

# The New Song of the Redeemed

---

Psalm 40:1-3  
Frank Walker, Ph.D.

In this evening's text, David wrote that God *hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord*. The idea of a new song has always fascinated me because we see it so frequently in Scripture — nine times, to be exact. But what's the point of it? What is a new song?

A new song is especially appropriate for the beginning of a new year. Every new year allows us to review the mercies the Lord bless us with in the preceding year and plead for them to continue in the future. It reminds us to stay focused on the one through whom these mercies come, viz., our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is true because the new song is a song of salvation, celebrating God's great works on our behalf. David expressed his salvation-song in verse 2 of our text: *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings*. Likewise, Psalm 98, which we looked at just a couple of weeks ago, begins: *O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory* (v. 1).

## Old Song — New Song

But we might wonder, 'If the new song is a song of redemption, what's the old song?' This isn't an easy question to answer because the phrase 'old song' doesn't occur in the Bible. But two passages offer some suggestions.

One is the fourth chapter of the book of Revelation, where the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders worship before the throne of God. The four creatures begin by praising God for his holiness and eternity. They said, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come* (v. 8). Then the twenty-four elders join in with a song of creation, saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created* (v. 11). The next chapter opens with a mighty angel looking for someone to open the scroll in the Father's hand. The angel searched high and low but found no one. Then an elder, i.e., someone who understood the redeeming grace of Jesus Christ, said, *Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven*

*seals thereof* (ch. 5:5). The twenty-four elders bowed before the Son of God and sang a new song a new song, praising him for giving them the victory.

Now, if the new song in Revelation is a song of victory, perhaps the old song was the song that preceded it, i.e., a song of creation, celebrating God's great power that brought all things into existence merely by speaking.

Psalm 77 suggests another possibility. The psalmist was troubled in spirit, depressed and overwhelmed with challenges. Though he sought refuge in God, his soul refused to be comforted. In verse 5, he remembered *the days of old, the years of ancient times*. He looked back to what he considered 'the good ol' days,' hoping to find joy or satisfaction in what used to be. As he reminisced, he called to mind his *song of the night*. Here his old song was a eulogy of his previous accomplishments. This song was doomed from the start because no man has laurels good enough to stand before God. All our achievements are nothing but a mist.

Whatever the old song is, the new song is much better. It's a song about God and his salvation. David had experienced this. Verse 1 says, *I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry*. It's a song that will always be new because it constantly renews our strength. Isaiah wrote, *But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint* (Isa. 40:31).

## The Lamb's Song

The new song is a song of victory, but not just any victory. This comes out in verses 5 through 8. In verse 5, David recognized that what God does for his people is far greater than our puny minds can imagine. He said, *Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered*. God's wonderful works go beyond David's military victories. They require someone even more committed than he was, one who wouldn't give in to adultery and murder, one who would offer his body and soul to win the greatest victory of all — deliverance from sin. Verses 6 through 8 continue: *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart*.

Who are these verses describing? The only one worthy of opening the scroll, our Lord Jesus Christ. The tenth chapter of Hebrews affirms as much. It says, *Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt*

*offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (vv. 5-10).*

Is there any doubt that Jesus' work for sinners pleased his Father? There shouldn't be. The forty-second chapter of Isaiah says so. Speaking of the Messiah, the prophet wrote, *Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth (v. 1).* The Lord's servant would have a mild and meek character, but would triumph in judgment. Verses 6 and 7 describe his salvation: *I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.* And then in verse 10, the prophet instructed us to sing the new song of deliverance: *Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.* Isaiah 42 is particularly fascinating because it brings together so much of what we've seen. In particular, we see that the prophet knew that the Messiah would be Jehovah, the Lord and Savior of his people, and that he would deserve everyone's praise for his marvelous work of salvation. That praise would take the form of a new song — a song of victory.

Here's our new song. Sing about Jesus, who came into the world to keep God's law that we might have righteousness through him. He gave us everything we lacked. The last verse of Psalm 40 reads: *But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God (v. 17).* And David, although he lived before the Father prepared a body for his Son, could sing the new song, too, because he believed with all his heart that the redeemer would come. How much more the twenty-four elders, who saw the accomplishment of redemption! They knew that Jesus was worthy and sang, *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.* Their new song celebrated what the Lamb had done for them. He redeemed them with his own blood and made them kings and priests before God.

By faith, we participate in our Savior's victory and song. First John 5:4 says, *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* So, if you want to sing the new song, you must believe in the one who overcame the world for his

people. Lay hold of him this very day! Don't delay or waver or stumble between two opinions! Come to Jesus now and receive everything you need for forgiveness, righteousness and everlasting life!

## For the Redeemed

There's another aspect of the new song that we need to consider. Revelation 14:3 says, *And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.* That is, only God's dear children know the song of deliverance.

This doesn't mean that the angels can't understand and appreciate the wonders of redemption. On the contrary, they're forever amazed that the Lord of glory condescended to help sinful man (1 Pet. 1:12). Was it not angels who first sang about Jesus' birth (Luke 2:14)? Nor does it mean that unbelievers cannot sing the words of our dearest hymns. Are we to suppose that everyone who sings Handel's *Messiah* is saved? Of course not. Rather, this verse means that only those who truly love the Lord Jesus Christ understand the greatness of our salvation and appreciate Jesus' work. Only believers rejoice in salvation by grace alone.

Here I'll remind you of two verses. First Corinthians 2:14 says, *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* And in Matthew 11, Jesus, pondering the fact that the Father opens the eyes of some and closes the eyes of others, prayed: *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him* (vv. 25-27).

The Lord has blessed us beyond imagination. We don't deserve his favor and never will. No matter how hard we may try, we can never earn it. But is this all? No, the fact that we've been given much means that God expects more from us. Jesus said, *For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more* (Luke 12:48). What does he expect? Lives of thankful obedience. Consistency in our daily walk. Telling others about God's grace in Jesus Christ. Diligence in prayer. And much more. These things are all products of the new song taking root in our hearts.

As we come to the beginning of another year, let's thank God for all the blessings of the past year and call on him to provide for us in the future. But let's remember that God himself gave us the

new song of our redemption through Jesus, our Savior. By his incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension, he's filled us with hope, peace and joy. So, let's sing the new song to the Lamb with joy and enthusiasm! Amen.