

“Etude”



SONGS IN THE BIBLE

THE SONG OF THE REDEEMED

How do you react to the sound of a glorious piece of music, or a beautiful view of God’s creation? King George II’s response on first hearing the “Hallelujah Chorus” from Handel’s *Messiah* was to stand to his feet, a spontaneous gesture which has now become practice by concert-goers listening to this work. There is so much for which we can praise the Lord, and songs recorded in Scripture are often an outpouring of love and worship to God in response for what He has revealed of Himself and for what He has done.

Our final meditation on songs in the Bible takes us to the end of time and the end of the journey, to a place we have not yet seen. It is a place to which those who know the Lord are travelling – the “house of many mansions”.¹

We are told that a day is coming when a vast multitude of people, too great to number, will stand rejoicing before the throne of God in Heaven, praising and worshipping Him in song. We read about these people in Revelation chapters 5, 7, 14 & 19. They are known as “the redeemed”. But who are they? Where do they come from? What qualifies them to be in Heaven? And what are they singing about?

The theme of “Redemption” is a glorious one which runs like a gold thread throughout the Scriptures. It involves cost and purchase. Probably the most well known example of redemption in the Old Testament was when Boaz paid the price to make Ruth his own and so became her “Kinsman-Redeemer”.² In the New Testament, the word denotes deliverance from the enslavement of sin and release to a new freedom in the Redeemer, Jesus Christ. So those who have been redeemed are people through the ages who have been bought at great cost, whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life. And that is what qualifies them to be in Heaven. They have no merit of their own that they can claim as an entrance ticket.

But there is another fact about “the redeemed” that we shouldn’t overlook. In Romans 8:37, the Apostle Paul uses a curious expression when he says “...in all these things *we are more than conquerors* through Him that loved us.” How can anyone be “more than” a conqueror? If a battle has been fought and won, is not the victor the conqueror? Could it be that because believers are *in Christ*, they share in the victory *He* has won over sin and death and Satan?

So we know *who* the redeemed are, but where have they come from? The answer to that is clear enough. Revelation 5:9 tells us that they are from “every tribe,

¹ John 14:2

² Ruth 4

language, people and nation". Not just educated, rich Europeans, but refugees and displaced people from Sudan and Eritrea. There will be North Koreans, people from the jungle in Brazil, from Papua New Guinea and from Greenland. And there will be kings too!

All who have been redeemed will sing a song that will reverberate around the courts of Heaven. What a sound that will be! It will be a song of worship – praising the Lamb of God who alone is worthy to be worshipped. Revelation 15:2-4 describes another event when the redeemed sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb - the song of Moses recalling Exodus 15 when the Lord delivered the Israelites from the Egyptians. That victory foreshadowed the victory of all God's redeemed over the beast, his image and number (Rev.15:2). The song of the Lamb points to the fact that it was the Lamb who gave the victory over the Egyptians – Moses was merely the servant.

There is one final nugget of gold that we must consider. At the end of Revelation (ch.22:1-5), there is a scene of wonderful peace and tranquillity. Battles are over, death and Satan have finally been banished and we are told that "the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city (the new Jerusalem) and his servants will serve him." Then follows the most glorious expression – "They will see his face". Can you imagine what that will be like?

"We shall see His lovely face some bright golden morning,
When the clouds have lifted, and the shadows flown;
Sorrow will be turned to joy, heartaches gone forever,
No more night, only light, when we see His face."³

Are you eagerly anticipating that day? Will you be one of that vast multitude of redeemed people singing praises to the Lamb? Are you even now able to sing from your heart -

"Face to face! O blissful moment!
Face to face – to see and know;
Face to face with my Redeemer,
Jesus Christ who loves me so."⁴

³ Norman J. Clayton

⁴ Mrs. F.A. Breck