

Exodus Chapter Fifteen

Read **Exodus 15:1-19** – The Song of Moses

v.1 “THEN SANG MOSES AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THIS SONG UNTO THE **LORD**, AND SPAKE, SAYING, I WILL SING UNTO THE **LORD**, FOR HE HATH TRIUMPHED GLORIOUSLY: THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER HATH HE THROWN INTO THE SEA.”

As is common among all generations of mankind; when an occasion of great rejoicing occurs it is immortalized in song. This is true with our own national anthem and other patriotic songs of our era and was true of the Israelites when God delivered them from Egyptian bondage. Through the direction of the Holy Spirit, this song is preserved for our study and learning.

This is a song of victory and among other places it is referenced in:

Psalms 106:12 “THEN BELIEVED THEY HIS WORDS; THEY SANG HIS PRAISE.”

Psalm 106 is a psalm that recounts Israel’s rebellions against God and His mercy toward them. This song in Exodus 15 is also referenced in **Revelation 15:3** as the “SONG OF MOSES” as a comparative to the song of victory the angels sing to celebrate the victory over the beast.

v.2 “THE **LORD is** MY STRENGTH AND SONG, AND HE IS BECOME MY SALVATION: HE **is** MY GOD, AND I WILL PREPARE HIM AN HABITATION; MY FATHER'S GOD, AND I WILL EXALT HIM.”

In this verse we see several things of note. First of all the Lord (Jehovah) is my “STRENGTH” as we know he is to us as well. Second, He has become my “SALVATION”, not only to Israel from their bondage but to all mankind from the bondage of sin. Third, they declare Him to be their God and their “FATHER’S GOD” committing themselves to His service. They promise to prepare Him a “HABITATION”, as they will with the tabernacle and the temples of later generations. We prepare Him a habitation within our hearts and minds. They also promise to “EXALT HIM”, as all men should but most do not. All would do well to follow the final words of the Psalm titled “God is our God”.

Psalms 48:14 “FOR THIS GOD **is** OUR GOD FOR EVER AND EVER: HE WILL BE OUR GUIDE *even* UNTO DEATH.”

v.3 “THE **LORD is** A MAN OF WAR: THE **LORD is** HIS NAME.”

They praised God as a God of war because He pledged to fight for them:

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Exodus 14:14 “THE **LORD** SHALL FIGHT FOR YOU, AND HE SHALL HOLD YOUR PEACE.”

And they had just observed His power to wage war in the destruction of the Egyptian Army in the Red Sea. Please note that in most good study Bibles, you will frequently find the word “Lord” either in bold or italic print. This is used to differentiate between the word lord and the name of Jehovah God or Yahweh, found in the original Hebrew as YHWH.

v.4 “PHARAOH'S CHARIOTS AND HIS HOST HATH HE CAST INTO THE SEA: HIS CHOSEN CAPTAINS ALSO ARE DROWNED IN THE RED SEA.”

Just as we read:

Exodus 14:28 “AND THE WATERS RETURNED, AND COVERED THE CHARIOTS, AND THE HORSEMEN, *and* ALL THE HOST OF PHARAOH THAT CAME INTO THE SEA AFTER THEM; THERE REMAINED NOT SO MUCH AS ONE OF THEM.”

v.5 “THE DEPTHS HAVE COVERED THEM: THEY SANK INTO THE BOTTOM AS A STONE.”

As we noted in an earlier study the walls of water were about 84 feet high, probably eight times as tall as a man standing in the back of a chariot. Chariots, horses, men wearing armor such as was developed in that day would definitely be covered and they would sink like stones.

v.6 “THY RIGHT HAND, O **LORD**, IS BECOME GLORIOUS IN POWER: THY RIGHT HAND, O **LORD**, HATH DASHED IN PIECES THE ENEMY.”

The greatness of God is manifested by the power of his right hand, the one most dominate in mankind as the hand which has the most power and ability.

v.7 “AND IN THE GREATNESS OF THINE EXCELLENCY THOU HAST OVERTHROWN THEM THAT ROSE UP AGAINST THEE: THOU SENTEST FORTH THY WRATH, *which* CONSUMED THEM AS STUBBLE.”

The greatness of God is honored and remembered, not only in this song composed by Moses at the direction of the Holy Spirit but also by the psalmist, Asaph:

Psalms 78:49-50 “HE CAST UPON THEM THE FIERCENESS OF HIS ANGER, WRATH, AND INDIGNATION, AND TROUBLE, BY SENDING EVIL ANGELS AMONG THEM. HE MADE A WAY TO HIS ANGER; HE SPARED NOT THEIR SOUL FROM DEATH, BUT GAVE THEIR LIFE OVER TO THE PESTILENCE;”

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v.8 “AND WITH THE BLAST OF THY NOSTRILS THE WATERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER, THE FLOODS STOOD UPRIGHT AS AN HEAP, **and** THE DEPTHS WERE CONGEALED IN THE HEART OF THE SEA.”

The strong east wind that God sent to part the Red Sea is depicted here, in the poetry of this song, as a blast from the nostrils of God. This allowed:

Exodus 14:22 “AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WENT INTO THE MIDST OF THE SEA UPON THE DRY **ground**: AND THE WATERS **were** A WALL UNTO THEM ON THEIR RIGHT HAND, AND ON THEIR LEFT.”

v.9 “THE ENEMY SAID, I WILL PURSUE, I WILL OVERTAKE, I WILL DIVIDE THE SPOIL; MY LUST SHALL BE SATISFIED UPON THEM; I WILL DRAW MY SWORD, MY HAND SHALL DESTROY THEM.”

As Adam Clarke points out in his commentary; since this is scripture, inspired or God breathed we can be sure that this was the plan that the Egyptians had devised in their plan of battle. They were intent upon the destruction of Israel, not just their return to slavery.

v.10 “THOU DIDST BLOW WITH THY WIND, THE SEA COVERED THEM: THEY SANK AS LEAD IN THE MIGHTY WATERS.”

This refers to:

Exodus 14:27 “AND MOSES STRETCHED FORTH HIS HAND OVER THE SEA, AND THE SEA RETURNED TO HIS STRENGTH WHEN THE MORNING APPEARED; AND THE EGYPTIANS FLED AGAINST IT; AND THE **LORD** OVERTHREW THE EGYPTIANS IN THE MIDST OF THE SEA.”

v.11 “WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE, O LORD, AMONG THE GODS? WHO IS LIKE THEE, GLORIOUS IN HOLINESS, FEARFUL IN PRAISES, DOING WONDERS?”

Now that the facts of the story have been told we come to the part of the song that begins to honor God; depict him as the Supreme Being of the universe, greater and more powerful than any of the gods of Egypt, or otherwise known to man. As Moses records later:

Deuteronomy 3:24 “O LORD **GOD**, THOU HAST BEGUN TO SHEW THY SERVANT THY GREATNESS, AND THY MIGHTY HAND: FOR WHAT GOD **is there** IN HEAVEN OR IN EARTH, THAT CAN DO ACCORDING TO THY WORKS, AND ACCORDING TO THY MIGHT?”

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Similar words of praise are found in various other places in scripture as well. One example:

Micah 7:18 "WHO IS A GOD LIKE UNTO THEE, THAT PARDONETH INIQUITY, AND PASSETH BY THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE REMNANT OF HIS HERITAGE? HE RETAINETH NOT HIS ANGER FOR EVER, BECAUSE HE DELIGHTETH IN MERCY."

And, of course, the answer to the question, is there another like him is a resounding NO! He is the Lord God of the universe.

v.12 "THOU STRETCHEDST OUT THY RIGHT HAND, THE EARTH SWALLOWED THEM."

But part of the children of Israel forgot that God had this kind of power didn't they? Do you remember to occasion? The rebellion of Korah and the 250 princes against Moses as the appointed leader of Israel resulted in a very similar experience for them.

Numbers 16:31-32 "AND IT CAME TO PASS, AS HE HAD MADE AN END OF SPEAKING ALL THESE WORDS, THAT THE GROUND CLAVE ASUNDER THAT *was* UNDER THEM: AND THE EARTH OPENED HER MOUTH, AND SWALLOWED THEM UP, AND THEIR HOUSES, AND ALL THE MEN THAT *appertained* UNTO KORAH, AND ALL *their* GOODS."

v.13 "THOU IN THY MERCY HAST LED FORTH THE PEOPLE *which* THOU HAST REDEEMED: THOU HAST GUIDED *them* IN THY STRENGTH UNTO THY HOLY HABITATION."

Now the song turns to the fact of Israel's redemption from Egyptian slavery and God's guidance, literally leading them out of the land and through the wilderness. It is remembered and used as an example of God's goodness to the remnant in Jerusalem after their redemption from Babylon:

Nehemiah 9:12 "MOREOVER THOU LEDDEST THEM IN THE DAY BY A CLOUDY PILLAR; AND IN THE NIGHT BY A PILLAR OF FIRE, TO GIVE THEM LIGHT IN THE WAY WHEREIN THEY SHOULD GO."

v.14 "THE PEOPLE SHALL HEAR, AND BE AFRAID: SORROW SHALL TAKE HOLD ON THE INHABITANTS OF PALESTINA."

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Because the power of God is so great; the inhabitants of the land that they are to occupy will tremble with fear. That promise is repeated by Moses in this last address to Israel.

Deuteronomy 2:25 “THIS DAY WILL I BEGIN TO PUT THE DREAD OF THEE AND THE FEAR OF THEE UPON THE NATIONS *that are* UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN, WHO SHALL HEAR REPORT OF THEE, AND SHALL TREMBLE, AND BE IN ANGUISH BECAUSE OF THEE.”

In the KJV we find the word “PALESTINA” used to describe Canaan. Who has another translation? All of the reliable translations, except the KJV use the name Philistia, the land of the Philistines. They were only one of the peoples that Israel displaced and that didn’t happen until the reign of King David. They are probably called out here because were the most warlike and the people most capable of opposing Israel’s occupation. The reason that the Philistines were such a problem for Israel is that they did not complete the work that God had commanded to clear the land of Canaanites. They did not use the power that God would have provided for them to accomplish this purpose.

v.15 “THEN THE DUKES OF EDOM SHALL BE AMAZED; THE MIGHTY MEN OF MOAB, TREMBLING SHALL TAKE HOLD UPON THEM; ALL THE INHABITANTS OF CANAAN SHALL MELT AWAY.”

The dukes of Edom, an English term, common in the day of the King James translation, is used to describe the captains or princes of the descendants of Esau. They would be amazed that they could be conquered even in their mountain strongholds. The might men of Moab, descendants of Lot through his incest with his oldest daughter would also fear the power of God.

v.16 “FEAR AND DREAD SHALL FALL UPON THEM; BY THE GREATNESS OF THINE ARM THEY SHALL BE **as** STILL AS A STONE; TILL THY PEOPLE PASS OVER, O **LORD**, TILL THE PEOPLE PASS OVER, **which** THOU HAST PURCHASED.”

The land to which the children of Israel would “PASS OVER” in this verse is the land of Canaan. They could have accomplished so much if they had done what God had commanded. If they had but exercised a little faith, relied upon God and moved forward to the work that was at hand. It is any different today? No. Just as the hymn that we sing sometimes our selves states, “little is much when the Lord is in it”. We must have the faith go forward and leave the problems that we might encounter, the troubles that we might have to endure, to the providence of God.

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v.17 “THOU SHALT BRING THEM IN, AND PLANT THEM IN THE MOUNTAIN OF THINE INHERITANCE, IN THE PLACE, O **LORD**, *which* THOU HAST MADE FOR THEE TO DWELL IN, *in* THE SANCTUARY, O **LORD**, *which* THY HANDS HAVE ESTABLISHED.”

The mountain referred to here is the mountain on which Jerusalem was located and the House of God, the temple, was eventually built and rebuilt. The hands of God established all that Israel was to accomplish. Several of the Psalms remind Israel of this fact. One example:

Psalms 44:1-2 “WE HAVE HEARD WITH OUR EARS, O GOD, OUR FATHERS HAVE TOLD US, WHAT WORK THOU DIDST IN THEIR DAYS, IN THE TIMES OF OLD. HOW THOU DIDST DRIVE OUT THE HEATHEN WITH THY HAND, AND PLANTEDST THEM; HOW THOU DIDST AFFLICT THE PEOPLE, AND CAST THEM OUT.”

v.18 “THE **LORD** SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER.”

v.19 “FOR THE HORSE OF PHARAOH WENT IN WITH HIS CHARIOTS AND WITH HIS HORSEMEN INTO THE SEA, AND THE **LORD** BROUGHT AGAIN THE WATERS OF THE SEA UPON THEM; BUT THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WENT ON DRY *land* IN THE MIDST OF THE SEA.”

All of the things that God wants his chosen people to accomplish were now known to be possible. God had demonstrated this fact in the power and might exhibited in leading Israel out of Egypt through the Red Sea and His destruction of the Egyptian armies in that Sea. Our study of these things in the Old Testament should bolster and strengthen our faith today as well.

Read **Exodus 15:20-22** – Miriam the Prophetess

v.20 “AND MIRIAM THE PROPHETESS, THE SISTER OF AARON, TOOK A TIMBREL IN HER HAND; AND ALL THE WOMEN WENT OUT AFTER HER WITH TIMBRELS AND WITH DANCES.”

As we should remember from the beginning of our study of Exodus, Miriam was the older sister of Moses and Aaron, old enough to have been given the responsibility of looking after the basket of reeds in which Moses had been placed as a baby. Here she is referred to as a prophetess and did function in that role as we see in:

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Numbers 12:1-2 “AND MIRIAM AND AARON SPAKE AGAINST MOSES BECAUSE OF THE ETHIOPIAN WOMAN WHOM HE HAD MARRIED: FOR HE HAD MARRIED AN ETHIOPIAN WOMAN. AND THEY SAID, HATH THE **LORD** INDEED SPOKEN ONLY BY MOSES? HATH HE NOT SPOKEN ALSO BY US? AND THE **LORD** HEARD IT.”

In the record in Numbers Miriam and Aaron didn't like Moses' choice for a wife, didn't like the fact that he overshadowed them in the leadership of the children of Israel and in so doing allows us to know that God spoke to Israel through all three of them, not just Moses. In keeping with the customs of Egypt and also the Israelite nation one commentator suggests that Miriam's role was to lead and teach the women as Moses and Aaron lead and taught the men.

What is a timbrel? Today we would call it a tambourine, it's the same instrument. So far as the word dance is concerned, one commentator argues that it refers to another instrument of music of some sort, while most, if they address it at all, refer to a rhythmic movement of the body in time with the music being played. Dance was used in the worship of God and in the worship of most idols in ancient times but is not authorized in New Testament worship.

v.21 “AND MIRIAM ANSWERED THEM, SING YE TO THE **LORD**, FOR HE HATH TRIUMPHED GLORIOUSLY; THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER HATH HE THROWN INTO THE SEA.”

It would appear that Miriam did lead the women in their part of the celebration of song given by God for Israel to remember His deliverance of them from Egypt.

v.22 “SO MOSES BROUGHT ISRAEL FROM THE RED SEA, AND THEY WENT OUT INTO THE WILDERNESS OF SHUR; AND THEY WENT THREE DAYS IN THE WILDERNESS, AND FOUND NO WATER.”

Now that the celebration is over, the time has come for Israel to continue on their journey and Moses leads them into the wilderness of Shur (See Map). They travel three days and find no water. This could be a very trying experience for 2-3 million people and all of the livestock that they have with them.

Read Exodus **15:23-27** – Marah and Elim

v.23 “AND WHEN THEY CAME TO MARAH, THEY COULD NOT DRINK OF THE WATERS OF MARAH, FOR THEY **were** BITTER: THEREFORE THE NAME OF IT WAS CALLED MARAH.”

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(See Map again) What does the word Marah mean? It is a Hebrew word that means bitter. One explorer of the Sinai contends that this location relates to a small stream at a location called Corondel today where without being diluted with rain water the water is brackish and virtually undrinkable. What does that word brackish mean? Salty, the water was salty, not as salty as sea water, but much saltier than normal drinking water.

v.24 “AND THE PEOPLE MURMURED AGAINST MOSES, SAYING, WHAT SHALL WE DRINK?”

They have been without water, or at least without any water besides what they probably carried with them, for three days. Then the water that they do find is bitter so Israel begins their habit of murmuring and complaining against Moses.

v.25 “AND HE CRIED UNTO THE **LORD**; AND THE **LORD** SHEWED HIM A TREE, WHICH WHEN HE HAD CAST INTO THE WATERS, THE WATERS WERE MADE SWEET: THERE HE MADE FOR THEM A STATUTE AND AN ORDINANCE, AND THERE HE PROVED THEM,”

We see also the pattern of life beginning that was to be for the next 40 years. The people of Israel encounter some difficulty, they complain to Moses and Moses being faithful to God brings the problem to God. God, in turn, provides, rescues or solves the problem that Israel is complaining about.

In this case we're told that God made for them a statute and an ordinance, a law that Moses will tell us about in the next verse. God used these various trials and troubles to prove both Israel and Moses.

v.26 “AND SAID, IF THOU WILT DILIGENTLY HEARKEN TO THE VOICE OF THE **LORD** THY GOD, AND WILT DO THAT WHICH IS RIGHT IN HIS SIGHT, AND WILT GIVE EAR TO HIS COMMANDMENTS, AND KEEP ALL HIS STATUTES, I WILL PUT NONE OF THESE DISEASES UPON THEE, WHICH I HAVE BROUGHT UPON THE EGYPTIANS: FOR I AM THE **LORD** THAT HEALETH THEE.”

God wants to teach Israel to do what? (1) listen diligently; (2) do what is right in God's sight; and (3) keep all his statutes. If they do this then he will protect them from the diseases that they obviously would normally have carried out of the land of Egypt. The solving of the bitter water of Marah was simply an example of what God would do if they would follow this commandment. Moses repeats it in:

Deuteronomy 7:15 “AND THE **LORD** WILL TAKE AWAY FROM THEE ALL SICKNESS, AND WILL PUT NONE OF THE EVIL DISEASES OF EGYPT, WHICH THOU KNOWEST, UPON THEE; BUT WILL LAY THEM UPON ALL THEM THAT HATE THEE.”

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v.27 “AND THEY CAME TO ELIM, WHERE WERE TWELVE WELLS OF WATER, AND THREESCORE AND TEN PALM TREES: AND THEY ENCAMPED THERE BY THE WATERS.”

See Map – Now they travel from Marah to Elim where there were 12 wells, one for each tribe and 70 palm trees, one for each of the seventy elders of Israel.