

Exodus 15

Exodus 14:10-14 And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. (11) Then they said to Moses, "Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? (12) *Is* this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For *it would have been* better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." (13) And Moses said to the people, "**Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today.** For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. (14) The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

The LORD commanded, through Moses to keep quiet and stand still as He fought for them. And with that, they witnessed the "salvation of the LORD"! They saw the miraculous, the unbelievable, the movement of waters to create a corridor at the bottom of which was dry land. Whether or not they took each step with abject fear, they nonetheless walked on dry land as if were just an extension of the shoreline they saw ahead.

Then when it looked as though the Egyptians would simply follow them across, the LORD confounded the army and caused their chariot wheels to fall off or simply become useless as the waters returned from where they came. And that was the end of the Egyptian army and Pharaoh. Forever (verse 14:13). This certainly implies that these enemies of God would be forever separated from them even in eternity.

That victory certainly deserves a song! Turn to Chapter 15:1.

(Exodus 15:1) Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: "I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown **into the sea!** (2) **The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him.** (3) The LORD **is a man of war;** The LORD **is** His name. (4) Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast **into the sea;** His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. (5) The depths have covered them; They sank to the bottom like a stone.

Moses broke out into a spontaneous song about the miracle they just experienced! Many divide the verses of the songs into stanza's. But, there are differences of opinion. I'm just following one scheme but I've modified according to my "humble but correct" opinions.

These 5 verses appear to be a "stanza". In these verses, Moses sings of the LORD's mighty acts as well as His glorious attributes:

1. He Triumphed and brought Glory to His Name
2. He threw His enemies into the sea where they all perished. They sank to the bottom of the sea!
 - a. Genesis 12:3 came to mind: "I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you;".
3. The LORD fought for them; therefore, He was strong for them! He caused their salvation and therefore He was their salvation!

4. He who did this was THEIR God, the same God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! And therefore, Moses led the children of Israel in a song of praise and a song of exaltation!
 - a. **Psalms 118:14** The LORD *is* my strength and song, And He has become my salvation.
 - b. **Psalms 118:21** I will praise You, For You have answered me, And have become my salvation.
5. Then there's a strange verse: about the LORD being a man of war. Some translation "soften" this to "the LORD is a warrior". But the Hebrew says "man". Now, this could be from some theophany that Moses experienced like in chapter 4 where it says, "and it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, **that the LORD met him** and sought to kill him" (verse 24). Or it certainly could be a prophetic utterance of the coming Christ, God made flesh.
6. In either case (I choose the second), the "battle belongs to the LORD". And this "man's" name is "The LORD".
 - a. **Psalms 24:8** Who *is* this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle.
 - b. 2 Chronicles 20:15-17 (15) And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, **for the battle is not yours, but God's**. (16) Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. (17) **You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!**' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you."

(Exodus 15:6) "Your right hand, O LORD, has become **glorious** in **power**; Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces. **(7)** And in the **greatness** of Your **excellence** You have overthrown those who rose against You; You sent forth Your **wrath**; It consumed them like stubble. **(8)** And with the **blast of Your nostrils** The waters were gathered together; The floods stood upright like a heap; The depths congealed in the heart of the sea. **(9)** **The enemy said**, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; My desire shall be satisfied on them. I will draw my sword, My hand shall destroy them.' **(10)** You blew with Your wind, The sea covered them; They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

This next stanza speaks of the Power and majesty of God and His infinite ability to withstand any assault on His people, unless it is for some greater purpose. He will also come against the "proud" as He did to Pharaoh and armies who tried to destroy the "apple of His eye". Some of this is poetic (with the blast of Your nostrils", but this is a song, therefore...

Would this is a picture of our God removing His own before His wrath is poured out? Can we then use this verse to support a pre-tribulation rapture or a pre-wrath rapture? Both sides would say "yes". I say we will cover this on Sundays as we study the Book of Revelation. I'm just trying to indicate that a single verse should never be used to design an idea or interpretation. It's the full counsel of God that must be used and if it's still unclear, we drop it can get back to work.

(Exodus 15:11) "**Who *is* like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who *is* like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders?** **(12)** You stretched out Your right hand; The earth

swallowed them. (13) You in Your mercy have led forth The people whom You have redeemed; You have guided *them* in Your strength To Your holy habitation.

Verse 11 is part of the Sabbath liturgy in Jewish synagogues.

The Mercy of God is what leads his people then and now because His mercy endures forever! Psalms 107, 118, and 136 all begin with “Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good! For His mercy *endures* forever.” Every verse in Psalm 136 has the “For His mercy *endures* forever” phrase!

Because of His mercy, Moses could proclaim “in the past tense”, that the LORD brought them to His holy habitation! This is before the tabernacle was built and surely the temple where He came and made Himself manifest in a cloud in the Holy of Holies!

(Exodus 15:14) "The people will hear *and* be afraid; Sorrow will take hold of the inhabitants of **Philistia**. (15) Then the chiefs of **Edom** will be dismayed; The mighty men of **Moab**, Trembling will take hold of them; All the inhabitants of **Canaan** will melt away. (16) Fear and dread will fall on them; By the greatness of Your arm They will be *as* still as a stone, Till Your people **pass over**, O LORD, Till the people **pass over** Whom You have **purchased**. (17) You will bring them in and plant them In the mountain of Your inheritance, *In* the place, O LORD, *which* You have made **For Your own dwelling, The sanctuary, O LORD, which Your hands have established**. (18) "The LORD shall reign forever and ever."

Israel's enemies are in sight in this third stanza. They will not prevail, and they will not have the courage to repel the Israelites as they “pass over” the Jericho river (as the commentators believe and the ancient Jewish writers understand this verse. Their enemies will be afraid and dismayed, have sorrow and tremble at the sight of God's nation!

The reference of the “Passover” and the redemption of the people of God is certainly looking back to how they were rescued and “purchased” by the LORD. And therefore, they will do again. It appears to be prophetic of our journey where we who were bought with a price will be led by the Spirit of Christ into our Holy Mountain, our Holy Place:

Hebrews 9:11-12 But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come, **with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands**, that is, not of this creation. (12) Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

(Exodus 15:19) For the horses of Pharaoh went with his chariots and his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them. But the children of Israel went on dry *land* in the midst of the sea. (20) Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. (21) And Miriam answered them: "Sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!"

And in this last stanza, we read the contrasting stories of the Egyptians who perished in the sea and the children of God who walked thru the sea on dry land! A fitting summary of the Red Sea story!

Miriam began to sing and dance with the women. Her name is not quite understood and there are many opinions as to its origin or meaning. Some say that it is the Hebrew form of "Mary". Some say that it means "a drop of water"; some say it means bitterness because she was born in Egypt and suffered with the Israelites in bondage. Regardless, she was the oldest of the three siblings with Aaron next and then Moses the youngest. Moses says here that she was a prophetess. She said as much about herself in **Numbers 12:2** **So they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it."** and in **Micah 6:4** "For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I redeemed you from the house of bondage; And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.". Many believe that she was also an instructor of the women who traditionally, even today, worship separately from the men.

And she too sang "Sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!"

A fitting end to the Song of Moses.

(Exodus 15:22) So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. **(23)** Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. **(24) And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?"**

I looked at a handful of maps to situate the Wilderness of Shur but I could not find any hard agreement on where it was. Some have it farther north in the Arabian peninsula and some farther south.

Depending on where scholars place the Wilderness of Shur, they also place Marah. No real consensus.

But is **not** the LORD leading them? Is He **not** testing them as one tests "gold"? So, this time, after several days, they finally found water but it was too bitter to drink. And they all do what they seem to do best: complain! The name Marah means bitter.

(Exodus 15:25) So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast *it* into the waters, the waters were made sweet. **There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, (26) and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you."** **(27)** Then they came to Elim, where there *were* twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.

And once again Moses lifted up his prayer to the LORD. The LORD shows him a tree – a presumably small tree which he cut and through into the waters. The waters were made sweet so that the people would not be thirsty.

The incident resulted in making a 'statute' and an 'ordinance'.

Statute: this is a custom, decree, a law, or a commandment.

Ordinance: this is actually a judicial verdict or sentence. But it has a wide variety of meanings including judgement, discretion, or an order.

The statute is to listen and obey the LORD; The LORD wanted the best for them. It required them to do what was “right in His sight” meaning, the definition of what was right and wrong belonged to the LORD! (we’ve read the Book of Judges where the Israelites did what was right in their own eyes). The Judgement is what will take place if you do: none of the Egyptian plagues will come upon you.

And with that, the LORD gives them another “name” for Himself: Adonai Rapha. The LORD that heals you! Just as He healed the waters of Marah.

Tonight, we have witnessed the celebration of the parting of the Red/Reed Sea. This Song of Moses was the first song recorded in the Bible. Therefore, it’s certainly important! He sings of God’s Great Deliverance of His People! Moses actually wrote another song but it’s tone and purpose was to be a witness against the very people he led out of Egypt. He spoke of their idolatry and their forsaking of their God. All this before they entered the Promised Land! But that’s for another time.

But this very song was offered up again:

Revelation 15:1-4 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. (2) And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark *and* over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. (3) They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "**Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! (4) Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested.**"

The song was about to have its final consummation. It was song by whom we call “tribulation saints”, those who were not overcomers and became overcomers because of the blood of the Lamb. But we’ll pick this up during our Sunday studies.

I spoke about the contrast between the Egyptians and the Israelites. But there’s another contrast that will come up again and again: the contrast between the children of Israel and their LORD God who called them out to serve Him. This started some 430 years before when He called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldeans. Then his son, Isaac, the son of promise was called to continue the lineage; he called Esau but God told him that it must be Jacob because he was called by the LORD. Then Joseph was called into Egypt, so to speak. And then Jacob and the rest of the clan. For now, we also see Moses being called, not to be in the lineage of the Promised Seed, but to lead the people back to the Promised Land where they would stay (for the most part) until the Messiah came. Throughout all this time the contrast between Israel and the LORD was painfully obvious! Between the weakness of the sinful flesh and their proud hearts there really wasn’t any comparison to the Messiah, the Man Jesus.

Even as He hung on a tree for them, they did not see that it was the same LORD whose mercy caused a tree to sweeten bitter waters. No, their lives will remain difficult until He returns as the Messiah, King and Savior they refused to see at His first coming. Pray that God will grant them repentance for His Name's sake and for the sake of their Fathers. Pray that the scales would be removed from their eyes so they too can cry out, "My LORD and My God"!