

Worship

Worship and Song and Praise

Lesson #6 for August 6, 2011

Scriptures: Psalms 32:1-5; 51:1-6,17; 1 Chronicles 16:8-36; Revelation 4:9-11; 5:9-13; Philippians 4:8.

1. This lesson is about David and his psalms or songs and what they can teach us about worship. "As a part of religious service, singing is as much an act of worship as is prayer. Indeed, many a song is prayer." *Education* 168.3
2. Some of David's most famous psalms were composed while he was still tending sheep on the hills of Bethlehem. How did he get started with that skill? Sheep have to be looked after on a daily basis. Did David observe the Sabbath and worship God with the sheep on the hills of Bethlehem?
3. As we enter into our discussion about song, music, and worship, we continue to ask these three questions: What does worship mean? (Remember that *worship* comes from the Old English word, *worth-ship*.) How should we do it? What can it do for us?
4. Seventh-day Adventists have claimed the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12 as their special portion of Scripture. We believe that these are God's messages that we are to give to the world in our day. Revelation 14:6,7 tells us to recognize that worshiping the Creator is one of our foremost responsibilities. Did God give John this message for us as a special warning against the inroads of evolution that have become so common in our day? God's creative power is an expression of His greatness! (Isaiah 44) Evolution teaches us that we do not really need God!
5. The life of David can be conveniently divided into several sections: 1) His childhood and youth herding sheep on the hills of Bethlehem; 2) The time after being anointed as the future king when he slew Goliath and spent time working in the house of Saul; 3) The period during which he was being pursued by Saul and lived as a migrant refugee with his life in constant danger; 4) David's early years as king; and 5) After his downfall with Bathsheba and dealing with the problems of his children.
6. In your own mind, compare the experiences of Saul and David. Why did God choose Saul as the first king of Israel? It seems clear that Saul was the kind of person the people wanted as king. What would have happened if God had refused to give them a king? Would He have lost effective control of the Israelite nation? But, if God knew what kind of king Saul was going to be, why did He choose him or accept him? (1 Samuel 15:10,11,29,35) Does 1 Samuel 16:7 give us a hint about the differences between Saul and David?
7. Read Psalm 32:1-5 and Psalm 51:1-6. Is every detail of these passages fully truthful? These verses were written after David's sin with Bathsheba. Does his attitude as portrayed in these passages help us to understand the difference between David and Saul? When David's sins were pointed out, he immediately repented and sought God's forgiveness. By contrast, Saul just rebelled.
8. There are a number of the psalms written by different authors that celebrate the covenant promises that God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They also celebrate the deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt and their experiences at Mount Sinai. Would these be reasons for celebration? Why do you think those subjects became great stimuli for hymn composition?
9. David wrote some of his most famous psalms after some of his most famous sins! Why were

the sins of David made so public—apparently for the rest of eternity? Would you like to have your sins spelled out in Scripture? Weren't David's sins cast into the bottom of the sea? (Micah 7:19) Why are they still in the Bible? Why is it that in the book of Psalms penitence seems to be followed so often by rejoicing? What matters is how God treats us! When was David a man after God's own heart?

I was shown that it was when David was pure, and walking in the counsel of God, that God called him a man after his own heart. When David departed from God, and stained his virtuous character by his crimes, he was no longer a man after God's own heart. *1 Spirit of Prophecy* 379.1

Though David had fallen [after his sin with Bathsheba], the Lord lifted him up. He was now more fully in harmony with God and in sympathy with his fellow men than before he fell. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 726.1

10. Do we learn and grow after committing our sins? Do we as individuals and as a Seventh-day Adventist Church have a covenant relationship with God? If we could write psalms, what would we or what should we write about? We should be so thankful for the writings of Ellen White in recent times. Her writings are of a character apart from normal writing. A recent testimony by three Jewish rabbis about her writings and how they correctly reflect the ideas of the ancient Hebrew should make us appreciate her writings even more.
11. The Scriptures make it very clear that we are all sinners. (1 Kings 8:46; 2 Chronicles 6:36; Psalms 130:3,4; 143:2; Proverbs 20:9; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:9-23; 1 John 1:8-10)
12. Think of the contrast between that which you know you could be and what you are; the contrast between the kind of thoughts you think and the kind you know that you should think; the contrast between what you do and what you should do, between what you do not do and what you know that you should. As Christians, with the biblical standard of Jesus before us, the personal realization of our true nature can be especially devastating. (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for Monday, August 1)
13. As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe that one of the reasons for worshiping God is the everlasting gospel? (Revelation 14:6,7) Our *Bible Study Guide* focuses on the fact that the gospel means that Jesus has died for our sins. It puts the emphasis on what God has done for us. While that is an excellent basis on which to praise and worship God, shouldn't we also focus on what God can do in and with us and what the gospel says about God? Like the ancient Jews, are we too focused on what we want God to do for us and not enough on what we should be doing for God?
14. Music is a great way to express emotions. Those emotions may include everything from wrath to loneliness, betrayal, sorrow for sin, rejoicing, and worship. Some experts who have studied music and its effects on human beings suggest that it bypasses the frontal lobes of the brain—the area of the brain where we do our serious thinking—and that the tempo and rhythm/beat have a direct impact on our emotions. In that light, what part of religion is supposed to be based on emotion? If God is love, is that talking particularly about emotions?
15. Consider the following statements by a musician:

So why should music play such an important and integral role in our lives? As it turns out, research over the last few decades has increasingly shown that music, and in particular the singing and playing of music, helps the brain develop much more fully and extensively, especially in our early years. Music makes us brighter, more intelligent, more logical, more rational, and more capable. It improves study habits and test scores. It builds a better sense of

self and community. It aids in our general sense of well-being and improves our quality of life. At times, it brings us closer to the divine in all of us. A recent study even suggests that the act of singing improves the immune system. To answer a question with a question: Why shouldn't music play an important role in our lives?—Peter Rutenberg, LA Music Director, Chamber Singers

16. Music is a whole-body experience, appealing not only to our emotions but to our bodies and minds. It can provide a powerful and touching corporate experience that tempers the atmosphere, prepares our hearts for spiritual truths, and brings us together in a common encounter with God. It is no wonder that music plays such an important part in worship. (*Adult Teachers Bible Study Guide*, p. 69)
17. Do young people watching music videos undergo a “whole-body experience”?
18. Why is it that some music seems to be uplifting while other music seems to be definitely degrading? What part do the lyrics, the tune, the tempo, and the beat have on music's impact on us? How do each of these aspects of music affect us?
19. Anyone who has watched or listened to many movies will recognize that music is a very powerful way to set the atmosphere for a scene. People get awards for doing that! It is often possible to tell what is coming next in the story by listening to the music which is playing. Why is that? Is this just a matter of habit and what we have grown accustomed to?
20. David recognized the role of song in worship. Whether this was a direct result of his experiences with his harp while herding sheep, we do not know. But, on the occasion when the ark was taken to Jerusalem and set in a tent, David appointed Asaph and his brothers and relatives to be responsible for the music in connection with the worship. Read 1 Chronicles 16:8-36 to get a feel for what David had in mind. Notice some of the action verbs that were used in that call to worship: *give thanks, sing, call on His name, seek the Lord, make known, talk of, declare, give glory to, proclaim, remember, and bring an offering.*
21. Read Job 38:7. Did the “morning stars” and the “sons of God” sing for the first Sabbath worship service held in the Garden of Eden? Did Adam and Eve sing with them? What was that first Sabbath worship like? Would it serve as a perfect example of worship?
22. For those who are somewhat familiar with the book of Psalms, it is clear that virtually every kind of emotion is expressed in those songs. Look briefly at Psalms 23, 32, 46, 47, 69, 137.
23. Read 1 Samuel 16:14. What is the context for this? What is meant when it says, “An evil spirit from the Lord”? Compare Judges 9:23,24; 1 Samuel 16:15,16; 18:10; 19:9; 1 Kings 22:19-22 Is this the concept of monotheism vs. polytheism? Compare 2 Samuel 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 21:1. If you believe there is only one God, everything supernatural that happens must be attributable to that one God. Were the songs that David sang for Saul to try to calm his emotions psalms that he had composed while herding sheep? What inspired those psalms or songs?
24. Daily revelations of the character and majesty of his Creator filled the young poet's heart with adoration and rejoicing. In contemplation of God and His works the faculties of David's mind and heart were developing and strengthening for the work of his afterlife. He was daily coming into a more intimate communion with God. His mind was constantly penetrating into new depths for fresh themes to inspire his song and to wake the music of his harp. The rich melody of his voice poured out upon the air, echoed from the hills as if responsive to the rejoicing of the angels' songs in heaven. . .
As he contemplated the perfections of his Creator, clearer conceptions of God

opened before his soul. Obscure themes were illuminated, difficulties were made plain, perplexities were harmonized, and each ray of new light called forth fresh bursts of rapture, and sweeter anthems of devotion, to the glory of God and the Redeemer. The love that moved him, the sorrows that beset him, the triumphs that attended him, were all themes for his active thought; and as he beheld the love of God in all the providences of his life, his heart throbbed with more fervent adoration and gratitude, his voice rang out in a richer melody, his harp was swept with more exultant joy; and the shepherd boy proceeded from strength to strength, from knowledge to knowledge; for the Spirit of the Lord was upon him.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 642.

25. In the moments of peace and quiet while herding sheep on the hills of Bethlehem, David had plenty of time to think. His thoughts turned to God. Do we have enough quiet time to think about God? Should we each be trying to compose our own songs or prayers?
26. Unfortunately, although we have the words—in our case only as translated into English—of many of these psalms, we do not have any of the original tunes or music. However, as we know, many, if not all, of these psalms have been converted into modern songs by modern songwriters. Do we find these modern adaptations of David’s hymns uplifting?
27. What should be our guide in choosing the kind of music to which we listen? Is Christ our Guide in everything? (1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 4:4,8; Colossians 1:18-20)
28. As suggested by Peter Rutenberg, our world is permeated with music. Unfortunately, much of it does not have an uplifting character.
29. Considering the impact of music on our thinking and emotions, is it any wonder that Satan has done his very utmost to pervert this instrument of God for demonic purposes? Look at what Satan is doing with the music industry in our day? Billions of dollars are being spent to purchase recordings and videos of songs that are anything but uplifting!
30. As parents and grandparents, is it our responsibility to teach our children to appreciate the better kinds of music? How do we keep them from being completely overwhelmed by the kinds of music that are so popular in our day?
31. While we recognize that different cultures have different kinds of music and not every kind of music appeals to every taste, after experiencing certain types of music, shouldn’t we each recognize whether it is uplifting or degrading?
32. Songs are an excellent way to memorize Scripture. Think of all the Scriptures that you have learned by singing them. Should we be taking more effort to put Scriptures to song? Don’t we need as many Scriptures as possible stored in our minds as protection for the times that are coming?
33. Why do different age-groups apparently have such different tastes in music? Is it just what they are accustomed to? Will the time eventually come when the music in churches completely changes? Will the time ever come when rock ‘n roll, jazz, and the blues seem to be appropriate to be played and sung in church?

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Last Modified: July 6, 2011

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