

Exodus

June 3, 2007

Chapter 15

I. Background

In Genesis, we saw the creation of the world, it being filled with people, their destruction because of sin, and then re-population through Noah's family. We saw the knowledge of God being carried by one family, from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob (later renamed Israel) to his sons. We saw that family migrate into Egypt.

Go forward 430 years. During that interim, the Israelites have continued to worship the one true God, but they also came to worship the false gods of Egypt becoming hopelessly entangled by them. Under judgment from God's anger, he causes them great suffering in Egypt. The Egyptians' desire to destroy the Israelites in Exodus 1 and 2 probably arose from this judgment, as well the need to work them hard in later chapters.

Moses is born into a Levite family and miraculously saved, lives 40 years as an Egyptian becoming highly educated, attempts to lead a rebellion against Egypt, and finally flees to the desert. Here, living 40 years in an apparently believing family, he finds the LORD God. The LORD sends him back to Egypt where through a variety of miracles showing that He is greater than all the gods of Egypt combined, Moses leads the people out of Egypt. Pharaoh makes one last failed attempt to regain his slaves, but the great miracle of parting the sea results in the Israelites being saved again and the pursuing Egyptian army being destroyed.

Having being preserved through God's power, the Israelites rejoice and praise Him in the first part of Chapter 15.

II. Song of Moses, Stanza 1

The substance of Song of Moses is entirely devoted to the praise and adoration of the LORD. It includes the judgment inflicted upon the heathen power of the world in the fall of Pharaoh, and the salvation that flowed from this judgment to Israel. In the Hebrew, there is a strong rhythmic pattern in the song. Many say that not even translation can eliminate it.

Ex 15:1-5

15:1 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD:

"I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea. 2 The LORD is my strength and my song; 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 warrior; the LORD is his name. 4 Pharaoh's chariots and his army he has hurled into the

sea. The best of Pharaoh's officers are drowned in the Red Sea. 5 The deep waters have covered them; they sank to the depths like a stone. NIV

- Verse 1 Based on this verse and the rest of the song, all the Israelites appear to be praising the LORD. Note that the celebration has a number of ingredients that is similar to the celebration in Chapter 32.
- Verse 2 Saying that the LORD “has become my salvation” is to say that God is the author of it.
- Verse 2 The “LORD” is only Yah or YH, rather than the usual Yahweh or YHWH. In Isaiah 12:2 that appears to quote this verse, YHWH is used.
- Verse 5 The indication of “deep waters” is another indication that the sea was actually split and then descended on the charioteers, all in a miraculous way.

III. Song of Moses, Stanza 2

Ex 15:6-10

6 "Your right hand, O LORD, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O LORD, shattered the enemy. 7 In the greatness of your majesty you threw down those who opposed you. You unleashed your burning anger; it consumed them like stubble. 8 By the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up. The surging waters stood firm like a wall; the deep waters congealed in the heart of the sea. 9 "The enemy boasted, 'I will pursue, I will overtake them. I will divide the spoils; I will gorge myself on them. I will draw my sword and my hand will destroy them.' 10 But you blew with your breath, and the sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters. NIV

Verse 7 The LORD does get angry, even if He is slow to anger. The LORD does impose justice, even if in our human mind wonders why He takes so long. While tolerance might be the word of today, it is clear that the LORD is not tolerant of those who go against Him and His work.

Verse 8 “Blast” is really wind. The “blast of your nostrils” implies anger. Apparently the blast or wind was the strong east wind from Ex 14:21
21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, NIV

IV. Song of Moses, Stanza 3

Ex 15:11-18

11 "Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you — majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? 12 You stretched out your right hand and the earth swallowed them. 13 "In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling. 14 The nations will hear and tremble; anguish will grip the people of Philistia. 15 The chiefs of Edom will be terrified, the leaders of Moab will be seized with trembling, the people of Canaan will melt away; 16 terror and dread will fall upon them. By the power of your arm they will be as still as a stone — until your people pass by, O LORD, until the people you bought pass by. 17 You

will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance — the place, O LORD, you made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, your hands established. 18 The LORD will reign for ever and ever." NIV

Verse 11 In a sense, the LORD fought with the gods of Egypt and defeated all of them. (See Ex 12:12)

Verse 12 The “earth” probably has the sense of “underworld” or “hell.” That is within the range of the meaning of the word.

Verse 13 In many ways, the story of Israel as an aggregate mirrors the story of a NT Christian. Both are redeemed by God’s love, and He leads them.

Verse 15 Josh 2:10-13 shows this verse to be true:

10 We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. 11 When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. 12 Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign 13 that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you will save us from death." NIV

Verse 16 “Still as a stone” implies that they will not organize an army to block the Israelites.

Verse 17 The “mountain” is probably Mt. Zion; it was not chosen until 2 Sam 24 but allusion to its selection is mentioned many times in Scripture before that.

V. Women’s Refrain

Ex 15:19-21

19 When Pharaoh's horses, chariots and horsemen went into the sea, the LORD brought the waters of the sea back over them, but the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground. 20 Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing. 21 Miriam sang to them: "Sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea." NIV

Verse 19 The chronology is not clear as to whether verses 20/21 occurred before the earlier verses in this chapter or after them. Both occurred after the events of this verse. The impact is that even the women got into the act of singing and dancing as moved by the joy of the LORD.

Verse 20 Miriam’s name in Exodus is only mentioned in this chapter and the next one. She is the first female prophet mentioned in Scripture, but not the only one. Others are Deborah, Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Isaiah’s wife, and Anna.

Verse 20 There might be a contrast here with the “joy” expressed in the Golden Calf incident.

VI. How Quickly They Forget!

Ex 15:22-27

22 Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert without finding water. 23 When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter. (That is why the place is called Marah.)

24 So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?"

25 Then Moses cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the LORD made a decree and a law for them, and there he tested them. 26 He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you."

27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water.

NIV

Verse 23 Although it might not be known as Marah before the Israelites got there, they probably knew of the oasis. By the time that they got there, the water that they carried was probably mostly gone...which is what worried them.

Verse 24 This is the second rebellion! The question is reasonable; it is the attitude of grumbling that is wrong. How quickly the Israelites have forgotten? Throughout the Wilderness period, as soon as any trouble or difficulty comes, they become a complaining mob.

Verse 25 The point is Moses' faith and Moses following what the LORD wanted.

Verse 25 The law is next. The LORD will test them later, and they will fail.

VII. DO EXACTLY WHAT GOD SAYS!!

The first part of Exodus deals with God's power. He shows that He is in control and makes happen what needs to happen.

The second part of Exodus, beginning with Chapter 15, deals with how we respond to God. Are we willing to trust in Him and do what He tells us? Are we willing to live by faith, not by sight? Do we have to control God to be comfortable with Him, or are we willing to live our lives the way He wants us to live?

The question for each of us is: Are we willing to follow God fully? In everything, not just in some things? We have to be self-controlled and alert in living our lives, noting when we depart from God's instructions and determining what we have to do to be totally in alignment with His will.

From Philippians:

-Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit (2:3)

-Do everything without complaining or arguing (2:14)