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**Exodus 13:17-15:21 – Sing to the Lord For He Has Triumphed Gloriously**

- I. Introduction: Worship questions and common answers given. (Not all are correct!)
  - A. Must we praise God?
    1. Yes. It is our duty.
    2. No. We praise God because we want to.
  - B. Should we praise God when we don't feel like it?
    1. Yes. God is worthy of praise.
    2. No. God hates it when we go through the motions.
  - C. What is the purpose of praise?
    1. To bring glory to God.
    2. To honor God.
  - D. Why don't we just talk praises to God?
    1. God likes music.
    2. We like music.
  - E. C.S. Lewis pointed out that praise is not only the expression of our enjoyment of God, but the actually consummation and completion of our enjoyment of God.
    1. We naturally praise things we enjoy.
    2. When we enjoy something, we overflow in praise.
  - F. Should I praise if I am not enjoying God?
    1. Our songs must display God's holiness, his sovereignty as creator, and his salvation.
    2. In singing these songs, we are reminded of why we should enjoy God, and so our praise grows as we sing!
- II. **Basic Message**: Sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously.
- III. **Organization**: Today we are going to look at our passage in two sections. First, we will look at the salvation God brings to Israel, and second, we will look at the worship God deserves.
- IV. **The Lord saved Israel for His glory. (Ex. 13.17-14.31)**
  - A. God leads Israel with his holy presence. (Ex. 13.17-22)
    1. God led Israel out of Egypt, but he did not send them the way that they expected, the most direct route.
    2. Instead, they were led by way of the wilderness near the Red Sea.
      - a. The Red Sea could also be translated 'Sea of Reeds' or 'Papyrus Sea'.
      - b. The Hebrew word *sup* means reeds which were used for papyrus.
      - c. Many people argue about the location where Israel crossed. Some argue that it is one of the lakes on the east side of the Nile Delta because there are no reeds in the

Red Sea today. Others argue that Israel crossed the Red Sea at the eastern arm on the east side of the Sinai Peninsula.

- d. James Hoffmeier was an evangelical archeologist and Old Testament professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He passed away about two years ago. He argued that the western arm of the Red Sea extended farther inland than today. He thought that the lakes were once part of the Red Sea. I think this is a really good insight, but no one knows for sure!
  3. Israel went out equipped for battle. It is not immediately clear why they did this. However, if we understand the Ancient Near Eastern setting, it makes more sense. 2 million people heading to or through another nation would have been threatening to those nations. No Canaanites would have liked this Exodus into their land. Traveling thieves and nomads surely would see this as an opportunity to rob and steal. Traveling was not safe. So, Israel went out as an army.
  4. Verse 19 shows us that God has been faithful to what Joseph prophesied in Genesis 50.25. He knew God would lead Israel out of Egypt and back into Canaan, and he knew that was the promise land. So, he made Israel swear to bury him there.
  5. We don't know the exact location of these cities that are mentioned here, but the point is, God did not send them the most direct route.
  6. However, he did go before them. His holy presence was visibly manifested to them, albeit in a veiled way, in the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day.
    - a. The text says that the Lord went before them.
    - b. Just like in the burning bush and the angel of death, God's real presence was with them. Most likely, this is the second person of the Trinity.
- B. God sets Pharaoh up for destruction. (Ex. 14.1-9)
1. Instead of moving onward, God leads Israel backward, into an un-strategic position where they are vulnerable to being destroyed.
  2. God intentionally baits Pharaoh. He intentionally makes Israel look vulnerable so that Pharaoh will again harden his heart and try to stop Israel.
  3. God does this for his glory so that his power will be shown.
  4. Pharaoh brings a huge army of 600 of his best chariots and all the rest of his chariots in Egypt to wipe out Israel. This is a powerful army that would probably demolish an army of 600,000 poorly equipped foot soldiers.
  5. God again hardens Pharaoh's heart.
  6. Egypt catches up to Israel so that Israel is pinned against the water without any seeming way of escape.
- C. God gracious endures Israel's doubt. (Ex. 14.10-18)
1. Israel fears Pharaoh and his army despite God's many signs of power over Egypt.
  2. Israel even bitterly mocks Moses and God. The comment about there not being enough graves in Egypt is satirical. Egypt specialized in graves (the Pyramids) and most of the land of Egypt could be used for graves.
  3. Moses calls Egypt not to fear.
    - a. The fear of the Lord is usually contrasted with the fear of man.

- b. We can either fear man and what they can do to us (shame us, mock us, harm us, embarrass us, steal from us, etc.) or we can fear God for what he can do to us (cast our soul into hell).
    - c. **Application:** Fear God alone. He alone can save. We do not save ourselves. We merely rest and trust him to save us.
  - 4. God then commands Moses what to do. He tells Moses to stretch out his staff so that the sea will divide.
  - 5. God explains that he will destroy Pharaoh in the waters.
- D. God leads Israel through the sea with the Egyptians pursuing. (Ex. 14.19-25)
- 1. Still, God's presence leads Israel, but then the Lord moved behind Israel to prevent the Egyptians from attacking Israel.
  - 2. What was a light for Israel, the pillar of fire, becomes a cloud of darkness for Egypt. The salvation of Israel is the day of judgment for Egypt.
  - 3. The night goes on without an attack.
  - 4. Then Moses obeys God's instruction and the sea parts by a strong wind.
  - 5. Israel crosses on dry land.
    - a. This is simply a miracle. There is no explanation scientifically for what happens here.
    - b. The land is dry.
    - c. The sea is a wall on both sides!
    - d. The Egyptian army gets stuck in mud.
    - e. The timing is perfect. It destroys the Egyptian army but not Israel.
    - f. The Egyptian army recognizes that God is fighting against them.
- E. God destroys Pharaoh's army and delivers Israel. (Ex. 14.26-31)
- 1. Moses then again stretches out his hand and the waters return.
  - 2. The whole Egyptian army was destroyed. Notice that it does not say that Pharaoh was killed. Nowhere does it imply that Pharaoh went in with his army.
  - 3. The single greatest act of salvation in Israel's history is finished as the Israelites see the dead Egyptians in the Sea.
  - 4. Israel fears God.
- F. Christ underwent the greatest exodus.
- 1. Matthew 2.15b quotes Hosea 11.1. It says, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." Originally, this referred to Israel. But, Matthew suggests that Christ is the true Israel. He relived Israel's history by fleeing to Egypt and then coming out of Egypt to eventually die on the cross. Luke 9.31 describes Christ's death on the cross as an exodus.
  - 2. Jesus is greater than Moses because he leads his people out of bondage not by a miracle alone, but by becoming the Passover Lamb whose blood redeems his people.
  - 3. Israel underwent a type of baptism which forecast our final deliverance in Christ. (see I Cor. 10.1-2)
- G. **Applications:**

1. We must remember that we have a greater manifestation of God's presence. The Holy Spirit dwells in us and empowers us in ministry.
2. Remember that God always is with us through His Spirit. He never leaves us, but always leads us. He goes before us as a warrior to protect us against the evil one.
3. We must fear God. We don't like to talk about this. But, fearing God is healthy. It is the way we come to repent of our sin and follow Christ. We must see God's mercy, but first we must come to grips with his fierce anger and fear what might happen to us.

**V. God's people give glory to God. (Ex. 15.1-21)**

- A. Worship God as the author of salvation. (Ex. 15.1-10, 12-16)
  1. This is the dominant reason God is praised in this song.
  2. God is praised for destroying the Egyptian army. (v.1, 4, 7-10, 12)
  3. God is praised for being a warrior. (v. 3, 14-16)
  4. God is praised for being the savior of Israel. (v. 2)
  
- B. Worship God as the sovereign creator. (Ex. 15.5-6, 10, 12, 18)
  1. This is probably the least common theme in this song, but it is there, tied into verses that deal with the salvation God has brought about.
  2. God controls the waters. (v. 5-6)
  3. God controls the wind. (v.10)
  4. God has power over the earth. (v. 12)
  5. God is eternal, existing before creation. (v. 18)
  
- C. Worship God who is holy. (Ex. 15.11, 17-18)
  1. This is another minor theme, but it is still present.
  2. God is unique. There is none like him. (v. 11)
  3. God is love. (v. 13)
  4. God will take Israel into his holy presence on Mount Sinai. (v. 17)
  5. God is eternal. (v. 18)
  
- D. Let all the people rejoice. (Ex. 15.1, 19-21)
  1. Worship is both individual (v.1 says 'I will sing') and corporate (v. 1, 21-22 show that many were involved)
  2. It is clear from verse 1 and from verses 20-21 that everyone participated in the worship of God.
  3. It was not just the men who worshipped, but the women as well.
  4. Miriam, who is probably the Miriam who is Moses' sister, led the Israelite women in singing, playing the tambourines, and dancing!
  5. Miriam is called a prophetess here. Many have used this as an example of female leadership among God's people to justify women pastors. This is a misapplication of the text for two reasons:
    - a. Miriam only led the women.
    - b. Getting a message from God does not imply that one has authority to lead God's people.

6. For more on Miriam the prophetess, go to this link:  
<http://www.cbmw.org/FAQs/Questions-&-Answers/How-do-you-explain-God-s-apparent-endorsement-of-women-in-the-Old-Testament-who-had-prophetic-or-leadership-roles>

- E. All Christians must sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously in Jesus Christ.
1. God has authored salvation by sending His Son Jesus to die for our sins and to deliver us from slavery to sin. He has redeemed us and made us God's children.
  2. God is holy. He who knew no sin became sin for us so that we might become holy and enter into God's presence.
  3. God created all things and yet, the creator humbled himself and became part of his creation in order to be shamed on a cross so that we might have everlasting life.

F. **Applications:**

1. We must praise God out of delight in what he has done for us. When you don't feel like praising God, you need to look at who God is and what Christ has done for us. This will draw you to worship.
2. We need to sing songs that talk about God's holiness, sovereignty as creator, and salvation. If we sing man centered songs, we are not delighting in God but in ourselves. We will not be drawn into a love for God but an emotionalism that is not rooted in the gospel.
3. We must be expressive in our worship! Miriam and the other women played instruments and danced while singing. If you jump and cheer at a football game, then it is normal for you to express delight in God that way!
4. We must praise God individually but also corporately. Both of these must be maintained.
  - a. If we see church as a place for me to have personal worship, then we will choose a church based on what music helps us worship the best. We will also tune everyone else out of the service and focus only on ourselves.
  - b. If we see church as simply a corporate gathering where the group is everything, then we will not individually delight in and praise God as we are all called to do.
5. We need good Christian musicians who are gospel centered and theologically sound. We need Christians who can write music that draws us into God's presence with music that fits the words written. We need songs that display God clearly put to music that is appropriate.
  - a. Note: It is true that many Psalms are individual prayers, laments, or petitions. These are valid.
  - b. However, in corporate worship, the main diet should be songs that are God centered.
  - c. Finally, the flow of a service also should be considered in song selection. It is appropriate to play laments after a time of confession and a triumphant song after the sermon and the assurance of forgiveness.
  - d. For more thoughts on these issues, see Worship By the Book, edited by D.A. Carson.