

Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 4:23 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Exodus 15:1-21

"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 extol Him!" (Exodus 15:2)

Last week, we covered what is generally considered "the greatest moment in Israel's history (appropriately captured by one of the greatest movies of all time)--the "exodus"--the miraculous deliverance of the Children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt, with their "great escape" happening, as only it could, through the parting of the Red Sea! The same God who, according to Genesis 1, as part of the creation story--in the beginning--"moved over the surface of the waters and let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, allowing dry land to appear," told Moses to "lift up his staff and stretch it over the waters of the Red Sea," and then caused a strong east wind to sweep the waters back, allowing the sons of Israel to "pass through the midst of the sea on dry land," with the water then returning to its normal state when the Egyptians followed, and "the LORD overthrowing them in the midst of the sea"! Wow! And so "the God of Israel saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians"--and would begin leading them, miraculously, by the "way of the wilderness," with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night! Our lesson ended with the words from Exodus 14:31--"When Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people "feared" (or revered) the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses!"

This set the scene (and tone!) for last nite's lesson on Exodus 15:1-21--with Moses and the sons of Israel joining together--and celebrating--by singing a song of praise to the LORD, who is "highly exalted" for the miraculous work He had done in delivering them from the Egyptians (the first recorded "song" in the Bible)!

The LORD, "majestic in power," is recognized as "a warrior" (as we heard John Neal expound on last nite) who defends His people and overthrows those, like Pharaoh and the Egyptian army who, foolishly, chose to "rise up against Him"! "Who is like You among the gods, O LORD...majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders! In Your lovingkindness You have led the people whom You have redeemed; (and) in Your lovingkindness You have guided them to Your holy habitation"! And then the song "goes prophetic"--envisioning some of the triumphs yet to come (over the Philistines and the Edomites, the Moabites, and the Canaanites)! And further envisioning "the place, O LORD, which You have made for Your dwelling, the sanctuary, O LORD, which Your hands have established! And ending with the resounding: "The LORD shall reign forever and ever!"

But the details of the Red Sea miracle are worth repeating, in verses 19-20, as Miriam, "the prophetess," picks up the melody and ends with a call for them (and, as a reminder for us, and for all God's people!) to "sing to the LORD, for He highly exalted!"

As we think of the fall of Pharaoh and the Egyptian army--and all those who choose to do battle with God--we're reminded also of Satan's "fatal fall," as described in Isaiah 14:12-14--"How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I

will raise my throne above the stars of God. And I will sit on the mount of the assembly. In the recesses of the north! I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High..." How foolish!

Interestingly, Constable calls our "text" for last nite (Exodus 15:1-21) a "textbook example of the divine warrior imagery of our God so prevalent in the Old Testament"--along with "songs of deliverance and praise" given by those delivered--and we can find so many examples there, as we search!

Consider Deborah, the judge and "prophetess" who, along with Barak (in Judges 5) was used by God to "save" Israel from the Canaanites, by "routing" Sisera, commander of the Canaanite army, and his "900 iron chariots"! And then how she and Barak burst forth in singing "on that day"--"I will sing praise to the LORD, the God of Israel...The mountains quaked at the presence of the LORD...the stars fought from heaven...O my soul, march on with strength...Let all Your enemies perish, O LORD, but let those who love You be like the rising of the sun in its might!" And so, they sung!

And how bout David, in II Samuel 23, after his victory over the Philistines, singing about how the LORD delivered Him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul--"The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold...(and more)! Picked up in Psalm 18 with, "Therefore I give thanks to You, O LORD, among the nations, and I will sing praises to Your name!" (Which he did a lot of!)

Interestingly, there's another "song of victory" that will be sung again in the days to come--"the song of Moses, and of the Lamb," that will be sung by the "redeemed" (according to Revelation 15:1-3) at the close of the Tribulation, by those who will overcome the Antichrist and his system! And it will go like this: "Great and marvelous are Your works, O LORD God, the Almighty; righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!"

Psalm 33:1-5 is a call for all of us, as His followers, today, to sing! For joy! "Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones; praise is becoming of the upright; give thanks to the LORD on the lyre; sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song; pay skillfully with a shout of joy. For the word of the LORD is upright and all His work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD!"

And Colossians 3:16 says, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thanksgiving in your hearts to God!" (As John Neal noted, songs "reveal truths about God by communicating the joy one feels, understands, and believes about God," and singing is "worship that is directed at the results of God's wondrous work in our lives"!

How fitting it is that we would close out our study of Exodus for the year 2020 with a note of joy and praise to the Lord--and "singing" to the Lord)--and particularly as we celebrate Christmas! Exodus, more than anything else, is a picture and "foreshadowing" of the great redemptive plan of God, culminating, as it does (eventually, in the New Testament) with the coming of Christ, as

the "babe in the manger," and "Savior" of the world! As the prophet Isaiah promised, "...Therefore...behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a child, and His name will be called Immanuel ("God with us"!)...Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Eternal Father, the Prince of Peace"! Wow! Something worth singing about with all our hearts!

So many songs come to mind that celebrate the great works of God (and the Christmas season!), including many old hymns--the likes of "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing," or "How Great Thou Art," or Martin Luther's "A Mighty Fortress," or Isaac Watt's "O God, Our Help in Ages Past," or Andrae Crouch singing, "My Tribute," or George Beverly Shea, singing, "O the Wonder of It All!" Or, lest we forget, Frederick Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus"--"For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth...And He shall reign forever and ever...King of Kings, and Lord of Lords...Hallelujah!"

But what could be more fitting, to "sum it up" and close this lesson, than with the great Christmas carol--another one, written by Isaac Watts, with music by Handel, "Joy to the world, the Lord! Sing along! "Joy to the world, the Lord is come; let earth receive her King! Let every heart prepare Him room, and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing...! Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns; let men their song employ while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plain, repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat, the sounding joy! No more let sins and sorrow grow, nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow, far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found, for as, for as the curse is found! He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove, the glories of His righteousness, and wonders of His love, and wonders of His love, and wonders, wonders of His love!" Whew!

Merry Christmas, men! And remember to (always) rejoice for what God has done for us and sing to the Lord!

Lowell