

Song of Salvation

Exodus 15:1-21

What Exodus 14 teaches, Exodus 15 celebrates. You hear the narrative to understand, but then you sing to rejoice. Prose becomes sung poetry as all the children of Israel learn this song, filled with hope and glory.

NOTES:

A New Song

This is probably the oldest song in Scripture, the first on the Holy Spirit's inspired album (Moses, Deut. 32; Deborah, Judg. 5, Hannah, 1 Sam. 2; David, 2 Sam. 22; morning stars, Job 28:7; psalmists; Mary and angels, Lk. 1-2). The song can be structured:

- A. Victory past (1-5)
 - B. The hand of the Lord (6-10)
 - B.' The hand of the Lord (11-13)
- A.' Victory future (14-18)

A recap and the Song of Miriam follow this, which may be a refrain or chorus. Moses begins the first stanza stating what he is doing in the first person: "I will sing to Yahweh, for He has triumphed gloriously!" (v1). Yahweh threw the horse and rider into the sea. By this He is identified as Moses' strength, song, and salvation; singing sides you with God because He has saved you (v2). God is a warrior, covenant Yahweh who battles to fulfill His promises (v3). Pharaoh's chariots and captains sunk like stones (vv4-5). Like the first, the second stanza begins exalting God's glorious power (vv1, 6) and ends with the sinking of His enemies (vv5, 10). His right hand cast in pieces, His wrath consumed like stubble, His breath gathered the waters, and Pharaoh's genocidal army drowned (vv6-10). The third stanza pauses to consider the person of God. Yahweh is singular among the gods, and to praise Him makes you full of awe-ful wonder (vv11-12). His mercy leads us right to His holy house (v13). The fourth stanza could be translated in the past or future tense, underscoring the completeness of the Lord's work and the effect it will have when they go into the promise land. The Philistines, chiefs of Edom, mighty men of Moab, and Canaanites will be afraid, dismayed, shaken, deflated, and overwhelmed with fear when Israel shows up (vv14-16). Yahweh will plant them in the sanctuary He has established, and the song ends climactically: "The Lord shall reign forever and ever!" (v18). Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, heard this, got her timbrel, and all the women joined her dancing and singing (vv20-21).

A National Choir

Moses and the children of Israel sing to the Lord (v1). Congregational singing, all of us, is eminently biblical, and was recovered at the Reformation. It's slipping away as Christians forget how to sing and instead hire bands to perform on *stages* for the crowd. Singing is not optional for worshipers and is aesthetically one of the most beautiful things we do. Think of all the terrible singers in that mixed multitude, and

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how wonderful they sounded all together! Think of the tears of joy shed as they looked at the Egyptian army and chariots washed up on the shore. God's songs are for all of God's people, and so we want to recover the songs and psalms of Scripture at center of our musical offering to God.

God of My Father

Even though Amram wasn't a perfect father, Moses praises Yahweh for being his God (v2). Even if his father had not known the Lord, Moses could look to his father Abraham. Our generation is suffering from father hunger, but instead using it as an excuse to sin and thereby passing it to the next generation, we need to turn to God our Father. The songs of God unite us across generations, giving us something to sing together that is rich in truth and beauty. We should receive this inheritance gratefully and build on it, writing and rewriting music and lyrics, letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16).

Future Hope

Music can be nostalgic, but it must not only be that for the worship of the living God. Israel is in need of vision. They plundered the Egyptians before, but now they do it again, collecting the weaponry for invading Canaan (v9). Moses' song is very specific regarding enemies, but the ultimate goal is rest and harmony in the Lord's sanctuary. Just as Israel saw and then sang their salvation, so do we. We have seen the victory of Christ on the cross and now celebrate it with joyful singing.