

Start Experiencing the River of Revival in Your Own Home

If you want to start out the year experiencing the manifest presence of God, I have one surefire way that will help you do that—check out the new worship release from The Ramp called *The River Is Rising*.

Worship That Ushers You Into God's Presence

Here is why I believe this worship recording is so important. In the hour in which we live, we need the presence of God more than ever. If our worship times ultimately do not usher us into an encounter with the Person of Jesus, through divine aid of the Holy Spirit, we are coming together for a concert. We are simply singing songs and enjoying Christian entertainment. While there is much concerting going on in the contemporary church, places such as The Ramp in Hamilton, Alabama, thrill me to no end. They've made God's presence their primary pursuit. This is clearly evident in all of their ministry practice and culture—especially their praise and worship.

This shouldn't come as any shock, though, since The Ramp was birthed by Christian music artist and minister Karen Wheaton. When she pioneered The Ramp, she told God every reason why she was unqualified to minister to young people. And yet, the one thing she did know was the way into the presence of God. This quest for God's presence is unmistakable to this day and is clearly revealed through this album.

From the moment the recording begins, trust me, you are not spectating at a concert. Whether you like it or not, you are being summoned into deeper level of encounter with the presence of God. I believe you are being introduced to the next dimension of worship.

Worship Birthed From Divine Encounters

While listening to *The River Is Rising*, I was immediately brought back to an era in praise and worship that was absolutely revolutionary. The days of Integrity/Hosanna; Maranatha Music and, of course, the Vineyard. But why? What was special about the 1990s in terms of praise and worship? Simple. Songs were being written out of profound revival encounters with God.

Songwriters and artists were not under any kind of contractual obligation to release albums at a certain frequency. Songs were not being written for the purpose of simply having more songs.

I'm not against artistry in praise and worship. I'm not at all against worship collectives, where multiple artists collaborate on writing songs. Bethel Music does this brilliantly, and their worship carries that supernatural grace from heaven. Matt Redman penned it best. It all comes back to the heart of worship.

The river of revival was flowing throughout the church and as a result, we were graced with the music of Darrell Evans, Lindell Cooley, Matt Redman, Passion and so many others. When I hear *The River is Rising*, I specifically think of how back in 1996, a worship album was released from a (then) unknown music team in Sydney, Australia.

That collection of songs still carries an anointing and authority even to this day. The album was *Shout to the Lord*. The worship team was Hillsong. The worship leader was Darlene Zschech. Today, I see a new breed of worship leaders and songwriters arising who carry that same mantle—boldly and extravagantly leading the masses to make Jesus the focus of worship. Not the music. Not the lights. Not the excitement. Not the production. The Person of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Catherine Mullins, worship leader at The Ramp, carries this anointing and it saturates every single song on the recording.

Truth be told, I struggled to make it through every song because there were worship moments that were so powerful, so presence-saturated, I had those songs on repeat. You're in for a treat, though. Don't expect one song, then another song, then another song in some kind of static procession. The songs flow into each other seamlessly.

Take a Journey Into the Glory

The album opens and closes with explosive praise—the likes of which I haven't heard in a good while. There have been many amazing slower-paced worship songs written in recent years, but some of the more jubilant praise anthems tend to be missing today. "The Whole Earth" sets the tone for the worship journey, fixing your gaze upon God alone. These songs are not man-centric; they are God-centric and as a result, take you on a journey into His very glory.

When the songs do have elements that involve man's participation, it's powerful and prophetic. "O Mighty Ones" is a declaration of what happens when we bless the Lord with all that is within us—voice and body. Praise pushes back the darkness. This is one you might end up putting on repeat!

"Let Hope In," originally written by Daniel Bashta ("God's Not Dead") is another prophetic anthem, releasing the life and hope of God into the darkest of situations. These songs help worshippers learn how to prophesy the Word and life of God. They give you language to agree with the life-releasing purposes of God. I speak to barrenness/I command life within. These songs don't only teach us how to worship—they teach us how to prophesy.

Songs That Carry God's Presence

There is a segment of about three songs that I struggled to move beyond. I found myself getting caught up, time after time and wave after wave, in abandoned worship to God. In a few

cases, I was so overwhelmed by His presence—often filling the car—that I thought I might need to pull over. My car is often my portable sanctuary of worship in the mornings, as I'm sure it is for many of you.

The songs are "The Lion and the Lamb," "He is Yahweh" (from Vineyard) and "He's Reigning in Zion." Truly, if you want to be taken into a throne room encounter, play these songs back to back. Who can stop the Lord Almighty? Lyric after lyric directs your focus to God. They recalibrate your worship to focus on the character and attributes of God Almighty ("He is Yahweh") and out of this revelation of God's nature, you can make confident, prophetic declarations. He's reigning in Zion, destroying our enemies. He's reigning in Zion, He's setting the captives free.

Finally, I love the album's diversity. You have energetic praise and prophetic anthems, explosive exclamations of joy ("Joy") and deep, intimate exchanges with God ("Jesus You're Beautiful," "All My Worship").

I've only touched on a selection of the songs presented on this recording. Trust me, you will be profoundly impacted by this magnificent album. It's not another music experience; it's a powerful worship encounter.

Get ready to get caught up in *The River is Rising!*{[eo](#)}

Larry Sparks is author of the books *Breakthrough Faith* and *Breakthrough Healing*. He also founded *Equip Culture Media*—a ministry that empowers believers with the tools and resources they need to live victoriously through the supernatural power of God. Larry serves as director of curriculum resources for *Destiny Image Publishers* and hosts *Life Supernatural*, a weekly radio program that features best-selling authors, emerging filmmakers and key ministry leaders. He lives in Florida with his wife and daughter. Follow him on Twitter @LarryVSparks. Subscribe to

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