



extreme GRACE

A Thousand Songs

Psalms 24:8–10

There are more than a thousand songs in my iPod. Yet, its carefully held music does not include the most famous ancient galactical chorus.

Though smaller than most cell phones, my tiny MP3 player holds the best of Charlotte Church, Celine Dion, The Carpenters, Michael W. Smith, Ray Boltz, Big Face Grace, and hundreds of others. I can listen for days to music of every possible style. But I cannot hear the one song the universe is straining for.

It has been sung twice, and will be the centerpiece at one more command performance.

It requires two choirs, one singing from below and one from above. One on the road surrounding the King, the other standing on the city wall protecting the gates.

It celebrates victory, commands celebration, and bursts every heart with love.

It is sung when the King comes home.

There are a thousand songs in my iPod. This is the only song I long to sing.

It was first sung when King David danced the ark into Jerusalem, when God was moving from a half-way house into His own city on the hill. Tens of thousands stood on the walls, leaned out the windows, and worshiped in the fields. Choirs

sang the well-known hymns, priests offered sacrifices, and the people stared with awe at the Ark of God's Presence.

Then the king touched a string on his harp and began a new song.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in."

No one was confused. This was not a request for David to enter his city, this was a request for God to come in and take over as KING in David's city. This was a pivotal moment of transition, of accepting the rule of God over the rule of man, a time of welcoming in the King of Glory.

As the sound of David's command echoed into silence, the gatekeeper's clear voice challenged from Jerusalem's wall.

"Who is this King of Glory?"

The answer came like thunder after lightning. Everyone on the road, everyone in the fields, every priest, soldier, merchant, farmer, mother, daughter, son and father, everyone coming toward the city sang out the response.

"The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."

Then king David pitched the song a note higher, and they all sang the command in unison, a choral verse that nearly tore the gate from its hinges.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in."

Everyone in the city answered.

"Who is the King of Glory?"

Now every voice joined in. From the walls and the fields, from the windows and the road the

chorus streaked into the Palestinian sky.

"The Lord Almighty—He is the King of Glory!"

Then the celebrating began. God was coming home!!

The song was sung again as the conquering Christ rose from the Mount of Olives into the court of heaven. Thousands of angels accompanied Him from earth to home. Uncounted millions awaited his arrival with "three-octave-higher" anticipation. And the Welcome Home song began.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in."

It will be sung once more. This time Christ Himself will sing the opening command into the courtyard of a silent heaven. One voice will answer, the lyric tenor of God the Father inquiring, "Who is the King of Glory?"

Jesus will look around at the conquerors rising with him above the flames of earth. There will be a catch in his voice as he identifies the King.

"The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."

Unable to wait, we will all join in—you, me, Martin Luther, Ellen White, King David, deacons and elders and shopkeepers and farmers and computer programmers and preachers and sons and daughters from every time and every land.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in."

There are more than a thousand songs on my iPod. This is the only song I long to sing.

Dick Duerksen