

# Music in the Scriptures

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*Echoes, and Anticipations, of Heavenly Praise*

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# Heavenly Music

## Past, Present, and Future

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- “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . **When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?** (Job 38:4–7)
- The song of the seraphim in the heavenly temple: “**Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.**” (Isaiah 6:3)
- “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ‘**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.**’” (Luke 2:13–14)
- “I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders . . . saying with a loud voice, ‘**Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.**’ And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, ‘**Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.**’” (Revelation 5:11–13)

# Humans and Music

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- **“Music is found in every known culture, past and present, varying widely between times and places.** Since all people of the world, including the most isolated tribal groups, have a form of music, it may be concluded that music is likely to have been present in the ancestral population prior to the dispersal of humans around the world . . . ***It then evolved to become a fundamental constituent of human life.***” (Wallin, Lennart, Brown, and Merker, *The Origins of Music*)
- **“Music is the first art . . . and vocal music is the first of the firsts . . . *It is the basic yearning of the human spirit to express love, thanks, devotion, praise to God.*”** (Craig Jessop, “Music and Mormons,” Mormon Identities episode 66)

# Music in Early Israel and the Hebrew Bible

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*References to Instruments and Signing; the  
Levitical Temple Choir; the Psalms*

# Types of Evidence

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- **Literary (scriptural) references**
  - “And [Jabal’s] brother’s name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. (Gen 4:21; NRSV, “lyre and pipe”)
  - Secular uses: family entertainment; celebrations of weanings, marriages, births, deaths; rally troops and celebrate victories; coronation of kings and honoring their achievements
  - Religious uses: importune God, praise him for his qualities, thank him for favors bestowed, celebrate pilgrimages and festivals, mourn and lament disasters
- **Archaeological evidence**
  - Instruments as artifacts; depictions of singing, playing, and dancing in art
- **Comparative evidence**
  - Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and other Levantine tomb paintings, textual references, and artifacts

# Old Testament Instruments

*David and all the house of Israel were dancing before the LORD with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals. (2 Samuel 6:5 NRSV)*

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- **Idiophones** (resonators that are shaken, struck, flexed, or rubbed)
  - Rattles, castanets, sistrums, cymbals, bells
- **Membranophones** (vibrations of stretched membranes)
  - Drums, tambourines, timbrels
- **Aerophones** (vibrations of air in, through, or around)
  - Single pipe, double pipe; *shophar* or ram's horn; "trumpet" (*salpinx*)
- **Chordophones** (plucking or bowing a string)
  - Various kinds of lyres, harps
- ***While we know, more-or-less, how these were used, we do not have any of the tunes that were played on them...***
  - When the temple was destroyed, instruments were forbidden as a sign of mourning

# Ancient Jewish Music?

- No ancient biblical music has survived, though there are references to musical terminology in the Bible, such as the enigmatic term *selâ*
- In the post-biblical period scripture was frequently chanted, and system of marking the biblical text, called *cantillation*, developed to divide it into units, indicate stress or accent, and indicate musical line

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְוּ הַמַּיִם

“And God said, "Let the waters be collected.” (Gen 1:9) Vowel points in red, cantillations in green;  
*public domain image courtesy of the ever-popular Wikipedia!*

- *Audio clip: Psalm 18:1–5 chanted* (Yehezkel Hai El-Beg) 
- *Piyyutim*, liturgical poems, and prayers acquired traditional melodies
- Other musical developments include Jewish hymns, *zemirot*, and “voice instrumental music” (often without words) called *nigunim*
  - *Audio clip: Psalm 133* (Jim Berenholtz) 
  - *Audio clip: Bernstein, Chichester Psalms: Psalm 23 with Psalm 2:1–4* (Westminster Choir) 

# Ancient Greek Music

- Hebrew musical transcriptions do not survive, but Classical Greek music had a system of notations used from 6C BC to 4C AD, though very few examples survive

ϸ ζ̄ ζ̄̄ κ̄ιζ̄ῑ κ̄ ῑ ζ̄ῑκ̄ ο̄ ϸ̄ ο̄φ̄  
Ὅσον ζῆς, φαί του, μη δέν ὄλ ως σύ λυ που·  
ϸ κ̄ ζ̄ῑ κ̄ῑ κ̄ ϸ̄ ο̄φ̄ ϸ̄ κ̄ ο̄ ῑ ζ̄ κ̄ ϸ̄ ϸ̄ ϸ̄ χ̄ῑ  
πρός ὄλ ἴγον ἐ στί τὸ ζῆν, τὸ τέ λος ὁ χρόνος ἀπαι τεῖ.



- Above: *Zigurr Photograph*; smaller letters (look like O's, M's, and lambdas) over the text are the musical notations
- Left: transcription of the Seikilos epitaph, showing both notes and note values above the text.
  - “While you live, shine / Don't suffer anything at all / Life exists only a short while / And time demands its toll.



# What Has Survived: Musical Texts

*Outside of some scattered apparent directions for performance, no notations or actual examples of music have survived outside of musical texts*

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- **Prophetic songs** (including those of Moses and Miriam, Exodus 15)
- **Psalms**
  - *The temple choir and “orchestra” are described in Talmud (Suk. 53a) as consisting of 12 instruments and 12 singers*
  - Would have been used in the developing synagogue service, which later added *piyyutim* or extra-biblical liturgical songs
- **Other scriptural poetry**
  - A great proportion of the prophetic books are in fact poetic!
- **Wisdom literature** (Job, Proverbs, Eccl)
- **Love poetry** (Song of Solomon)

# Songs of Moses and Miriam

Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD,  
and spake, saying,

I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously:  
the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

The LORD is my strength and song,  
and he is become my salvation:  
he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation;  
my father's God, and I will exalt him.

The LORD is a man of war:  
the LORD is his name.

And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them  
that rose up against thee:  
thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.  
And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together,  
the floods stood upright as an heap,  
and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods?  
who is like thee, glorious in holiness,  
fearful in praises, doing wonders?

Thou stretchedst out thy right hand,  
the earth swallowed them.

Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed:  
thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.  
(Exo 15:1-3, 7-8, 11-13 KJV)

And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her  
hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with  
dances. And Miriam answered them,

Sing ye to the LORD,  
for he hath triumphed gloriously;  
the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.  
(Exo 15:20-21)

# A Few Characteristics of Hebrew Poetry

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- *Does not rely on rhyme or unusual forms*
- Exhibits **parallelism**
  - Sometimes called *parallelismus membrorum*: correspondence in the *ideas expressed in two successive verses* (more in the next slide)
  - Divisions
    - Strophes (monocolon, bicolon, tricolon)
    - Numbers of syllables per line
    - Stanzas (a unit of sense, roughly analogous to a verse or refrain)
- **Employs rhythm** (here patterns of accented or stressed syllables) **but not necessarily meter** (Classically patterns of long and short syllables)
- **Characterized by poetic style**
  - Imagery, theme, diction
  - Simile: a figure of speech in which two ideas are compared

# More on Parallelism and Other Structures

- **Synonymous parallelism**

- *Why do the heathen rage,  
and the people imagine a vain thing? (Ps. 2:1)*

- **Antithetical parallelism**

- *For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous:  
but the way of the ungodly shall perish (Ps. 1:6)*

- **Synthetic or climactic parallelism**

- *Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty,  
give unto the LORD glory and strength. (Ps.  
29:1)*
- *I glory in plainness,  
I glory in truth  
I glory in my Jesus  
for he hath redeemed my soul from hell (2 Nephi  
33:6)*

- *Parallelism is important because,  
unlike rhythm and meter, figures of  
thought can be translated into  
another language!*

- Morphological
- Grammatical
- Acrostics

# Introduction to the Psalms

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- **Title**
  - Hebrew: *Tēbillām* or “songs of praise”
  - Greek: *Psalmoi*, also “songs of praise” but from the verb *psallō*, meaning “sing to the accompaniment of a harp”
- **“Torah is revelation, prophecy is proclamation, psalms are response”** (Bandstra)
  - The Psalms reflect the feeling and religious experience of ancient Israel
- **Many are pre-exilic, some even original with David**
  - Nevertheless, some are post-exilic and all bear evidence of editing during the collection process
- **Structure**
  - 150 psalms divided into 5 “books” on analogy to the Torah
  - Each book ends with a **doxology or statement of praise** (41, 72, 89, 106, 150)
- **Attributions**
  - David (73), Solomon (2), Sons of Korah (12), Asaph (12), Heman (1), Moses (1), Ethan (1)

# Psalm Types

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- **Complaint** (e.g. Psalm 22:2–3)
  - The largest number of Psalms are actually lamentations, describing **the suffering of the singer** and containing **pleas for deliverance**
- **Penitential**
  - Prays for forgiveness and help
- **Trust**
- **Thanksgiving**
  - Express gratitude for divine intervention to the singer
- **Hymn**
  - Descriptive language to praise a characteristic of God (irrespective of what he has done for the singer)
- **Torah Psalms** (e.g. Psalm 119:1–2)
  - Praise God's revelation in Torah
- **Wisdom**
  - Cf. Proverbs
- **Royal Psalms**
  - Praising a king as the representative of YHWH, sung at important events (coronation/adoption, weddings, victories)
  - For Christians the king was supposed to be a type of the coming Messiah, hence many serve double-duty as **Messianic Psalms**
- **Temple and Liturgy** (esp. Psalms 120–134, songs of ascents)
  - Describe the joys of the temple, prepare worshipers
- **Imprecations (cursings!)**
  - Display God's justice, prove God's authority over the wicked, lead wicked to repentance (*HCSB*)
  - "God hears even outrageous cries for justice and attends human suffering" (Bandstra, 410)

# Performing a Psalm

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- The example of Psalm 6's heading:
  - **To the choirmaster** (KJV, "chief musician"): **with stringed instruments** (KJV, "on Neginoth"); **according to the Sheminith** (literally, "according to/on the eighth," either an 8-stringed instrument or to the eighth musical pattern); **a psalm of David**.
- Some musical directions in headings may refer to **now-lost melodies**
  - Gittith (Pss. 8, 81, 84); The Hind of the Dawn (Ps. 22; KJV, "Aijeleth Shahar"; The Lillies (Pss. 45, 69, 80; KJV, "Shoshannim"), etc.

# Psalm 47: Example of Praise

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O clap your hands, all ye people;  
shout unto God with the voice of triumph.  
For the LORD most high is terrible;  
he is a great King over all the earth.  
He shall subdue the people under us,  
and the nations under our feet.  
He shall choose our inheritance for us,  
the excellency of Jacob whom he loved.

*Selah.*

God is gone up with a shout,  
the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.  
Sing praises to God, sing praises:  
sing praises unto our King,  
sing praises.  
For God is the King of all the earth:  
sing ye praises with understanding.  
God reigneth over the heathen:  
God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.  
The princes of the people are gathered together,  
even the people of the God of Abraham:  
for the shields of the earth belong unto God:  
he is greatly exalted.

*John Rutter, "O Clap Your Hands"* 



# Psalm 24: A Liturgical Song

*This may have been sung/performed in a responsorial manner, with the priest standing in the temple gate and the worshipers responding to him*

The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof;  
the world, and they that dwell therein.  
For he hath founded it upon the seas,  
and established it upon the floods.  
Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD?  
or who shall stand in his holy place?  
He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;  
who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,  
nor sworn deceitfully.  
He shall receive the blessing from the LORD,  
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.  
This is the generation of them that seek him,  
that seek thy face, O Jacob.

*Selah.*

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;  
and the King of glory shall come in.  
Who is this King of glory?  
The LORD strong and mighty,  
the LORD mighty in battle.  
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;  
and the King of glory shall come in.  
Who is this King of glory?  
The LORD of hosts,  
he is the King of glory.

*Selah.*

Handel, "Lift Up Your Heads," *The Messiah* 

# Early Christian Music in the New Testament

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*Pauline Christological Hymns, Lucan Hymns,  
and Heavenly Songs in Revelation*

# Early Christian Music

- *Jesus and his disciples no doubt used Jewish music*, e.g. one of the Hallel Psalms of Passover (113–118, 136) after the Last Supper: “**And when they had sung an hymn . . .**” (Mark 14:26; par Matthew 26:30).
- Like Hebrew chanting and singing, **early Christian music is all post-biblical**, although *perhaps Byzantine (Eastern Orthodox) music gives a sense of what it might have been like*
- Byzantine music was most often monophonic
- A complicated system of musical notation, different from Western, developed in the ninth century AD
  - *Audio clip: Kontakion of the Nativity*
  - *Audio clip: Achranton Eikona*

## Ο ΤΡΙΣΑΓΙΟΣ ΥΜΝΟΣ

### ΗΧΟΣ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΣ

Δι Μ

Α μην Α α γι ι ι ο ο ος ο ο ο Θε

Δι Μ

ο ο ο ος α α α γι ι ι ο ο ος ι ι ι

# Identifying Hymns in the New Testament

(Christian D. von Dehsen, "Hymnic Forms in the New Testament," *Reformed Liturgy & Music*, 18, No. 1 [Winter, 1984], p. 8)

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- The passage contains **vocabulary which is different** from that of the surrounding context.
- The passage is **written in poetic form**, that is, it exhibits rhythmical patterns and careful structure.
- The content of the passage **interrupts the context**.
- The name of the deity is absent and is replaced by a relative clause or a participle.
- Words are used in the passage which are found nowhere else in the New Testament.
- **The cosmic role of God or Christ is emphasized.**
- Theological concepts and christological doctrine are **expressed in exalted and liturgical language**.

# Significance of New Testament Hymns

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- Early—but still post-biblical—Jewish and Byzantine music *may* give a *hint* of what early Christian music was like, but ultimately what it was like is unrecoverable with current evidence
- **We are left with hymn fragments within the New Testament, texts that probably circulated among early Christians *before* the New Testament was written**
  - Fragments of the hymns in Paul and Luke reflect few of the features of Greek poetry—since they instead reflect Semitic style, *it is possible that he translated already existing Christian hymns in Hebrew or Aramic into Greek for his converts*
  - Hymn, song, and other poetic fragments in John's writings reflect both styles, suggesting that they may have been Greek creative workings on earlier poems
- **New Testament hymns provide a glimpse of the beliefs and feelings of the early Christians**

# Hymnic Passages in Paul

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- Philippians 2:6–11 (“Third” Missionary Journey, AD 53–58; perhaps AD 62–63)
- Colossians 1:15–20 (during “first” imprisonment, AD 62–63)
- Titus 3:4–7 (AD 62–63)
- 1 Timothy 3:16b (AD 62–63)
- Ephesians 1:3–14 (AD 62–63)
- Ephesians 2:14–16
- Ephesians 5:14
- 2 Timothy 2:11–13 (AD 62–63, or, if during “second” imprisonment, AD 67?)

# Philippians 2:6–11 (Greek)

<sup>5</sup>Τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,

<sup>6</sup>ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων  
οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ,

<sup>7</sup>ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν  
μορφὴν δούλου λαβών,  
ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος·

<sup>8</sup>καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος  
ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν  
γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου,  
θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ.

<sup>9</sup>διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν  
καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα  
τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομα,

<sup>10</sup>ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πάντες γόνα κάμψῃ  
ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων

<sup>11</sup>καὶ πάντα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται  
ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς  
εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.

# Philippians 2:6–11

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<sup>5</sup>Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

<sup>6</sup>Who, being in the form of God,  
thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

<sup>7</sup>But made himself of no reputation,  
and took upon him the form of a servant,  
and was made in the likeness of men:

<sup>8</sup>And being found in fashion as a man,  
he humbled himself,  
and became obedient unto death,  
even the death of the cross.

<sup>9</sup>Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him,  
and given him a name  
which is above every name:

<sup>10</sup>That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
of things in heaven, and things in earth, and  
things under the earth;

<sup>11</sup>And that every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

- The structure is somewhat debated, but it seems to divide into two sections (one about Christ's humbling himself, the other of his exaltation) of three strophes each



## Colossians 1:15–20 (Greek)

<sup>12</sup> ὑχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ τῷ ἰκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί·

<sup>13</sup> ὃς ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκοτους καὶ μετέστησεν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ, <sup>14</sup> ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν·

<sup>15</sup> ὃς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως,

<sup>16</sup> ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὄρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα, εἴτε θρόνοι εἴτε κυριότητες εἴτε ἀρχαὶ εἴτε ἐξουσίαι· τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται·

<sup>17</sup> καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ πάντων καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν,

<sup>18</sup> καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας·

ὃς ἐστὶν ἀρχή, πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, ἵνα γένηται ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτὸς πρωτεύων,

<sup>19</sup> ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι

<sup>20a</sup> καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν,

<sup>20b</sup> εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ,

<sup>20c</sup> [δι' αὐτοῦ] εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

# Colossians 1:15–20

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<sup>12</sup> . . . Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: <sup>13</sup>Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: <sup>14</sup>In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:

<sup>15</sup>Who is the image of the invisible God,  
the firstborn of every creature:

<sup>16</sup>For by him were all things created,  
that are in heaven, and that are in earth,  
visible and invisible,  
whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or  
principalities, or powers:  
all things were created by him, and for him:

<sup>17</sup>And he is before all things,  
and by him all things consist.

<sup>18</sup>And he is the head of the body, the church:  
who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead;  
that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

<sup>19</sup>For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all  
fulness dwell;

<sup>20b</sup> by him to reconcile all things unto himself;

<sup>20a</sup> And, having made peace through the blood of  
his cross,

<sup>20c</sup> by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or  
things in heaven.

- Creation and then reconciliation (atonement/salvation)

# The Lucan Canticles

(*Magnificat*, Luke 1:46–55; *Benedictus*, Luke 1:68–79); *Gloria in Excelsis*, Luke 2:14); and *Nunc Demittis*, Luke 2:29–32)

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- **Originally a song other than a psalm from the Bible (from the Latin canticulum, a diminutive of canticum, song)**
  - Unlike the hymns in Paul's writings, which were not widely recognized or studied until the last century or so, *Christians have recognized that these were songs from the earliest days*
- **Like Pauline hymns, they interrupt the context, use different vocabulary, and exhibit poetic style**
  - In this case they are most certainly Semitic, based on Hebrew or Aramaic poems translated into Greek
  - Luke chs. 1–2 are already Semiticizing, with Luke consciously imitating the style of the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures), but **these are even more directly based on Hebraic models**
  - They regularly praise “the salvific action of God without any precise reference to events that Luke was narrating in the infancy narrative” (Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, 349)

# The *Magnificat*

(Luke 1:46–55, “My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord”)

<sup>46a</sup> And Mary said,

<sup>46b</sup> My soul doth magnify the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

<sup>48</sup> For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden:  
for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me  
blessed.

<sup>49</sup> For he that is mighty hath done to me great things;  
and holy *is* his name.

<sup>50</sup> And his mercy from generation to generation  
*is* on them that fear him. [Greek word order]

<sup>51</sup> He hath shewed strength with his arm;  
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

<sup>52</sup> He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats,  
and exalted them of low degree.

<sup>53</sup> He hath filled the hungry with good things;  
and the rich he hath sent empty away.

<sup>54</sup> He hath holpen his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of *his* mercy;

<sup>55</sup> As he spake to our fathers,  
to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

- Different scholars divide this differently, but here it is divided into three stanzas or sections
- **A Model in the Song of Hannah, mother of Samuel** (1 Samuel 2:1–10): “My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD . . .”
- There are many Old Testament references and borrowings, however
- Mary and/or Luke’s models knew their scriptures!
- ***In traditional liturgy, read or sung each morning***

Cundick, “My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord,” *The Redeemer* 

# The *Benedictus*

(Luke 1:68–79, “Blessed Be the Lord God of Israel”)

<sup>67</sup> And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

<sup>68</sup> Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel;  
for he hath visited and redeemed his people,  
<sup>69</sup> And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us  
in the house of his servant David;  
<sup>70</sup> As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets,  
which have been since the world began:  
<sup>71</sup> That we should be saved from our enemies,  
and from the hand of all that hate us;  
<sup>72</sup> To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers,  
and to remember his holy covenant;  
<sup>73</sup> The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,  
<sup>74</sup> That he would grant unto us,  
that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies  
might serve him without fear,  
<sup>75</sup> In holiness and righteousness before him,  
all the days of our life.  
<sup>76</sup> And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest:  
for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;  
<sup>77</sup> To give knowledge of salvation unto his people  
by the remission of their sins,  
<sup>78</sup> Through the tender mercy of our God;  
whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,  
<sup>79</sup> To give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

- Some OT references: Psalm 111:9, Judges 3:9, Psalm 18:2, Psalm 18:17
- John the Baptist was to be a forerunner of the Christ. This section focuses on the saving role of Jesus Christ, especially the ultimate, end-times deliverance
- Verses 76–77 form the kernel of the original blessing to John
- OT references resume in application to John’s role: Isaiah 60:1, Num 24:17, Isaiah 42:6–7, Isaiah 9:2

## *Gloria in Excelsis*

(Luke 2:14, “Glory to God in the Highest”)

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<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

<sup>14</sup> Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace, good will toward men.

[Greek: “and peace on earth to men of good will”]

- The closest allusion is not OT but NT: Luke 19:38’s account of the reception hymn at the triumphal entry: “Peace in heaven / and glory in the highest,” which is the converse of the Gloria!
- *Our earliest Christmas carol!*

# *Nunc Demittis*

(Luke 2:29–32, “Lord, Now Lettest Thou Thy Servant  
Depart in Peace”)

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<sup>28</sup>Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

<sup>29</sup> Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart  
in peace, according to thy word:

<sup>30</sup> For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

<sup>31</sup> Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

<sup>32</sup> A light to lighten the Gentiles,  
and the glory of thy people Israel.

- Simeon blesses the Lord for letting him live to see the Messiah’s arrival
  - OT allusions are largely from Isaiah: Isa 49:6, 42:6, 40:5, etc.
- The prayers of the righteous before their own deaths?
- *In traditional liturgy, read or sung each evening*

# Songs in Revelation

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- The Book of Revelation contains a number of **songs and hymn fragments**, which John presents *as being sung by heavenly figures at different points in history*
  - Some allude to, or have parallels with, Old Testament models
  - Others seem to be “fresh” compositions
- A few prominent songs include the Trisagion expanded (Revelation 4:8–11; cf. Isaiah 6:3); Worthy is the Lamb (Rev Revelation 5:9–10, 12, 13); The Kingdom of Our Lord (Rev 11:15–17); The Song of Moses (Rev 15:3–4); The Marriage of the Lamb (Rev 19:6b–7); Jesus’ Song of Himself, Our Response (Rev 22:16b–17)
  - **Many are familiar to modern audiences, largely because of the efforts of Handel’s *Messiah***, but other works of sacred music have also drawn from this “repertoire”



# Worthy is the Lamb!

(Revelation 5:9–10, 12, 13)

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<sup>8</sup>And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. <sup>9</sup>And they sung a new song, saying,

Thou art worthy to take the book,  
and to open the seals thereof:  
for thou wast slain,  
and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood  
out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

And hast made us unto our God kings and priests:  
and we shall reign on the earth.

<sup>11</sup>And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times

ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; <sup>12</sup>Saying with a loud voice,

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain  
to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength,  
and honour, and glory, and blessing.

<sup>13</sup>And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying,

Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power,  
be unto him that sitteth upon the throne,  
and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

<sup>14</sup>And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

*Handel, "Worthy Is the Lamb that Was Slain/ Amen Chorus," Messiah* 

# Postlude: The Songs in Revelation

“E’en So Lord Jesus Quickly Come,” by Paul Manz

Lyrics allude to several passages from Revelation, including 1:4-5, 4:8, 12:12, 2:20, 21:22-23

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Peace be to you and grace from Him,  
Who freed us from our sins,  
Who loved us all, and shed his blood ,  
That we might saved be.

Sing holy, holy to our Lord,  
The Lord almighty God,  
Who was and is, and is to come,  
Sing holy, holy Lord.

Rejoice in heaven, all ye that dwell therein,  
Rejoice on earth, ye saints below  
For Christ is coming, is coming soon,  
For Christ is coming soon.

E’en so Lord Jesus quickly come,  
And night shall be no more,  
They need no light, no lamp, nor sun,  
For Christ will be their All!

