



*The Seventh Plague of Egypt*, John Martin, 1823

**About the artist and painting:** The English Romantic painter John Martin was no stranger to death and despair. Out of the 13 children born to his mother and father, John was one of only 6 that survived childhood. He grew up in poverty, the son of a farm laborer. In 1813, John lost his grandmother, mother, father, and youngest son all in the same year. Despite his popular appeal to English society, he was never really celebrated much less even accepted by the art community. Yet he was somewhat of a revolutionary by choosing to paint very fantastic, biblical scenes and landscapes. One can't help but think John looked to the extraordinary aspects of the bible to deal with the harsh realities of life in a broken world.

His 1823 work, *The Seventh Plague of Egypt*, helps to capture the deliverance theme so prevalent in the Book of Exodus. In the painting you have these mighty structures of Pharaoh's palace, city, and pyramids all displayed in their grandeur. In Moses' day this represented to God's people Pharaoh's power and oppression towards them as he ruthlessly made their lives harsh. Yet God is breaking into these circumstances, "showing up" to bring about His deliverance. In this painting, over and above the Egyptian structures is something more magnificent, the storm of God: thunder, hail, and fire being poured down upon the oppressor and persecutor of His people. And your eye is drawn to the man standing on the left side of the painting, Moses, with outstretched arms looking to the LORD and His deliverance.

## **The purpose of Exodus:**

“The original purpose of Exodus was theological, to teach God’s people about himself and their relationship to him.” - Peter Enns, NIVAC, 25.

“Exodus is about a man, Moses. He is central to the narrative in a way in which no single character, not even Abraham, dominates Genesis...Exodus is about a nation, Israel, moving from slavery in Egypt into freedom...but ultimately Exodus is about God, about the God of the covenant who has instituted a new relationship between himself and those whom he has called to be his people.”  
- John Mackay, Exodus, 9.

“The whole story of Exodus is a covenant narrative. The God who pledged himself to Abraham and his descendants remained the faithful God. He had made promises and intended to honor them, and when his moment came, honor them he did...in a word, Exodus cannot be described simply as the book of the holiness of the Lord, nor simply as the book of the presence of the Lord, but as the book of the holy God present in all his holiness at the heart of his people’s life, their provident savior and friend, who makes provision whereby they, in all their unworthiness, may live safely with him.” - Alec Motyer, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of Exodus*, 20, 23.

The setting for Exodus 1:1-2:25 is Israel in Egypt. The opening section sets the stage for the rest of the book by describing: the connection to the narrative of Genesis (Ex. 1:1–7), the oppression that has arisen under a new pharaoh (1:8–22), the preservation of Moses at birth (2:1–10) and later in Midian (2:11–22), and the declaration of God’s intimate knowledge of Israel’s suffering and God’s faithfulness to his covenant with Abraham and his descendants (2:23–25).

## **Exodus is a journey in two parts.**

Part One: Egypt Exodus 1-15 Aug. 7th – Oct. 30th

Part Two: Sinai Exodus 16-18 Nov. 6th – Nov. 20th

*Pause for Advent: Nov. 27th – Dec. 18th*

Part Two Cont. Sinai Exodus 19 - 39 Jan. 8th – June 25th

*Pause for Missions Sunday: February 5th*

*Pause for DNOW: February 19th*

## **Resources for further study:**

*Exodus: A Mentors Commentary* by John Mackay

*Exodus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*  
(Volume 2) (The New American Commentary) by Douglas Stuart

**October 30, 2022**

## **DELIVERED TO PROPELLING WORSHIP**

### **Exodus 15:1-21 ESV**

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 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 exalt him. The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is his name. "Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea, and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea. The floods covered them; they went down into the depths like a stone. 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 waters piled up; the floods stood up in a heap; the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them. I will 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; the earth swallowed them. "You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode. The peoples have heard; they tremble; pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia. Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed; trembling seizes the leaders of Moab; 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. 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."

Scriptures for further study:

Exodus 6:3-6a

Matthew 1:20-22

1 Peter 1:3

1 Peter 2:9

Hebrews 13:25

**BIG IDEA:** If, in His awesome glory, the LORD has definitively defeated our greatest enemy by living up to His name, then corporate worship is a regular reminder of the greatness of that victory, propelling us to be powerfully more than our circumstances in Him through faith.

## OUTLINE

1. Living Up to His Name (Exodus 15:1-6)
2. Saved to Sing (Exodus 15:1, 20-21)
3. Propelled by Praise (Exodus 15:14-17)

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In Exodus 15, immediately after the great deliverance of Israel by God through the Red Sea, Moses leads the people in singing a hymn of praise to the Lord. It is a doxology. The opening verse of the song highlights one of the primary themes of the book of Exodus: “I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea” (15:1). After the song is finished, Miriam leads the women of Israel in response by singing the same words antiphonally (15:20–21). These words serve as the refrain for the larger hymn, and the purpose of a refrain is to underscore the hymn’s most important teaching: the Lord is triumphant and sovereign. He alone is King of kings and Lord of lords.

The second verse of the song in chapter 15 underscores a second great theme of the book of Exodus. The people sing, “The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.” The Lord is the Deliverer and Savior of his people. He had promised Abraham that though his descendants would be slaves in a foreign land, he would deliver them from bondage after four hundred years (Gen. 15:13–14). This he did in the book of Exodus: he is a God who keeps his word by delivering his people from oppression. Finally, the Lord does not merely deliver his people from slavery, but he also solidifies an ongoing relationship with them. The hymn of Moses in Exodus 15 accentuates that reality: “You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode” (15:13). This truth is displayed in what has come to be known as the Immanuel Principle: “I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God” (Ex. 6:7). This relationship between God and Israel is formalized on Mount Sinai, where God establishes his covenant with the Hebrews.

Van Pelt, Miles V. *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (p. 87). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

## DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. What school fight song do you know? At what times is it sung? Why have a fight song? In what way might a worship service be like a pep rally? How is a worship service different?

2. Read Exodus 15:1—8, 11-12, 17-18. From these verses, what words or phrases describe the Lord? How does His name line up with what He did for the Israelites? From Matthew 1:20-22, how does Jesus’ name and His work on our behalf of line up?

3. Contrast Pharaoh’s purpose for the people of Israel with the Lord’s purpose for his people. Have you viewed God’s purpose for deliverance differently from the message of the sermon? What prompted Moses to lead the Israelites to sing? Read Exodus 14:30. Notice from the song contained in Exodus 15:1-22 the paradigm set by Moses and the Israelites for us in singing. How might Moses’ example apply to the Christian life today?

4. Read Exodus 15:14-7. Where is the Lord leading His people? How important would it be for the Israelites to sing this song as they were poised to enter the Promise Land? In what way can worship refresh your heart to move forward in faith this week?

“Worship is a meeting at the centre so that our lives are centered in God and not lived eccentrically. We worship so that we live in response to and from this centre, the living God. Failure to worship consigns us to a life of spasms and jerks, at the mercy of every advertisement, every seduction, every siren. Without worship we live manipulated and manipulating lives. We move in either frightened panic or deluded lethargy as we are, in turn, alarmed by specters and soothed by placebos. If there is no centre, there is no circumference.”

- Edmund Clowney

***PRAISE TO JESUS-*** Praise God who is who He says He is. He is the Lord of the Armies, He is a Warrior, He is our Deliverer, and He has saved His people and He has saved you (if you have confessed Him as Lord and believe in your heart). Praise be to our Savior, Jesus, whose life, death, and resurrection measured up to His hype as Messiah.

***REPENTANCE THROUGH JESUS-*** Confess the times that you have lost sight of the purpose of worship. Confess the times when you forgot God's mighty work on your behalf and give into fear rather than sing a song of praise during the challenges of life.

***CONSECRATION FOR JESUS-*** Consecrate yourself to gather weekly for worship to sing, remember and reflect upon God's mighty acts throughout history that are supremely found in the person and work of Jesus. Be refreshed in corporate worship and be propelled forward in faith towards the callings that God has placed your life.

## FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

1. Review with your children the events of Exodus 14 and the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. This will allow us to understand the context for Exodus 15 and the worship songs by Moses, Miriam, and the Israelites.

- a. Ask your children what they learned about God with the crossing of the Red Sea. Make sure to talk about how God is all-powerful and how He used His power to save His people.

2. Ask your children how they react when something amazingly good happens to them. If you all have attended a sporting event, talk with them about how you and the crowd cheered loudly when your team did well. Or, if you have been to a play or dance recital, how the crowd cheers at the end of the performance.

- a. Talk with them about how the Israelites celebrated God's miraculous parting of the Red Sea to allow them to escape from the Egyptian army. Make sure to talk about how Exodus 15:1 tells us that Moses and Israelites sang a worship song to God.

3. Ask your children about Exodus 15:2 and what the Israelites sang about God in that verse. Talk with them about how God saved them from the Egyptians and "has become my salvation."

- a. Ask your children what else they learn about God from the rest of today's verses. Make sure to talk about how God defeated the Egyptians and therefore protected His people. Point out verse 13 that mentions God's "steadfast love" for His people.

4. Ask your children if they can describe worship to you and ask them why we worship. You will want to talk about how worship is a response to God and his saving work in the world and in our lives.

- a. Ask your children for what reasons we must worship God. Ask them about what God has done in their lives and in the family. Talk with them about how we should be grateful for our house, clothes, food, etc. But the greatest reason we have to worship is God's redemption of us through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.
- b. Look up the lyrics of some of your favorite worship songs and talk about what those songs describe as reasons to worship God. Some good choices of songs might be "In Christ Alone" or "Amazing Grace."

Scriptures for further study:

1 Peter 1: 3-5

Revelation 5:9-14

## FOR STUDENTS

1. God led Israel into a “trap” in order that he might show His own glory. How does this give us a helpful perspective on the difficulties of our own churches and lives?
2. Why is it good that God acts for the sake of His name, rather than in response to our merit?
3. How did imagining the walls of water collapsing in, and seeing that this is what Jesus stepped into at the Cross, make you feel about him?
4. The Israelites are told to “fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today” (Ex. 14:13). Yet they had to respond in faith made evident by identifying themselves with Moses and stepping onto the dry ground of the Red Sea. What is the difference between their accomplishing their own salvation and responding in faith to God’s salvation?
5. What is the difference for us between responding to salvation offered in Christ and accomplishing our own salvation? (You might bring Acts 16:30-31 and Ephesians 2:8-9 into the discussion).

\*\*Selected questions borrowed and adapted from *The Lamb of God* by Nancy Guthrie and *Exodus for You* by Tim Chester



## FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

1. Here in verses 13 and 16, we find these two phrases: “the people you have redeemed” and “the people you bought.” When we consider what God does in saving people, the Bible often speaks in terms of His buying or purchasing us. In Matthew 20:28, Jesus says that He came to give His life as a ransom, meaning He gave His own life as a payment for our sin. Paul likewise reminds us in 1 Corinthians 6:20 that we have been bought with a price. Know that God loves you so much that He is willing to give His own life and to shed His own blood in order to pay the price for your sin and to win you back!

2. This song of praise is a response to all the many ways God had proven Himself faithful to His people. Moses and Miriam refer to God’s power, provision, protection, presence, and purposeful guidance. No wonder they exclaim in verse 11, “Who among the gods is like you, O, Lord?!” Do you know this God personally and are you worshipping Him? If not, what other gods could you possibly want to turn to instead?

3. We should note that the very waters that became the source of salvation for the people of Israel are also the very waters that became the source of judgment for the Egyptians. This is true of our relationship with God as well. Either you will submit to Him as your gracious Savior and Lord, or you will experience Him ultimately as the God whose judgment falls on you. Through belief in Jesus Christ, you can walk through the waters and not be drowned by them.

4. This passage is essentially a song of praise to God. The songs we sing say a lot about us, and what is in our hearts. Based on the songs that are popular in our culture today, what do you think this says about our societal beliefs and values? Also take inventory of the lyrics in the music you find yourself listening to these days. What does your choice of music say about you, and about the things you value?