

Songs of Salvation

1. Think of some Christian songs (any music style) that are great for expressing our thanks and praise to God. How do Christian songs help you in your faith-walk?

[As you read through these songs in the Old Testament remember they are songs in poetic form. They were composed following historical events but sometimes the language is full of imagery.]

Exodus 15: 1-18 Moses' Song

If you flip through the preceding chapters, you will notice that the Israelites have escaped slavery in Egypt, miraculously passed through the Red Sea where their enemies were destroyed but as yet don't have a place to call home.

2. This song praises God for who he is. Read through the song and discuss some of the ways the songwriter (Moses) describes God.
3. This song praises God for what he has done. How has God saved the Israelites? How has he saved us?
4. This song praises God for what he will do in the future (15: 13-18). What impact would this song have on the Israelites as they moved forward?

Luke 1: 67-79 Zechariah's Song

5. This song comes at a point in history when the Israelites were ruled by the Romans. Skim through Luke 1:5-25, 57-66 to learn about Zechariah's personal salvation story. Although this song could be read offering political hope, what elements suggest the song is about a much greater salvation?
6. This song also praises God for what he has done. What do we learn about God from this song? Who is the 'horn of salvation' (Ps 18:2; Acts 4: 10b – 12)
7. This song also foreshadows the future in Jesus Christ (1: 76-79). The child referred to is John the Baptist, Zechariah's son who would go on to prepare the way for Jesus. As we celebrate this Christmas how does this song remind us of the incredible gift Jesus' coming means for us?

Pray Together

Take time to praise God for his salvation and for who he is.

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1. What would cause you to celebrate wildly, without inhibition?

I Samuel 2:1-10 Hannah's Song

2. Skim through I Sam 1:1-20 to understand Hannah's personal situation. [Note: in ancient Israel polygamy was not common but not considered morally wrong; childlessness was considered a shame since children were a blessing from God Ps 127:3.]
How does Hannah's song in 1 Sam 2: 1-10 celebrate her joy and more, in response to God's answer to her prayer?
3. In 1 Sam 2:2 Hannah sings praises to God as there is no one like him. In what way does this song show us how God's actions turn the expected order of society up-side-down? How is God unlike all other gods and people? (See also Matt 5:3)
4. How does this song praise God as being in control (I Sam 2: 6-8, 10b) and as judge of all (I Sam 2: 3, 4, 9-10a)?

Luke 1: 46-56 Mary's Song

5. Skim Luke 1: 26-35 to remind yourself of Mary's situation. How does Mary's song celebrate her joy and excitement, in response to what God was doing through her?
6. In what ways do the themes of Mary's song resonate with those in Hannah's song? What does Mary affirm about God?
7. Hannah's song hints of a king/messiah to come (I Sam 2: 10 the Hebrew word for 'anointed one' is the word for 'messiah'). Mary's child is that king/messiah. How does Jesus fulfil the longing of the Israelites for a messiah? (Luke 1: 31-33, 54-55)
8. In what ways has God shown his personal care of you in big and small ways? What can you learn from Mary's response to God's personal care for her?

Pray Together

These songs express the exuberant joy of Hannah and Mary. How might you express your joy for God's saving work in our lives this Christmas?