

From the first song recorded in Scripture we learn that redeemed people are singing people. With biblical clarity and pastoral warmth, DeMars calls the church to lift her voice in response to God's glorious salvation. This is a timely and needed encouragement, reminding us that congregational singing is not merely tradition but a vital act of worship flowing from hearts captivated by the glory of Christ.

**Matt Boswell**

Pastor, The Trails Church, Celina, Texas;  
Hymn writer

I've spent most of my life planning, polishing, and platforming performing artists—marketing, merchandising, and every-thing in between. For years, my world revolved around the seamless execution of performances designed to captivate an audience. But for the past decade, as a pastor, I've worked to pull apart the polish, performance, and platform mentality that has shaped so much of modern worship culture.

Sean DeMars offers a needed corrective. *Redemption Song* shifts worship from the stage to the saints, from polished performance to biblical participation, from an audience watching to a people singing. Deeply rooted in Scripture, this book reminds us that worship isn't about production—it's about proclamation. It's not about a platform, but a people. And at its core, it's biblically informed worship for an audience of One.

**Thomas J. Terry**

Founder, Humble Beast

A great little primer that will help ministers and the congregation. I encourage you to read it.

**Jonathan Carswell**

Founder, 10ofthose.com

*Redemption Song* is a wonderfully punchy reminder of why Christians sing. The people of God, the world over, have always been known as a “singing people”. Why is that? Sean DeMars walks through the theology and practice that has typified God’s people for thousands of years. From Yembiyembi, Papua New Guinea, to Rochester, New York, to the shores of the Red Sea, God’s people sing, and we will sing till the King returns—and from then on—for eternity.

**Brooks Buser**

President, Radius International

Most people know that God’s people sing. But why the church sings, what she sings, and how she sings matters too. In this short but rich book, Sean DeMars sums up the biblical why, what, and how of congregational singing. It’s a valuable resource for all Christians, but especially the pastors, elders, and worship teams shaping their church’s singing culture.

**Brett McCracken**

Senior Editor, The Gospel Coalition

Sean DeMars is a faithful pastor who has labored to help his church embrace a biblical view of worship. Now, in *Redemption Song*, he kindly gifts sound wisdom on a crucial matter to the church at large. DeMars wonderfully prods us to understand why we should sing, what we should sing, and how our services can bring the utmost glory to God. It doesn’t matter how large or small your church may be, this little book is fit for every believer who cares about worship in the church—and that’s every believer! The gospel is simply too good not to sing, and this book will help us all sing better. I plan to give one to each

family in our church, and I'd encourage you to do the same.

**Aaron Menikoff**

Senior Pastor, Mount Vernon Baptist Church  
Atlanta, Georgia

In recent years, we have been blessed by a reformation of the pulpit, with renewed emphasis on expository preaching, Christ-centered proclamation, and faithfulness to authorial intent. Likewise, the church has experienced a revival in biblical ecclesiology, recovering the importance of meaningful church membership, a plurality of elders leading, deacons serving, and the proper practice of church discipline. Yet, amid these vital reforms, congregational singing is often neglected—left in the shadows when it, too, stands in great need of reformation. In this excellent book, Sean DeMars directs us to God's Word, reminding us that singing is not an afterthought but an essential act of worship, designed by God for His glory and the edification of His people. *Redemption Song* will challenge, encourage, and inspire you to sing with biblical intentionality.

**Josh Buice**

Pastor, Pray's Mill Baptist Church, Douglasville,  
Georgia; Founder, G3 Ministries

A church service without congregational singing is just a concert with an extended lecture. Singing together is, perhaps, the weirdest thing Christians do in our culture of personally-curated playlists and headphones. Congregational singing testifies to our self-denying love for God and the others in the room. In *Redemption Song*, Sean Demars provides a

concise, accessible reminder that broad participation in congregational singing is vitally important to the health of a local church. His reflection on the song of Moses in Exodus 15 is a useful resource to encourage Christians to drop their guard and make a joyful noise to the Lord.

**Andrew Spencer**

Associate Editor, The Gospel Coalition

If true worship is our response to God's revelation in Christ, then singing is not just appropriate—it's necessary. Why? Because the glory of God's redeeming grace is too great for mere speech. Yet much of today's worship music is designed for individual consumption rather than congregational singing. In *Redemption Song*, Sean Demars helps us recover our bearings, refocusing our hearts on singing together. Rooted in Moses's song in Exodus 15, Demars equips us to proclaim God's truth with wonder and joy. If you want to encourage your congregation to sing heartily to the Lord and to one another, buy several copies and pass them around.

**Juan R. Sanchez**

Senior Pastor, High Pointe Baptist Church  
Austin, Texas

God delights when His people's mouths are filled with songs of praise. But He doesn't just want any song. He delights in songs that are sung with joy and faith according to His Word. *Redemption Song* is a brief and remarkably insightful booklet that helps God's people grow in singing to God as He is worthy.

**Garrett Kell**

Pastor, Del Ray Baptist  
Alexandria, Virginia

SEAN DEMARS

REDEMPTION  
SONG



A PRIMER ON SINGING  
FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD



CHRISTIAN  
FOCUS

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## INTRODUCTION

# The Artist and the Engineer

Dividing all human beings into all-or-nothing binary categories is a crude and unsophisticated way of viewing the world. People are complex, and almost no one is all one thing or another—introvert or extrovert, partier or planner, pessimist or optimist.

Nevertheless, it is sometimes helpful to lump people into categories based on their natural inclinations, giftings, and temperaments. I've found, for example, that when it comes to worship, there are basically two kinds of Christians—the artist and the engineer.

- **The artist** tends to be guided by feeling, intuition, and experience.
- **The engineer** tends to be guided by facts, logic, and reason.

Although very few people are pure artist or engineer, most of us tend to lean one way or another. (If you don't know which way you lean, ask the person who knows you best. They'll have a quick answer for you, I promise.) For better or worse, these leanings permeate every aspect of our lives, including the way we think about worship.

Over the years, I've found that many of the "engineer Christians" would be perfectly content to walk into church right before the sermon after the singing and the praying is over. These engineer Christians love a good logical sermon, laden with propositional truth claims, syllogisms, and cross references galore. Throw in a chart of some kind and the engineers will ascend to the highest heaven!

The artist Christian, on the other hand, is more than happy to sing for most of the service, but would prefer to trim the sermon down to something like a fifteen-minute devotional. The artists want to *feel* more than *think*, to *experience* more than *analyze* and *interpret*.

There's nothing wrong with being an artist or an engineer, as long as you're open to letting God's Word correct your instincts, intuitions, and inclinations where they may be out of line with God's vision for faithful corporate worship ... which is what this book is all about.

## THE NEED

I wasn't planning on writing a book about worship, but then I preached through the Song of Moses one

Sunday as part of an expositional series through the book of Exodus. When I did, I found a song that offered encouragement *and* correction to both the artist and the engineer. In Exodus 15, I found a description *of* and prescription *for* corporate worship that has much to say to the modern church. In Exodus 15, we find the *Song of Moses*. But more than that, we find God. Not just any God, but the God of the Bible. And the God of the Bible is a God who reveals Himself through reason and beauty, logic and creativity, prose and poetry, propositional truth claims and musical melodies. In Exodus 15, we encounter a God who leads His people through stories, sermons, and *songs*.

The Song of Moses recounts the incredible saga of God leading His people through the perils of the Red Sea to salvation on the farther shore. But what you really have to understand about the *song* of Exodus 15 is that it comes right after the *narrative* of the same event in chapter 14, and that's on purpose. Why? Well, because narrative is not enough.

As God inspired Moses to write the Exodus story, a mere factual recounting of the salvation story was not sufficient. In recording the events of redemptive history, God didn't just want truth, He also wanted beauty. He didn't just want prose, He also wanted poetry. He didn't just want a story, He also wanted a soundtrack.

We're going to spend the rest of our time in this little book taking a closer look at the Song of Moses, but my aim is not to study the *content* of the song. There are many fantastic books and commentaries that you can consult on the particulars of the crossing of the Red Sea. In this book I'd like us to step back and consider what this song has to teach us about corporate worship more broadly. But before we dive in, allow me to get ahead of a potential objection.

Some of you may be wondering what a song from several thousand years ago, written in the desert, under the Old Covenant, can possibly teach us about modern corporate worship. Well, as it turns out ... quite a lot, actually.

The fundamental pattern of worship has not changed since the days of Moses, because the same God who led Israel to worship Him by the sea is the same God who leads us to worship Him in the church, and the nature and character of our God never changes (James 1:17). The basic pattern of biblical worship is the same from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. Some of the details may change along the way, but the broad contours are the same from the beginning of the story to the end. I think you'll see what I mean by the time you finish reading.

As we work through the Song of Moses together, I want to invite you to consider eleven insights that

should give shape to the way we worship as the body of Christ. Some of these insights may seem obvious to you. Great, you've been discipled well! But even when an insight seems obvious to you, I'd still like you to consider it as carefully as if it were a fresh revelation. After all, we rarely know things as well as we think we do, and we usually need to be reminded as much as we need to be initiated. Or, as the Apostle Paul put it in his letter to the Philippians,

To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. (Phil. 3:1)

Finally, some of these insights may challenge or even frustrate you. Your initial gut-reaction may be to argue or disagree, which you're certainly free to do! But I want to gently challenge you, dear reader, right here at the outset of the book, to try and read with an *open* mind and a *humble* heart. If you're anything like me, I'm sure you wouldn't say that you've got this worship thing figured out. Right? But we're always striving to grow in faithfulness! So, if you can agree, at least in theory, that you don't worship God perfectly (yet!), then allow yourself to be stretched and challenged by some of the more difficult portions of this little book. And always ask yourself, "Does this line up with the Word of God?" If it doesn't, discard it immediately. But if it does, receive it with joy (Acts 17:11).

## Redemption Song

Now, with all that in mind, I'm going to ask you to do something that may seem strange at first, even though it shouldn't. Would you take a moment, before reading any further, to pause and pray? To ask God to guard you from error and lead you into truth? Ask God to encourage you where you need to be encouraged, and correct you where you need to be corrected?

\* \* \*

Okay, now let's read the text:

Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying,

"I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;

the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.

The LORD is my strength and my song,

and he has become my salvation;

this is my God, and I will praise him,

my father's God, and I will exalt him.

The LORD is a man of war;

the LORD is his name.

"Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea,  
and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea.

The floods covered them;

they went down into the depths like a stone.

Your right hand, O LORD, glorious in power,

your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy.

In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow  
your adversaries;

## Introduction

you send out your fury; it consumes them like stubble.

At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up;  
the floods stood up in a heap;  
the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.

The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake,  
I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them.

I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them.'

You blew with your wind; the sea covered them;  
they sank like lead in the mighty waters.

"Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?  
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,  
awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?  
You stretched out your right hand;  
the earth swallowed them.

"You have led in your steadfast love the people  
whom you have redeemed;  
you have guided them by your strength to your  
holy abode.

The peoples have heard; they tremble;  
pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia.

Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed;  
trembling seizes the leaders of Moab;  
all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.

Terror and dread fall upon them;  
because of the greatness of your arm, they are  
still as a stone,

till your people, O LORD, pass by,  
till the people pass by whom you have purchased.

You will bring them in and plant them on your own  
mountain,

the place, O LORD, which you have made for

## Redemption Song

your abode,  
the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have  
established.

The LORD will reign forever and ever.”

For when the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots  
and his horsemen went into the sea, the LORD  
brought back the waters of the sea upon them, but  
the people of Israel walked on dry ground in the  
midst of the sea. Then Miriam the prophetess, the  
sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and  
all the women went out after her with tambourines  
and dancing. And Miriam sang to them:

“Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;  
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.”

(Exod. 15:1-21)



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