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A Singing God

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A Singing God

Dave Schelhaas

The Lord your God will rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17b

God sings? Who knew?
And He sings to us!

Of course the angels sing their glorias and hallelujahs.
And everyone knows God's people sing to him:
"Make a Joyful noise!" the psalmist says,
and we do, it seems, whenever
more than two or three of us get together.

We know that Jesus sang. The rabbi
and his disciples, after the Passover meal but
before they headed out with cleansed feet
toward Gethsemane and heartbreak,
"sang a hymn."

Was there a standard post-seder meal hymn?
Psalm 103, perhaps?
Did someone give the pitch?
Did this motley male choir harmonize?
Did they miss Iscariot's strong tenor or
was he a monotone?
Did Jesus on this last night
stop singing from time to time and just listen?

Jesus, the God-Man, singing—

But now here's Zephaniah whose words I have left unread
for sixty years or more,
telling us all—all of Abrahams's seed—
that Yahweh is bending over us
singing and rejoicing
like a mama dreaming the future of her cradled babe.

How does he sing, this Spirit God
who has no larynx with vocal folds,
no pharynx, trachea, diaphragm, or tongue?

Yet the prophet says he sings over us
and surely he's not just talking
about thunder, bird song, choir concerts,
or even the "music of the spheres,"
that celestial hum
the Ancients said the planets made
as they moved in their appointed paths.

No, it's God's voice I'm going to be listening for,
crooning a lullaby,
a love song,
a bit of blues, perhaps,
in a voice that may sound older than Satchmo's
singing "What a wonderful world!"