

EXODUS

Chapter 15

The Song of Moses

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.”

15:1–18 A poetic celebration of God's saving Israel from the Egyptians (vv 1–12) and anticipating salvation from the Canaanites (vv 13–18). (TLSB)

15:1 *Moses and the Israelites sang.* As though one person, the whole community praises God. (CSB)

A God-given, on-the-spot composition. (TLSB)

I will sing. A common way to begin a hymn of praise (see Jdg 5:3; Ps 89:1; 101:1; 108:1). – Two other hymns by Moses are found in Deuteronomy 32 and Psalm 90. While the song is an expression of faith by the whole community. It is also personal. The concept is like the

confession of creeds. Everyone individually must believe; no one is saved without a personal faith. (CSB)

his rider. Possibly cavalry riders, used as scouts, but most likely the riders in the chariots. (TLSB)

thrown into the sea. Cf 14:27. (TLSB)

15:2 The first half of the verse is quoted verbatim in Ps 118:14 (see Isa 12:2). (CSB)

the Lord – God’s covenant name, Yahweh, occurs ten times in our text.

my strength and my song. God sustains His people and inspires them to praise Him in song (cf Ps 118:14; Is 12:2; Rv 15:3). Luther: “If you want to be a maker of God, come here and listen. He wants to teach you the art so that you do not err and make an idol but make the true God as he really is. Not that you are to create his divine nature, for it is and remains eternally uncreated; rather, you are to make him God for you, so that he might also be for you a true God, as he is for himself a true God.... Learn to remember him, that is, as has been said, by preaching, praising, honoring, listening, and giving thanks for the grace revealed in Christ.... When this takes place, you have made him the true God for yourself, and by means of such a confession you have upheld his divine glory.... It is true that such worship takes place devoid of all splendor and does not appeal to the eye according to the flesh; but it fills the heart, which otherwise neither heaven nor earth could fill.... That praising and thanking God is the same as adorning and decorating God is plainly written in the Song of Moses, Exodus 15 [:2]: ‘This is my God, and I will praise him, my father’s God, and I will exalt him.’ See, there you are told how you can make your God beautiful, embellish, adorn, and paint him in the nicest way, place a wreath and crown upon him, deck him out with brooches and chains, and you need no money or bronze for it; but you must believe with your heart and praise him with your mouth, listen to his praise and grace with your ears, and whatever else has been said above” (AE 38:107–8). (TLSB)

salvation - yeshooaw – Something saved, deliverance, aid, victory, prosperity, health. (QV)

15:3 *The LORD is a man of war.* God is often pictured as a king leading his people into battle (see, e.g., Dt 1:30; Jdg 4:14; 2Sa 5:24; 2Ch 20:17–18). (CSB)

God is a warrior fighting for His people (14:14). The Lord approves of and participates in just wars. (TLSB)

15:5 *into the depths* – In Scripture the unruly sea often represents chaos and death (Jonah 2), but here the enemy is the one who drowns. Paul uses this as a comparison to baptism when he says in 1 Corinthians 10:2: “They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”

like a stone. Babylon is similarly described in Jer 51:63–64. (CSB)

This was the final punishment for Egypt’s arrogance. Centuries later, Jeremiah would predict a similar punishment for Babylon’s arrogance (Jer 51:63–64). (TLSB)

15:7 *consumes them like stubble.* Quickly. (TLSB)

15:8 *blast of your nostrils.* A figurative description of God’s wrath and of the east wind. (TLSB)

congealed. God made the separated waters stand aside in their assigned place. (TLSB)

15:9 *I will*. Repeated four times; reveals Egypt's arrogance. (TLSB)

15:10 *mighty waters*. Ambrose: "Even then holy baptism was prefigured in that passage of the Hebrews, wherein the Egyptian perished, the Hebrew escaped. For what else are we daily taught in this sacrament but that guilt is swallowed up and error done away, but that virtue and innocence remain unharmed?" (NPNF 2 10:318). (TLSB)

15:11 *Who is like you ... ?* See Ps 35:10; 71:19; 89:6; 113:5; Mic 7:18. The Lord, who tolerates no rivals, has defeated all the gods of Egypt and their worshipers. (CSB)

Repeated twice to emphasize God's unique status. (TLSB)

majestic in holiness. The Lord is great and separate from all rivals. God's defeat of the Egyptians and their gods (idols) was obvious, and Israel witnessed this in the cloud and the battle action. (TLSB)

15:12 *earth*. Perhaps refers to Sheol or the grave (see Ps 63:9; 71:20), the "realm of death below" (Dt 32:22), since it was the sea that swallowed the Egyptians. (CSB)

15:13 *your holy abode*. Perhaps a reference to the house of worship at Shiloh (see Jer 7:12), and ultimately the temple on Mount Zion (see Ps 76:2), the "place" God would "choose" (Dt 12:14, 18, 26; 14:25; 16:7, 15–16; 17:8, 10; 18:6; 31:11) to put "his Name" (Dt 12:5, 11, 21; 14:23–24; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2). But the phrase may refer to the promised land, which is called "your dwelling" and "the sanctuary ... your hands established" in v. 17. (CSB)

Looks forward to Israel's arrival at God's holy mountain, their entry into Canaan, and perhaps to the temple on Mount Zion (Gal 4:25). (TLSB)

15:14–15 *Philistia ... Edom ... Moab ... Canaan*. The order is roughly that along the route Israel would follow from Mount Sinai to the promised land. (CSB)

Prophetically lists the nations Israel would encounter on the way to the Promised Land, roughly in order. (TLSB)

15:15 *chiefs*. The term used earlier of the Edomite rulers (see Ge 36:15–19, 21, 29–30, 40, 43). (CSB)

15:16 *pass by*. One of the verbs used to describe God's "passing through" Egypt (12:12, 23). Israel would cross the territory of other nations on their way to Canaan. (TLSB)

purchased. In Ps 74:2 the meaning "bought" or "purchased" is found in context with "redeemed." (CSB)

Hbr *qanah*, another expression for "redeemed." (TLSB)

15:17 *inheritance*. The promised land (see 1Sa 26:19; Ps 79:1). (CSB)

15:18 Israel would become God's kingdom (19:6). (TLSB)

15:19 Summary of events that prompted Moses' song of praise. (TLSB)

15:20 *prophetess*. See Nu 12:1–2 for a statement by Miriam concerning her prophetic gift. Other prophetesses in the Bible were Deborah (Jdg 4:4), Isaiah's wife, Huldah (2Ki 22:14), Noadiah (Ne 6:14), Anna (Lk 2:36) and Philip's daughters (Ac 21:9). (CSB)

Miriam was one of only a few prophetesses in the Bible. (TLSB)

women followed her, with tambourines and dancing. Such celebration was common after victory in battle (see 1Sa 18:6; 2Sa 1:20). (CSB)

Part of the celebration of God's victory. A "round" dance, performed in a circle; a typical dance for women (cf Jer 31:13). (TLSB)

15:21 Miriam repeats the first four lines of the victory hymn (see v. 1), changing only the form of the first verb. (CSB)

Miriam and the women apparently picked up the first phrase of Moses' song and sang it as a chorus. (TLSB)

15:1–21 Moses praises the Lord for victory and anticipates future victories. The Israelites are just beginning to understand how badly they have needed God's rescue from Egypt and to see the life with God into which He is bringing them. In the light of God's Law, we begin to see how badly we need God's rescue. And in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we can begin to see the humbling extravagance of God's grace. • "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" (15:11–13). Amen. (TLSB)

Bitter Water Made Sweet

22 Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water. 23 When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; therefore it was named Marah.[b] 24 And the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" 25 And he cried to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a log, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the LORD made for them a statute and a rule, and there he tested them, 26 saying, "If you will diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, your healer." 27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there by the water.

15:22 *wilderness of Shur*. Located east of Egypt (see Ge 25:18; 1Sa 15:7) in the northwestern part of the Sinai peninsula. In Nu 33:8 it is called the "Desert of Etham." Shur and Etham both mean "fortress wall" (Shur in Hebrew, Etham in Egyptian). (CSB)

East of Egypt, in the northwest part of the Sinai Peninsula. Nu 33:8 calls this the wilderness of Etham. Both mean "fortress wall" (*shur* is Hbr; *etham* is Egyptian). (TLSB)

15:23 *Marah*. Probably modern Ain Hawarah, inland from the Gulf of Suez and 50 miles south of its northern end. (CSB)

Probably modern Ain Hawarah, along the east side of the Gulf of Suez, 50 mi from its north end. (TLSB)

bitter. It probably contained dissolved minerals that gave the water a disagreeable taste. The people were used to a very different water source in Egypt. (TLSB)

15:24 *grumbled*. During their desert wanderings, the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron whenever they faced a crisis (see 16:2; 17:3; Nu 14:2; 16:11, 41). In reality, however, they were grumbling “against the LORD” (16:8). Paul warns us not to follow their example (see 1Co 10:10). (CSB)

First of many instances in which Israel grumbled against Moses, a mark of unbelief (1Co 10:10). (TLSB)

15:25 *showed*. The word for God’s Law (i.e., “instruction”) is a form of this verb. (TLSB)

log. God had provided the solution years earlier, when the tree first grew. (TLSB)

He threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. For a similar occurrence see 2Ki 2:19–22. (CSB)

A miracle; no natural reason for this result is apparent. Perhaps the tree represented life, communicating to onlookers that the water was cleansed. (TLSB)

tested. God tested Israel also in connection with his provision of manna (see 16:4; Dt 8:2–3) and the giving of the Ten Commandments (see 20:20). (CSB)

statute ... rule ... commandments ... statutes. With this incident, the Lord began to lay down some rules to discipline the immature nation. He introduces covenant language, as He had with the patriarchs (e.g., Gn 26:5). (TLSB)

15:26 *diseases ... I put on the Egyptians*. A mark of divine punishment. Cf 12:23. (TLSB)

I am the LORD, your healer. Israel is to look to God for health and sustenance (cf Dt 32:39). Physicians were highly prized in the Egyptian culture, from which Israel had just departed. (TLSB)

15:27 *Elim*. Seven miles south of Ain Hawarah in the well-watered valley of Gharandel. (CSB)

Means “large trees,” probably in the Valley of Gharandel, c 7 mi S of Marah. Date palms were highly valued as a source of food and shade. (TLSB)

palm trees. Elim means “large trees.” (CSB)

15:22–27 The Lord patiently supplies Israel with drinking water. Without water, there is no life. We need water to refresh our body; without it, we die. And if we go without spiritual refreshment, we will die eternally. However, God meets this spiritual need for us just as certainly

as He slaked Israel's thirst at Marah. • Jesus Christ, Living Water, refresh us in this wilderness so that we may pass the test and prove You faithful by our faithful obedience. Amen. (TLSB)