



All the Songs of the Savior's Season

This session's verses take a different approach — we're reading ALL the Scriptural songs that surrounded Jesus' announcement and birth. Read these verses, noting what God brings to your attention. Jot notes that come to mind as you contemplate the passages.

Elizabeth's Exclamation: Luke 1:42-45

42 In a loud voice she (Elizabeth) exclaimed:
"Blessed are you (Mary) among women,
and blessed is the child you will bear!
43 But why am I so favored,
that the mother of my Lord should come to me?
44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears,
the baby in my womb leaped for joy.
45 Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord
would fulfill his promises to her!"

Mary's Song: Luke 1:46-55

46 "My soul glorifies the Lord
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
48 for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed,
49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is His name.
50 His mercy extends to those who fear Him,
from generation to generation.
51 He has performed mighty deeds with His arm;
He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
53 He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
54 He has helped His servant Israel, remembering to be merciful
55 to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as He promised our ancestors."

Zechariah's Song: Luke 1:67-79

(Regarding the coming Messiah)

68 "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because He has come to His people and redeemed them.
69 He has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of His servant David
70 (as he said through His holy prophets of long ago),
71 salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us—
72 to show mercy to our ancestors
and to remember His holy covenant,
73 the oath He swore to our father Abraham:
74 to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve Him without fear
75 in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

(Regarding Zechariah/Elizabeth's newborn, John)

76 And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Him,
77 to give his people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
78 because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven
79 to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace."

The Angels' Song: Luke 2:14

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests."

Simeon's Song: Luke 2:30-32

29 "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.
30 "For my eyes have seen your salvation,
31 which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:
32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people
Israel."

How to Read God's Word Contemplatively as a Group

- ◇ We'll start with prayer, then silence. Relax and let go of the busyness and junk of the day.
 - ◇ We'll read the Bible passage aloud one time. Then we'll be quiet for a while as we individually listen to God's leading and to His Word.
 - ◇ Write the passage (if you want to).
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- ◇ We'll read the passage aloud several more times.
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- ◇ After a little while, we'll begin to talk about what we sense God is showing us in this passage.
 - ◇ Try to limit your comments to what God is showing you *right here, right now*. Try to avoid "retweeting" something you heard in another Bible study or sermon in the past.
 - ◇ We'll start with sharing 1-2 words of insight. Then as we feel led, we'll share a sentence or two.
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- ◇ Let these questions guide your thoughts:
 - ✓What does it say about God?
 - ✓What does it say about mankind?
 - ✓What does it say about living to please God?
 - ✓What can you change in your life to obey these words from God?
 - ✓Does someone you know need to hear about this passage?

How to Read God's Word Contemplatively On Your Own

- ◇ Quiet your heart and mind. Simply ask God to block out (and help you to block out) thoughts that don't relate to what He wants to say to you right now. Create your own sense of "holy space."
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- ◇ Concentrate on the verse by reading it slowly (or listening to it being read). Focus on each word.
 - ◇ If you want, copy the verse word-for-word. It helps you slow down and appreciate each word.
 - ◇ Jot down words or concepts that you begin to see, connections that you can make in the verses (circle repeated concepts/words that are important, words that "jump out at you," etc.).
 - ◇ Read the verse silently in your heart as if you are having a one-on-one conversation with God. Read slowly, lingering over each word.
 - ◇ Ask God about the verse. "What does this part mean to me, Lord?" "Give me insight." "Fill me with your understanding, Lord."
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- ◇ Personalize it by saying the verse/praying it back to the Lord. For example, "Lord, I want to rejoice always; help me to pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances...."