

Exodus 15:1-18

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Preacher: Arthur Jackson

[0 : 00] 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.

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. The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea. And his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea. The floods covered them. They went down into the depths like a stone.

Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power. Your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy. In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries.

You sent out your fury. It consumes them like stubble. At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up. The flood stood up in a heap. The deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.

[1 : 02] 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.

You blew with your wind. The sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters. Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

You stretched out your right hand. The earth swallowed them. You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed. You have guided them by your strength to your holy abode. The peoples have heard. They tremble. Pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia. And now the chiefs of Edom are dismayed. Trembling seizes the leaders of Moab.

All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. 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.

[2 : 06] Till the people pass by whom you have purchased. 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. The Lord will reign forever and ever. 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. 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.

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. This is the word of the Lord.

Good morning, Holy Trinity family. What a joy it is to be in God's house, worshipping with God's people, lifting our voices in praise to him together.

[3 : 13] Praise God for that. If you're looking for a somewhat traditional path in to and through Advent, that won't be happening this particular year at HTC.

We thought we would take a little off the beaten kind of path this year. The texts that we're looking at are not normally ones that one might see or get into during Advent season.

But as we've heard in Exodus 15, the songs that Dave and I are going to be sharing over the next four weeks, it brings us in touch, puts us in touch with the saving, rescuing work of the living God. That's a clear focus. We'll be looking at songs that celebrate those kinds of things. Is it not true of the text that we have heard today?

Here's a song that celebrates the saving work of God on behalf of his ancient people, Israel.

[4 : 31] That's one thing that comes through in somewhat of a crystal clear kind of fashion. It may surprise you that this passage, we hear in the first time in Scripture, words like sing and sang and song, first mentioned in the Bible in this particular text.

In the context of our saving God, these words, singing and song, they emerge in this particular context that we find before us.

What we have in this text sets in motion what could be called a liturgical pattern, a worship legacy that really continues among the people of faith, biblical people of faith, people of biblical faith today, until this very day.

Singing. And worship. And celebration. Worship that celebrates the victory of the almighty God. He has rescued his people here in this text from over 400 years of slavery.

[6 : 02] Egyptian bondage. When I think about texts like this, in our African American tradition, there has been a sort of identity with the children of Israel who are under the heavy hand of oppressor for so long.

That's why narratives like we see in Exodus and in other places in the Old Testament, they have somewhat of a distinct resonance because of our history too.

But the pivotal event that we look at that is here contextually, its importance cannot be overstated. The event that celebrates this particular song or the song that celebrates the event, this event is like no other event.

It is overshadowed only by the event that it ultimately points to, deliverance through the person and work of Jesus.

This, friends, is a biblical theological benchmark. And it's established. And it bleeds over, this particular event, it bleeds over, over into the whole of the biblical record.

[7 : 33] The psalmists sing about it. The prophets use it as a point of reference because it is so, so important that we're taken back to it again and again and again.

And as we will see, even in the last book of the Bible, Revelation, we have it there. And so it spans, in a sense, the whole of the biblical record.

Take a look back at Exodus chapter 2 and verse 23 because there we see the plight of God's people is there summarized.

Look there with me. It's summarized and it was the point where God himself began to work or to take specific action in history, though the promises had been long stated and given.

It is this point that God begins to work in moving of specific fulfillment. Notice what it says in verse 23. The people of Israel groaned because of their slavery.

[8 : 56] And guess what they did in their groanings and cried for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery.

Here it goes. Came up to God and God heard their groaning and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

God saw the people of Israel and God knew. Did you notice that chain of divine action on the basis of the prayers of his people?

He heard. He remembered. He saw. God knew.

God knew. In answer to the prayers of his people, the Lord sent an initially reluctant man by the name of Moses.

[9 : 58] You remember him, don't you? Prince of Egypt that God exiled in order to mold him and shape him into the leader that he wanted him to be.

Initially, he was reluctant to go. But eventually, he went as God's instrument to rescue God's people from bondage back to Exodus 15.

Boy, what a chapter we had before us. The introduction in verse 1, we see the singers and the song, they are there introduced.

Take a look. Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord. Sang, huh? It is sung both by Moses and those that he is leading.

This is the people in the nation. In a sense, this is a national choir here. Well, wouldn't it be wonderful to have the whole nation singing?

[11 : 03] Can you imagine? About two million people choir? Ben, how would you like to lead that kind of group? Betty Ann? Two million? National choir, if you will.

According to Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, all were under the cloud and all passed through the sea.

and the choir, David, were composed of all. All of them. All who had shared the experience. Guess what they did? They sang about it.

All who had experienced the hand of God, they sang about that experience. Huh? The object of their singing is clear, is it not?

Ah, they sang this song to Yahweh, the Lord. The one who had saved them and who had secured their release.

[12:10] Exodus, you know, chapters 12 and on and on, God goes in and he secures the release. Huh? This is better than Jesse Jackson or some emissary going to the Middle East.

God shows up. And when God shows up, you gotta let him go. He's on the scene and it's sort of, he is, he didn't negotiate.

He told them what was going to happen. Look back at chapter 14, just back at verse 30. Perhaps it's on the same page. This is what they're celebrating.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Huh?

That's what they're singing. The salvation that God has delivered. And people who had been rescued, saved from slavery, offered their song to the what?

[13:06] Who had delivered them. 1B, it gives you the song in summary. He gives you the general here. He's gonna break it down and give you the specifics.

But he says, here it is, I will sing to the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously. the horse and his rider. He is thrown into the sea.

I love this. Drayton, if there's anything that I remember about my Hebrew, it's the infinitive absolute. In essence, for you take one form of a word that modifies another form of the word and this really could be translated, there had been a triumphant triumph.

Here, huh? Sort of like some of the food that you ate at Thanksgiving. Oh, my wife showed out this year. It was scrumptiously delicious.

So, another way of looking at this is that today, what happened back then, we would call it a blowout today.

[14:16] God has risen like a wave over his enemies and he actually had blown his enemies away. he had triumphed gloriously.

The horse and his rider he had thrown into the sea. This is what the song is about. It's alternately called A Song of the Sea and the Lord had commandeered the sea and used the sea as his weapon and so the details of this, the particulars of this victory we're going to see in the text. But before we come to that we get a close up look of the Lord himself. It's sort of like the credits are beginning to roll for him in verses 2 and 3 where it says the Lord is my strength.

Here's Israel's covenant keeping God the Lord Yahweh. Here is the God of the covenant covenant and the credits for him begin to roll.

You see that divine name all caps usually in the English and again it's Yahweh ten times you see I mean four times in verses 1 through 4 ten times in the song proper verses 1 through 18 twelve times throughout these 21 verses where the Lord covenant keeping God of Israel who comes into view.

[15:45] What about him? He's the source of strength and the reason for singing and the source of salvation. You see that there the Lord is my strength and my song he has become my salvation.

This is the first time that we see this kind of praise here and we hear it repeated in the Psalms we hear it repeated probably in Chronicles the Lord is my strength and my song.

Now let me just stop. Can you say that here today? You don't have to but are there those here who recognize where the realest source of your strength comes from? We may think that we're all that but we're not.

God himself is the source of our strength. It comes from him if you were to be able to trace it.

Trace your intellectual powers. Trace your financial security. Trace these things. He's the source of our strength and he is our song the reason for our song and the source of salvation.

[16:57] He is the God not only that notice did you notice that he is the God of the present he is my God and not only he's the God of history he's my father's God he's God with the history he has a track record he's God with a resume and verse three is extremely contextually significant and that the Lord is described as here he is he's a man of war yeah oh he's a warrior that's what he is he's the divine warrior and again you see a theme here established going to run throughout scripture he's the God of might and power he's all conquering God almighty God so the victory that is spoken of in general terms will soon be more specifically celebrated but two things particularly come in view

in the verses that follow what is being celebrated first of all the defeat of the enemy is going to be celebrated but secondly the deliverance of

God's people is also going to be celebrated! What about it? So the defeat of the enemy here's a question for you this morning how do you handle a powerful military force that has 600 chariots in its arsenal you might think well that might not be such a big deal then but it was then you're talking about the most powerful nation military force of that day how do you handle them?

Let me tell you what the Lord did he commandeered the sea as God's servant as an instrument against the greatest military force the most powerful force of that day and so what has been captured in the narrative that precedes this song becomes more graphic this is what poetry does poetry uses words to paint pictures and it sort of amplifies what has been seen and particularly in Hebrew poetry that really it's a parallelism of thought and it strengthens and it repeats itself and that's what we have here an entire army defeated by God and he uses the sea as his weapon he's a divine warrior with every force in all of the universe at his disposal did you notice the varied words that describe the waters look at verse four the sea and the red sea in verse four the floods and the depths in verse five the waters the floods the depths in verse eight sea mighty waters in verse ten God is commandeering the waters and using them as his weapon against the enemies of his people which ultimately are the enemies of God he's the divine warrior commandeering wind and wave to bring about defeat look verse six and I'm going to go a little faster I'm not going to a little later but bear with me now because there you see a shift did you notice from the third person to the second person begins to speak directly to God your name your right hand oh lord glorious in power your right hand oh lord why the right hand because that's the hand that held the sword held the weapon it shatters the enemy and the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries you send out your fury it consumes them like stubble second person we've done that this morning haven't we your name it's a strong and mighty tower were you talking to him when you sang it oh your name is a shelter like no other your name let the church shout it louder because nothing has the power to save like your name lord so he speaks to him your right hand the hand of power and victory magnificently powerful god's powerful hand again that speaks of the whole of his might represented by his hand but he's all his feet are powerful too his left hand is powerful he's all powerful what's the impact on the enemies they're shattered look at the other words that picture the enemies defeat adversaries overthrown verse 7 consume like worthless weeds verse 7 they sink like lead verse 10 the earth swallows them it's a blowout plain and simple that's what it amounts to the enemy is defeated and that kind of divine action warrants human praise praise from us isn't that what happens when there's a victory in the sports world when there's a championship

I wish they had a paraded moor in Kansas City but the rolls came up one chart I know yes Doug is smiling on the front roll but there's a party isn't that what happens often times in the victory of war don't you do it like we used to but at the end of the world war two and times of celebration because there had been a victory victories demand celebration this song based on the events established the pattern friends that continues today when God works his people celebrate with song with singing this redemptive event that we see here has been memorialized in song down through the centuries as I mentioned others earlier poets and prophet alike bring it to the minds of God's people the repertoire music includes it the music and song of the people of faith of the ages recount this particular redemptive act when God works his people celebrate with song huh the living [23 : 52] God uh look at what the enemy raises his ugly head in verses 9 and 10 doesn't he he's arrogant huh the enemy said I will pursue oh yeah I will overtake hmm I will divide the spoil my desire should have its fill on them I will draw my sword my hand shall destroy them huh up uh verse 10 there isn't it um like God like a traffic cop where do you think you going huh you blew with your wind check that out whose wind is it it's your wind God huh the sea covered them sink like lead in the mighty waters let me tell you something here the enemy too even in our day uh even after a marvelous service like this today huh he may have something for you he may target you with ill but when the heavy hand of the enemy begins to press remember who it is that is commanding all things huh who it is that's ultimately in control it's the living God that we see here huh uh look at verse 11 because there the uniqueness the Lord's uniqueness comes into view and this is actually the center of the song who is like you oh Lord among the gods rhetorical questions aren't they who is like you majestic in holiness awesome and glorious deeds doing wonders huh two questions in play there's none and the answer there's none in the universe whose resume compares with the

Lord's the gods of the nations are ultimately nothing they're nothing but idols sticks and stones works of men's hands and of their imagination the Lord the living God is in a class of one his majestic and holiness that speaks of his nature his magisterial his magnificent otherness if you will there's a sense of which the living God defies description friends he is holy huh he's awesome glorious deeds the glory of his deeds glory of his deeds come into view here that his deeds are like none other his works are all inspiring marvelous they're wonderful deeds the psalmist put it in another place wonderful are your works and my soul knows it very well huh do you know of his works in that way the psalm continues to address the

Lord acknowledging the might of his right hand in verse 12 but then while the hand of God the divine warrior has caused the crushing defeat of the enemy there's a shift to the glorious deliverance of God's own people huh the glorious deliverance of God's people in verses 13 through 18 there you had the redeemed look at it there you stretch your verse 13 you have laid in your steadfast love what the people whom you have there it is redeemed you've guided them by your strength to your holy abode huh God's people the redemptive deeds of the almighty God here are no begin to be noted what about them what about God's redemptive deed number one they're rooted in covenantal love huh you see that there your steadfast that is your unfailing love for your people those the people that you've loved those are the ones that you have redeemed huh this covenant love has been codified in his covenant with

Abraham Isaac and Jacob huh he's compelled by again unfailing love huh it's love that motivates action huh it's love that doesn't stop when they are released it gets one out but it also takes one where they need to go to use marital terms it's love that doesn't stop at the altar it's until your death doers part kind of love it will God want to their desired destination huh it rescues and it relocates the one who rescued us when we I think about Paul in Colossians when he speaks on this wise he has rescued us from the domain of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of his dear son and he doesn't leave us he is with us he goes with us huh uh did you notice the response of Israel's neighbors uh look

I mean they're sort of shaking in their boots because God has acted there the peoples verse 14 have heard they tremble pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed trembling seizes the leaders of Moab all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away terror and dread fall upon them because of the greatness of your arm that they are still as a stone wow huh stunned to silence huh it is like they're holding their breath they don't want to be on God's hit list huh silent inaction is what's here huh deflated defused disarmed and dismayed are ways to describe them the people who have been purchased were going to be planted in a place that God had designated for them huh real estate if you will

[30 : 28] I believe it was Goldsworthy that describes God's kingdom as God's people and God's place under God's rule God was in motion for that very thing huh verse 18 don't you love it what a reminder the Lord will reign forever and ever now if you got your Christmas ears on people we're going to hear that again and again this season huh and he shall reign forever and ever huh it anticipates revelation 11 and 15 huh which is spoken of Christ there here the living God is in view the Lord will reign it speaks of his kingship here friends is the warrior king that is in you his eternal rule his victory his triumph they are not a fluke of sorts huh his kingdom or his reign they are eternal for all time and eternity he is as an eternal kingship and eventually friends it will be made manifest even here huh the end of the song but not the end of the passage in a sense because there we see

Miriam coming into play huh her praise in verses 19 and following echoes the praise that we hear at the beginning of the song leader and people coming to focus initially Moses and the people of Israel hear Miriam and leading worshipping women with instrument and with dance huh it mirrors what we've seen earlier in the text a worshipping leader and a worshipping throne celebrating the victory of the Lord huh the defeat Pharaoh and his army is not this similar to what we see in first semi I believe it is what happens when David and Saul return the women go out and they are singing the praises of the the champion warrior Saul got a little bit of praise you know he's slain his thousands oh but David he's slain his ten thousand guess what

Moses is not getting the praise here huh God himself sing to the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously huh here the victorious warriors at the center of the song was the Lord himself he's reflected in the chorus huh people who experience deliverance are to sing sing to the Lord in ways that celebrate his victorious might huh and as I think of this particular ending does Miriam's praise preview the praise of her namesake in the New Testament Mary and the gospel where God's

saving works are there celebrated does the praise that we find here anticipate our praise in view of God's saving activity through the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ are not Miriam's word a fitting call to worship for the people of the ages in view of the saving work of the almighty the singing of God's praises of God's people's praises ring out in view of the crushing defeat but also the glorious deliverance of his people huh is not the cross of Christ and his subsequent resurrection such a place huh a place of victory and what we see here in this text establishes the pattern of the praise for the ages huh we can't be quick to dismiss what we see here huh the one who rescued his people of old from Egypt's power is the one who saves us from Satan's power today the one who purchased us will guide us to the place that he has prepared for us the writer of Psalm 73 says this you will guide me with your counsel and afterwards you will receive me to glory and finally

I find it extremely interesting that this song in Exodus chapter 15 anticipates the song that's sung in Revelation 15 and while the words sing and song are first mentioned in the biblical writ in Exodus 15 they are last mentioned in the biblical writ in Revelation 15 well you see this medley of song the song of Moses and the lamb I want you to turn with me there even as I close to Revelation chapter 15 with John and it's amazing how John he was an Old Testament student of scripture and you see the plagues of Exodus sort of replayed as it were in the end times it's filled with that but even here at the end

[36 : 25] I believe it was of the seven plagues look at verse 3 and they sang here it is the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the lamb great and amazing are your deeds oh Lord the almighty just and true are your ways oh king of the nations who will not fear oh Lord and glorify your name for you alone are holy all nations will come and worship you for your righteous acts have been revealed isn't not there the mirroring of what we see at this first celebration of praise and and what we see as it is anticipated at the end of the age what are we saying today simply this saving works of God deserve the singing of his people save people should be singing people those have been rescued and so we come back to

Miriam's word it's an exhortation for you and me sing sing to the Lord sing to him in view of the defeat of the enemy but also sing in view of the deliverance of God's people and friends that includes you and me may we honor him even as we head into this season that celebrates his coming let's pray father we thank you this day we give you praise and worship you're the living God and I praise you Lord that I've seen our people over the years lift their songs in more robust ways and may we continue that pattern may we continue in the vein of what we see here in view of your mighty and awesome deeds and even as this event anticipated the greatest of all deeds in the person and work of

Christ in whom we have triumph and victory we bless and we honor your name and give thanks to you for your great might today