

Contemporary

Scripture Reading: Numbers 14:1-4, 10b-18

After most of the spies sent into the Promised Land report that it was too dangerous to cross over into it, the people rebel against God and Moses, intending once again to go back to Egypt. God loses patience with the people, but Moses bargains again for love and mercy. It is in our nature to desire to return to the past, but God's promises reside in the future.

¹ Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. ² And all the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron; the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! ³ Why is the LORD bringing us into this land to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become booty; would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?" ⁴ So they said to one another, "Let us choose a captain, and go back to Egypt."

^{10b} Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the Israelites. ¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? ¹² I will strike them with pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

¹³ But Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for in your might you brought up this people from among them, ¹⁴ and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O LORD, are in the midst of this people; for you, O LORD, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go in front of them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. ¹⁵ Now if you kill this people all at one time, then the nations who have heard about you will say, ¹⁶ It is because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land he swore to give them that he has slaughtered them in the wilderness.' ¹⁷ And now, therefore, let the power of the LORD be great in the way that you promised when you spoke, saying, ¹⁸ 'The LORD is slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children to the third and the fourth generation.'



Soulful Symphonies

The Fusion of Tradition and Innovation in Contemporary African American Church Music

Contemporary music within African American churches continue to be a vibrant and diverse expression that reflects a fusion of traditional gospel roots with a wide array of modern musical genres. Artists and worship leaders draw inspiration from hip-hop, R&B, soul, jazz, and electronic music, creating a dynamic and inclusive musical landscape. The use of technology remains prevalent, with churches incorporating advanced sound systems, multimedia presentations, and online platforms for worship services. This modern approach enhances the worship experience and allows for broader accessibility.

Contemporary gospel artists, such as Kirk Franklin, Yolanda Adams, Tasha Cobbs Leonard, Travis Greene, and Jonathan McReynolds, are influential figures in shaping the current landscape. They bring a fresh and innovative sound to gospel music while maintaining a strong connection to the spiritual and theological foundations of African American worship. Franklin's crossover success helped expand the reach of contemporary gospel to a broader audience.



In addition to solo artists, gospel choirs continue to play a significant role, combining traditional vocal harmonies with contemporary arrangements and instrumentation. The lyrics often touch on themes of faith, social justice, empowerment, and the enduring resilience of the African American community.

African American church music reflects a commitment to both tradition and innovation, embracing a broad spectrum of styles to engage diverse worshippers. This contemporary musical expression serves as a dynamic and evolving channel for spiritual connection and cultural celebration within the African American religious experience.

Gospel music saw a rise in popularity with artists like Kirk Franklin, who brought a fresh approach by incorporating hip-hop, R&B, and urban contemporary sounds into gospel music. Franklin's crossover success helped expand the reach of contemporary gospel to a broader audience.

Song Recommendations (LBW)

- [Lift Every Voice and Sing – Hymn #841](#) (Appropriate Anytime)
- [Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing – Hip Hop Version](#)
- On Eagles Wings – Hymn #787
- [On Eagles Wings – Hip Hop Version](#)
- Let Justice Flow Like Streams – Hymn # 717
- [Let Justice Flow – Spoken Word Version](#)
- Blessed Assurance – Hymn #638
- [Blessed Assurance/Rap The Word](#)

Prayer of the Week

*Heavenly Father, Today I commit to staying so centered in the awareness of God in all things so that loving-kindness will inevitably pour forth from me. I gladly and wholeheartedly dedicate my time, resources, talents, and treasure to those efforts that help create a world where everyone feels accepted. I promise to provide a safe place where everyone can be themselves. I will strive to meet others where they are. I am grateful for our similarities and hope to learn from our differences. I value individual contributions to this world. I freely share and spread the seeds of unity, love and peace wherever I go. **Amen.***

Offering Prayer

Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal. Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name. **Amen.**

Blessing

Beloved, we are God's own people, holy, washed, renewed. God bless you and keep you, shower you with mercy, fill you with courage, and ☩ give you peace. **Amen.**

Contemporary Additional Information

Articles

- [The future of the Black church will include its musical heritage](#)
- [Black Gospel Matters—Because Gospel Is Intrinsically Black](#)

Video/Documentary

- [Rejoice & Shout](#) - Covers the 200-year history of African-American Christian Music.
- **Music:** [Contemporary Black Gospel Playlist](#)