

SONG OF THE SEA EXODUS 15:1-21

This chapter begins with a composition written by Moses that praised Yahweh for delivering the Israelites through the water from the onslaught of the Egyptian army. Some places refer to Exodus 15:1-18 as the Song of Moses or the Song of the Sea, but there is also a long poem in Deuteronomy 32:1-43 called the Song of Moses. I'm using Song of the Sea in order to differentiate the two. One theologian called this an Ode of Triumph and Constable called it Israel's Song of Deliverance. Many commentators believe this Scripture is the Song of Moses the Tribulation saints are singing before the throne in Revelation 15:3.

Exodus 15:1 ¹Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and said, "I will sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted [גָּאֹה גָּאֹה]; The horse and its rider [רָכַב] He has hurled [רָמָה] into the sea.

Some theologians believe this poem must have been something that Moses composed immediately after they were safely, and permanently, delivered from the Egyptian army. Others believe verse 15 refers to events that happened a few months later in Edom and Moab; therefore, it seems likely he wrote it later, but reading verse 15 doesn't necessarily lead to that conclusion. It simply says the leaders of Edom and Moab were afraid of the Israelites. Both Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the Lord. The liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian control was not complete until the possibility of an Egyptian attack on them was removed. In my opinion, that was a major component of God's purpose in leading them to the place where they were seemingly trapped by the sea at

their back and a hostile army coming at them from the opposite direction. God's plan for Israel was furthered by the destruction of a large portion of the Egyptian army.

After having seen all the miraculous works of God on behalf of the Israelites, Moses wrote that God is highly exalted, גָּאֵה גָּאֵה. It could also be translated He has "done majestically" or He is "gloriously glorious." The TANAKH translates it "triumphed gloriously." The point is God is to be given honor in relation to the mighty status that is rightfully His. It also suggested that Yahweh had glorified Himself by means of not only the deliverance of Israel, but in the judgments levied against the powerful, pagan Egyptian empire.

We need to keep in mind that as dispensationalists, we believe the Word of God has revealed that God has a purpose for history and that purpose is the glorification of His name throughout the created order. What He is accomplishing in history will be to His glory for eternity. There are things we do not understand about what has happened, what is happening, and what will happen that have to do with creation, the Fall, salvation, man and angels, and the ultimate restoration of the created order that will glorify God in the sight of all creation for eternity. We are incapable of seeing the whole picture right now. What He accomplished for Israel at this point in history is part of the exaltation and glorification of His name that will have everlasting consequences and significance.

At first glance, the words "horse and its rider" seem to suggest cavalry troops, that is, war horses carrying soldiers, were used by the Egyptian army,

however, the word in Hebrew really isn't carrying that meaning. Rider, רִכַּב, means to ride or mount; to ride a horse or to ride in a chariot; it means to come or go in linear movement by getting up onto an animal or vehicle with an associative meaning of having the freedom of wide ranging movement. The TANAKH reinforces the idea of charioteer by translating this to read "horse and driver."

When reading this Scripture, we have to remember it is poetry. It may use figurative language to affirm what has come before it. For example, we know the waters swept back over the Egyptians and they weren't physically picked up and thrown into the sea, but the effect, the end result, was the same as throwing them in. Hurl, רָמָה, means to hurl, to cause the throwing of an object through the air implying a harm or danger to the object thrown. The physical result of the waters churning over them was analogous to the end result of throwing them into the waters. Sinking like stones is a metaphor for drowning in the sea, and so on.

Exodus 15:2 ²"The LORD [יְהוָה] is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation [יְשׁוּעָה]; This is my God [אֱלֹהֵי], and I will praise Him; My father's God [אֱלֹהֵי], and I will extol Him.

I found it interesting to note there are three different words used as the name of God in this one verse. LORD is יְהוָה referring specifically to the Creator God as a shorter form of יהוה (Yahweh) while the other two words used as names for God can be used in the generic sense of referring to the true God or some imaginary, pagan god. One is El, אֵל and the other is Elohim אֱלֹהִים. I don't know that

it means anything significant, but it is interesting to note they would use three different names to refer to the one true God in the space of one sentence. At the very least, the use of Yahweh eliminates any ambiguity in understanding the identity of the God in question.

Moses acknowledged that Elohim is the God of his father referring either to Abraham singularly or to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob collectively. The father or fathers are those to whom Yahweh made promises that are now on track to being fulfilled and Moses is praising Him for their deliverance. Moses made an emphatic declaration that the God who delivered him is His God and he is praising that God who is also the God of his father.

In this Scripture, salvation, *ישועה*, is referring to temporal, physical deliverance of the nation from destruction at the hands of the Egyptian army. This not a reference to the spiritual justification salvation the Israelites have already experienced (Ex. 4:31; 14:31).

There is a grammatical issue in the text that is of minor importance. The word translated “song” may be missing a letter due to scribal error and the intent of the author may have been to read “my strength and help” or “my strength and protection” rather than “my strength and song.” The TANAKH reads “my strength and might.” That actually makes more sense as it is paired with “strength.”

Exodus 15:3 ³“The LORD [יהוה] is a warrior [אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה]; The LORD [יהוה] is His name.

Warrior is literally, אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה, “Man of war.” Whether God was directly fighting for the Israelites by directly engaging in warfare on their behalf as He did at the sea, or empowering them to win the battle as He did the second time they went up against Ai (Joshua 6:1-27, 7:16-26), He was and is a warrior God at times. He led the Israelites into battle, He warred for and with them, and He insured their survival. He is the God of ultimate power and no one can stand against Him. It is also important to note that Israel was to be entirely dependent on Him to fight on their behalf. They were not to become entangled in foreign alliances; instead they were to depend on God. When they did engage in foreign alliances throughout their history, the results were often disastrous for them.

Deuteronomy 20:1, 4 ¹“When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots *and* people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, is with you.... ⁴for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.’

The concept of God as a warrior distresses many Christians today who are of the God is all love all the time and only love all the time brand of Christianity. One commentary said, “the concept itself [meaning the concept of a warrior God as opposed to the God of all love] causes consternation among God’s people even today.”¹ It shouldn’t cause controversy among God’s people who understand the God of the Bible who has revealed Himself in Scripture. God is the God of holiness, righteousness, and justice as well as love, and He is the Cre-

¹ Eugene Carpenter, *Exodus*, ed. H. Wayne House and William D. Barrick, vol. 1, *Evangelical Exegetical Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 541–543.

ator who has the authority to do with His creation as He sees fit which includes the removal of life if that is the righteous thing to do according to God's character and purpose for the world in history.

The concept of God as warrior is particularly relevant when discussing Israel. That is evident in the Old Testament and it is evident in the book of Revelation when God's attention is once again focused on Israel. The church is engaged in spiritual warfare and the concept of God as a Man of war is not of primary importance in this dispensation. Our weapons of warfare are spiritual weapons for the purpose of engaging in spiritual warfare.

Ephesians 6:10–17 ¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, ¹⁵and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; ¹⁶in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Finally, liberal Christians tend to see the God of the Old Testament as a mean God who is a bloody tyrant and engages in war which is evil and beneath the dignity of any God who is worth following, but Christ is only love; therefore, He is the God that people should follow and worship. The truth is the God of the Old Testament who is engaging in that warfare is God the Son; He is the Creator God and He is the God-man interacting with human beings within

the confines of time and space. Therefore, their basic premise is faulty from the start. The failure of so many theologians to understand these things is rooted in their rejection of dispensational distinctions which leads them into replacement theology.

God, Yahweh, has revealed Himself to mankind to the extent He has seen fit to do so. He is not a mystery in the sense that there is nothing known about Him at all. He has revealed Himself in His creation and He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures which are a product of Jewish prophets and apostles. He has revealed Himself through His relationship with Israel and this was powerfully revealed throughout the Exodus.

Exodus 15:4–6 4“Pharaoh’s chariots and his army He has cast [יִזְרָה] into the sea [יָם]; And the choicest [מִבְּחָרָיו] of his officers are drowned in the Red Sea [יָם סוּף]. 5“‘The deeps [תְּהוֹמוֹת] cover them; They went down into the depths like a stone. 6“Your right hand [יְמִינֶךָ], O LORD, is majestic in power, Your right hand [יְמִינֶךָ], O LORD, shatters the enemy.

Moses referred to the destruction of Pharaoh’s troops in some figurative, poetic language. He was simply recounting the fact that God lured Pharaoh’s army into the sea and drowned them there.

The account of casting Pharaoh’s troops into the sea parallels the account of casting the Hebrew babies into the waters of the Nile to kill them. In Exodus 1:22, the babies were cast, שָׁלַךְ, meaning they were thrown into the water implying it was done with intensity and violence. God cast, יִזְרָה, Pharaoh’s army into the sea in a way that insured their own violent death.

In Exodus 14:7, we learned that Pharaoh sent six hundred select chariots plus all the other chariots at hand after the Israelites. He must have had an elite chariot unit of his best fighting men and he sent this unit with its officers after the Hebrews. This may be why his choicest, מִבְּחָרָם, officers were drowned in the sea. Choicest, מִבְּחָרָם, means choice, choicest, the best, or most desirable to have. It often refers to elite military officers, men of rank. This elite chariot unit was apparently commanded by an elite cadre of officers and all them were wiped out at the hand of God in the sea. In other words, these troops weren't just cannon fodder or irrelevant, expendable troops; at least some of them were Pharaoh's premier fighting men, men that would be difficult to replace for some time.

Once again, we don't know exactly what body of water this was. In my opinion, the only real viable alternatives are the Great Bitter Lake and the Red Sea Gulf of Suez which is the one I favor. The only argument against that is the location of the Wilderness of Shur to the north and I don't know just how certain the exact boundaries of that wilderness are. Some geographers think the Red Sea's Gulf of Suez was further north at the time which would allow a crossing into the Wilderness of Shur if it was entirely to the north. There is also evidence the Wilderness of Shur extends further south than many modern theologians presume.

The word deeps, תְּהוֹמוֹת, is also translated depths. It means a deep place or depth. In this context, it refers to the deep parts of a body of water. The use of this word negates any interpretation of the crossing being over some sort of shal-

low water that could be walked through. This was deep water that had to be held up in a heap on either side in order to cross and it was high enough to sweep an army under and drown everyone caught up in it when it returned to its place.

God's right hand, יְמִין, in this context, is a metaphor for the omnipotent power He wields in exercising His will. Nothing can stand against Him, not even the most powerful human armies the world has ever seen—then, now, or future. God's hand is also used as a metaphor for God's activity in judging the Israelites for their unfaithfulness. Just as God's activity as a warrior is connected to Israel, so is His activity in exercising a mighty hand of judgment connected to Israel.

Ezekiel 20:33–34 ³³“As I live,” declares the Lord God, “surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you. ³⁴“I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out;

Matthew 3:12 ¹²“His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

The Song of the Sea continued to proclaim the wonder and the power of God as He delivered the Israelites from harm.

Exodus 15:7 ⁷“And in the greatness of Your excellence You overthrow those who rise up against You; You send forth Your burning anger [הַרְדִּין], and it consumes them as chaff [קֶשֶׂא].

In the context of Exodus 15:7, those who rebel against God arouse His anger and He destroys them. This a generally applicable truth that is evident from

Genesis to Revelation. Yahweh is a just and righteous God who cannot have sin and rebellion in His presence, yet He is patient and quick to forgive, justify, and restore all those who turn to Him. He gave the Egyptians ample opportunity to believe in Him and no doubt some of them did so. The Israelites believed in Him (Exodus 4:31, 14:31). An agricultural metaphor was used to illustrate this truth. In order to render grain usable, it must be separated from the chaff, and once that is done, the chaff is burned. Those Egyptians who continued to rebel against Him were destroyed by means of drowning just as chaff is destroyed by burning. Chaff, קֶשׂ, refers to the husks or shells of grain as it is separated from the grain on the threshing floor. The word can also mean stubble, but that is not the meaning in this context. Stubble is what is left of the stalk in the field. The grain stalks were cut and taken to the threshing floor. That was tread upon to separate the grain from the straw [תֵּבֵן] and to knock the husk off the grain. The straw was removed and the grain was thrown up into the air and the lighter chaff was blown away from the heavier grain which fell back down to the floor to be scooped up and stored.

God's anger, קֵרוֹן, which refers to a fierce anger or wrath, a very intense anger, is righteous and just when He exercises it and He will never exercise it in any way that violates His righteousness and justice. He who creates life and knows the truth of all things can be expected to destroy all who oppose Him and His plan for history. It is His right to do so. That's what is revealed here and that will be true at the end of history as we now know it.

Exodus 15:8 ⁸“At the blast of Your nostrils the waters were piled up [עָרַם], The flowing waters stood up like a heap [נָדָה]; The deeps were congealed [קָפְאוּ] in the heart of the sea.

It is a small thing that God can cause the waters to gather into a heap in order for the Israelites to safely traverse the sea. The work involved in the entire creation process was described as merely the work of His fingers (Ps. 8:3); therefore, in comparison, this act is nothing. The east wind is simply and metaphorically described as a blast of the Lord's nostrils. The use of the words, “at the blast of Your nostrils” is an anthropomorphism designed to allow us to understand God and His work in human terms familiar to us. It is also telling us this wind came directly from God; it was not some powerful, natural wind force that comes up every once in a while across the sea and pushes water around as some skeptics would have us believe. It was something easy for Him to do; it didn't take any great effort on His part.

Piled up, עָרַם, means to be piled up or to be dammed up; it refers to something heaped up into a pile. Heap, נָדָה, refers to a barrier or a dam wall; that which acts as a dam or wall to hold a body of water. Congealed, קָפְאוּ, means to congeal or thicken; it is to become in a stiffened state and so go from a liquid to a solid or semi-solid state without freezing. All of these words are further confirmation the water was deep and not shallow and it stood as a dam like a wall on either side of the Israelites as they passed through.

Moses described the evil intentions of the Egyptian army to recapture the Hebrews, re-enslave them, and take their wealth for themselves. The idea that

these men wanted to avenge the terrible destruction that had been unleashed on their nation by the Israelite God cannot be dismissed. They would not have pursued the Hebrews without Pharaoh's order, but once he gave the order, they may have relished the opportunity to seriously punish the Israelites.

Exodus 15:9 ⁹“The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; My desire shall be gratified against them; I will draw out my sword, my hand will destroy [יָרַשׁ] them.’”

The usual interpretation “destroy them” is probably not correct even though every English translation I routinely look at interprets it that way. The word translated destroy, יָרַשׁ, actually refers to the heir; to gain the possessions of an inheritance; therefore, the more probable interpretation is, “my hand will possess them.” The TANAKH reads, “my hand shall subdue them.” If Exodus 14:5 is an indication of their intent, the stated purpose was to enslave them again, not kill them off. If they could steal their stuff from them while doing that, all the better.

At that point, Pharaoh's army was confident and certain they could engage, spoil, and capture the Hebrew slaves who were certainly no match for the mighty Egyptian armed forces. Once they followed the Israelites onto the sea bed, they realized they were not actually fighting against the Hebrews, but against the God of the Hebrews who had already done so much damage to their nation (Ex. 14:25). Once they came to that realization and tried to flee, it was too late.

Exodus 15:10 ¹⁰“You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them; They sank like lead in the mighty [אֲדִירִי] waters.”

God simply reversed the action He took to cause the waters to stand up on either side of the passageway and drowned the Egyptians in the sea. Moses used a metaphor—they sank like lead—to illustrate the fact they drowned. The text leaves no room for understanding that some of them were able to swim to safety; they all drowned. Mighty, אָדִיר, indicates the power of the water. It means mighty or strong and pertains to actions that show great physical power either natural or supernatural. Experientially, we all know how powerful water can be. The action God took at that time would be similar to two dams facing one another giving way at the same time. The waters coming back together from opposite directions would have expended tremendous energy and would have produced violent, crushing, catastrophic turbulence that no human being could survive. After it was over, many Egyptian bodies washed up on the seashore (Ex. 14:30) and that served as evidence they drowned.

Exodus 15:11 ¹¹“Who is like You among the gods, O LORD? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?”

Moses praised the attributes of Yahweh who is majestic or glorious and holy; He is set apart from everything in His creation and He alone controls it. He is awesome, revered, and feared and He performs praiseworthy acts that reveal His attributes to the world. He is a God of signs, wonders, and miracles; there is no other like Him. All the other gods are nothing as He has proven over and over again throughout the Exodus story to this point. Yahweh alone can do all these things and be the God that He is.

In verse 12, Moses returned to describing the power of God when He caused the water to cover them.

Exodus 15:12 12“*You stretched out Your right hand, The earth [אָרֶץ] swallowed them.*

Moses repeated the truth that it was the power of God that accomplished this feat. Earth, אָרֶץ, almost always refers to the earth or land but it can also refer to the underworld which is how it must be understood in this context. When those Egyptian men drowned in the sea, they entered into their eternal destiny which, for pagans, is Sheol, the underworld. The underworld may be metaphorically referred to as swallowing people up in the earth. The end result is not only had the Egyptian army failed to recapture the Israelites, they lost their lives, and they entered into their eternal destiny separated from the God who created all things, the one true God of the universe.

By contrast, Yahweh has led the Israelites to a position from which they can continue to follow Him wherever He leads.

Exodus 15:13 13“*In Your lovingkindness [רַחֲמֶיךָ] You have led the people whom You have redeemed [גְּאֻלִּים]; In Your strength You have guided *them* to Your holy habitation [קֹדֶשׁ בְּוֵה].*

God has an everlasting love for the Israelites. He created them and He has a plan for them. He expressed this love for Israel centuries later, at the time between the Assyrian conquest of Israel and the Babylonian conquest of Judah, saying, “I have loved you with an everlasting love” (Jer. 31:3) and He promised to rebuild Israel and Judah in the future (Jer. 31:4) and restore them. It was not

coincidental that the New Covenant was revealed at that time. His everlasting love for the Israelites never changed and it will never change; it was true when He redeemed them from Egypt, it is true during the dispersion and regathering of Israel in unbelief, and it will be true during the Millennial Kingdom. His love for Israel is based in the covenant promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Whether Israel is faithful to God or not, He was, is, and will always be faithful to them by keeping His covenant promises to them.

Lovingkindness, **רַחֲמִים**, refers to kindness, lovingkindness, mercy, goodness, faithfulness, love, and acts of kindness. This is an eternal attribute of God which is expressed to all who belong to Him and not just to the Israelites, but in the context of the Exodus, obviously Israel is the subject. Psalm 136 is a hymn of praise to Yahweh for His everlasting love and His work in the Exodus is part of it.

Psalm 136:10–15 ¹⁰To Him who smote the Egyptians in their firstborn, For His lovingkindness is everlasting, ¹¹And brought Israel out from their midst, For His lovingkindness is everlasting, ¹²With a strong hand and an outstretched arm, For His lovingkindness is everlasting. ¹³To Him who divided the Red Sea asunder, For His lovingkindness is everlasting, ¹⁴And made Israel pass through the midst of it, For His lovingkindness is everlasting; ¹⁵But He overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Redeemed, **גָּאֹלִים**, means to act as a kinsman redeemer. It also refers to redeeming or purchasing someone out of slavery which is a vivid picture of what Yahweh did for the Israelites in Egypt. It is also a picture of what Christ did for us when He redeemed or purchased us out of the slave market of sin, but that is obviously not the context here.

There is also the concept of the ransom or redemption of the firstborn that is very much a part of the Exodus story of redemption. God referred to Israel as His firstborn son when He instructed Moses on what He should say to Pharaoh (Ex. 4:22).

Holy habitation, קֹדֶשׁ נְהִיָּה, may refer to one of two things. First, it may refer to the holy mountain, Mt. Sinai, where God called Moses into His service (Ex. 3:5) and had him remove his sandals because he was standing on “holy ground” and that was the place Moses was to take the people immediately after their deliverance for the purpose of worshiping God (Ex. 3:12). The other possibility is Canaan, the place where God's presence would be in the ark with the Israelites in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple. The thinking is since God called the location where He “will choose for His name to dwell” was Israel (Dt. 12:11 and many others), then Canaan was the place of His holy habitation.

In Psalm 78, the context of the Exodus was used to claim Canaan as “His holy land.”

Psalm 78:52–55 ⁵²But He led forth His own people like sheep And guided them in the wilderness like a flock; ⁵³He led them safely, so that they did not fear; But the sea engulfed their enemies. ⁵⁴So He brought them to His holy land, To this hill country which His right hand had gained. ⁵⁵He also drove out the nations before them And apportioned them for an inheritance by measurement, And made the tribes of Israel dwell in their tents.

The biblical evidence seems to indicate Yahweh's holy habitation is the land of Canaan, but I wouldn't get dogmatic about it. At that point in time during the Exodus, Mt. Sinai could have been the subject.

Once God delivered the people out of Egypt, the inhabitants of Canaan heard of these things and became very afraid.

Exodus 15:14-16 ¹⁴“The peoples have heard, they tremble [רָגְזוּ]; Anguish [הָיִל] has gripped the inhabitants of Philistia. ¹⁵“Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed; The leaders of Moab, trembling grips them; All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. ¹⁶“Terror [אַיִמָּה] and dread [פַּחַד] fall upon them; By the greatness of Your arm they are motionless as stone; Until Your people pass over, O LORD, Until the people pass over whom You have purchased [קָנִיתָ].

The peoples in the area of Philistia, Edom, and Moab heard of the mighty works Yahweh accomplished on behalf of the Israelites in Egypt and they apparently knew they would be coming into Canaan to possess the land which necessarily means they were going to be displaced. This prospect terrified them. Tremble, רָגְזוּ, is the physical response to fear and anxiety, and anguish, הָיִל, means an intense, frightful pain that may manifest itself in a physical response such as writhing around. In other words, these people were very afraid of what was coming.

Edom, Moab, and Canaan are listed here in the order in which the Israelites would face them on their journey into the land of Canaan. The book of Joshua confirms the fear the pagans felt.

Joshua 2:8–11 ⁸Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, ⁹and said to the men, “I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. ¹⁰“For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. ¹¹“When we heard *it*, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

The Gibeonites were so afraid they tricked Joshua and the elders into making a covenant with them (Joshua 9:1-27).

Joshua 9:9 ⁹They said to him, “Your servants have come from a very far country because of the fame of the LORD your God; for we have heard the report of Him and all that He did in Egypt,

Balak, king of Moab, was so afraid of the Israelites that he hired Balaam to curse them. The text doesn't reveal exactly what and how much he knew, but he knew they came out of Egypt and he knew they were an enemy of his nation.

Numbers 22:5 ⁵So he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, at Pethor, which is near the River, *in* the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying, “Behold, a people came out of Egypt; behold, they cover the surface of the land, and they are living opposite me.

The pagans of Canaan and the surrounding area were simply terrified after hearing about all Yahweh had done for His people in Egypt, Terror, *צִיָּמָה*, means terror, fear, and dread; it refers to being in a state of great emotional distress. Dread, *פְּחָד*, also means terror, fear, dread and it refers to being in a state or condition of severe distress over impending trouble. This is a horrible feeling; it is incapacitating. The fear was so great and so incapacitating they were rendered motionless; their defenses were rendered moot. It's as though they were standing still while the Israelites conquered them. They did fight back, but it was pointless and ineffective. The God of Israel could not be, cannot be, defeated.

The point is, the peoples in the area knew what happened in Egypt and they were not only frightened, they were terrified into immobility. As the Israelites moved about in the area, the inhabitant's fear and anxiety increased.

The Israelites were God's people and He purchased them for Himself. Purchased, קָנָה, simply means to buy, to purchase something by means of the exchange of money or services, bartering in other words. This concept is closely tied to redemption. The purchase price was the shed blood of the innocent lamb, which was a type of the shed blood of the Lamb of God who, at that time, was yet to come. They were God's people and He was going to get them exactly where He wanted them to be.

Moses revealed the truth the Israelites would one day be established in the land.

Exodus 15:17–18 ¹⁷“You will bring them and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, The place, O LORD, which You have made for Your dwelling, The sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established. ¹⁸“The LORD shall reign forever and ever.”

There isn't any doubt this is a prophecy that God will, in fact, establish the Israelites in Canaan, where the mountain of Yahweh's inheritance, the place where He would make His dwelling, which is the sanctuary, would be located. This is the same mountain where Abraham was ordered to take Isaac for a sacrifice. Whether this place is called Mt. Moriah (Gen. 22:2), Mt. Zion (2 Kings 19:31), or the Temple Mount, this is the place Moses wrote about in this verse. This may also be an indication the conclusion is correct that Canaan is the holy habita-

tion referred to in verse 13 because that is where the sanctuary would be established which was the place of God's presence among His people. This is addressing the eventual location of Solomon's Temple and it is not necessarily a specific reference to Israelite settlement into Canaan, however, one presupposes the other. In other words, if God was going to establish His sanctuary on that mountain in Canaan in the midst of the Israelites, His choice people, then the Israelites had to be living in the land.

Moses proclaimed God's eternal reign. Obviously, we know the sanctuary was destroyed and Israel was dispersed from the land for nearly two thousand years, but that will change. God Himself will sit on David's throne in that place for one thousand years. Yahweh's reign is indeed eternal.

Moses summarized their deliverance through the sea.

Exodus 15:19 ¹⁹For the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his horsemen went into the sea, and the LORD brought back the waters of the sea on them, but the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea.

This is a summary statement of what has come before concerning the safe passage of the Israelites on dry land and the annihilation of Pharaoh's troops in the sea. One commentator claimed this verse proved there were no infantrymen but instead only chariots involved in the pursuit because only horses, chariots, and horsemen are mentioned. This seems untenable because in Exodus 14:9 it revealed that horses, chariots, horsemen, and Pharaoh's army, pursued the Israelites. This verse is a summary statement, not a detailed recitation of

the facts; whatever the structural makeup of Pharaoh's troops, they all died in the sea.

Miriam led the women in celebrating the Israelite's deliverance.

Exodus 15:20–21 ²⁰Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dancing. ²¹Miriam answered them, "Sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted; The horse and his rider He has hurled into the sea."

Moses likely identified Miriam as Aaron's sister in keeping with the status of the firstborn son; Aaron was the eldest, but the fact is, it's not really known why he identified her that way since he had been divinely granted the preeminent role in the Hebrew community. Interestingly, these two verses are the only verses in the book of Exodus that identify Miriam by name. Everyone supposes she is the sister who watched Moses float in the Nile to Pharaoh's daughter, but we don't specifically know that from biblical revelation because that sister was never identified. We assume the siblings were limited to Aaron, Miriam, and Moses, but we really don't know that as a fact either. What we do know is that is the only revelation we have from the inspired record.

Miriam apparently taught the Hebrew women this Song of the Sea so they could also praise Yahweh and give thanks for their deliverance. It wasn't unusual for societies of that time to use music and dance to teach succeeding generations. One commentator who is considered an expert in Hebrew said the repetition of verse 1 is the shorthand way of indicating she taught them the

whole song. The first verse functions as the title of the Song.² Miriam was insuring the women would pass on to their children the Exodus account thereby insuring it was remembered from generation to generation.

Was Miriam called a prophetess because she was proclaiming this song to the women of the Hebrew community or was she considered to be a prophet in her own right? If her role is comparable to the other women in the Bible called prophetess, then she was a prophet in her own right. We know the Bible reveals other women to be prophets: Deborah (Judges 4:4) who was also a judge of Israel; Huldah (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chron. 34:22); Isaiah's wife (Is. 8:3), and, in the New Testament, Anna (Luke 2:36) and the four virgin daughters of Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8-9). The fact that some women falsely claimed to be prophets is not a surprise; Satan always has counterfeits trying to lead people astray. The Bible identifies two false prophetesses: Noadiah (Neh. 6:14) and Jezebel (Rev. 2:20). False prophets are nothing new; we have them today in the New Apostolic Reformation, the Word of Faith movement, and in some Charismatic/Pentecostal circles who claim to be receiving the Word of God today. At the time all these women were considered to be prophets, the canon was not closed and revelation was still being provided. How that worked in terms of woman as opposed to men, I don't know. Today, the canon is closed and no new revelation is available which makes the office of prophet, whether male or female, unavailable at this point in time. Some people do consider a prophet to

² Douglals K. Stuart, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Exodus* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 364.

be one who faithfully proclaims the Word of God, but that seems to be a pastor and teacher rather than a prophet.

The prophet Micah credited Miriam with being one of the leaders of the Israelites alongside her brothers.

Micah 6:4 4“Indeed, I brought you up from the land of Egypt And ransomed you from the house of slavery, And I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam.