

My friend the singer¹ worked constantly to find the words that we would be the most meaningful in the worship of our Lord God, and the music that could lift our spirits so that we can better serve Him. I was amazed as I considered the amount of time that he spent in the search, meditation, and organization of what he felt were proper hymns for the coherent worship of the assembly of believers. He took time to make sure that we understood the meaning of the words and read them aloud prior to leading us in singing God's praise. I know that he worked diligently in his individual worship to gain insight to his plan to lead his church into their group worship.

In the beginning, we relied totally on the oral traditions that sprang forth from the early days of the church's existence. The singer welcomed the inspired words of those who truly worshiped the Lord. He worked with some of us to learn new songs and practice them before presenting them to the larger group. Many of the songs were not so new, but were drawn from the historical information that was provided from the scriptures about how God's people worshipped Him in song. The singer was very much like those who were spoken of as a ministers of "prophesying with music"².

In the days of the original kingdom, there were many instances of worship by singing groups, or choirs³, which were often accompanied by musical instruments. Sacred songs⁴ were sung by the people during regular worship activities, as well as for preparation for battle⁵ with God on their side. The people proclaimed, "Give thanks to the Lord; He is good; His love endures forever". In those days, such worship brought the presence of the Lord as a dense cloud, filling the temple⁶.

King David threw his entire being into singing and dancing when the ark was brought to Jerusalem⁷. He also wrote and sang the words that constituted the greatest Psalm-hymn I knew⁸:

*The Lord is my rock,
my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock,
in whom I take refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation.
He is my stronghold,
my refuge and my savior –
from violent people you save me.
I called to the Lord,
who is worthy of praise,
and have been saved from my enemies.*

We sang Psalms as we quoted them from our memories and our hearts. Many Psalms even mentioned the act of singing, especially "new" songs⁹ that came from the hearts of those who wrote them:

*He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the Lord
and put their trust in him¹⁰.*

We know that Jesus and the apostles sang a hymn before going to the Mount of Olives¹¹; this can now be seen as an act of sacred worship before going into a great battle. Our brothers Paul and Silas also prayed and sang hymns while they were in prison¹² for their involvement in their mission (which was like a fighting a battle). This singing was also another way of spreading the gospel of Christ.

Hymns and spiritual songs were developed and passed on orally for a long time. Eventually, some of the texts so common in our worship were passed around in letters and other bits of communication from fellow followers of the Way¹³. There was no real organization of them into a book¹⁴, even though this would have been very useful to share with other churches.

We came together often in our worship, with each of us having a hymn or a word of instruction to share with each other such things as were inspired by the spirit. We were working to build up the church. We sang and made music from our hearts in gratitude for God's grace¹⁵.

One of the greatest of the hymns was developed several years after the resurrection, as the apostles and others with the mission of spreading the gospel gathered knowledge about Christ and put them into written form¹⁶:

[Christ Jesus]

*Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!*

*Therefore God exalted him
to the highest place
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father¹⁷.*

As we looked to the future and the new heavens and new earth¹⁸ that would be established, we often considered the chant recorded by the prophet Isaiah regarding the Lord on His magnificent throne¹⁹:

*“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.”*

When this worship occurred with Isaiah, the presence of the Lord filled the temple²⁰ like in the instance mentioned earlier. We are compelled to sing about the worthiness of the Lord God Almighty²¹ in reference to that holiness. The words became part of the new songs that exhibited the new covenant Kingdom of God with Christ as the Lion and the Lamb²². The old song of Moses²³ was given new life in what was called “the song of Moses and the Lamb”²⁴. In our worship of God we recognize His great and marvelous deeds²⁵ and that He gave His unique Son in exchange for us so that we might be saved. And it is said that He will rejoice over us with song in return²⁶.

References

1. Here the singer is my very good friend Tom Marcrom, who is our worship leader at our congregation.
2. 1 Chronicles 25:1,3
3. 1 Chronicles 15:27, Nehemiah 12:31, 38, 40, and 42
4. 1 Chronicles 16:42
5. “After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: ‘Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever.’ As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.” 2 Chronicles 20:21-22.
6. “The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang: “‘He is good; his love endures forever.’ Then the temple of the Lord was filled with the cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God.” 2 Chronicles 5:13-14.
7. 1 Chronicles 15:27
8. “David sang to the Lord the words of this song when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. . . .” 2 Samuel 22:1-4 (copied in Psalm 18:1-3).
9. There are six Psalm references to new songs (NIV).

10. Psalm 40:3
11. Matthew 26:30 and Mark 14:26
12. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Acts 16:25.
13. The best hymn candidates are listed here: Phil 2:6–11, [Col 1:15–20](#), Eph 1:3–10, I Tim 3:16, II Tim 2:11–13; An Introduction to the New Testament (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.9985
14. “Although there are references to Christians singing “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” the NT does not contain a collected book of hymns similar to the OT Book of Psalms ... This is not rhyming poetry; indeed some would argue for prose hymns.” An Introduction to the New Testament (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.9914 & 9928 ...
The earliest preserved Christian hymn collection may be the Odes of Solomon, a Jewish Christian collection in Syriac of the 2d century. The earliest preserved musically annotated Christian hymn seems to be Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1786 of the early 3d century. An Introduction to the New Testament (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.21987 [2]
15. “What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.” 1 Corinthians 14:26.
“... speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord...” Ephesians 5:19.
“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.” Colossians 3:16
16. “The Christological Hymn of 2:5–11. A plausible case can be made for the possibility that Paul learned the hymn in the late 30s in the first years after his conversion.” An Introduction to the New Testament (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.9981
A. Fitzmyer, an expert in Aramaic, makes a strong case that the prePauline Philippians hymn (2:6–11) with its very high christology dates back to the 30s... An Introduction to the New Testament (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.21759
17. Philippians 2:6-11
18. Isaiah 65:17&22;
19. Isaiah 6:1-3 (vs 3 shown)
20. Isaiah 6:4
21. Revelation 4:8
22. Revelation 5:5,6
23. See Exodus 15
24. Revelation 15:3a
25. Revelation 15:3b
26. “The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.” Zephaniah 3:17 [Thanks to Tom Marcrom for this note.]

Hymns In NT Letters. Although there are references to Christians singing “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” the NT does not contain a collected book of hymns similar to the OT Book of Psalms, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.9914 ... This is not rhyming poetry; indeed some would argue for prose hymns. *An Introduction to the New Testament* (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.9928 ... a distinctive syntax is often found, e.g., avoiding conjunctions (thus, parataxis). *An Introduction to the New Testament* (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.9930 ... [the SSM, the singer?, and the storyteller work out ideas for creating a hymnbook]

The Christological Hymn of 2:5–11. A plausible case can be made for the possibility that Paul learned the hymn in the late 30s in the first years after his conversion. *An Introduction to the New Testament* (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.9981 ... In other words does the hymn posit an incarnation of a divine figure as does the Johannine Prologue, or is there a play on two Adam-figures (i.e., human archetypal models): the Adam of Gen who was in the image of God but, by ambitiously trying to go higher, went lower through his sin; and Christ who was in the image of God but, by humbly choosing to go lower, ultimately was exalted by being given the divine name (2:9–11)? *An Introduction to the New Testament* (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.9992

Like the seraphim in Isa 6, the four living creatures who are cherubim chant a trisagion (the hymn with the threefold “Holy”); and all join in a “Worthy are you” hymn praising the creator God. *An Introduction to the New Testament* (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.15707

[comm] According to Justin’s *Dialogue* the purpose of the eucharistic remembrance among Christians was to give thanks to God for having created the world and for having delivered us from evil — the themes of the “Worthy” hymns in Rev 4 and 5.61... *An Introduction to the New Testament* (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.15735

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The detection of hymns in Eph, however, is an inexact and disputed enterprise; *An Introduction to the New Testament* (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.22780 ... other scholars would prefer to speak of the use of hymnic style rather than of the adaptation of preexistent hymns. Eph 5: 19 encourages psalms and hymns to the Lord (Christ). *An Introduction to the New Testament* (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.22782

Among the many hymns in the NT (pp. 232, 489 above), those in Rev are the most specifically identified as such. They are of a choral type and not spontaneous or individual utterances. *An Introduction to the New Testament* (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.23813

Dead Sea Scrolls A collection of texts, some in remarkably good repair, some extremely fragmentary, found in the late 1940s around Qumran (near the north- east corner of the Dead Sea), and virtually all now edited, translated and in the public domain. They formed all or part of the library of a strict monastic group, most likely Essenes, founded in the mid- second century BC and lasting until the Jewish – Roman war of AD 66 – 70. The scrolls include the earliest existing manuscripts of the Hebrew and Aramaic scriptures, and several other important documents of community regulations, scriptural exegesis, hymns, wisdom writings, and other literature. They

shed a flood of light on one small segment within the Judaism of Jesus' day, helping us to understand how some Jews at least were thinking, praying and reading scripture. Despite attempts to prove the contrary, they make no reference to John the Baptist, Jesus, Paul, James or early Christianity in general. Mark for Everyone (The New Testament for Everyone); Wright, N. T.; p.228

The following is a list of hymns often detected by scholars in NT letters (scholarly estimates run from five to thirty); it does not claim to be complete, and those marked with an asterisk would be the most agreed on:

Phil 2:6–11*

Col 1:15–20* 15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Heb 1:3

I Cor 13

Eph 1:3–14*

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he[a] predestined us for adoption to sonship[b] through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will — 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, 9 he[c] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

I Pet 1:3–5

Rom 3:24–26

Eph 1:20–23

I Pet 1:18–21

Rom 6:1–11

Eph 2:14–18 (22)

I Pet 2:21–25

Rom 8:31–39

Eph 5:14*

Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you

I Pet 3:18–22

Rom 11:33–36

Titus 3:4 –

I Tim 3:16*

He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.

II Tim 2:11–13*

If we died with him, we will also live with him; 12 if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; 13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

An Introduction to the New Testament (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library); Brown, Raymond E, loc.9985 ...

There is an ancient prayer called the Jesus Prayer —“ Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner”

1 Chronicles 15:27; Now David was clothed in a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and as were the musicians, and Kenaniah, who was in charge of the singing of the choirs. David also wore a linen ephod.

Nehemiah 12:31, 38, 40, 42; I had the leaders of Judah go up on top of the wall. I also assigned two large choirs to give thanks. One was to proceed on top of the wall to the right, toward the Dung Gate. ... The second choir proceeded in the opposite direction. I followed them on top of the wall, together with half the people—past the Tower of the Ovens to the Broad Wall, ... The two choirs that gave thanks then took their places in the house of God; so did I, together with half the officials, ... and also Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malkijah, Elam and Ezer. The choirs sang under the direction of Jezrahiah.

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consider the oral tradition at the beginning of the church's existence;
reading the words to the hymn prior to leading it;
appreciating other people's words and ideas of worship;
he worked with others to learn and practice songs
he worked diligently with individual worship to gain insight to his plan to lead his church into their group worship.

The Scriptures are full of historical information about worship in song

Relate to the history of singing in the OT;

- the song of Moses, how that relates to the song of Moses and the Lamb in Revelation
- choirs were in use, perhaps common, as in [1 Chronicles 15:27, with David dancing to the music and singing; Nehemiah 12:31, 38, 40, 42; multiple choirs in a complex organization, under the direction of Jezrahiah.]
- 1 Chronicles 16:42; Heman and Jeduthun were responsible for the sounding of the trumpets and cymbals and for the playing of the other instruments for sacred song. The sons of Jeduthun were stationed at the gate.
- Ministry of prophesying with music; 1 Chr 25:1,3
- 2 Chronicles 5:13-14; The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang: "He is good; his love endures forever." Then the temple of the Lord was filled with the cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God.
- 2 Chronicles 20:21-22; After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever." As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.

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1 Corinthians 14:26; What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.

Ephesians 5:19; speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord,
Colossians 3:16; Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.
Reference my story: “The Song”

Revelation-like

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Revelation 5:9; And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Revelation 14:3; And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.

Revelation 15:3; and sang the song of God’s servant Moses and of the Lamb: “Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations.

the song of Moses, how that relates to the song of Moses and the Lamb in Revelation

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