

The Song of Moses and The Song of The Lamb

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[0 : 0 0] Well, we're going to turn to our Bibles now, to our reading this evening, and Paul is going to be preaching from Revelation chapter 15. That's the very last book of the Bible, chapter 15. So you might want to turn that up and stick your finger in there. But first, we're going to read from Exodus chapter 15. So that's the very second book of the Bible, right at the beginning, right at the end. And you will see why, I think, as we read. If you need a Bible, there's some at the side, some at the front and the back. So do grab one and follow on. I'm going to read Exodus chapter 15, most of it, and then Revelation chapter 15. So Exodus 15 begins just after the children of Israel have gone through the Red Sea, and all Pharaoh's armies have been engulfed in the waters coming back.

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. The Lord is my strength, your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power. Your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy. In the greatness of your majesty, you overthrow your adversaries.

You send out your fury. It consumes them like stubble. At the blast of your nostrils, the water's piled up. The flood stood up in a heap. The deeps congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue.

I will overtake. I'll divide the spoil. My desire shall have its fill of them. I'll draw my sword. My hand shall destroy them. You blew with your wind. The sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters. Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? You stretched out your right hand, and the earth swallowed them.

You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed. You've guided them by your strength to your holy abode. The peoples have heard, and they tremble. Pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia. Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed. Trembling seizes the leaders of Moab.

[2 : 3 2] All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. 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. 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.

The Lord will reign forever and ever. 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. And 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.

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. And I turn over to Revelation chapter 15, the very last book of the Bible.

And John's vision continues. And after the great gathering of his people and the judging of his enemies that we saw last week in chapter 14, he says, Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing.

Seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last. For with them the wrath of God is finished. And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire. And also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God, the Almighty. Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy.

[4 : 55] All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed. After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of witness in heaven was opened.

And out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls, full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. And the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power. And no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished. Amen. And may God bless to us His Word.

Well, good evening. And as always, please do have Revelation open in front of you, chapter 15, as we consider this song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.

Now, coming as it does in the midst of accounts of the judgment of God, this chapter gives us a glorious vision of a real and certain hope for the future. It reveals to us the ultimate destiny of God's people. It shows us our true and lasting home, where we're given a tantalizing glimpse of the song that one day we will be singing in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, and with the great congregation of God's great congregation of God's eternal people, we're given a glimpse into this wonderful future. This is a passage to thrill our souls, to lift our minds and hearts to ultimate realities. And it's a passage to reassure us that the judgment that's to come is just and true.

And seeing our glorious destiny, that is what struggling saints like you and I need, isn't it? We need reassurance in this present age, which is an age marked by gospel growth on the one hand, but also hardship and suffering on the other. That is our present experience. We struggle along in this present age. How can we keep going? How can we endure? How can you keep going this week with all that you face? Well, we fix our minds and our hearts on chapters like this one, so that our vision is extended beyond the world we see, the world we see around us, to a much larger and bigger and glorious vision of eternity. And to the things that really matter, and the things which will really last. Here are realities to fix our minds and hearts on this evening. These are the realities we need to dwell on, and think on, and hold in our hearts. It is these realities, and not the latest ideas and trends fed to us on our phone screens by the giant algorithm in the sky. We do not need to be led by that.

[8 : 29] These realities need to fill our minds and hearts. And we really do, don't we, need to work against all that is being fed to us 24 hours a day. We've got to push back against that.

The agendas of Apple and Amazon and Google and Facebook do not, you might be surprised to learn, align with the purposes and plans of Almighty God. We need to counter hard the ways in which our thoughts and hearts are manipulated by the mega corporations of the world. We've got to push against that, equip ourselves to meditate on the word of God more than anything else. These realities must shape our entire lives. We need to read, mark, learn, inwardly digest God's word. So let's do that this evening, as we meditate on this short passage, these few verses words of the glorious song of the Lamb, which one day we will sing in glory. Now before we get to the actual song, a quick word on the context. Look at verse 1. We're introduced here to seven angels who in the following chapter will pour out on the entire world the seven bowls of divine wrath. Now we'll think about that next Sunday evening. But these seven bowls, which are about to be unleashed and poured out, they are the third series of seven in an interrelated sequence of seals, trumpets, and bowls, which began all the way back in chapter 6 of Revelation. So think back as we've been going over Revelation, that's where this set of sevens began. Three sets of seven. And remember that these cycles of seven are not meant to be read like one long timeline on the wall, coming one after another. That's not how this works.

They do not pick up where the last one finished. Rather, it's like we're going back to the beginning. With each set of seven, we're resetting and we're going back. And the period covered by these sets of seven is the period we are now living in between Christ's first and second comings. This is how history will unfold. This is how God will be at work in his world. So we back up each time and we review what we've just been reading. It's like, to change the metaphors, like watching a glorious tri from the Irish in the Six Nations, or indeed the Scots. But you're watching it from multiple angles. You see the tri, but then you watch it from another angle. That's what's happening in these sets of seven. Same bit of history, but from a different angle. Same events, different angle, different emphasis each time. And they're each advancing the story in a particular way, giving us a vital aspect of truth about God's judgment in these last days, rather than trying to give us precise data on the chronology of when these things will happen.

So don't try and find dates, specific dates. You'll get lost. A lot of people try to do that. But rather it's giving us the big picture of how God is at work in these last days. And that's all by way of reminder. We've been looking at that in Revelation in the past months.

But we're now about to encounter the last set of seven, with these seven bowls. These are the last of the plagues, in that they complete the warnings of God to an impenitent world. You notice that end of verse one there. With them, the wrath of God is finished. These are the last of the plagues.

[12:14] All that remains is final judgment itself. These plagues anticipate the final outpouring of divine retribution. And as we'll see next week, they are met with rejection by people whose hearts like that of Pharaoh are hardened against God. It's a heartbreaking chapter to read. As you see God's warning time and time again, and yet many harden their hearts. They will not repent.

Well, we'll see that next week. But before the seven plague angels receive the bowls and pour out God's wrath on the world, we hear of those who have emerged victorious over the beast.

Verse two. That is what we're going to consider this evening. Those who emerge victorious and who sing this awesome song in verses three and four. They sing a song of praise to God for his great and righteous works. It is the song of redemption that began with Moses. We read that earlier from Exodus. The song of redemption that began with Moses and has found its completion in the work of the sacrificial death of the Lamb. God is to be praised because his ways are just and true.

And that's the focus of our time this evening. The song of chapter 15. And we're going to notice here with this song what it is that God's people have been saved for and what they've been saved from and then what they've been or who they've been saved by. So what are God's people saved for and from and by whom? So firstly, we see that God's people are saved for rest. Verse two. We see here the destiny of God's people. And rest is, I'm afraid, not an absence of work, but rather it's an absence of enemies. We were seeing this this morning, weren't we, in Ezekiel. God's rest, an absence from enemies.

Now look at verse two with me. The first thing we see, the first thing we notice is the location. So John is seeing this vision and what is it that he sees? I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire.

[14 : 55] There are few things more calming than standing on the seashore on a beautiful sunny day on a breath of wind in the sky and a calm, utterly flat sea, a sea like glass.

Just imagine it. It is a glorious vision of tranquility and peace. And that is what the future holds for God's people.

That is what the future holds for you. If you belong to Jesus this evening, this is your future. Now remember, throughout all the book of Revelation, God's people are those who are often, almost always, under persistent attack and opposition and persecution.

That is the reality of God's people as we look back through history, as we look around the world today. We saw that again, didn't we, this morning in Ezekiel. Constant opposition from the world around, from Edom in particular.

Raging opposition throughout history for God's people. Harassed, harried, downtrodden, and discouraged. That is our past. That is our present.

[16 : 14] And for many brothers and sisters, that is a very real present situation. They fear for their lives. Persecution, opposition. But that is not our future.

Our future will be one of tranquility. Like standing beside a perfectly still, glassy sea. Now the sea, throughout most of Revelation, throughout most of the Bible, represents cosmic evil and chaos in this present age.

It is from the sea, remember, back in chapter 13, that one of the evil beasts emerged. But no longer. The sea here is calm.

And it's calm because of the fire that is present. It's a strange image, isn't it? A sea of glass mingled with fire. What's that all about? Well, fire represents God's judgment on evil.

And so the chaos of the raging sea has been mastered. It is no longer. The beast has been defeated. There is peace. And so the dragon of chapter 12, which, if you remember, was stood on the shore.

[17 : 29] It was stood right by the sea. The chaotic sea is now replaced here by victorious saints. The dragon is no more.

He's away. And in his place stand victorious saints by a sea of calm. And this is the glorious future that awaits God's people. And it's a future of peace and tranquility.

No more will we face the hardships and worries of this world. No more hate crimes legislation. No more battling with that sin.

No more grief or loss. No more betrayal. No more mocking. No more battles against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

All that will be gone. All the things that we struggle with now, all the things that bring anxiety to our hearts, that keep us awake at night, they will be no more.

[18 : 31] That is our future. These words this morning were so striking, weren't they? Ezekiel 36, verse 15. And I will not let you hear any more the reproach of the nations.

And you shall no longer bear the disgrace of the peoples and no longer cause your nation to stumble, declares the Lord God. That is our future. No longer. No longer.

The things that weigh us down. The opponents we face today. No longer. You see, that is what we've been saved for. That is our future.

That is our glorious inheritance to come. Absence of enemies. Peace. Like a calm, flat sea. That is our future. That is our future.

That is our future. That is our future. That is what we've been saved for. But who are these people? Who are these people who are standing by the shore?

[19 : 33] Look how they're described. Look again in the middle of verse 2. Those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name. Those are the ones standing beside the sea.

Those who stand on the crystal pavement are those who have emerged victorious over the beast. They are the overcomers to whom the seven letters hold out the promise of eating of the tree of life, protection from the second death, hidden manna, authority over the nations, those wearing white garments, the honor of becoming the pillar and the temple of the Lord, the privilege of sitting with Christ on his throne.

That is who these victorious believers are. These are the ones who have not succumbed to the holy trinity of evil that we saw a few weeks ago from chapters 12 and 13, the unholy trinity of the devil and his two evil companions.

These saints have endured. They've not fallen for the devil's lies. They have conquered. Revelation 12 tells us, they have conquered him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives, even unto death.

They are those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. In other words, those who are described here as victorious, those who have conquered the beast, who are standing beside this calm sea of tranquility, those who are described as victorious, they are normal Christians.

[21 : 22] Those who have trusted in Christ's work on the cross, which deals with our sin, which grants us eternal life, it is Christ's victory that becomes our victory.

That is how we conquer, by holding to him and holding to the testimony of Jesus, obeying his commands, sharing the good news of Jesus with those around us to a lost world.

That is how we conquer. Normal Christian living. That is who conquers over the beast. That is who will one day stand beside the sea of tranquility.

It's not superstar Christians. It's not those with the most Bible knowledge. No, it's those who have clung to Christ, who walk with him and follow him.

That's how we conquer. And this is the glorious destiny of those who do overcome, standing beside the sea of glass with harps in their hands and singing.

[22 : 30] It is a future of rest, a future of peace from enemies. That's our future. That's what we're saved for.

Let's look on and consider the song from verse 3 onwards. We've seen what God's people have been saved for. Let's notice what they've been saved from.

And they've been saved from bondage and slavery. It's the first half of verse 3. We see here the deliverance of God's people.

The explicit link with Moses and the events of the Exodus tell us something of the nature of what it is that God's people have been rescued from. Verse 3 and 4 echo the song sung by Moses and the Israelites at the Red Sea after the defeat of the Egyptians.

That was the great redemptive act of God in the Old Testament. An act of deliverance which saved the nation for the purposes of God. And what we have depicted here in Revelation are the new Israelites delivered from another Pharaoh but they belong not to what you might call the interim victory of Moses but to the final victory of Christ.

[23 : 51] And they sing not only the song of Moses but also the song of the Lamb of God the one greater than Moses whose salvation is forever. just as Moses and the Israelites sang a hymn of God's deliverance after the passage through the Red Sea the saints here sing the song of Moses the sermons of God the song of the Lamb.

Moses sang those words by the parted Red Sea they sang the Lord is my strength and my song he has become my salvation and the saints here sing beside another sea a sea of glass in heaven.

Jesus himself referred to his own death as an exodus in Luke 9 he was the true Passover Lamb whose blood redeemed his people set them free from sin and set them free to worship and know and love the Lord.

the Israelites they were enslaved weren't they? they were in bondage under the cruel reign of Pharaoh for 400 years they cried out to God they groaned because of their slavery they cried out for help and their plight was obvious their situation was visibly very bad they were in slavery it was clear they needed a rescue and the slavery that our world is under that these saints here singing in Revelation 15 the slavery that we are under is no less real the rescue that our world needs that every person needs is no less vital or necessary or urgent than those living all those thousands of years ago in Egypt you see by nature we are slaves to sin we are destined for the righteous judgment of God the problem is that so many do not see their plight so many do not realize they are living in Egypt under slavery so many are blind to the spiritual reality how does Paul describe it in Ephesians 2 how does Paul describe the reality he says you are dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked following the course of this world following the prince of the power of the air the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh carrying out the desires of the body and the mind and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind that is the reality for all who are outside

Christ that is our natural state if you are a Christian here this evening if you think back to before you became a Christian you would probably not describe yourself in this way would you you would not have thought of yourself as dead but those walking in darkness do not realize they are walking in darkness we need the light of revelation we need God himself to come to wake us up to see the reality and the slavery and bondage of our lost humanity today is just as real just as desperate as was the slavery and bondage of God's people 4,000 years ago in Egypt then and today we need deliverance then and today we need rescue from the bondage of our sin and the consequences of our sin and that is the source of the joy in the song of Moses and in the song of the Lamb

[28 : 00] God's people knew what they had been rescued from those leaving Egypt they knew the horrors of what they left behind they were relieved overjoying because of what God had done he had rescued them delivered them destroyed their enemies and so too for us do you see what you've been rescued from the bondage and slavery of sin that's gone you've been rescued from it and knowing what we've been rescued from helps us to sing with great joy because of the deliverance we've been given God's people here knew what they've been rescued from or finally let's consider the rescuer himself we've seen what we've been rescued for and from but who who we've been saved by well we're saved by the Lord

God Almighty himself this is the song from verse 3 to 5 we see here the deliverer of God's people now this deliverance necessitates judgment and victory over enemies that was certainly the case with the exodus events in the past and it's the case for the future remember this brief chapter comes in the midst of chapter upon chapter of judgment there can be no salvation without it sin must in the end be punished but the judgment doesn't come without warnings it's not one of the most sober and dreadful aspects of the whole story of Moses and Pharaoh time and time again Pharaoh was given time to repent to obey the commands of God but each time Pharaoh hardened his heart he refused to repent and so in the end in the end final judgment fell and it was a terrible judgment and it will be so in the future as we'll see next week in chapter 16 it truly is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living

God to remain unrepentant the final judgments that these final chapter of Revelation anticipate and warn of have not yet come to pass they are in the future but there's a call today now to respond in faith and repentance you see God's heart is to save he takes no pleasure whatsoever in judgment he is abounding in mercy he's abounding in grace he desires that all would turn and repent and follow him that's the great heart of God isn't it for God so loved the world that he gave his only son why why did God do that why did God give his only son well the verse continues that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life that is

God's heart isn't it for this world that all would turn and repent now is the time of gospel proclamation and warning now is the day of God's salvation now is the time when men and women can hear God's gracious warning and turn to him and maybe you're here this evening and you've not yet repented well repent that is God's greatest desire for you that you would repent turn to him tonight because there is a judgment coming do not make the mistake that Pharaoh made do not harden your heart that is the warning implicit in these verses it becomes explicit next week we'll think about that in chapter 16 but the focus here particularly is on the redeemed on those who have been rescued on the song that they sing and the defeat of the enemies of God and of the enemies of God's people is a source of rejoicing here in Revelation 15 and also in

Exodus 15 it's a song sung in response to God's great acts of salvation and judgment look again at the content of the song itself great and amazing in your deeds so Lord God the almighty just and true are your ways O king of the nations who will not fear O Lord and glorify your name for you alone are holy all nations will come and worship you for your righteous acts have been revealed glorious truths about God are affirmed here he is almighty he is just he is true he is the king of the nations he is holy he is righteous God is to be praised for who he is and he's praised for what he's done great and amazing are your deeds just and true are your ways and it is because of the ultimate act of redemption and deliverance that God is to be praised the greatest moment the greatest and ultimate act of redemption was not the deliverance of God's people from

[34 : 01] Egypt great as that was there is a greater act and deliverance which we celebrated last weekend the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the son of God that is the great moment of redemption when Jesus the one who is without sin took upon himself the wrath of God and became sin for us so that all who believe in him can know forgiveness be rescued from bonded to sin rescued from the coming judgment saved for rest three implications as we consider this song of God's deliverance number one a reformed perspective this song urges you and I to be preoccupied not with the changing events of this world but rather with the glory and might of the unchanging and holy

God he's the one to fill our vision who he is and what he's done and what is true of God's people in the future this is our future and what is true of our future should be reflected and increasingly be true of God's people now these realities shape our presence they sing of the song of Moses the servant of God the song of the lamb saying great and amazing your deeds oh Lord God almighty just and true are your ways king of the nations and we can sing these words too because we do look back on the decisive moments in all of history with the victory of the cross we can look back on his great and amazing deeds deeds which have determined the course of history irrevocably the same God who parted the Red Sea the one who caused the walls of Jericho to fall down the one who converted

Saul on the road to Damascus he is saving people today he is building his church today and nothing will stop it the destiny we read about here is coming nothing can stop it that is the God to whom you belong this is the song that needs to be on our lips in our hearts shaping our perspective so don't let the things of this world determine your view let this song shape your perspective second application a realignment of present allegiances the middle part of the song poses the key question in light of God's great deeds verse 4 who will not fear oh lord and glorify your name for you alone are holy this reminds us that we should fear only God not the pharaohs of this world that was the effect wasn't it on Israel and the destruction of pharaoh's army in the red sea that's what prompted the original song of Moses

Exodus 14 31 Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians so the people feared the Lord and they believed in the Lord and his servant Moses our reaction our response to seeing the great deeds of God is to fear him and not the pharaohs of this world only God is to be feared for he has holiness and power his name alone is to be glorified the powers of this world the leaders of this world the armies of this world the thought leaders of this world they don't ultimately wield any power power that matters they do not wield they strut briefly across the stage of history and though they may loom large in our eyes they are in the end of no consequence in the end only God matters because he alone is creator he alone is sovereign he alone is judge so here's the thing if your allegiance is not to him today then it needs to be realigned if your allegiance is not with the almighty sovereign

Lord it needs to be if your allegiance to him is wavering then heed the warning who are you really fearing fear the Lord he is holy only he can deliver you you do need to be on the right side of history and he is the one who is sovereign over history third and final implication the renewed zeal for sharing the gospel the song of Moses son of the lamb reminds us to focus our efforts on serving the kingdom of God that has now come into the world through Christ and is advancing through history this means that we should be zealous in our commitment to proclaim the gospel notice how the song finishes all nations will come and worship you for your righteous acts have been revealed that is the end point of history that's where we're going the redeemed from every tribe and language and nation gathered around the throne worshipping

[40 : 02] God by the sea of glass how is it that the nations come how is it they know to bow the knee to Jesus to worship him well it's through the witness isn't it of the church it's through the testimony of those who follow Jesus it's the mission of the church that's how the nations will come as we go and tell John Piper at the start of his book on mission and evangelism makes the point that mission exists evangelism exists witness exists because worship doesn't and God is due our worship and honor and honor isn't he he deserves it as believers our greatest desire must be that Jesus is given the glory and the honor we want him to be worshipped because of who he is and that happens he is glorified when people recognize who he is when they repent and believe and worship him that's how

Jesus is glorified the glorious vision of Philippians 2 therefore God has highly exalted him that is Jesus and bestowed on him the name that is above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father we long to see Jesus glorified don't we we want to see him worshipped people with a song of Revelation 15 on their lips that is our great hope for the world for every individual on this planet everyone we know we want them to join with us and sing that song we evangelize so that more and more people will give glory to Jesus John Piper continues he says worship is ultimate not missions because

God is ultimate not man when this age is over and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God missions will be no more it is a temporary necessity but worship abides forever the song of Revelation 15 we will sing for eternity that is the destiny of the world is your zeal for sharing that news not renewed as you see these words as you see the destiny of history do we not want others to join with us to praise God because he is God do we not wish to see many hundreds and thousands from our city joining their voices to yours in this great song that ought to be the desire of our heart shouldn't it see many more joining proclaiming

Jesus as king is this song the song of your heart to use a light to sing about your savior and redeemer we've seen what we're saved for and from and who saved us do we delight to sing of the cross about our rescue from judgments great and amazing are your deeds oh lord god almighty just and true are your ways oh king of the nations friends this is our destiny this is our destiny let it shape your perspective let it determine your allegiances and move you to share the hope that you have so that others will sing to the lamb and the lord god almighty amen let's pray father father our hearts and minds struggle to comprehend these things things almost too marvelous the lord please give us the eyes of faith that we would see and believe and trust your word to know that we belong to you forever and that our great destiny is rest standing by the sea of glass praising your name for all eternity great and amazing are your deeds lord give us the eyes of faith we pray in Jesus name amen