

An Attempt To Listen To God

The Hymn He Sang

By

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It is always a wonder to me that the Lord sang a hymn of praise to God! Matthew and Mark are emphatic about the fact that the Lord, with His disciples, “sang” (Matt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26). I wonder what that was like? Twelve men in a room singing: “Oh give thanks unto the Lord for He is good”; or “The stone which the builders rejected the same is become the head of the corner”; or the amazing words “This is the day which the Lord hath made we will rejoice and be glad in it”. While we are not told in the gospels what they sang, every Jew would know that at the Passover there was sung the Hallel which consists of Psalms 113-118.

No one, terrestrial or celestial, can comprehend what must have been the deep meaning for the Lord as he sang those words? The disciples would have been like we so often are, singing the words but not appreciating the emotions and truths imbedded in them. For an individual to write a hymn out of deep experiences and sing it, there would rise within them deep thoughts and recollections. As Christ sang these words knowing these were written concerning Him, He was the one whom the builders rejected; He was the head of the corner; He was the sacrifice bound to the altar; this was the day that had been set by God’s appointment for the major assault on the Satanic kingdom. These were no mere words to Him. He felt their every clause.

The Passover had ended and the Lord, on this very solemn yet joyous occasion, instituted the Supper. It must have amazed the disciples when He began speaking of His approaching betrayal and death, and doing it when they are celebrating their deliverance from Egypt (Psa. 114:1). I can understand them singing the Hallel when partaking of the Passover, for the redemption from Egypt was a joyous occasion. But, for the Lord to announce that which was going to befall Him would have made it very hard to sing Psalms 117-118 for it was when the Passover and institution of the supper was over, they sang a hymn (Matt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26). The disciples would have sung the Hallel looking back to that wonderful night when they were brought out of Egypt. Christ would have sung it looking forward to that which was soon to befall Him.

This then is the supreme example of our Lord for His people. In those hours when heartfelt singing to God is so very difficult, times of loneliness, bereavement, business collapse, health, and bewilderment at the ways of God, etc., then we can think of that lovely man, who when facing His darkest hour, sang praises to God.

Singing is something we do when we are joyful, but as many know, it is very hard to sing when facing, or experiencing great darkness and grief. Knowing the devotion of the Lord to God I would have no doubts that He led the singing. What must it have been to have heard his voice singing: “This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psa. 118:24). I wonder if He thought of a time yet to come when He would rejoice over His own with singing? “The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing” (Zeph. 3:17). Perhaps He thought of that day when standing before His Father with His own and He says: “I will declare Thy Name unto my Brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee”. Then we read those unfathomable words: “Behold I and the children which God hath given me” (Heb. 2:12-13).

I say again, this would not have been a mere formal singing of a hymn without attention to that which is being sung. Rather it would have been with deep thoughtful contemplations.

It is to be observed some of the reoccurring themes: (this is left for the individual to develop).

- a) God’s deliverance of His own:
 - i) Israel going out of Egypt (Psa. 114:1)
 - ii) At the Red Sea (Psa. 114:3)
 - iii) In provision of water (Psa. 114:8)
- b) God and Creation:
 - i) The Red Sea and Jordan was driven back (Psa. 114:3, 5)
 - ii) The mountains, hills, and earth trembled at His presence (Psa. 114:4, 6-7)
- c) God’s place in the Heavens:
 - i) He is high above the heavens (Psa. 113:4)
 - ii) His glory is above the heavens (Psa. 113:4)
 - iii) He is in the Heavens (Psa. 115:3)

- d) Trusting in God:
 - i) Israel trust in the Lord (Psa. 115:9)
 - ii) House of Aaron, trust in the Lord (Psa. 115:10)
 - iii) Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord (Psa. 115:11)

- e) Praising God:
 - i) Praise ye the Lord (Psa. 113:1-9)
 - 1. His name (Psa. 113:1)
 - 2. His exclusiveness (Psa. 113:5)
 - 3. His gracious condescension (Psa. 113:6-9)
 - 4. In making Israel and Judah His dwelling place (Psa. 114:2)
 - 5. His sovereignty (Psa. 115:3)

In reviewing that which the Lord sang it is observed that the background is victory resulting in praise, and as we read them it behooves us to think of how the Lord would have mused on them.

Psalm	Muse on the following expressions as what that would have meant to the Lord	Basic theme
Psa. 113	“From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord’s name is to be praised” (v. 3). That would be possible because of that which He was going to do.	A song of praise to Jehovah because of Himself
Psa. 114	Speaking reverently, what personal memories that would have brought to His mind. It was He who had done these things, He brought them out of Egypt, He was the Lord at Sinai (vv. 1-8). He was the One who would deliver His people from a greater bondage (v.1).	Israel’s deliverance out of Egypt
Psa. 115	This Psalm expresses why He came, and His lifestyle. He came to give glory to God’s Name (v. 1). Even his enemies had to say: “He trusted in God” and His prayer was heard because of His fear (v. 11; Matt. 27:43; Heb. 5:7)	Israel’s deliverance from Egypt’s idolatry
Psa. 116	<p>“I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.” (vv. 1-4).</p> <p>“I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people. Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid.” (vv. 15-19).</p> <p>Consider how the personal pronouns are used: I, me, mine, my; 37 times in 16 verses.</p> <p>Note also the “I will’s” of the Psalm: “I will call upon the Lord” (vv. 2, 13, 17); “I will walk before the Lord” (v. 9); “I will take the cup of salvation” (v. 13); “I will pay my vows” (vv. 14, 18); “I will offer” (v. 17). This from the man who said: “Not my will but thine be done” (Lk. 22:42).</p>	Praise to God for His deliverance

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Psalm	Muse on the following expressions as what that would have meant to the Lord	Basic theme
Psa. 117	Three times over in this Psalm the Lord sang “Praise”, but two different Hebrew words are used. In the first clause: “O praise the Lord” and the last clause: “Praise ye the Lord” the word is “Halal”. The word in it’s original means to shine, to glorify. The word “praise” in the second clause: “Praise Him all ye people” is the word “shabach”, which basically means to loudly adore. Putting these together the Lord sang in adoring enthusiasm: “glorify and exalt Jehovah”. One can never fathom how He sang like this on that night.	Praise to God for His kindness
Psa. 118	“I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day, which the LORD hath, made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD. God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar. Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee”. (Psa. 118:21-28)	In many ways it is a summarization of the previous Psalms incorporating: Praise, (vv. 1-4) God’s deliverance, (vv. 5-13) His Kindness (vv. 13-29)

When we consider the Lord He is never compared to anyone or anything. He is always contrasted and in this case it is the same.

- a) David had known the jealousy of Saul (1 Sam. 14:5-9) who with unsparing energy sought his life (1 Sam. 14:11; 17-19, 25). Eventually Saul was killed, and after genuine lamentation over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:17-27); and the defeat of the giant and his associates (2 Sam. 21:15-22); with the victory assured David sang unto the Lord (2 Sam. 22:1).
- b) Moses and the children of Israel had stood on the bank of the Red Sea. It was a major barrier (Ex. 14:1) (humanly speaking) and the Egyptians were coming behind them (Ex. 14: 6-10). There was no where to run. Then God opened up the way, parting the waters (Ex. 14:16), drying the muddy ground and they went across on “dry ground” (Ex. 14:22, 29). The Egyptians sought to do the same but God made the dry ground mud again (Ex. 14:25) and brought down the waves killing them all (Ex. 14:28). In the light of the morning, Israel saw all their enemies dead, and it was then they began to sing (Ex. 15:1-21).

Note: Both of these men began to sing AFTER the mighty conquests by God, after the enemy was defeated. Our Lord sang the hymn of triumph before the victory over Satan and death had been faced. His victory was assured and in the fulfillment of the Scriptures He: “swallowed up death in victory” (Isa. 25:8). He not only rose the victorious Lord: “Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:15); then: “He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive” (Eph. 4:8).

He sang a hymn fully conscious of the victory that would be His and we join and sing:

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won;
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave clothes where thy body lay.

Refrain:

*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,
Endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
Let the Church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing;
For her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
Life is naught without thee; aid us in our strife;
Make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love:
Bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.

Edmond Budry (1854-1932)

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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