

The God Who Provides (Part 3 of 6)

The Song of Moses: A Song to the Lord Who is a Warrior & Horticulturalist

Exodus 15:1-21

*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.*

*¹³ "You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed;
you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.*

*¹⁴ The peoples have heard; they tremble;
pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia.*

*¹⁵ Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed;
trembling seizes the leaders of Moab;
all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.*

*¹⁶ Terror and dread fall upon them;
because of the greatness of your arm, they are still as a stone,*

*till your people, O Lord, pass by,
till the people pass by whom you have purchased.
¹⁷ You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain,
the place, O Lord, which you have made for your abode,
the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established.*

¹⁸ The Lord will reign forever and ever."

¹⁹ For when the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his horsemen went into the sea, the Lord brought back the waters of the sea upon them, but the people of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea. ²⁰ Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing. 21 And Miriam sang to them:

*"Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea."*

We come in our study of Exodus to the fifteenth chapter, where we find the Song of Moses. There are three points I would like to make in introduction to help us better understand this passage.

First, the words are constructed in poetic form that immortalizes the story of the previous chapter. Hebrew poetry is beautiful, as it generally shows parallel lines of very descriptive and emotional terms. The Psalter is full of these poems, and it is wonderful to have a diversion in the narrative of Exodus. It is an explosion of emotion and poetry, following the greatest redemptive story in the history of Israel—the crossing of the Red Sea. Victor Hamilton comments on this poem which tells the story of chapter 14 in a creative song. Poetry can often communicate in a deeper way than mere narrative. He compares narrative and poetry by saying that narrative tells the story and poetry sings it; in one you march, in the other you dance; in one there is a holy hush, and in the other there is a crescendo of praise; in one you are moving, and in the other you are on the shore; in one you are holding your breath to see what will happen, and in the other you are standing on shore; in one the cloud goes ahead of you, and in the other your reputation precedes you. Finally, chapter 14 is about warship, and chapter 15 about worship. Thank God for poetry.

Second, we see the arts in worship. This section shows worship in Israel as the arts and gifts of the people are brought to bear in celebration of their great God. There is singing, poetry, instruments, diversity (men and women), and, of all things, dancing. It is a way of describing a full-out worship of the redeemer God in His work of salvation. Miriam shows the importance of women in the kingdom and in worship. Sing on, sister.

Third, we see the Warrior. The focus of the poem is God Himself. As Pastor Mark has reminded us on a regular basis, Exodus is not primarily about Pharaoh or Moses, or Egypt or Israel. It is primarily about the Lord, and that is very clear in this passage. The main picture of God in this passage is that He is the Warrior of His people. He is a man of war. That concept is not particularly "politically correct" in our age, but it is a wonderful truth if you see the battle

of the world as one which pits the seed of the serpent against the seed of the woman. The battle is for the souls of mankind. It is not just a domestic skirmish. It is a cosmic war, and the enemy desires to kill the seed of the serpent. We need a warrior for at least three reasons:

- a) There is a real battle in the world — two kingdoms are at war
- b) We are not strong enough to defeat evil alone
- c) We need a warrior who will save us (or redeem us)

With these background points, let's jump into this beautiful poem, and we will see two actions of the Lord, who is the great warrior on behalf of His people.

I. The warrior Lord defeats the greatest enemy and redeems His people (15:1-13a)

Verse 1—Moses sings a song to the Lord. The Lord is the focus of worship. The poetry then begins a victory cry of the Lord who had triumphed in battle, and the horse and rider were soundly defeated. The picture is one of utter defeat and the supremacy of the Lord, who throws evil into the sea. It is the reversal of the early part of Exodus where the babies were thrown into the sea; now the wicked are thrown into the sea.

Verse 2—Moses leads in singing praise to the Lord, who is the one who achieves the salvation of His people and who is the same God his forefathers worshiped. He has proven to be faithful again.

Verse 3—This Lord is a “man of war” or a “warrior.” As stated before this is not a picture of our God that we like to use in our culture. We often prefer a passive, old man God who does good deeds and does not really rock the boat. We prefer to communicate the attributes of love, grace, kindness, and righteousness to our God and skip past the sections on war and battle. The Bible does not agree with our sympathies. The Bible sees the forces of evil as strong and as desiring the death of humanity. Evil has no mercy or grace. Humans are in a war whether we admit it or not. We need a warrior God, as did Israel. We need one to defeat the seed of the serpent and bring victory. We need one to defend righteousness against injustice.

There are many good illustrations of our desire as humans for a warrior defender on our side. We have had several presidents (Washington, Jackson, T. Roosevelt, Eisenhower) who were former war heroes. We love “super heroes” (Superman, Spider Man, and Mr. Reese) who rescue regular people against the wicked villains. God is not a capricious warrior who just likes to hurt people. He is a defender of His people in saving them from the evil one(s). The ultimate man of war was Jesus, who conquered the evil foes on the cross so that we may inherit His kingdom (Col. 2:15, Rev. 17:14). The cross was the epic battleground, and the winner was the Warrior Jesus who defeated sin and evil and who is able to save His people as the conquering One.

Verse 4—The chosen officers were sunk. This was not the rejects of Pharaoh's army. The best were there and were drowned.

Verse 6—"Your right hand." The hand of God is a prominent metaphor in this poem. Right hand is the dominant and most powerful hand. When the hand is the Lord's, it – by definition – will succeed. Verse 10 contrasts the "hands" of the Egyptians, and those hands will drown in the sea.

Verse 8—What a graphic picture of the greatness of the Warrior. His nostrils pile up the water. He has total control of nature and all else. He is without equal and without any foe who can defeat Him.

Verse 9—This shows the irrationality of evil and sinful humanity. The key word in this verse is "I". The enemy really seems to think that he will succeed and kill the people of God. The battle is real, and the foe seeks to destroy.

Verse 10—The picture again shows God covering the arrogant wicked Egyptians into the sea, and they sink like a lead weight.

Verse 11—This is an interesting section to the poem. The mention of "gods" could be merely wooden statues or carved images. It more likely refers to demons who were behind the figures. Deuteronomy 32:17 equates false gods with demons. I do not think all evil is from demons or Satan, but their influence in the world is real and devastating. BUT — the Lord is glorious and in a different league from the strongest of spiritual forces. In verse 12 He causes the earth to swallow them up.

Verse 13a—I have taken this section down to verse 13a. There the word "redeemed" is used to describe the events of the Red Sea. God redeemed His people. The warrior bought back His people. He won the victory, defeated the evil ones and redeemed His people. What a great warrior, who is powerful and considerate enough to act on behalf of his people.

Application

1. When looking at life, be sure to look to the Lord first. He is the one who can correctly interpret life.
2. Be assured that life will be filled with many trials and pitfalls. Most people attempt to deal with that in their own strength (or lack of strength).
3. The Gospel of the Bible is proclaimed in the Israelite crossing of the Red Sea — the Lord is the redeemer of His people. He has conquered evil and sin and has made a way for His people to be redeemed. It is not of works, but it is of trust. Jesus is the ultimate warrior, who defeated evil on the cross and who calls on people to trust in Him for their redemption. Come to Jesus today as your hope in a sinful world. Hear the Gospel.
4. Change the way you perceive yourself. If you are a child of the Lord, you are defended and defined by the Lord, the warrior. He is your defense against the biggest problem

of your life — sin. You have been delivered from Pharaoh (or evil) and have been baptized through the sea (or saved). See Romans 6:1-11.

II. The warrior Lord leads His people to their final abode with Him in His own mountain (15:13b-18)

Part two of this beautiful psalm describes the journey of the redeemed people of the Warrior to their final dwelling place. The first part of this song was all about salvation and redemption. The warrior wins the battle and gets His people. Now the focus remains on the warrior who leads His people to His own abode. They get to go home with Him. He leads them on that journey to His place.

Verse 13b—The same powerful Warrior who redeemed His people now guides His people to His own abode.

Verses 14-16a—The verb tenses are interesting, and their meaning is debated. In the ESV the verbs in these verses are in the past tense, although the events have not yet occurred. That may suggest that God controls the future and will guide His people through other opposition and will defeat future foes as well, so the past tense sees it as already complete in essence if not in time and space. I like the NIV, which translates the tense from the perspective of the reader. The Warrior God has redeemed His people and will not let them go. His reputation as a successful warrior will be verified as He defeats and instills fear in the Philistines, Edomites (descendent of Esau), Moabites (descendents of Lot) and Canaanites. All of these names represent the seed of the serpent. They all live in opposition to the kingdom of God. You probably remember battles where the Lord was victorious against many of these people.

16b—This is a great part of the poem, showing the contrast of the evil nations who are impotent in the presence of the people of God who are protected by the Warrior. That does not mean that there were not struggles and battles, but in the end, God carried His own safely through.

Vs 17-18—This concludes the poem and song. It is the great triumph of the Lord who successfully will bring His people to His mountain and plant them there. They will dwell with Him forever in the sanctuary established by His hand. The idea of a mountain dwelling may come from Mount Sinai, as God establishes the laws of His kingdom for his people there. It may refer to Jerusalem where the temple was build and was the capital of the nation of Israel. It may refer to the New Jerusalem, which will be the abode of God with His people forever (Rev. 21:2). I think all of those mountains are anticipating the final mountain of Zion. The author of Hebrews states in 12:22-24 that we have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. . . " That is the final abode of the redeemed and the mountain of God. God will take His people there for sure even if the path is full of treacherous obstacles. He will deliver His own. He secures those whom He redeems.

Conclusion: So what do we do with this song?

All glory, laud and honor to thee Redeemer King! We should sing, dance, and join in worship to the Warrior who stands above all and who is to be worshipped alone for His own glory. Jesus and His defeat of evil on the cross is the true Warrior who has defeated what Pharaoh and His army only represent. Let the praises ring!

We all need a warrior. The gospel is for all to see the good news of a God who can deliver.

All who have not trusted in the Lord should do so without delay. That is the only hope for redemption in a fallen world.

Those who are His need Him to bring us safely home by His amazing grace. He is a warrior who does not desert His people. If your identity is as one of His, you have access to all His gracious power to overcome evil. You are not a victim of sin — it does not have mastery over you (Rom. 6). When you are faced with the challenges of life, the Warrior has promised to bring you through them. Even when you come to death, He will walk with you and give you victory in His resurrection. We all need God to be our Warrior and Defender.

Our final destiny is the mountain of the Lord. He will get us there if we trust in Him. Find great encouragement in the victory of God our Warrior.

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