

## Praise in the Midst of Life's Turmoil: *Moses Worships the Lord* (Exodus 15:1-19)

"The future punishment of ungodly men . . . is to show the whole universe the glory of God's power."

~ Jonathan Edwards

### I. Investigation: An Examination of Exodus 15:1-19

#### A. Introduction

Known as the "Song of Moses" or the "Song of the Sea", Exodus 15:1-19 celebrates the Lord's deliverance of His people and His victory over Pharaoh and his army. The hymn serves as a response of faith given by the Israelites after their salvation from the Egyptians. As noted by one commentator, "The poem praises God as the sole agent of salvation. Israel did not co-operate or even play a minor role. The figure of Moses is completely omitted. Yahweh alone affected the miracle at the sea" (Childs, *Exodus*, 249). Ultimately, the song is not about the destruction of the Egyptians or even what happened to the Israelites. Rather, it is about God and who He is.

#### B. Praising God for His Victory at the Sea (15:1-12)

Several times in this song, Moses rejoices in the Lord's power and greatness (vv. 1, 3, 6, 7, 11, 12). Ultimately, this victory at the Sea serves as an example or illustration of God's character. In speaking of this miraculous deliverance, the psalmist states, "he delivered them for the sake of his reputation that he might reveal his power" (Psalm 106:8).

v. 1 - "horse and rider" - Since Egyptians did not utilize soldiers on horseback at this time, the phrase could be rendered "horse and chariot".

v. 2 - Moses personalizes his praise of Yahweh. One commentator writes, "God is not only great in himself, he is also great and good toward 'me.'" (Garrett, *Exodus*, 403).

vv. 4-8 - Moses praises the Lord not only for His sovereignty, His power, and His justice, but he also extols the Lord for His wrath. Praising the Lord for His wrath seems rather odd. Yet, even Psalm 76:10a reads, "Certainly your angry judgment upon men will bring you praise." Why would Scripture rejoice in God's wrath? In answering this question, one scholar aptly notes, "This wrath of God is not a vehement, irrational, vindictive, arbitrary, capricious venting of some supernatural spleen. It is the manifestation of the repugnance of a holy God against all who defile, disrupt, and destroy the world that He has made" (DiGangi, "Faithful in Commitment to the Lost" in *Faithful Witness*, 125). Moses understood that God's anger is always righteous.

v. 9 - The very thing Pharaoh seeks to do to the Israelites becomes his very own fate. Further demonstration of Pharaoh's hardened and arrogant heart can be seen in the six references to "I."

vv. 10-12 - Moses also mentions the holiness of God in this song of praise. The Lord's holiness only further validates the call for the destruction of the Egyptians—individuals who failed to recognize His glory and worship Him.

v. 11 - "Who is like you?" - This repeated question is obviously rhetorical. No god can compare to Yahweh, nor should other gods ever be honored (Exod 20:3). Psalm 97:7 declares, "All who worship idols are ashamed, those who boast about worthless idols. All the gods bow down before him."

v. 12 - "earth swallowed them" - This phrase may either refer to the grave/Sheol or it could be simply a poetic phrase to include the sea.

Verse 12 serves as a refrain to this section.

### C. Praising God for His Provisions for Israel (15:13-19)

The verbs of verses 13-18 can be rendered as "prophetic perfects". Though the verbs are translated in the future tense, their verbal forms indicate that these events were as if they had already taken place. "Thus in Exod. 15, Moses sings not only poetically, powerfully, and passionately but also prophetically" (Hamilton, *Exodus*, 230).

v. 13 - The deliverance at the Sea is only the beginning of how the Lord plans to redeem His people. Observe that Moses begins this portion of the Song by rejoicing over the love of God. This great covenant word of the Old Testament describes God's unfailing attitude of love towards His people (cf. Exod 34:7; and Cole, *Exodus*, 125).

vv. 14-15 - Similar to how the Lord dealt with the Egyptians (vv. 1-12), He will also address any future enemy of Israel (e.g., "like a stone" in vv. 6 and 11, becoming "stiff" or "congealed" in vv. 8 and 15). These four people groups mentioned not only become future enemies of Israel, but they also represent major geographical regions (i.e., Philistia indicates the west, Edom the southeast, Moab the southern territory, and Canaan the northern territory).

Note how Moses describes the response of these non-Israelites.

vv. 13, 16-17 - Moses highlights that the land is ultimately the Lord's residence. As observed by Garrett, "the term 'inheritance' means that the place is holy to him [the Lord] forever and the place of his sanctuary. Israel will be planted in *his* land; he does not come along with them into *their* land" (*Exodus*, 405).

Verses 18 and 19 serve as a refrain to this section. These final words reiterate that Yahweh's victory was not a fluke and that God is sovereign and supreme. The deliverance of the Israelites at the Red Sea testifies to these truths!

## II. Intersect

A. God grants victory in our lives ultimately for His glory. The Song of the Sea is not about God destroying our enemies because we deserve to be rescued. Rather, it is about God punishing His enemies for the sake of His name. The reason we have salvation is simply because of God's grace.

2 Timothy 4:16-18 -

B. We can rejoice knowing that we serve a loving God who will not abandon His people.

Deuteronomy 31:6 -

C. Our lives need to be marked with praise to our great Lord. After all, we will be singing His praises for all eternity!! In fact, the Song of Moses will be sung once again in the future.

Revelation 15:2-4 -

"Awake, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb!  
 Wake every ear and every tongue to praise the Savior's Name . . . .  
 Sing on your heavenly way! Ye ransomed sinners, sing!  
 Sing on, rejoicing every day. In Christ, the eternal King!"  
 ~ William Hammond