanets. The new findings could give scientists a better idea of how multistar systems emerge.

GROUP DISCUSSION. On a regular basis we learn about some new, mind-stretching aspect of creation. How do you respond to these kinds of discoveries?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Think about the last time you sensed God's presence as you marveled at something in creation. What made this experience possible for you?

Psalm 8 is one of several songs celebrating God as Creator. The singers accepted that the observable world around them—earth, skies and seas—was the handiwork of God who was therefore owed praise and obedience. They found in him the security they needed when facing overwhelming enemies of one kind or another. *Read Psalm 8.*

1. In your own words, what are the song's major themes and goals?
2. What is wrapped up in the confession “our Lord”?
3. How does your personal relationship with God affect the way you look at creation?

4. As you reflect on God's majesty in creation, what thoughts, ideas and questions occur to you?

5. In what ways does your response compare to the singers'?

6. How would you answer the song's question in verse 4?

7. How have you experienced God's care?

How do you respond to his care?

8. What difference does it make that you are "crowned ... with glory and honor" (v. 5)?

9. What responsibilities has God given to humans (vv. 6–8)?

In what ways do you, or could you, fulfill these responsibilities?

10. How does this song help you praise God?

How does it help you apply God's power and love to your needs for faith, hope and courage?

Ask God to make you sensitive to his power, love and wisdom in the world around you. Pray that you will not allow the world's noise to keep you from thanking and praising his majesty and name in all the earth.

Now or Later

Rehearse this creation song in your mind and compose a song of your own. Keep your main points simple so you can comfortably and wisely share them as part of your Christian witness. For example, consider how song writers ancient and modern have rephrased Psalm 8.

Songs from Scripture

2

Song of Deliverance

Exodus 15:1–21

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+15%3A1%20%80%9321&version=NLT>

Few events in history have captured the imaginations of poets, writers and filmmakers like Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt. Called simply "the exodus," it has been the cornerstone of Jewish faith down through the centuries. At the same time, bondage to cruel despots has never been stamped out. People of every era and culture have cried to God for deliverance. Somehow, people seem to know there is a true, living God in heaven who cares about us.

GROUP DISCUSSION. What different forms of bondage and slavery exist today? What means of deliverance are offered to hurting people?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Have you ever felt enslaved by something? How did deliverance come to you?

In poetic form, Exodus 15 thrills us to the core. We can imagine being one of the millions of Israelites who have just escaped slaughter by Pharaoh's fast-encroaching army, only to witness them drowning in the Red Sea. We have just set our feet on dry ground when Moses, our captain, breaks out in song. His song is a balm to our terrified spirits. *Read Exodus 15:1–21.*

1. What spirit and tone permeate this song?

2. Why might Moses have resorted to poetry and music instead of lecturing about what God had done?

3. How does Moses picture his relationship with God (v. 2)?

How do his metaphors give credibility and authenticity to his song?

4. How do you use songs to teach the basics of Christian truth in your church?

5. How do the graphic poetic details in this song (vv. 6–12) enhance Israel's estimation of God's wisdom and power?

6. As a consequence, how should the people respond to this kind of God (vv. 1–3, 6–7, 11–13, 18, 21)?

7. What does the song foretell about Israel's future (vv. 13, 17)?

How did these events fuel their faith to move ahead?

8. What milestone events in your life could you set to music?

9. Why is it essential to tell your life-changing events over and over again, whether set to music or not?

10. What is the essence of Miriam's song?

Why might she have instigated her own celebration with the women?

11. In what ways is this song about Israel's exodus from Egypt a picture of the Christian's deliverance from the power and bondage of sin?

Thank God that through the death and resurrection of Jesus we can be liberated from sin. Ask him each day for resurrection power to be delivered from saying yes to sin's temptations.

Now or Later

Since the exodus is such a popular theme in books and films, consider the possibility of inviting some friends to watch a movie and compare it to the biblical record. Suggest some ideas about how liberation is both personal and political. Be clear about a brief story of your own.

Songs from Scripture

3

Song of Invitation

Isaiah 55

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+55&version=NLT>

Invitations from God accompanied by promises and warnings pour out from the pages of Scripture. They reveal God's nature and our needs. We probably are most familiar with the story Jesus told about the wedding feast, an alarming picture of people who refused to accept the invitation (Matthew 22:1–14). Such is our perversity, yet God never quits inviting us to come to him for forgiveness, joy, peace and purpose. His invitations point us to the supreme value of knowing and serving the living God.

GROUP DISCUSSION. Describe the attractiveness of our culture's varied "invitations." What do they appeal to? Why?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. At what turning point in your life did God offer you an invitation? What steps to spiritual growth did his invitation draw you to? How did you respond? Why?

Isaiah's prophetic invitation foretells many similar calls in the New Testament. It was directed to God's people suffering in captivity in Babylon because of their past disobedience to the Lord. They were in chains, so to speak, but they could be liberated because God cared and offered them a new way of life. See how the song celebrates his love, which he gave freely, and his promise of relief, forgiveness and hope. *Read Isaiah 55.*

1. What various commands does the prophet use in his song of invitation (vv. 1–3, 6–7)?

2. What promises does this song give to those who accept the invitation?

3. What does God invite you to?

How would you picture your appropriate responses?

4. To what high point in Israel's history does the song testify (vv. 4–5)?

5. What facts do we learn about God in the last stanza (vv. 8–13)?

What does God promise?

6. How do these promises differ from those in the first stanza and encourage one to accept God's invitation?

7. Why are these truths needed to provide strong support for the invitations?

8. How does the indictment of verses 8–9 fit the overall tone and spirit of this song?

Is it really necessary? Why or why not?

9. As you worship in song, how do you include both your personal feelings toward God and what you know to be true about him?

10. How do the poetic pictures of verses 10–13 speak to your personal needs in worship?

11. If you were captive in Babylon, how would you feel after singing this song? Why?

Ask God to make you sensitive to his patient, loving calls to fellowship, worship and service. Pray for wisdom and courage to reject the world's invitations to material satisfaction.

Now or Later

Invite a friend to meet you for coffee or a sandwich. Plan to share a brief story about some significant way you have chosen to follow the Lord because you have realized the kind of life he offers you. Use some metaphors of your own or borrow Isaiah's.

Songs from Scripture

4

Song of Hope

Jeremiah 31:1–14, 31–34

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+31%3A1%20%9314%2C+31%20%9334&version=NLT>

Throughout history songs of hope have served to ameliorate the suffering of captive peoples. For example, the songs known as Negro spirituals—sung by thousands of slaves in America—are remembered and sung today. Because exile and captivity fell upon the Israelites, the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament used poetry to teach both judgment and redemption. Their songs conveyed truth with power and passion. Since those days, hope has been the consistent theme of Scripture from the Old Testament through the culmination of history in the book of Revelation.

GROUP DISCUSSION. Why is hope such a critical component of spiritual and psychological health? In what ways is Christian hope substantially different from generic hope?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. What songs of hope have lifted your spirits? Why were the lyrics so personally applicable to your situation and feelings? Recall some of those words and phrases.

Some scholars think that Jeremiah's nickname, "the weeping prophet," is an unfair summary of his life. He was deeply touched by the impending doom of God's judgment on his people, but he also showed remarkable resilience and faith, as well as hope, in the long run. Because his prophecy is not recorded chronologically, it's hard to follow his story. Judgment for rampant sin is Jeremiah's major theme, but light and hope penetrate the darkness in his songs as well. Set in the dark and final days of Israel's existence as a national entity, Jeremiah's song offers hope for better days to come in chapters 30–33. *Read Jeremiah 31:1–6.*

1. How does the general theme of this stanza offer hope to God's people?
2. What does this theme reveal about God and his relationship with his people?
3. If you were creating a painting of verses 1–6, what scenes would you include?
4. What metaphors can you use to describe God's everlasting love in your life?

5. In what circumstances have you felt a unique need to be assured of God's everlasting love?

Read Jeremiah 31:7–14.

6. What reasons does the singer give in verses 8–14 for his two commands in verse 7?

7. If you had been among the captives in exile in Babylon, what psychological or emotional effects would this stanza have had on you?

8. What reasons do you have for rejoicing "in the bounty of the LORD" (v. 12)?

Read Jeremiah 31:31–34.

9. What main points does the singer make in verses 31–32 to introduce the theme of this stanza?

10. How would you define God's new covenant in your own words?

11. How does this stanza of the song give hope and courage to the exiles?

What would be required of them in response?

12. How do you celebrate God's covenant of grace that gives you forgiveness and eternal life?

How does this song influence your worship?

Thank God for giving you hope through his wise and loving desire to have a covenant relationship with you in Jesus Christ.

Now or Later

Consider the covenants (mutual agreements) you now live with. Plan some specific activities that will show the priority your covenant with God has in your life. Write a descriptive verse about it.

Songs from Scripture

5

Song of Despair

Job 19:1–12, 21–27

[https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+19%3A1%E2%80%9312%2C+21%E2%80%9327
&version=NLT](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+19%3A1%E2%80%9312%2C+21%E2%80%9327&version=NLT)

Despair is not a word that zips across the social media circuits. We use words like *oppression*, *persecution* or *exploitation* to picture very painful, often unjust, circumstances for which there is no relief in sight. But if we were to visit Nigeria, for example, and talk to the people who have lost their homes and families to marauding gangs, they would say they are overcome by despair. Despair includes distress and trouble of all kinds, not just physical suffering but also extreme emotional and spiritual stress caused by both external and internal pressures. Despair is very much a universal malady even though the word may have disappeared from our everyday usage.

GROUP DISCUSSION. What examples of social or personal despair come to mind? What harmful outcomes do people face under these circumstances? What successful relief attempts can you cite?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Jesus said his followers could expect serious trouble, but he told them not to despair (John 16:33). In what circumstances have you felt unusual pressure and stress?

Job's saga begins with the catastrophic loss of all of his property, possessions and family. Three friends arrive to comfort and console Job, but they only add to his misery by blaming him for all that has befallen him. Job rises to defend himself and his character, but his friends remain unmoved. Chapter 19 is Job's sixth reply to his friends' charges. *Read Job 19:1–12, 21–27.*

1. How did Job's misguided friends add to his despair?
2. Why do the words of well-meaning friends so often bring judgment rather than encouragement?

How do you handle the subsequent distress?

3. What does Job accuse God of (v. 6)?

4. What feelings of despair does Job blame God for?
5. Which hardship do you think was the most difficult for Job to endure? Why?
6. Put Job's dramatic lyrics into your own words and tell which cause of his despair you most closely identify with.
7. When you feel you have been wronged, and as the aggrieved person you get no response, help or justice, what do you tell God?
8. Describe Job's vision for the future in your own words (vv. 23–27).
9. How did Job's vision lift him from the depths of despair to triumphant hope?
10. Compare Job's heart yearning for God (v. 27) with the various steps people take today in their efforts to ease the pain of their despair.
11. How do your mood changes follow the pattern of Job's song?

What does this tell you about the life of obedient faith in Christ?

Ask God for courage, faith and hope when you encounter distress and trouble that leads to despair. Pray for patient endurance while you look for answers. Pray with thanksgiving for what you know is good, right and true. Ask friends to pray with you.

Now or Later

After reflecting on Job's compelling song, compose something similar after you have come through a time of despair.

Songs from Scripture

6 Song of Triumph *Luke 1:46–55*

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%3A46%E2%80%9355&version=NLT>

Scenes of triumph remain indelibly impressed on the minds and hearts of those who witnessed the wild, chaotic celebrations that marked the end of World War II in 1945. Suddenly, the release of pent-up emotions exploded everywhere. The war was over; victory was ours at last.

God's people have long been called to claim victory and triumph because the very heart of their faith rests on a triumphant God. "Faith is the victory that overcomes the world" has been their battle cry, despite tears of tragic losses and suffering. Somehow, out of the pits of darkness Christians have declared, "Yes, we look like losers, but we are the true winners. You may torture and kill us, but we will not die. We are triumphant because Jesus, our King, reigns on high."

To be triumphant is not to be cocky but to be confident in God's transcendent power and glory. Mary the mother of Jesus grew up in her country's weakness and despair, but her faith catapulted her to triumph.

GROUP DISCUSSION. As you look at the church's history, when was it right or wrong to act triumphantly in the world? Why? How have Christians behaved when they have lost everything?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. When have you needed a good dose of celebrating your triumphs by faith? How did you move from darkness to light?

Mary's song of triumph (the *Magnificat*, Latin for "my soul magnifies") is perhaps the most celebrated of the biblical songs because it exhibits such joyous, powerful faith by an unheralded teenage Jewish girl living in bondage to a foreign power. The immediate cause of her outburst of celebration was the angel Gabriel's announcement that she had been chosen by the Lord to bear a son who would rule an everlasting kingdom. In the face of seeming impossibility Mary had submitted to being the Lord's obedient servant (Luke 1:26–38). She rushed off to see her relative Elizabeth and tell her the startling news. After Elizabeth called her "blessed" (Luke 1:39–45), Mary broke into song. *Read Luke 1:46–55.*

1. Dissect Mary's preamble (vv. 46–49). What do you learn about her spiritual and physical circumstances?

What does she give God the credit for?

2. Why was her confession an appropriate way to begin her song of triumph?
3. What impresses you about Mary's knowledge of God as a teenage girl?
4. In your discoveries about God, how have you grown in your understanding of his grace, love and power?
5. Why did Mary believe that future generations would honor and bless her?
6. In our Christian songs of triumph, how can we match Mary's humility and her understanding of who God is and what he is like?
7. Look at the specific deeds Mary chose to illustrate God's triumphs (vv. 50–55). Why do you think she sang about these particular deeds?
8. Powerful lyrics arise from vivid contrasts. Identify the contrasts in Mary's song (vv. 51–53). What do they add to her sense of victory?
9. How did God's victories become a source of triumph for Mary?
10. What does Mary's choice of things to celebrate teach us about pride and humility?

How does our pride sometimes spoil our victories?

11. Choose one word that best summarizes this young girl's religious understanding and faith. Which of her attributes would you like to develop in yourself?

Ask God to fill you with joy and praise in the midst of even your darkest circumstances. Pray that you will experience the triumph that comes from your obedient faith.

Now or Later

You are writing your song of triumph. How would it go? What would you include? Why?

Songs from Scripture

7

Song of Humility *Philippians 2:5–11*

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A5%E2%80%9311&version=NLT>

Nothing offends God as much as human pride. The Tower of Babel pierced the sky as a monument to pride so God destroyed it. Other ancient kings also paid dearly for taking credit for their achievements. Egypt's Pharaoh rejected orders from God through Moses, and his pride brought his realm untold misery and disaster. But object lessons from history fail to dent popular culture, which is obsessed with the pride of being the best at everything. For many people humility doesn't register on their list of personal goals. It's assumed that being humble means being willing to be stepped on. Who needs that?

GROUP DISCUSSION. What powers in popular culture seem to ridicule humble persons? Why do entertainment and sports personalities seem to feed on their pride? How does pride affect issues between nations? Religious differences?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Think of someone's humility and how it touched you. Think of someone's pride and how it offended you. What made the difference?

Typically, Paul's correspondence teaches doctrine and then reveals how the doctrine forms the basis of a completely new and revolutionary life style. His letter to the Philippians does not exactly follow that pattern. Seemingly, from out of nowhere he expounds the two natures of Christ in the context of humility. *Read Philippians 2:5–11.*

1. In what context does the apostle Paul offer this song of humility (vv. 1–4)?
2. Why do you suppose this was such a crucial issue to him?
3. If you were to choose one aspect of your Christian character to write about, would it be humility? Why or why not?
4. What basic command does Paul give (v. 5)?
Why is that such a tall order?

5. List the examples of Christ's humility (vv. 6–8).

In Paul's mind, what was the climactic event on which to focus his theme?

6. How does the cross smash human pride and give us an example of how to live?

7. The key, tempo and volume of a piece of music help us to understand it. If Paul's song were set to music, how would you contrast verses 9–11 with verses 6–8?

8. What is the universal scope of God's plan for his Son (vv. 9–11)?

9. What is the connection between Christ's past humiliation and his future exaltation?

10. In a world that celebrates pride and ridicules the name of Jesus, how do Christians humbly affirm the supremacy of the name of Jesus?

What does his name represent to you?

Thank and praise God for the incomparable humbling of his Son so we might be absolved of our sins and enter his kingdom. Ask that the power of his humility might transform your life.

Now or Later

Make a checklist with two columns: first, situations when your pride took charge; second, situations when your humility triumphed. Ask what made the difference and why.

Songs from Scripture

8

Song of Glory *Romans 11:33–36*

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+11%3A33%E2%80%9336&version=NLT>

Perhaps the apostle Paul's song of glory for Christians was inspired by a scene he had witnessed in Rome (2 Corinthians 2:14; Colossians 2:15). Romans publicly celebrated the success of military commanders who led their forces to victory in the service of the state. On the day of his triumph, the general wore a crown of laurel and the gold-embroidered purple triumphal toga, regalia that identified him as nearly divine or nearly a king. He rode in a four-horse chariot through the streets of Rome in unarmed procession with his army, captives and the spoils of his war. To Paul, this must have seemed like small potatoes compared to the glory of almighty God, whom he loved, served and worshiped.

Since then, Christians have tried to glorify God with their art, architecture and music. Gothic cathedrals are one example; Crusader forts are another. I trudged through an enormous Crusader fort in Kerak, Jordan, part of a chain of fortresses that led to Jerusalem. The builders said they mounted huge blocks of stone to glorify God. The sight gave me pause to ask myself, *How do I glorify God?* It's a matter of heart, mind and will that will not go away.

GROUP DISCUSSION. What different forms of Christian worship have stirred you to glorify God? Why? Why is this basic Christian concept so hard for us to sink our teeth into?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. What does it mean to you to claim that everything you do is for God's glory? How does that goal shape your daily routine?

Paul's song in Romans 11:33–36 seems like the sudden appearance of a brilliant star breaking through clouds of uncertainty. Many difficult teachings in Romans 9–11 arise from Paul's treatise on the future of his own people, the Jews. Paul did not shrink from saying that God has not given up on the Jews, but that the failure of the Jews had opened the door to salvation for Gentiles. Somehow, the enormous magnitude of his teaching overwhelmed his soul. In spite of our feeble attempts to understand God's mind and purposes, he calls us to sing our unqualified praise of his glory (See Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14). God's glory overrides everything else. *Read Romans 11:33–36.*

1. What was Paul's understanding of God in this passage?
2. In what terms does he establish God's supremacy?
3. In light of the sticky theological problems Paul was dealing with (Romans 9–11), why was it good medicine to sing this doxology?
4. How has singing your faith helped you to dispel the clouds in your soul?
5. What do you do when you find it hard to figure out what God is up to?
6. If the depths and riches of God are beyond our understanding, why and how can we glorify God?
7. What are some examples of the “all things” (v. 36) that come from God and return to God?
8. By implication, this song of praise includes a warning (vv. 34–35). How would you describe these perils?

How can you avoid them?

9. “To him be the glory” (v. 36) is a tall order. What does that mean and how do you carry it out?

10. In your congregational setting, how do you affirm your faith in song?

How do you keep your focus on God's eternal glory rather than your emotional feelings?

Ask God to allow your heart and mind to focus on him as you read Scripture and pray. Ask him to close your mind to your own problems for a minute or two at least.

Now or Later

Make a search of biblical songs, blessings or benedictions. Store them in a separate document in your computer files. Refer to them for yourself, or email to others who send you some news for prayer.

Songs from Scripture

9

Song of Redemption

Revelation 5:6–14

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+5%3A6%280%9314&version=NLT>

Redemption (and its cognates) has slipped from our religious vocabulary. The New International Version of the Bible has replaced it with *purchased* (Revelation 5:9), which hardly packs the same wallop. I grew up singing the power-laden strains of “Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it. Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb” ringing in my ears and heart. Part of the demise of *redeemed* can be attributed to the fact that many people have never heard of the idea that we are bound in slavery to selfishness and pride and must therefore be set free. In other words, we must be purchased or *redeemed* to gain our freedom. If we could speak with slaves, we would understand very well what it means to be redeemed.

GROUP DISCUSSION. How does the goal of attaining eternal bliss in heaven affect people you know? Why has joining the hosts of heaven in singing praises to Jesus Christ lost its luster as an eternal destiny? How can it be regained?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. How do you maintain a heart for what you know lies ahead in heavenly worship? What values does this perspective enhance in your life? If you asked God to make you fit for heaven, what would change in your life? Why?

The book of Revelation scares off people because of its mystery-laden battles between good and evil. But before the powers of darkness are unleashed Jesus speaks to seven congregations (chaps. 1–3). Then the glorious throne and magnificent worship in heaven come into view, followed by the coronation of Jesus as the Lamb who will rule the world. Worship suffuses chapters 4–5 before the cosmic struggles begin. We get glimpses of spectacular scenes of worship again in chapters 7 and 11. *Read Revelation 5:6–14.*

1. If you were producing a television documentary about heaven based on this song, how would you identify and describe what you wanted to highlight and focus on?
2. What are the distinguishing marks and roles of the Lamb, the creatures, the elders, the angels and “every creature”?
3. In what sense is this song a song of redemption?

Who is redeemed?

By whom and at what cost?

4. What does it mean to you to be redeemed, or purchased, by the blood of the Lamb?

What difference does it make in your life?

5. How does a worship scene like this touch you intellectually and emotionally?

6. How do you explain the apparently contradictory visions of the Lamb: first slain, then given power, glory and honor?

7. Why is the imagery and metaphor of the Lamb so powerful?

What does it add to the spirit of worship in the song?

8. If you played a part in this scene of your documentary, what would it be and why?

9. How does this song enhance and inspire your anticipation of heaven?

10. Notice the widening circle and scope of singers who honor the Lamb (vv. 8–9, 11–12, 13). What does this say to you about the universal, everlasting power of the gospel of the crucified Christ and your place in spreading the song of redemption?

Ask God for a positive, worshipful approach to Revelation. Thank him for revealing scenes of glory, praise, majesty and honor regarding Jesus the Lamb of God who gave his life for us.

Now or Later

Look up some classical paintings of this scene on the Internet. (For example, *Adoration of the Lamb* by Jan van Eyck [1432]). What do they emphasize? How would you paint this scene?¹

¹ Reapsome, James W. *Songs from Scripture: 9 Studies for Individuals or Groups*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Connect: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2016. Print. A LifeGuide Bible Study.