

Songs & Chants

by Patch Blakey

I'm not sure how the Israelites sang the songs that Moses wrote (Ex. 15:1–8; Deut. 31:30–32:43). Was it a *cappella* or accompanied? Also, what tune was used in Jesus' revelation to John (Rev. 15:3–4) where John saw the saints in heaven still singing at least one of Moses' songs? While the words are recorded for us in the Bible, the melodies are not. And the same applies to David and his songs and psalms. We know there were musical instruments that often accompanied these songs and psalms because we can see either the instruments utilized (Psa. 81:2) or know that it was written to "the Chief Musician" which implies the use of some form of music (see Psalms 75, 76, 77, 80, and 81 for examples).

The word "remember" is mentioned in the book of Deuteronomy twelve times. The twelfth time is in the song that Moses taught the children of Israel to sing.

*"Remember the days of old,
Consider the years of many
generations.
Ask your father, and he will
show you;
Your elders, and they will tell you."
(Deuteronomy 32:7)*

Is it possible that the songs of Moses and the Psalms of David and others were given as a means of *remembering* all that the Lord their God had said and done?

Even one of David's Psalms specifically includes a passage which should be encouraging to its singers and listeners,

"But the mercy of the LORD is

*from everlasting to everlasting
On those who fear Him,
And His righteousness to
children's children,
To such as keep His covenant,
And to those who remember His
commandments to do them."
(Psalm 103: 17–18)*

Perhaps singing this psalm would help put the singer in mind to remember God's commandments. One wonders if God's commandments were ever sung by the children of Israel.

This psalm also speaks of the nature and character of God, and His regard for His children.

*For as the heavens are high
above the earth,
So great is His mercy toward
those who fear Him;
As far as the east is from the
west,
So far has He removed our
transgressions from us.
As a father pities his children,
So the LORD pities those who
fear Him.
For He knows our frame;
He remembers that we are dust.
(Psalm 103: 11–14)*

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul urged those in the churches at Ephesus and Colossae to speak, teach, and admonish one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). To do so was an indication of being in submission to the Holy Spirit and also an indication of godly wisdom.

Consistent with what the Bible teaches, Dorothy Sayers astutely observed that young children have a natural propensity to take in

new information. She stated in *The Lost Tools of Learning*, "The Poll-parrot stage is the one in which learning by heart is easy and, on the whole, pleasurable; whereas reasoning is difficult and, on the whole, little relished." Because this is the way the Lord seems to have created most children, teaching them songs, chants, rhymes, and verses is a key element of the instruction for young students at ACCS schools.

To that end, ACCS is thankful for the many schools and teachers which have so willingly contributed the chants they use in their classrooms and which are published in this issue. There were far more submissions than ACCS could reasonably publish in this journal so we hope to ultimately include all of them on the ACCS website.

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