

# The Song of Moses

*Exodus 15:1-21*

## Opening Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, you truly are a powerful God. Your adversaries are like stubble, and you breath like an open flame. Truly, we have reason to fear you. Yet, because of Christ, we, who were your enemies, have been redeemed. Now you are on our side. Please be present in our lives. Bring the joy of Your salvation to those who do not yet know about the eternal deliverance You have provided in Jesus our Savior, in whose name we pray. Amen.

## Exodus 15:1-10

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.

## A Few Thoughts About Hebrew Poetry

Hebrew poetry is different from today's poetry. Instead of focusing on end rhymes, Hebrew poetry specializes in what is called parallelism. Vs. 2 is a good example.

"The LORD is my strength and my song;  
He has become my salvation."

Notice how the English translation puts these into two different lines. Sometimes the English translation will help you notice that there is some poetry in the passage, but parallelism works like this: one thing is said on one line, then on another line that same thing is said but in a different way.

Aa = "The LORD

Ab = "He

Ba = is my strength and my song."

Bb = has become my salvation"

"This is my God, and I will praise him,  
"My father's God, and I will exalt him."

The "parallelism" in this chapter not only tells us there is poetry happening, but it also helps us to better understand what Moses is saying.

1. Who does Moses say the Lord is in vs. 2-3?

2. Considering who Moses says the LORD is, what does the parallelism tell us? (Remember vs. 2)
  - Aa = "The LORD"
  - Ab = "is my strength and my song;"
  - Ba = " he"
  - Bb = "has become my salvation."

What three things is Moses tying together?

3. Notice the ironic parallelism in vs. 7 concerning the effects of "fury and fire." What is it?

### **Exodus 15:11-21**

(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."

### **A Song About More Than Israel and Egypt**

4. Moses' song expands to include more than simply God's victory over the Egyptians. The Egyptians and ALL of Pharaoh's army was no match for God. Notice the operations of the mouth in vs. 9-10. How does the enemy use his mouth? How effective is it? What about God? Also, did you notice how Moses broadened his song here?
5. In vs. 11, Moses begins a transition in his song. While he is talking about God's deeds over Egypt, this verse also applies God's deeds outside of Egypt. Look at vs. 12. What did God cause to "swallow" the Egyptians? According to the following words from the prophet Isaiah, what else will God "swallow up" someday?

Isaiah 25:7-8 And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

6. "The Lord is God; besides Him there is no other" (Deuteronomy 4:35). Since there is only one God, what is meant by the expression "among the gods" (v. 11)?

7. What other "gods" do people worship today in our culture?
8. Exodus 15:13 obviously refers to God's deliverance of His people from the slavery and bondage of Egypt, but what larger significance does this verse have for YOU and your future?
9. How does this broader inclusion of Moses' song become even more apparent in vss. 14-18?
10. What does it mean that the LORD will plant His people on His mountain? How does the prophet Isaiah give us a clearer understanding of this reference in the following verse?

Isaiah 2:1 "It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths."

11. In vs. 21, the Lord drove back the sea with a strong east wind. In a splendid example of Biblical poetry, how does the Song of Moses describe that wind in vv. 8 and 10?

### **In Praise of Salvation and Deliverance**

12. Hymns or psalms of praise recounting the deeds of the LORD (Yahweh) among His people were a common form of worship for the Hebrews. Compare Moses' Song in Exodus 15 to the following psalms of praise. What similarities and differences do you see? What images and word pictures are used to express the presence and power of God?

Psalms 105:1-2 Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples! (2) Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!

Psalms 105:24-39 And the LORD made his people very fruitful and made them stronger than their foes. (25) He turned their hearts to hate his people, to deal craftily with his servants. (26) He sent Moses, his servant, and Aaron, whom he had chosen. (27) They performed his signs among them and miracles in the land of Ham. (28) He sent darkness, and made the land dark; they did not rebel against his words. (29) He turned their waters into blood and caused their fish to die. (30) Their land swarmed with frogs, even in the chambers of their kings. (31) He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, and gnats throughout their country. (32) He gave them hail for rain, and fiery lightning bolts through their land. (33) He struck down their vines and fig trees, and shattered the trees of their country. (34) He spoke, and the locusts came, young locusts without number, (35) which devoured all the vegetation in their land and ate up the fruit of their ground. (36) He struck down all the firstborn in their land, the firstfruits of all their strength. (37) Then he brought out Israel with silver and gold, and there was none among his tribes who stumbled. (38) Egypt was glad when they departed, for dread of them had fallen upon it. (39) He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light by night.

Psalms 77:13-16 Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God? (14) You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples. (15) You with your arm redeemed your people, the children of Jacob and Joseph. (16) When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; indeed, the deep trembled.

Psalms 106:6-12 Both we and our fathers have sinned; we have committed iniquity; we have done wickedness. (7) Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works; they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea. (8) Yet he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make known his mighty power. (9) He rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry, and he led them through the deep as through a desert. (10) So he saved them from the hand of the foe and redeemed them from the power of the enemy. (11) And the waters covered their adversaries; not one of them was left. (12) Then they believed his words; they sang his praise.

Psalms 136:10-15 to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt, for his steadfast love endures forever; (11) and brought Israel out from among them, for his steadfast love endures forever; (12) with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, for his steadfast love endures forever; (13) to him who divided the Red Sea in two, for his steadfast love endures forever; (14) and made Israel pass through the midst of it, for his steadfast love endures forever; (15) but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, for his steadfast love endures forever;

13. Why would it be important for the people to remember the exodus as they worshiped? What did the event mean to them?
14. How would singing this song of Moses throughout the years to come continue to help Israel to praise the Lord?
15. How is God rescuing His people at the Red Sea similar to His rescuing YOU in Holy Baptism?
16. List some special events we celebrate with songs about what God has done.
17. Think of some of your favorite hymns. What makes these hymns special to you?
18. According to Jesus, what above all else counts in our worship of the Lord?

John 4:23-24 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. (24) God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."