

30 DAYS WITH

the book of

REVELATION



Singing the Faith+ Resources

If you are engaging with Bible Month 2023, here is a starter list of hymns from Singing the Faith and StF+ that you might find helpful. There are hymn suggestions for the four themes developed by Dr Helen Miller in the **30 Days with Revelation** Bible Month resource, together with a more general selection of hymns that echo the overall tone and message of the book.

This general list is accompanied by some brief comments about the nature of the hymns in the Book of Revelation itself – and the praise they inspire in us.

1. Introduction - *The Book of Revelation and sung praise*
2. Week 1 - *The Church then and now*
3. Week 2 - *The triumph of the lamb*
4. Week 3 - *Witness, worship, waiting*
5. Week 4 - *Heading home*

Each group of hymns is built around the preaching points in the Bible Month resource, and picks up on comments in Helen Miller's notes.



Introduction

The book of Revelation and sung praise

A great many hymns and worship songs draw on the models of sung praise in the Book of Revelation and reflect its themes of hope, witness, perseverance, judgment, awe and adoration. A small selection of hymns that express these themes include:



*All heaven declares the glory of the risen Lord ([StF 293](#))**

*Day of judgment! Day of wonder! ([StF 732](#))**

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here ([StF 20](#))

From all that dwell below the skies ([StF 75](#))

*Glory to God, glory to God ([StF 753](#))**

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father ([StF 51](#))

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! ([StF 11](#))

*How shall I sing that majesty which angels do admire? ([StF 53](#))**

I will worship with all of my heart ([StF 54](#))

*Immortal, invisible, God only wise ([StF 55](#))**

Lord of the boundless curves of space ([StF 111](#))

(Online you can find more extensive lists of hymns and worship songs of different styles that are either directly inspired by passages in the Book of Revelation or echo its themes. E.g. see:

[Hymnary.org](#) or [Jesus Walk](#))

A Template for Praise

Singing the Faith is permeated throughout by the imagery and influence of the Book of Revelation. It provides the bedrock examples of how we sing our praise of God (see the Adoration of God section of Singing the Faith). This is also true of the great wealth of contemporary worship songs and older Gospel traditions.

The Book of Revelation itself is punctuated with hymns of praise. Many of these poetic texts are quite short but several have inspired a great number of hymns and songs. Six hymns and songs in Singing the Faith alone begin with the words 'Holy, holy, holy' (cf. Revelation 4:8). Some of the great classics of choral music are also inspired by these hymns, including Handel's Messiah.¹

FOOTNOTES

[1] Derek Demars offers a neat introduction to these hymns in his blog post: [The Book of Revelation is a musical?!](#)



Introduction

The book of Revelation and sung praise (Continued)

The number of passages within the Book of Revelation identified as hymns varies; some might be better described as spoken poetry. Eleven passages that are said to be sung are:



4:8; 4:11;
 5:9-10; 5:12; 5:13;
 7:10; 7:12;
 11:17-18;
 15:3-4;
 19:1-4; 19:6-8

Justin P. Jeffcoat Schedtler analyses the hymns in Revelation in detail in *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*.² He argues that they *'are one of the primary vehicles through which the author makes theological, Christological, and soteriological claims'*.

Robert S. Smith, who has studied the hymns of Revelation extensively, describes them as *'transparently doxological . . . richly pedagogical and pointedly pastoral'*.³ This is a helpful way of thinking about them. They offer us a template for how to sing our praise of God, rather as Jesus offered *'the Lord's Prayer'* as a template for how we should pray to God. Helen Miller makes this point in Week 3 of the **30 Days with Revelation** booklet; Christians and faith-seekers are gifted sung worship as a means and opportunity for witnessing to their faith.

The use of hymns in the Book of Revelation also reminds us that, as for the Christian communities to whom the book is addressed, praise and adoration of God is often, amongst other things, about expressing hope. Singing songs of worship can remind us that, even in the hardest of human experiences, and when our faith is most under pressure, God is present alongside us and gives us the promise of a divine-human relationship that can never be severed. As St Paul expressed it: *'Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.'* ([Romans 8: 38-39](#))

FOOTNOTES

[2] *The Handbook* (ed. Craig R. Koester, 2020: OUP), see Ch.8. Schedtler explores themes within the hymns, including the sovereignty of God and the vice-regency of the Lamb, and suggests they function as *"implicit claims against Roman imperial rule, and emphasise the writer's anti-imperial stance"*.

[3] See <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/songs-of-the-seer-the-purpose-of-revelations-hymns/>



Week 1

The Church Then and Now

The Book of Revelation is known as a complex vision, often with allusions and references that require some unpicking. However, it is also, importantly, a letter – addressed to seven early Christian communities across Asia Minor (present-day Republic of Turkey).

Each of these communities is living in a time of waiting for God’s commonwealth of justice and mercy, and wrestling with how to live faithfully over and against the dominant power and influence of Rome. How the churches respond to the pressures they face as they wait it out varies. Most praise is reserved by John for the church communities in Smyrna (*‘Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.’* [Revelation 2: 10](#)) and Philadelphia, which has exhibited faithful endurance in face of opposition and persecution.

John says of the church in Smyrna: *‘I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.’* ([Revelation 3: 12-13](#)).

This phrase is picked up in a wonderfully catchy gospel song by **Austin Miles: ‘There’s a new name written down in glory, And it’s mine, O yes, it’s mine!’** Listen to it performed by Ben Speer and Friends or in a ‘straighter’ version sung by The Heralds.



There is a new name....
Ben Speer and Friends



There is a new name....
The Heralds

The other five churches receive less glowing reports, and all seven together raise questions about our own local settings and our present day Christian witness and activity. Would those observing us from the outside experience us as ‘lukewarm’ (like Laodicea) or as having *‘lost the fervency of first love’* (Ephesus), for example? As Helen Miller puts it in **30 Days with Revelation**: ‘the main problems that Jesus identifies are compromise and complacency’. She asks: *‘Which aspects of Jesus’ challenge and encouragement to these seen churches most apply to us today?’*



Week 1

The Church Then and Now (Continued)

The challenges put to, and faced by, the seven churches of Revelation – not least the challenge of experiencing world systems as oppressive and harmful – are reflected in a range of hymns, including:



As if you were not there ([StF 724](#))*

Community of Christ, who make the Cross your own ([StF 691](#))

'Live out your creed and risk your life for God alone'

Day of judgment! Day of wonder! ([StF 732](#))*

'And to those who have confessed him . . . Christ will say, "Come now, you blessed"'

Father, we have sinned in word, and deed, and thought ([StF 422](#))

God moves in a mysterious way ([StF 104](#))

'Fresh courage take . . . his purposes will ripen fast . . . the bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower'

God of forgiveness, your people you freed ([StF 425](#))

'Your power we implore... our lives to restore'

Great is the darkness that covers the earth ([StF 405](#))

Immortal, invisible, God only wise ([StF 55](#))*

Lord, your Church on earth is seeking your renewal from above ([StF 410](#))

'teach us all the art of speaking with the accent of your love'

Praise to the God who clears the way ([StF 183](#))*

'Praise to the God who comes to judge the truth of word and deed, who call our minds and wills to change...'

To be a soldier ([StF 133](#))*

(which includes engaging with 'a greater struggle the cosmic Christ will show')



Week 2

The Triumph of the Lamb

There is a sometimes-overlooked pastoral intent in the writing of the Book of Revelation, and nowhere is this more true than in the chapters that introduce John's vision of the divine throne room. Here, we discover not only the 'Lamb' (Jesus) but also 24 elders, representing the people of God who Helen Miller says '*have won the right sit with Jesus around his throne*'.⁴ Luke Powery suggests the image of the Lamb, standing 'as though it had been slain' (5:6), and the repeated mentions of his blood, speak 'to the "walking wounded" who suffer under Roman oppression'.⁵

At the same time, the Christian communities in Asia Minor are offered a vision of what God will bring to fruition. It is both a gift of hope and an incentive to persevere in their faith: to live now the lives promised us by God. The Lamb is our model: that Christ paid the ultimate price in order to enact God's eternal love for us is why the singers of Revelation proclaim him 'worthy' to share the throne room with God.

The hymn suggestions chosen for this week pick up on the theme already explored in Week 1 (how the praise offered to God and the Lamb inspire our praise in our churches today) but go further, following Helen's question: '*What are the practical implications of believers' living in light of their heavenly identity?*'



All heaven declares the glory of the risen Lord ([StF 293](#))*

Behold the lamb of God ([StF 234](#))

'He takes away the sin of the world'



Behold our God seated...
Jonathan & Meghan Baird et al.

Christ is made the sure foundation ([StF 677](#))

Come and see, come and see ([StF 270](#))

esp. refrain

FOOTNOTES

[4] 30 Days with Revelation, p.10

[5] Luke A. Powery, "Painful Praise: Exploring the Public Proclamation of the Hymns of Revelation", *Theology Today* 70



Week 2

The Triumph of the Lamb (Continued)



Crown him with many crowns ([StF 347](#))

'the Lamb upon the throne' – a hymn that praises the Son of God who straddles time before the worlds began but who also walked in our world

Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise ([StF 50](#))

Hail to the Lord's Anointed ([StF 228](#))

Holy, Holy, Holy (various versions in Singing the Faith, incl. StF 9-11 & 766)*



Is He Worthy?
Andrew Peterson



Jesus, Name Above all Names
Naida Hearn

Majesty, worship his majesty ([StF 333](#))*

'Kingdom authority flows from his [Jesus'] throne unto his own'

Praise to the God who clears the way ([StF 183](#))*

This hymn links more closely to chapter 6 of Revelation, in which Jesus is presented as judge and king as well as saviour



The Splendour of the King ([StF 15](#))

The Spirit lives to set us free ([StF 397](#))

'walk, walk in the light'

We pray until the hour ([StF 741](#))

see v.3: 'At last may we be found obedient to your word, attentive to the judgement sound. . .'



We will glorify the King of Kings
Twila Paris



Week 3

Witness, Worship, Waiting

Witness, worship and waiting are the three key strands that weave their way through the Book of Revelation. They are intertwined and, interdependent. Worship and waiting are, themselves, a form of witness. Our worship is, itself, a symbol of our waiting. These three themes are also central, together with God's justice, to the season of Advent. This is why a number of the hymn suggestions below come from the Advent section of Singing the Faith (StF 165 – 189).

Helen Miller suggests that through the activities of witness, worship and waiting, 'God's Spirit works in us to help us become more Christ-like in our thoughts, desires, words and behaviour.' As Kate Barclay Wilkinson puts it:

*May the mind of Christ my Saviour
live in me from day to day,
by his love and power controlling
all I do or say. (StF 504)*

The hymns selected offer answers to key Revelation questions, such as:

- What does the call to wait look like? (How do we enact standing firm in our commitment to Jesus?)
- What forms of idolatry are Christians today most tempted to give in to?



And I will wait now ([StF website only](#))

Angel voices ever singing ([StF 39](#))

Christ, from whom all blessings flow ([StF 676](#))

Give us your comfort, Lord ([StF website only](#))

(intercessory response)

Glory to God, glory to God ([StF 753](#))*



Week 3

Witness, Worship, Waiting (Continued)



Let all the world in every corner sing ([StF 56](#))

Majesty, worship his majesty ([StF 333](#))*

May the mind of Christ my Saviour ([StF 504](#))



Shall we Gather at the River
Robert Lowry

A beautiful American gospel song speaking of the Christian anticipation of restoration and reward; it refers to the 'river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb',

Sing we the King who is coming to reign ([StF 185](#))



Some day the Silver Chord will Break
Fanny Crosby

What shall I do my God to love, my loving God to praise? ([StF 436](#))

'Your sovereign grace to all extends, immense and unconfined'

You call us out to praise you ([StF website only](#))



Week 4

Heading Home

Like the author of Revelation, John Bell and Graham Maule (*As if you were not there*, [StF 724](#)) face head-on the fear that God is absent while bad things are happening in the world and to Christian communities.

As if you were not there . . . rivers tear their banks asunder . . . we televise the dying . . . [and] your Son faced a crowd which crucified him.

Helen Miller notes that the Book of Revelation does not shy away from depicting ‘political power (and its abuse)’.⁶ She instances the trade in human beings ([Revelation 18: 11-13](#)) as one example of economic oppression and injustice in the Roman empire, just as modern slavery is a terrible blight in our present-day world. In an age of twisted values ([StF 703](#)), as visible today as they were in the time of John’s seven churches, where will we rediscover and celebrate God and the life of the Church in the world?

We encountered the same question in our Bible Month materials on the [book of the prophet Isaiah](#). There, Helen Paynter described Isaiah ‘*straining towards God’s promised future*’ – a future that may have been located well beyond the resolution of his own immediate crisis (the Babylonian captivity). She suggested that the prophet might have had in mind a vision of a world made new. John the Seer picks up on, and develops this vision in Revelation. There, the world we know – ‘Babylon’ – is set against the *new world God sings into being* ([StF 714](#)) – New Jerusalem.

How do we live out the values and characteristics of heaven while living in a broken world? How do we acknowledge our present-day Babylon experience of (*We lay our broken world in sorrow at your feet*, [StF 718](#)) while aspiring to channel God’s peace in the world ([StF 707](#))? But more than our own aspirations, the Book of Revelation proclaims God’s, which give us the confidence to pray:

*Even so, Lord, quickly come -
bring your harvest home!
Gather all your people in
free from sorrow, free from sin* ([StF 123](#))

FOOTNOTES

[6] 30 Days with Revelation, pp.18-19

[7] 30 Days with Isaiah, p. 19



Week 4

Heading Home (Continued)



As if you were not there ([StF 724](#))*

Come, thou long-expected Jesus ([StF 169](#))

Come, you thankful people, come ([StF 123](#))

Usually pegged as 'just' a Harvest hymn, this is a celebration of the world as 'God's own field' and the Christian anticipation that 'God shall come and shall bring his harvest home'

How shall I sing that majesty which angels do admire? ([StF 53](#))*

In an age of twisted values we have lost the truth we need ([StF 703](#))

It is God who holds the nations in the hollow of his hand ([StF 705](#))

Especially vv.1,2&4

Love divine, all loves excelling ([StF 503](#))

Make me a channel of your peace ([StF 707](#))



Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King **Andrae Crouch**

The God who sings a new world into being ([StF 714](#))

There is a new heaven ([StF 738](#))

Ruth Duck describes a society in which 'distinctions, divisions which hurt and destroy will all disappear' - v.2

To be a soldier ([StF 133](#))*

With its injunction to 'bring the poor release' and 'to enter politics praying'

We lay our broken world in sorrow at your feet ([StF 718](#))