



Anthem: "Shall We Gather at the River"

Based on Hanson Place
by Robert Lowry (1864)
and Deep River, traditional
Setting by John Carter

The anthem is based on the hymn of the same name which was written by Robert Lowry. Exhausted after a long, hot day, Lowry lay down. It was then that he had a vision of heaven. He wrote, "Brightest of all were the throne, the heavenly river, and the gathering of the saints...."¹

In Revelation 22 is John's vision of the River of Life.

Verses 1-2; 3b - "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city." "The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him." NIV

Anthem Reflections:

- 1) In the first verse the saints begin with what Lowry called "a Christian inquiry." *Review the question a moment.
- 2) In the chorus, Lowry heard the saints answer their own question. *What is their declaration?
*How would you describe the emotion of the verse and chorus?
- 3) In the second verse, the saints describe what will take place before they reach the shining river.
*How would you paraphrase what the saints describe?
- 4) After a second chorus, two lines of the spiritual "Deep River" is introduced. *What word(s) would you use for the feeling of the slower musical pace and the words of "Deep River"?
- 5) The lines of "Deep River" are then intermingled with the last verse of the anthem. *Do the feelings of the "Deep River" words and the verse's words seem to differ?
*If so, how do they work together?
*If not, how would you describe the feeling?

Prayer: God of Heaven, we gather here and now with the confidence that one day we will gather at the river of life that flows from Your Throne. There we will be among the saints to serve and honor You and Jesus the Lamb. Oh, what a day of rejoicing that will be! Amen.

Anthem Text

Shall we gather at the river
Where bright angel feet have trod;
With its crystal tide forever
Flowing by the throne of God?

Chorus

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river,
Gather with the saints at the river,
That flows by the throne of God.

Ere we reach the shining river,
Lay we ev'ry burden down;
Grace our spirits will deliver,
And provide a robe and crown.

Chorus

Deep river, My home is over Jordan,
Deep river, I want to cross over into
campground.

Soon we'll reach the shining river,
Soon our pilgrimage will cease.
Soon our happy hearts will quiver
With the melody of peace.

Chorus

¹[Discipleship Ministries | History of Hymns: Apocalyptic vision leads... \(umcdiscipleship.org\)](http://umcdiscipleship.org)