

Exodus I – Notes

XIII. The Song of the Sea

27-Aug-06 Exodus 15:1-21

Theme: In response to God's great salvation, the people of God worship and praise Him.

Key Verses: Exodus 15:1-2 ¹Then 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! ²The 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."

Review

Last week we studied the actual exodus from Egypt, the initial stages of the journey, and God's great salvation in the crossing of the Red Sea. The exodus event almost seems anticlimactic, wedged in between the ten plagues and the Red Sea crossing. But everything that happens in the exodus – the death of the firstborn of Egypt, the Passover, the plundering of Egypt, the departure of Israel – occurred exactly in accordance with God's plan.

God leads His triumphant army out of Egypt by a visible display of His *Shekinah* glory – the pillar of cloud and fire. God's visible presence reassures His people, guides His people, shelters His people, and protects His people. God's guidance leads Israel away from the quick road along the sea and instead traces a path into the wilderness. God knew that Israel was not ready for the confrontations that awaited them on the direct route to Canaan. Instead, they needed time in the wilderness to be trained and to worship God. Furthermore, God was drawing Pharaoh into a trap for one final display of His power and glory.

Pharaoh falls into the trap and pursues the children of Israel with his army of chariots and horsemen. Although the people of God complain in fear and unbelief, Moses exhorts them to "see the salvation of the LORD." Salvation, from first to last, top to bottom, is solely the work of God – man can add nothing to it or take anything away from it.

God divides the Red Sea and the people of Israel pass through on dry ground to the other side. However, a rainstorm and earthquake bring the army of Egypt to disarray and confusion. Their chariots get stuck in the mud, and the wheels fall off. Too late, they realize their fatal mistake, just as the sun rises and the Day of the LORD dawns in judgment upon Egypt. The walls of water come crashing down upon the enemies of God and the army of Egypt is swept away to destruction. Salvation has come to Israel in a grand and awesome display of God's glory. God gains glory through the defeat of His enemies, the spread of His fame throughout the world, and the salvation and worship of His people. Q. Why did the Israelites cross the sea? A. To give God the glory.

Introduction

Before we move on to Exodus 15, I would like to pause for a moment and highlight a few of the lessons from Exodus 14 and the Red Sea crossing.

The first lesson is that salvation is 100% from the LORD. Moses told Israel to "stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD" (14:13). This exhortation from Moses underscores man's inability to save himself. If it had been left up to the Israelites, they would have perished. It is God who wills and God who acts to save. Salvation comes from the LORD.

Exodus I – Notes

Secondly, God's salvation results in faith and praise. This is the theme of our lesson today. But we see it first in 14:31: "Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses." Salvation brings faith, and faith brings praise. The more we understand what God has accomplished for us – paying the price for our sins with the precious blood of Jesus Christ – the more we realize how great a gift our salvation is. We have been saved for God's glory, and that is what we must do – glorify Him through praise.

Third, the Red Sea teaches us that there are two sides to the gospel. All sinners are under judgment for their sin. God in His mercy saves some (like the Hebrews), while He leaves others in a hardened, sinful state (like Pharaoh). Although the Red Sea crossing meant light and life for Israel, it spelled doom and destruction for Egypt. Paul spells this principle out in 2 Corinthians:

¹⁴Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. ¹⁵For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? (2 Corinthians 2:14-16).

"To one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life." These are the two sides of the gospel: salvation and judgment.

Next, consider how the apostle Paul links the exodus crossing of the Red Sea with our baptism:

¹Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ²all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ (1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

Ryken makes some useful comments on this passage:

For the Israelites, passing through the Red Sea was a type of baptism, and thus it was "a forecast of our final deliverance in Christ." Once we were enslaved in the Egypt of sin, but now Christ has set us free. All of this is symbolized in the Red Sea event of baptism. What happened at the Red Sea ought to help us clarify our relationship to Christ. The only "Red Sea experience" that really matters is the one that Jesus had when He passed through the walls of death and came out victorious on the other side. This means that baptized Christians have already had their "exodus experience." We had it at Calvary and in the garden tomb, because when Jesus died and rose again, He did it for us. We were included in these saving events when we were baptized into Him, and now we are safe on the other side. All that remains for us to do is what the Israelites did: fear God and trust Him as we go forward.

Finally, we should realize that the Passover and the Red Sea crossing, while different, are intimately related. Mackay reminds us that we should think of them "as two parts of the one event in the same way as the crucifixion and the resurrection are both required to constitute the gospel message." Israel's salvation was made complete by experiencing both the Passover and the Red Sea; likewise, our salvation is made perfect through both the death and resurrection of Christ.

Exodus I – Notes

We have only one topic left in this quarter, and it is a fitting subject after considering God’s great redemption. Our lesson concerns the proper response to God’s work of salvation in our lives: praise and worship. After the wonder of God’s salvation at the Red Sea, the people of God hold a worship service. Finally, they are getting it right. God had repeatedly told Pharaoh, “Let My people go so that they may serve Me.” At long last, we see them serving and worshipping God. Let us join in their celebration of praise.

A. Introduction to the Song

1. *Song of Praise*

Exodus 15:1-18 is a song, a hymn of praise. Before we study the contents of the song, we should spend a few minutes in orientation. First, let’s consider what to call this song. Although some may refer to it as the *Song of Moses*, that name is usually reserved for the song recorded in Deuteronomy 32:1-43. The song here in Exodus 15 is most often referred to as the *Song of the Sea* because of the location where it was sung.

What is the theme of the *Song of the Sea*? In one word – *doxology*. This is a song of praise to God. It is a hymn that describes who God is and what He does. It is thoroughly *theocentric* – that is, God-centered. Scan through the hymn. Where are the references to Moses? Where are the descriptions of the works of the children of Israel? There aren’t any. The song from beginning to end is about the LORD – Yahweh. The name of the LORD appears eleven times in this song, testimony to the One it is about.

This hymn is so unlike what much of modern evangelicalism considers “praise & worship songs.” The *Song of the Sea* contains great truths about the character of God: His holiness, His power, His glory, His mercy, His greatness. It describes His righteous acts: redeeming His people, destroying His enemies, doing wonders, fulfilling His promises. It is a marvelous description of who God is and what He does.

2. *Song Structure*

Looking at the structure of a piece of Hebrew poetry such as this song can sometimes give you insights about its meaning. Interestingly, commentators are all over the map when it comes to describing the structure of the song. There are several different ways to diagram the song, and I believe they all have some value.

One way to look at the song is to see verses 1-12 as describing what God has already accomplished, while verses 13-17 describe God’s mighty acts that still lie in the future for Israel (Bentley). Another way to look at the song is to see verses 1-5 as singing *about* God, while verses 6-17 are singing *to* God (Mackay). In both cases, verse 18 is a final word of praise, proclaiming God as eternal king.

Several commentators see the song as having three stanzas – verses 1-6, 7-11, and 12-16 – with an epilogue in verses 17-18 (Jordan, Currid, Ryken). These commentators note verbal similarities in each of these identified stanzas: 1) All three stanzas have the phrase “O, LORD” toward the end; and 2) all three stanzas have a similar metaphor near the end, describing the descent of the Egyptian army into the sea: “like a stone” (v. 5); “like lead” (v. 10); and “as a stone” (v. 16). However, I see verses 17-18 as integrally related to the song, not simply an epilogue.

Exodus I – Notes

Motyer diagrams the song in a chiasmic manner with four stanzas:

- A Victory past (1b-5)
- B The Lord's hand (6-10)
- B' The Lord's hand (11-13)
- A' Victory future (14-18)

I've chosen to follow Motyer's outline and break up the song into four stanzas: vv. 1-5, 6-10, 11-13, and 14-18. Each of the first three stanzas begins with the name of the LORD. The final stanza ends with the name of the LORD. Since the LORD is the subject of this song and His praise is the theme, I think it is appropriate to divide the song up according to His name.

B. The Song of Moses (15:1-18)

1. "I Will Sing to the LORD!" (15:1-5)

"I will sing" in Hebrew is in the first person. Although Moses is singing, it is unlikely that he is singing by himself. Rather, the entire covenant community is singing as one. The people of God are united by their common experience – the experience of salvation.

Right off the bat, we are introduced to the subject of this song – the LORD – and His triumph over the army of the Egyptians. The destruction of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea is poetically described at the beginning and ending of this first stanza: "The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!" (15:1), and "They sank to the bottom like a stone" (15:5). Pharaoh was no match for the LORD. Moses can call this a glorious triumph because that is exactly what it was: God had determined to destroy Egypt in order to gain honor and glory for His name (14:4, 17, 18).

While verse 1 describes the LORD and His victory, verse 2 makes it personal. Notice all of the possessives in describing God: He is "my strength" and "my song." God is "my salvation." He is "my God" and "my father's God." God may be holy and transcendent – that is, far above us – but He is also our loving Father and immanent, or near to us. Notice how only those who have been redeemed by God can sing this song. It takes a personal relationship with God to praise Him. It takes the experience of having been saved, of having been redeemed, of having experienced forgiveness of sin, and of having been rescued from the bondage of sin. Only then can we truly praise our God. Only then can we say that "the LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation" (15:2; *cp.* Ps. 118:4; Is. 12:2).

Verse 3 uses a word picture for God that most modern "praise & worship" songs don't – God is a "man of war." God is a warrior, fighting on behalf of His people. It is God who fights and wins the battle against the spiritual forces of darkness. It is God who wages holy war to rescue His people from bondage. Who is this man of war? "The LORD is His name." Much later in Israel's history, the prophet Amos picks up on this refrain and quotes it three times in his prophecy (Amos 4:13; 5:8; 9:6).

Verses 4-5 reprise the theme of defeating the Egyptian army in the Red Sea. God has cast them into "the depths," an unusual Hebrew word that is the same one used to describe the chaotic waters of creation (Gen. 1:2). Just as God controlled the depths at creation, so He controls them here. "He is the Lord of creation, and the waters do what He commands" (Mackay).

Exodus I – Notes

The first stanza ends with remembrance of the great victory of God over His enemies as they sink like stones to the bottom of the sea. Surely, this triumph is reason indeed to sing of the LORD and His glory.

2. “Your Right Hand, O LORD” (15:6-10)

The second stanza begins in verse 6 with a double reference to God’s “right hand.” Throughout Scripture, this picture of the right hand speaks to “power, pre-eminence, and strength” (Currid). The hand is the part of the body which acts to accomplish the will. It is God’s strong right hand that brings Israel out of Egypt (7:4-5). The image of God’s right hand protecting and delivering His people is prevalent especially in the Psalms (*e.g.*, Ps. 17:7; 60:5; 118:15-16).

¹Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
For He has done marvelous things;
His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory (Psalm 98:1).

In contrast to the powerful hand of God in verse 6, we are presented with a pitiful portrait of the enemy in verse 7. They are consumed like “stubble.” The end of the wicked is often to be consumed like stubble (*e.g.*, Is. 40:24; 41:2; Jer. 13:24; Ps. 83:13; Nah. 1:10; Mal. 4:1).

¹⁸“The house of Jacob shall be a fire,
And the house of Joseph a flame;
But the house of Esau shall be stubble;
They shall kindle them and devour them,
And no survivor shall remain of the house of Esau,”
For the LORD has spoken (Obadiah 1:18).

Although the imagery of stubble is fitting, in this instance it is also ironic. Remember how the Egyptian taskmasters had forced the Israelite slaves to “gather stubble instead of straw” (5:12)? Little did they know that their cruelty in forcing the Israelite slaves to work with stubble would come full circle to describe their own fate. How fitting is God’s justice! How perfect are His ways!

Verse 8 gives us a “behind the scenes” look at how God accomplished the miracle of the Red Sea crossing. In the previous chapter, God sends “a strong east wind” to separate the sea (14:21). Here in the *Song of the Sea*, the Red Sea is separated by “the blast of your nostrils” (*cp.* Ps. 18:15). This is the theological interpretation of Exodus 14: the east wind is of divine origin. This “anthropomorphism” clearly displays God’s personal involvement in His creation and in the affairs of men. He is not an aloof God; He is intimately involved, even to the breath of His nose.

If verse 8 shows us what God did behind the scenes, then verse 9 serves the same purpose for the opposite side in the spiritual conflict. Pharaoh’s inner thoughts and motivations are now revealed. The essence and nature of Pharaoh are captured in a series of self-centered and selfish statements: “I ... I ... I ...” It is all about the Pharaoh. He refers to himself no less than six times in this single verse. Pharaoh is vain, arrogant, and ultimately foolish. He thought his hand would be the destroying hand, but we’ve already seen in verse 6 how it is the hand of God which wins the great victory.

With a puff of God’s wind, the LORD completely overwhelms this man of sin (15:10). “In contrast to the ineffective bluster of the Egyptians, the LORD merely blew with his breath and catastrophe enveloped them. They went down as quickly as a lead weight” (Mackay).

Exodus I – Notes

This second stanza thus echoes the first. God’s glorious power is demonstrated in His complete and utter defeat of Egypt. The strong right hand of the LORD is victorious over His enemies. While Pharaoh’s trust is in himself and the might of Egypt, Moses’ trust is in the God of his salvation. What a contrast between the man of God and the man of sin!

3. “Who Is Like You, O LORD?” (15:11-13)

Having clearly demonstrated the superiority of the LORD over the might of the Egyptians, Moses asks, “Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods?” (15:11). Does God have any competition from the gods of the nations? Of course the answer is “No!” In verse 11, Moses affirms three attributes of God that are without parallel. First, Moses extols the *holiness of God*. This is the defining attribute of who God is. He is holy, separate, set apart from the creation. He is the Creator; everything else is creation. He is awesome in His glory, majestic in His holiness.

Second, God is *fearful in praises*. This means that He is worthy to be praised. His actions are praiseworthy. This song is an example of praising God for His actions in both salvation and judgment. This sentiment is echoed over and over in the Psalms (*e.g.* Ps. 48:1; 145:3).

⁴For the LORD is great and greatly to be praised;
He is to be feared above all gods (Psalm 96:4).

In the third place, He is a God who *does wonders*. The ten plagues are examples of His wonders. The supernatural hardening of Pharaoh’s heart is an example of His wonders. The salvation of Israel out of the house of bondage in Egypt is an example of His wonders. The parting of the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh’s army are examples of His wonders. His wonders declare His glorious holiness. His wonders cause the righteous to praise His name.

As if we needed reminding, Moses describes the wonders of God in verses 12-13. Again, we have the image of God’s right hand performing the wonder of parting the Red Sea. Just as Aaron’s serpent-rod “swallowed” the serpent-rods of the Egyptian magicians (7:12), so the earth “swallows” up the army of Pharaoh.

But that may not even be the biggest wonder that God has accomplished. The reason judgment comes to Egypt is because “mercy” comes to Israel (15:13). Can you just hear the awe and amazement in the lines: “You in your mercy have led forth the people who You have redeemed”? The Hebrew word for “mercy” here is *hesed*, which can also be translated as “loving-kindness.” *Hesed* is the covenant love of God. This is the amazing grace of God which He chooses to bestow upon an unworthy people. This is the mercy of God that forgives wickedness, rebellion, and sin (Ex. 34:7). This is the loving-kindness that saves undeserving sinners. Ultimately, the salvation of God’s people is His greatest wonder.

The end of verse 13 indicates that God will guide His people to His “holy habitation.” It is not clear exactly what is meant here. It could mean Mt. Sinai, the Tabernacle, the Promised Land of Canaan, or even the Temple. From the point of view of Moses and the children of Israel at the Red Sea, all of these locations are in their future. However, I don’t think we have to choose between these options, because they ultimately all point to the same reality of God dwelling in the midst of His people. This is the Immanuel Principle again: “I will take you as My people and I will be your God” (6:7). Ultimately, this picture points us to Jesus Christ and the Church. We are now God’s habitation, the place where God’s Holy Spirit resides (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

Exodus I – Notes

Moses has asked the question, “Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods?” In answer to this rhetorical question, he has sung of God’s glorious holiness, His praiseworthiness, His awesome wonders, His power in judgment, His mercy in salvation, and His dwelling in the midst of His people. The answer to Moses’ question is obvious. The LORD stands alone. No one is like our God. He alone is worthy to be praised.

4. “*The LORD Shall Reign Forever*” (15:14-18)

The fourth and final stanza builds upon the uniqueness and awesomeness of God. One of the purposes of the plagues was to spread the glory of God’s name throughout the earth (9:16). Verses 14-16a describe the knowledge of God’s glory reaching the nations in fulfillment of God’s purpose. From the point of view of Israel, these verses take place in their future. And yet the outcome is so certain, that in the original Hebrew they are declared to have already happened.

The nations hear what God has accomplished and they become afraid (15:14). This is fulfilled during the conquest of the Promised Land (*e.g.*, Jos. 2:8-10; 5:1; 9:9; 10:1-2). The reputation of God’s wonders precedes Him. Four nations are listed in these verses. “The order in which the nations are listed follows the geographical sequence of the route the Hebrews will use to travel to the Promised Land: Philistia – Edom – Moab – Canaan” (Currid).

God has promised to guide His people to His holy habitation (15:13). Verse 16 describes this process taking place. As they advance, the enemy nations cannot prevent the passage of Israel or their settlement in the Promised Land: “They will be as still as a stone, till Your people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over whom you have purchased” (15:16b). Again we have the concept of a purchase price, referring to the redemption of Israel by God.

The destination of God’s people is described in verse 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.” The initial fulfillment of this promise is the establishment of Israel in the Promised Land. God plants His people like a vineyard (Ps. 80:8-11; Is. 5:1-7) in the land of Canaan. This land, which had long ago been promised to Abraham for his descendants (Gen. 17:8), is considered their heritage (6:8) or inheritance (Num. 26:53). Yahweh – the LORD – has fulfilled His covenant promises in establishing Israel in the Promised Land.

However, the possession of the land is not the ultimate reason for their being planted in the Promised Land. God leads them there because that is where His sanctuary will be located. Later on, God’s dwelling place, the Temple, is built on Mt. Zion in the city of Jerusalem (Ps. 48:1-2; 74:2; 76:2). This is the ultimate purpose of the exodus: God’s people have been brought out of bondage and taken possession of their inheritance so that they may have the sanctuary of the LORD in their midst. They have been redeemed in order to serve the LORD through worship.

Bentley points out that Canaan is not the ultimate fulfillment of this promise:

Initially this place was Canaan — the Promised Land, but that land was to prove to be a place of continual conflict. Therefore, it was not in that earthly land that the Lord would reign for ever and ever. The ‘land’ where God has His mountain, His inheritance, His dwelling and His sanctuary is heaven itself. That is why this song of Moses is linked so closely to the one in Revelation 15; the closing chapters of the book of Revelation give us a small idea of what heaven is like.

Exodus I – Notes

The song concludes in a fitting manner of praise to our great God: “The LORD shall reign forever and ever” (15:18). From beginning to end, this song has been a doxology of praise to God. The focus has been on His attributes – such as power, glory, and holiness – and His actions – judging, saving, and reigning. God does not simply rule over the people of Israel or the nation of Egypt – He has universal reign and everlasting dominion. The *Song of the Sea* is an amazing psalm of praise and worship to our holy God.

C. The Song of Miriam (15:19-21)

Following the *Song of the Sea*, we have two verses of prose introduction to the *Song of Miriam* in verse 21. Verse 15:19 is simply a summary of the historical background for both of these songs. It is a declaration of the actual events as described in Exodus 14. This verse reminds us once again that the basis for our worship, the foundation of our praise, is in the saving acts of God that take place in history. Our faith is not based on myths or spiritualized truths derived from fictitious stories. Our faith is rooted in the truth. The salvation of Israel occurred at the Passover and the Red Sea; our salvation occurs at the cross and the empty tomb. The apostle Paul declares the absolute historical basis of our faith in 1 Corinthians 15:

³For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time (1 Corinthians 15:3-8).

In verse 20, we are introduced to Miriam. We learn two things about her here. First, she is a prophetess. This is an unusual designation; only a few other women in Scripture have this title: Deborah (Jdg. 4:4); Huldah (2 Kgs. 22:14); Noadiah (Neh. 6:14); the wife of Isaiah (Is. 8:3); Anna (Luke 2:36); and Philip’s daughters (Acts 21:9). Undoubtedly, her calling meant that she had high standing and regard within Israel. As a prophetess, Miriam apparently received direct communication from God. She later used this privilege as an opportunity to challenge the authority of Moses (Num. 12:2).

The second thing we learn about Miriam is that she is “the sister of Aaron.” By implication, she is also the sister of Moses. Way back in Exodus chapter 2 we were introduced to the clever sister of Moses who watched her baby brother while he floated on the Nile in his ark. It was this unnamed sister who observed Pharaoh’s daughter pulling Moses out of the river and who secured their mother to be the child’s wet nurse. Although that young girl was unnamed in Exodus 2, it is likely that it is the very same Miriam we are introduced to here in Exodus 15.

Bentley points out that Miriam’s calling as a prophetess does not violate the general teaching of the apostle Paul on the subject of female leadership: “And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence” (1 Tim. 2:12). From the text in front of us, we can discern that Miriam’s ministry was directed specifically toward the women of Israel, not the men: “all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances” (15:20).

Rather, the leadership of Miriam is used to complement the worship of Israel. While Moses led the men in praise by singing the *Song of the Sea*, Miriam led the women in praise to God. Thus, we can see the inclusive nature of praise – all of God’s people are to praise Him! Ryken notes:

Exodus I – Notes

The point is that the song of salvation is for all God's people. It was not enough for Moses to sing it, or even all the men of Israel. The women had seen the same salvation, and they were trusting in the same Savior, so they also needed to praise God for His victory at sea. The children were singing too, for they had been saved along with everyone else.

“And Miriam answered them ...” (15:21). This phrase seems to indicate that the song Miriam and the women sing is a response to what the men sing. The portion of the song given in verse 21 is essentially an echo to the first verse of the *Song of the Sea*. This musical form is what is called an *antiphon* – a song with a call and a response. Many of the Psalms were meant to be sung in a similar sort of fashion; the clearest example is Psalm 136, which has a refrain after every line of “for His mercy endures forever.” In this case, Moses and the men would sing, and then Miriam and the women would echo. Back and forth they would go, singing their praises to God.

D. The Song of Moses and the Lamb (Rev. 15:1-4)

If we hit the fast forward button and advance to the last pages of Scripture, we will find in Revelation 15 another song. This song is called “the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb” (Rev. 15:3). This song has a similar setting to the *Song of the Sea*. The saints of God are standing on a “sea of glass mingled with fire” (Rev. 15:2). This word picture recalls to mind the sun rising above the Red Sea as salvation comes to the children of Israel. Likewise, the theme of the song of Moses and the Lamb is the same as in Exodus 15: the glorification of God. Listen to this song of God's people:

³Great and marvelous are Your works,
Lord God Almighty!
Just and true are Your ways,
O King of the saints!

⁴Who 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 (Revelation 15:3b-4).

At the Red Sea, Israel sang of God's holiness and great work of salvation. As they stood by the shores of the sea, they looked ahead in time to see the nations tremble as they were led into their inheritance. And at the end of time, when the saints are gathered in their heavenly inheritance, they will still be singing essentially the same song. The *Song of the Sea* belongs to the church today, just as the song of Moses and the Lamb does. We should be singing these songs in the church today, rehearsing for when we sing them in eternity.

The *Song of the Sea* is one of the great hymns of Scripture. When we consider what hymns we should sing, this song should be a model, along with the Psalms and the other great songs of Scripture – the song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1-10), the song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55), the song of Zacharias (Luke 1:67-79), the song of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32), and the songs of praise in Revelation 4:8-11, 5:9-14, and 15:3-4 amongst others. What do these Biblical songs have in common? They are uniformly God-centered. God is at the center of these hymns. Enns comments:

One thing that strikes me about these biblical songs is the lack of focus on oneself. And any attention that is paid to the one uttering the song (as in the case of Mary's song) quickly

Exodus I – Notes

recedes into the background to let the true focus of the song come through—praise to the Lord. Songs in Scripture are about what God has done for His people. These songs are thoroughly theocentric. Our worship of God in song should be equally theocentric and, ever since Easter morning, Christocentric as well.

Conclusion

For the past 13 weeks we have been studying the opening chapters of the book of Exodus. The overarching theme of these chapters has been “the redemption of God.” We have seen how God gained glory for His name through His mighty wonders in redeeming the children of Israel out of the house of bondage in Egypt. We’ve traveled from slavery in Egypt to freedom at the shores of the Red Sea. We noted time and again that the purpose of Israel’s redemption (and ours) is to serve the LORD and worship Him. We are saved for service; we are redeemed to give glory to God; we are delivered to praise the LORD. I hope that this message has sunk in, and I pray that it impacts the way you worship God.

How should we end our class and our quarter? Once again, Enns makes an insightful comment that gives us a hint of what we should do:

Built into Scripture is the notion that the song should be repeated. The fact that it is repeated so soon after its premiere performance hints that it should be sung not just once more, but again and again. We have, in other words, a reminder of the liturgical and ritualistic function of the song. It is a repeated celebration of God’s deliverance, of which God’s people must be reminded continually.

I can think of no better way to end this class, and end this quarter, than to join in with Moses and the Old Testament saints and sing a part of the *Song of the Sea*.

“The Horse and Rider” (Ex. 15:1-2)

I will sing unto the LORD for He has triumphed gloriously
The horse and rider thrown into the sea (2x)

The LORD, my God, my strength, my song
Has now become my victory (2x)

The LORD is God and I will praise Him
My father’s God and I will exalt Him (2x)

Amen.

Close in Prayer. End of Quarter

Next week: Begin new Adult Sunday school classes.