

- Last week we looked at Psalms of praise, including Psalms 93, 8 and 150. All of them have parts that are used in our hymns today. The common theme in all of them is how God is to be praised, exalted and thanked because He is in control of everything and is so much greater than we.
- This week we are looking at songs of Thanksgiving, and the very first one we will look at was sung spontaneously by Moses and the Israelites in Exodus 15.
- The context for this song of Thanksgiving is that the Israelites had just crossed through the Red Sea that God had parted for them via Moses. Then when Pharaoh's pursuing army went through the Red Sea as well, God closed the parting in the waters so they were all drowned. ([Exodus 14:26-29](#))
- The opening verse makes clear that Moses and the people of Israel are singing this song of Thanksgiving to God. ([Exodus 15:1](#))
- The song acknowledges that God has become salvation to them. Not that He has saved them, that was obvious. The people are so grateful that they are acknowledging the God that was providing them strength before has in fact become salvation to them. ([Exodus 15:2](#))
- Next, they acknowledge God's deliverance in a military context, comparing the Lord to a man of war. ([Exodus 15:3](#))
- Next we get a more detailed view of what happened and how total was the destruction. The song is designed to give God the credit, and in so doing, we get more detail about the event than we had in Exodus 14. One detail we learn here is that God used the wind somehow, at least in making the waves crash down and drown Pharaoh's army. ([Exodus 15:4-10](#)).
- The Israelites acknowledge that in this great deed the Lord has made many powerful nations along the way afraid to face them now because they have heard about this act. ([Exodus 15:11-19](#))
- In the middle of the song, Miriam, sister of Moses, breaks into spontaneous praise and song with several Israelite women. ([Exodus 15:20-21](#))
- Remember that Miriam was mentioned as one of the leaders of the Israelite people ([Micah 6:4](#))
- The song is over and the chapter closes by mentioning an incident immediate after that one, in which God makes bitter water drinkable by causing a tree to be cast into water. ([Exodus 15:22-27](#))
- Although it can't be proven, it is likely that God is proving that His salvation is not limited to acts of war, but He can save the people by providing them sustenance too.
- David wrote Psalms 9. It is unclear when he wrote it, but it was likely after some big victory (some think it was written after he vanquished Goliath, others after he vanquished his son Absalom's army, still others think it was the Philistines, and others hold other theories).
- We know from the preface that this Psalm was written to the choirmaster (leader of the choir of Israel), and the title says on the occasion of Muth-Labben, the meaning of which is in dispute. (<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Muth-labben>)
- David says he will praise God with him whole heart. ([Psalms 9:1-2](#)) Notice the emphasis in this passage on praise and singing.
- Next David gives God credit for the fact that his enemies have turned back and says even the very memory of his enemies is gone. ([Psalms 9:3-6](#))

- David notes that the Lord is doing all this from His throne. (Psalms 9:7-8)
- David notes that even through troubles God has not forsaken them (Psalms 9:9-12)
- Contrast this verse with another Psalm written by David (Psalms 22:1), quoted by Christ on the cross (Matthew 27:46). Just like God did not permanently forsake either David or Christ, the pain they felt for that period during which they were separated from God was very real.
- David asks for God to be gracious to him and drive back other nations. (Psalms 9:13-20)
- The fact that David references other nations here gives some credibility to those who argue that this song is about the victory over the Philistines (and other external enemies).
- The word “Higgaion” is used at the end of verse 16, followed by the word “Selah.” The former word is not used anywhere else, but Selah is used frequently in the Psalms (71 times) and even 3 times in the book of Habakkuk, and again at the very end of the Psalm. We don’t know exactly what these words mean, but is probable that they were used to indicate a pause which encourages the singer to also know that the words which come before it were significant (much as we say “Amen” to things today for emphasis/approval – but not to indicate a pause of course). (<http://www.bible-history.com/smiths/H/Higgaion/> and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selah>)
- Psalms 136 gives thanks to God as the power behind creation and history.
- The last line of each verse is the same, recognizing that God’s love to us will always persist. Although there is no dispute about the original writing and what it means, there are different translations of this common phrase:
  - The RSV and ESV have it as “for his steadfast love endures forever.”
  - The KJV has it as “for his mercy endures forever.”
  - The NIV says “for his love endures forever.”
  - The NASB has it as “For His lovingkindness is everlasting.”
  - The ISV has it as “for his gracious love is everlasting.”
  - The Message has it as “His love never quits.”
- Nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. (Romans 8:38-39)
- David praises God’s power and origin over all creation (Psalms 136:1-9)
- David next turns his attention to history and a recounting of the many ways God saved Israel, starting with the Egyptian slavery and ending with the conquering of other nations in the land the Israelis inhabited. (Psalms 136:10-22)
- David ends Psalm 136 with a summary of the way God has remembered Israel. (Psalms 136:23-26)

#### Questions:

1. What is the context for the song of Thanksgiving offered in Exodus 15?
2. Who sings the song in Exodus 15 and who are they addressing?
3. What has God become for Israel?
4. What do the children of Israel say the Lord is man of?

5. What do we learn from the song of Thanksgiving in Exodus 15 about how God made the waves to drown Pharaoh's army?
6. Why do the Israelites say that many nations are afraid to face them now?
7. Who is specifically mentioned in Exodus 15 as leading the women in a song of praise?
8. What miracle does God perform at the end of Exodus 15?
9. Why do you think God does the miracle in Exodus 15 at the time he does it?
10. Who wrote Psalms 9, to whom and why?
11. What is notable about the way David opens this Psalm?
12. Who does David give credit to for turning back his enemies in Psalm 9?
13. What does David say has perished about his enemies?
14. Where does David say God does all this?
15. What does David say about the way God has remembered him in time trouble?
16. Why is it significant that David expresses it this way?
17. What does David ask God to do for himself and to His enemies?
18. What is the significance of the fact that David talks about other nations?
19. What do the words "Higgaion" and "Selah" mean?
20. What two things does David praise God for in Psalms 136?
21. What phrase does David keep repeating in Psalms 136 and what does it mean?
22. What can separate us from God's love for us?
23. What two things does David note was God's role in creation in Psalms 136?
24. Where does David begin and end his praise for God's involvement in history?
25. How does David end Psalms 136?