

EXODUS

THE GOD WHO RESCUES

SESSION OBJECTIVE: EXODUS 15:1-12

To understand more about Moses' song.

Read the Text:

Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying, "I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. 2 The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this 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 host he cast into the sea, and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea. 5 The floods covered them; they went down into the depths like a stone. 6 Your right hand, O LORD, glorious in power, your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy. 7 In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries; you send out your fury; it consumes them like stubble. 8 At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up; the floods stood up in a heap; the deeps 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 have its fill of 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. 11 "Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? 12 You stretched out your right hand; the earth swallowed them.

(Exodus 15:1-12, ESV)

Study the Text:

Moses' Song, Pt. 1

Over the past few weeks the themes of faith and fear have been major focuses in the text. We have discussed how the Israelites, though they had seen God act in numerous ways on their behalf, were struck with fear when they saw that the Egyptian armies had pursued them and caught up to them, and worse, that they were trapped with their backs to the sea. However, we also saw the LORD draw the waters of the Red Sea apart through Moses and lead His people to safety while simultaneously drowning all of Pharaoh's host in the process. Psalm 106 says that after the waters covered Israel's adversaries, "then they believed his words; and sang his praise" (Ps. 106:12). Chapter 15 is the beginning of this song. Verse 1 begins by saying, "Moses and the people of Israel sang this son to the LORD." Over the next couple of weeks we will go examine the details of this song. Below is a breakdown of some of the key details and concepts throughout it.

SINGING IS RESPONSIVE

The most crucial detail of this song is that it is a song *in response* to the works of God. They are not simply singing to God because they love Him or because it makes them feel good. God has acted, and they are responding to His actions. The bible ties singing to God's triumph in many places. Sometimes it gives us the song written out, such as is the case here and in Psalm 118. Sometimes it only mentions the songs being sung in celebration of victory (2 Samuel 6). Regardless, singing is intended to be responsive.

A HERITAGE OF FAITH

Notice that Moses says in verse 3: "this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God." One important aspect of the Israelite faith (and the Christian faith today) is that it is intended to be generational. We do not simply worship a God disconnected from our culture or familial heritage. We worship a generational God. The God who acts in your life is the the same God who acted during your parent's and grandparent's and great-

grandparent's lives. God has endured all of human time, for He created it. He is not only the God of now, but of always.

THE LORD IS A MAN OF WAR

Exodus 14:14 notes: "The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent." Here, in verse 3, Moses reiterates: "The LORD is a man of war. The LORD is His name." One of the defining characteristics of God in the Old Testament is that He is war-prone. He does not abide evil actions or wicked behavior, and He takes justice and vengeance very seriously. Moreover, He's very good at war. He needs no one to fight His battles. Here more than most places we see the Lord directly act on behalf of His people. In the last chapter we saw "the angel of God" who went before the host of Israel move to separate Egypt from Israel (Ex. 14:19-20). Then we saw the Lord drive the sea back by a strong east wind all night and make the sea dry land for Israel to walk through (Ex. 14:21-22). We watched as the Lord looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, clogging their chariot wheels (Ex. 14:24-25) before ultimately throwing the Egyptians into the midst of the sea (Ex. 14:27-28).

THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

Verse 12 says, "You stretched out your right hand; the earth swallowed them." The "right hand" of God is a term that's used to describe a number of characteristics of God. Here, in Exodus 15:12, the right hand of the Lord is glorious in power and shatters the enemy. In the Psalms, the right hand is described as a saving place for those who seek refuge from their adversaries (Ps. 17:7), a "saving might" (Ps. 20:6), a support (Ps. 18:35), mighty and strong (Ps. 89:13), a hand to lead and hold us (Ps. 139:10), and much more. Exodus 15 also features the "hand" of the enemy as well, in contrast to God's right hand (Ex. 15:9), but God's right hand overtakes the hand of the enemy.¹

One interesting detail to consider is the prominence of the "right hand of God" in the New Testament as the location of the risen and ascended Lord (Acts 2:33; 3:7; Rom. 8:34). 1 Peter 3 states that Jesus is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers all having been subjected to him (1 Peter 3:22). The enemy, just like this song noted, has come to kill, steal and destroy (Jn. 10:10), but the Lord's right hand brought victory for His people through Jesus' death and resurrection. What the enemy meant for evil, the Lord turned to good (Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:31).

What About Now?

One takeaway is our need to celebrate the victories in our lives. When we see the Lord work in our lives, bringing victory where the enemy has sought destruction, we need to praise Him. We see here a way we are able to celebrate the victory - through singing. This song is a great starting point for how we can praise the Lord. We see a recounting of events of how the Lord saved them from the destruction of the enemy and a praise for the character of the Lord that they discovered through the events. Songs are a great way of aligning our beliefs about the Lord as a community and praising Him with one voice. Another takeaway is that God is a God who fights for His people. And while the LORD showed up to fight *for His people*, He now fights *through His people* as His Spirit indwells His newly redeemed bride, the church. Paul says in Ephesian 6:12: "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." Our fight is one

¹ It should also be noted that the "right hand" is an example of personification being applied to God. This is done in Moses' song not only with the "right hand" but also God's "nostrils" (Ex. 15:8), and that He is described as a "man of war" (Ex. 15:3).

we now participate in, but merely as the Spirit works through us. In the same way that Israel would be destroyed if they tried to fight for themselves, so is true for us.

Study Questions

Day One

1. Read Exodus 15:1-3. Who sang the song to the LORD? How is the LORD described in these verses?

2. Read Exodus 15:4-5. How are Pharaoh and Egypt contrasted in these verses? How did the Egyptians go into the sea?

Day Two

1. Read Exodus 15:6-8. What does the “right hand” of the LORD accomplish? How is God described in these verses?

2. Read Exodus 15:9. What did the enemy say?

Day Three

1. Read Exodus 15:10-11. In your own words, describe the works of God in these verses.

2. Read Exodus 15:12. How is the “right hand” of God understood here?

Day Four

1. Read Psalm 150. Notice the number of ways one can praise the Lord. Which way do you find easiest?

2. Which way do you find hardest?

Discuss the Text!**Week 35 Discussion: Songs Matter**

We have gone through the first part of the song Israel sang after the Lord's victory over the Egyptian army. The Lord equipped the Israelites for battle (Exodus 13:18), but the Israelites praise the Lord in this song by telling Him that they are aware that the battle and the victory is from the Lord's right hand. While He had worked numerous signs and wonders in front of Israel, they finally believed his words in the parting of the Red Sea and the final defeat of Pharaoh's host, and this song was their response. They sang to the Lord, for he had triumphed gloriously. Talk as a group about how songs play a role in our worship and adoration of the LORD.

1. Icebreaker: Does worshiping the Lord in song come easily or hard to you?
2. What is your preferred way of worshiping the Lord?
3. Can you think of a time the Lord has brought victory in your life?
4. Did you praise the Lord with song?
5. Can you think of a time the Lord worked victory in your community?
6. What was the response to that victory?

Takeaways:

1. Moses and the Israelites sing a song to the LORD in response to His victory over Egypt.
2. The song describes the manifold ways that God is superior to His enemies.