



MT. ROSE REFORMED
ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Song of Deliverance

Reverend Scott Johnson | August 3, 2025 | Exodus 15:1-21

Old Testament Reading

The Old Testament reading is Exodus 15 verses 1-21 and this is the inerrant and infallible word of our God. Let's hear God's word. 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 chariot 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 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 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 was 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. Payings 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. To the people passed 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.

New Testament Reading

And now let's turn to Revelation chapter 15. According to this passage in Revelation, this song that was sung by the people of Israel continues to be sung. In heaven, the song of Moses, as the saints glorified, sing praise to the Lord in heaven. Revelation 15 verses 1 through 4. Revelation 15, 1 through 4. 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. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. You may turn back to Exodus chapter 15.

This is our sermon text for this morning. Our passage this morning tells us what happened. Immediately after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry ground. And if you recall from a few weeks ago, just before the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, Moses told the people of God this. He said in chapter 14, verse 14, the Lord will fight for you. You have only to be silent. And did the Lord ever fight for his people? He not only parted the waters of the Red Sea in a miraculous way so that the people of Israel could cross on dry land, but he caused those two towering walls of water to come crashing down on the mighty army of Pharaoh so that all of his horsemen and soldiers and chariots were drowned in the water. And what role did the Israelites play in that

great deliverance? Well, basically, none at all. Just as Moses had told them, they were silent. They had only to be silent to witness the almighty power of God as he brought them salvation. All they had to do was to step out in faith and to trust in the Lord and in his saving might. It was God who fought for them. It was God who accomplished their salvation.

They Sang Their Praises to God

But once they were across the sea, once their deliverance was complete, the Egyptians had been destroyed, they are safely on the far side of the Red Sea, now is the time for the Israelites to be no longer silent. Now was the time for them to rejoice, to make a joyful sound, to sing to the Lord Praises for this great redemption that he worked for them and that is what they do. No sooner are they on the other side of the shore that we read in verse 1 of chapter 15 Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord. This is the first thing that they do on the other side of the sea. They don't keep marching on, they don't sit down to have breakfast, but they sang, they sang. And can you imagine what a sound, what a glorious sound that must have been. Remember there were probably over a million Israelites gathered there, perhaps even two million Israelites, and all their voices in unison rang out together the praises of God on the seashore. wonderful sound that must have been and then Moses later in chapter 15 tells us that his sister Miriam she took up the chorus and began leading the women singing the same song playing tambourines dancing for joy so that the Lord was glorified not only in the whole choir of Israel singing his praises but in these hundreds of thousands of women's voices singing his praises as well and that too must have been an amazing sound to hear as well.

Well there's a lot for us in this passage to learn as Christians because our response to the grace that God has given us is the same response as the Israelites to the grace God gave them and that is we are to praise God with our song. We are to sing his praises And so as we look at this song of Moses that he sang and that the people of Israel sang, we're going to consider what does it teach us as the people of God today, as Christians, what does it teach us about our singing to the Lord? And the first thing that I want us to see here is the most obvious thing, and that is simply this, that the Israelites sang to the Lord. This was their response of gratitude and thanksgiving. They sang to Him their praises. And this is a pattern that we find over and over repeated in scripture. Whenever God does some great work of deliverance for his people, his people respond by singing his praises. For example, in the book of Judges, after the Lord defeats Jabin and the Canaanites, we read that Deborah, who was judging Israel at the time, and the general Barak, that they sing a song of praise for the salvation of the Lord. Or in 2

Samuel 22, after the Lord saved David and Israel from the Philistines, David sang a psalm of deliverance. He gave thanks to the Lord in song. Isaiah 51 11 looks forward to the day when the people of God will be restored from their time in exile and they will be brought back into the promised land. And they will not go back to the promised land with their mouths shut in silence, but they will go back singing the praises of God. Isaiah 51 11, And the ransom of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing. Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. They shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. And so when God does His works of salvation, they are followed by the praises of God's people as they sing to Him His praise and His worship.

That same pattern is repeated in the New Testament Luke's Gospel tells us that after Jesus the Savior was conceived even before he was born, that Mary, his mother, sang a praise, a song of praise to the Lord, the very Lord who was incarnate in her womb. She praised him with song. And then after the birth of Jesus, of course, we know that the angels of heaven formed this glorious heavenly choir and lifted up their worship and praise to God who had brought his son into the world. And so in our worship as Christians, we sing. This is what we do as the people of God, as those who have been saved by His grace. We sing. We sing His praises. We must sing. It's almost impossible to conceive of anything that could go by the name of Christian worship that would exclude singing the praises of God. Christians have always sung, and we always will sing praise to God. because this is our proper, this is our God-glorifying response to the mercy, to the grace that we have received from God in His Son Jesus. When you read the book of Revelation and when you see John's vision of heaven, the glorified saints there, the angelic hosts, the heavenly beings, how they are singing to the Lord, praising Him, worshiping Him with song. It's clear that we will continue to sing beyond this world, beyond this life, and the life to come. Worshiping God will consist of this, our singing His praises, thanking Him, worshiping Him with song. One day our voices will join with that great heavenly chorus that sings forever and ever the praises of God and of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Now one feature that we should take note of as we consider the song that the people of Israel sang here at the Red Sea is that they sang as a congregation. They sang together. This was not a musical performance for their entertainment. This wasn't a concert. This was not an occasion to showcase the virtuoso talents of a few gifted musicians. But this was their united corporate expression of thanksgiving and praise in the form of song. This was their collective worship. They sang praises to God as one people, one body. And that's how we are to sing our praises to God. We are to worship Him as one people, one body, one voice. Now that doesn't mean that

there isn't a place for a choir or perhaps special music in Christian worship, but it does mean that nothing should replace or diminish the corporate singing of the people of God as one body. Romans 15, 6 says that we are together with one voice to glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so the Israelites, this is the first lesson, They sing the praises of the Lord together as they rejoiced in that deliverance that God had worked for them at the Red Sea.

They Sing to Praise God For Who He Is

The second thing that I want us to observe about their singing is this. They sing to praise God for who He is. They simply worship the Lord for who He is as God. The great musician Johann Sebastian Bach, perhaps the greatest musician ever, he often inscribed the initials SDG on his compositions. And SDG stands for Soli Deo Gloria, and that's a Latin phrase that means for the glory of God alone. And you could say that SDG, for the glory of God alone, is inscribed across this entire song that the people of Israel sing. This song is all about God and his glory. God, who he is, as the creator, as the redeemer of the people of Israel. It's a song of thanksgiving and praise for who God is, as the one true and living God. And there are so many wonderful truths about God that we could examine In every verse of the song, we don't have time to do that, but let's just look at some of the ways that the Israelites praise the Lord simply for who He is. Verse three, the Lord is a man of war. In other words, the Lord fights for his people. Verse six, your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power. All power belongs to God. He is omnipotent. He can do all things, and he does all things according to his righteous will. No one can stay his hand. No one can frustrate or hinder his purposes. He is almighty in power. Verse 7 speaks of the greatness of his majesty God is majestic he is infinitely greater than anything that he has created he is infinitely greater than we are he is majestic in holiness in verse 11 says who is like you oh Lord among the gods who is like you majestic in holiness awesome in glory in glorious deeds doing wonders there is no God but the one God of creation, the God of Israel, the God of the Bible. All the gods of Egypt, all the idols of Egypt, they prove themselves to be nothing in the face of the mighty, the true God. And that is true for all the false gods, all the idols of other religions, all the idols of the world, all the idols of our own hearts. They are nothing before the true and the living God. verse 13 speaks of the steadfast love of God that is that God will always show his love and his mercy to his people whom he has made his own by his covenant of grace and in verse 18 we read that the Lord will reign forever and ever This God who saved the Israelites from the Egyptians on that day at the Red Sea. He is the Lord who reigned from everlasting, from all eternity. He is the Lord whose rule will extend to everlasting, to all eternity.

And as Christians, we must also praise God in our singing, as we sing our praises to Him for these very same reasons, because He is God. He is worthy to be praised. He is worthy of our singing, our worship. He is still a man of war who fights for us. He is almighty in power. He is majestic. He is the only true God. He is a God who has shown us and continues to show us love and mercy. And He reigns as Lord. And as Christians, we know that all of these truths about God, everything that is true about God is most supremely revealed in the person of his son, Jesus Christ, because his son is God in the flesh. And so we sing our praises to worship God, to glorify him as we sing them in the name of Jesus and to Jesus. It is Jesus who is the man of war who fights for his people. It is the risen and exalted Jesus who is almighty in power. He is majestic in holiness. He is love and he reigns as Lord and will reign as Lord forever and ever. And so we glorify Jesus by singing his praises. And when we sing our hymns and songs of praise to God to bring him glory as we sing the praise of Christ, the incarnate Lord. We do so primarily in order to glorify God. That's what we're all about, to worship Him. But God uses that worship of Him to build us up in our faith and in our love and devotion to Him.

Several years ago, I read a very helpful book on worship by an author named Marva Dawn. The book has a catchy title. We're reaching out without dumbing down, a theology of worship for this urgent time. And one point that the author makes in the book is this, that one function, one purpose of our worship, obviously overall it's to glorify God, but one other purpose for our worship in the songs that we sing to God is to form the character of the people of God. And she says this in the book, when God comes to us in all the fullness of who God is, our character will be transformed. Consequently, if our worship practices accord God the proper place and scope, who we are and what we are becoming as Christians will be rightly developed. And so the goal of our singing, the goal of our music in church and our worship, is first of all to glorify God, but in addition to that, it is to build up and to edify the people of God. It is to help develop in us, to form in us a Christ-like godly character. And only music and words that are centered upon and communicate the truth about the character, the greatness of God and Christ will do this. And so the songs that we sing really do matter. They really matter how we sing to God, what we sing to God, the words that we use to praise God. They matter most of all because God's honor is at stake, but they matter because these songs are forming us as the people of God into a kind of people, a kind of people that God would have us to be. What kind of character do we want to see formed in us? What kind of character do we want to see formed in our children? Well, we want to be people for whom God is great. We want to be people who are deeply impressed with the majesty, the holiness, the glory, the weightiness of God. We want to be people who come

before Him with reverence, with awe, with joy. One way to see that is to ensure that the hymns and the songs that we sing, that they truly do magnify, they glorify God, that they are theocentric, God-centered, that they are giving glory to Christ as well.

The New Testament recognizes this function of music and singing, that it is meant as well. And so these Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs that we are to sing as the people of God they are of course to praise God but also in praising God we are teaching, we are admonishing one another we are administering to one another, we are building up one another even in our singing praises to God and that's what the people of Israel here were doing even as they gave glory and praise and thanks to God they were teaching, they were admonishing one another They were growing together in this way, in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. And we do the same. And so this song of Moses sets the standard for what singing in worship should be. It is one way in which we worship God, glorify Him, but also in singing God's praises in worship, we build up one another, we are built up in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, His Son. So that's the second lesson. They praise the Lord for who He is.

They Sang Praise to God For What He Had Done For Them

Thirdly, the Israelites sang praise to God for what He had done for them. And so they praised God not only for who He is, but for what He had done for them. When Moses led the people of Israel in this song of praise to the Lord, it wasn't as though he had spent the past few days meditating on all the attributes of God and filling his heart with the truth of God's glory. And then this song was the result of his meditations. That's a good thing to do, of course, but that wasn't the case here. Rather, Moses led the people of Israel to praise the Lord because they had just experienced this most amazing deliverance. Remember, the Israelites are standing on the far shore of the Red Sea. The bodies of the dead Egyptians are washing up on the shore. And they sing this praise. It almost appears to be spontaneous. Of course, it's inspired by the Spirit, but it's this immediate response of praise and worship and thanksgiving on the part of the Israelites for the salvation that the Lord had just accomplished for them. And so the song exalts all that the Lord had just done for the Israelites. Moses begins the song by singing, I will sing to the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The song goes on to describe in various ways how the Lord triumphed marvelously, gloriously over his enemies and the enemies of the people of Israel.

And one of the most remarkable things that the scripture tells us about this song of Moses is that this was not the first and last time that it was sung, but it is still being sung in heaven. By the saints and angels in glory, we saw that passage from John's Revelation, or John's vision in Revelation. He sees those who have conquered the beast with harps of God in their hands, and he says, and they sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord, the God Almighty. And notice where John how John describes their situation. He says that they are standing by a sea of glass mingled with fire. And so just as the Israelites were standing by the Red Sea as they sang their song of praise to the Lord, so now in heaven John gives us his vision of the glorified saints, the angelic host, praising the Lord as they stand by this heavenly sea. And John tells us it's not just the song of Moses that they are singing in heaven. but it's also the Song of the Lamb. And so if the Israelites were praising God for the mighty deliverance that the Lord had worked for them, bringing them through the Red Sea, destroying their enemies, the Egyptians, so we praise the same God, not only with the Song of Moses, but with the Song of the Lamb. We give Him praise for the salvation He has worked for us through Jesus Christ, His Son. that Jesus came into the world, sent by the Father to lay down His life for our sins, that He was raised from the dead on the third day, that He came to deliver us from our bondage to sin and death, to bring the forgiveness of sins, to give us eternal life, to give us the promise of everlasting life and glory with Him forever. And if Jesus Christ is your Savior, if today your faith and trust and hope are in the Lord Jesus Christ, then the Song of Moses is yours, the Song of the Lamb is yours. The Song of the Lamb, the Lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world. And so we sing in response to what God has done for us.

And just like with this Song of Moses, and the Song of Moses and of the Lamb that we hear in Revelation, songs of joy that we sing to the Lord. Now, when we take all of Scripture into consideration, we know that there are other states of mind or emotions that we may express to God in our singing to Him. We sing of the cross. We have hymns that sing of the suffering of Jesus on the cross. Someone can correct me if I'm wrong later. Many of those hymns are in a minor key. God has given us the psalms as songs to express every emotion or state of mind that we may experience as God's people. When you read the psalms, you see the psalmist giving vent to the state of his heart. It could be grief, it could be sorrow, it could be suffering, longing for God. We may sing to the Lord as an expression of different kinds of emotions or the state of our mind, but having said that, the predominant note, the prevailing theme in our hymns is joy. That is the note that is the recurring theme of our singing. This is the predominant theme, joy,

rejoicing, thanking the Lord, for his salvation. And that's because, above all else, as Christians, we have received God's grace in his Son, Jesus Christ. We are a redeemed people. We are a saved people. We are a forgiven people. We are a heaven-bound people. And therefore, for most of our singing, the prevailing theme of our songs will be joy, rejoicing, thanksgiving, and gratitude for the grace that we have received in Christ. And that's what music does. Music really is an expression, or it gives expression to our emotions, our feelings. You know that from your own experience, just not even thinking about singing in church or sacred music, but you listen to the kind of music you're in the mood for. If you're in a sad mood, you might listen to the blues. If your dog gets run over by a train, you might listen to country music. Very fitting for that. When you are happy, you want to hear a song that is as light-hearted as the feeling that you have in that happiness. But music goes even deeper than that. Music really is a vehicle for expression of the state of the soul, the state of the heart, the state of the person before God.

I once had a memorable and even somewhat jarring experience that brought home to me just how powerfully music can communicate the spiritual condition of those who make it and perform it. I was living in Japan at the time and one night this small village in which I lived they were putting on their annual festival and it was a festival of the date of Japanese religion which is Shinto and part of what they did as part of this festival was to parade up and down the streets of the village, playing what was the traditional music of that festival, which was, again, it was all tied to the Shinto religion. And if I could describe the music, there was sort of this dark, low beat of the taiko drums. And then there were other instruments. I don't know what they were, but they made a kind of wailing or crying sound. And it just so happened that night when that was passing by my street on which I lived, with that kind of music, I just happened to be reading the famous sermon by Jonathan Edwards, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. And if you have read that sermon by Edwards, you know that in it he gives some extremely powerful and vivid descriptions of God's judgment in hell. And as I read the sermon and I heard this plaintive and woeful music in the background. It was almost as though I was hearing the sounds of the lost in hell, the hopeless, the sad wailing and screaming. And that kind of music is fitting for a religion in which there is no good news. What is there to rejoice in? That music gives expression to a soul that is cut off from God. There is no redemption. There is no joy in that religion. So why should their music be joyful? But that is not the case with the people of Israel by the Red Sea. It is not the case for us as the people of God. We sing songs that express the joy that God has given us and the salvation that is ours in Jesus Christ. God has given us joy and therefore we sing songs filled with joy. And when we do sing, we must sing from the heart. The joy must be

genuine and must be singing with our whole heart to the Lord. We're commanded to do so. Psalm 81 says, sing aloud to God our strength. Shout for joy to the God of Jacob. In Ephesians 5:19, we are told that we are to be singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart. So here's a reminder to us that when we come to church on Sundays, God's will for us is that we are to sing from the heart. We are to sing with joy, with gratitude. If we are merely mouthing the words of the hymn, not thinking about them, if our hearts are far removed from what we're singing, if we are detached from the words and the music, if we're just going through the motions in a rote kind of way, that is not worship. We are not worshiping the Lord. The words may be impeccable in their orthodoxy, but if we are not singing from the heart with joy, we might as well not be singing at all. And so God wants you and me, like the Israelites here, to sing his praises with joy and gratitude from the heart for all that he has done for us as our God and Savior.

Now, when the Israelites sang this song, they were singing a song, as we know from the lyrics, that specifically gave thanks to the Lord for this particular redemption, this act of salvation, and bringing them across the Red Sea. Did the Israelites have any music before this? Did they already have written hymns that they sang to God? We don't know. But one thing is clear, they did not dust off an old song for this occasion. Rather, they sang a song that specifically praised the Lord for this new work of salvation, for this latest act of deliverance that the Lord had worked for His people. And in doing so, the Israelites followed what is a biblical principle, and that is, in response to the new mercies of God, in response to the new saving acts of God, the people of God are to respond with a new song. with a new song. Psalm 98:1 says, O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things. His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. And we sing a new song. We stand on the other side of the cross from the perspective of Moses and these old covenant saints. We sing a new song. We sing praise to God for what he has done for us in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gift of his son, the death and resurrection of Jesus, the new life that he gives us. We sing a new song. When Moses and the Israelites sang the song by the Red Sea, they said this in their song, they said, the Lord is his name. The Lord is his name. With the coming of Christ, the Lord has revealed to us a new name. God has a new name. His name is Jesus. And so it is right, it is biblical for us to sing the new name of the Lord in a new song. Jesus is the name that is above every name and therefore his name is most worthy to be praised in our singing. And so they sang praise to God for what he had done for them.

They Sang for What God Promised Them

Finally, they sang praise to God for what he had promised them. If you look at verses 14 through 16, the song of Moses speaks of the terror and the dread that came upon the Edomites, the Moabites, the Canaanites when they heard what God had done for Israel. You'll notice that grammatically, it's in the past tense. However, this is actually a prophetic word of what God will do in the future. He will bring this dread and terror upon the enemies of God when Israel will be brought into the promised land. So this is a promise and the Lord did this very thing, but it's in the past tense because it is certain as if it had already taken place. And so these promises are spoken of in the past tense and yet they are future promises. And then the song goes on to sing about how the Lord will lead the Israelites into the promised land. He will plant them on His holy mountain. There He will make His dwelling among them in His sanctuary, His abode. And so the song, here's another prophecy, is looking forward to the time when the Israelites will be in the promised land, when God will set apart Mount Zion as the place of His dwelling. Here is a prophecy of the building of the temple, because it was there that the Lord would dwell with His people. And so the Israelites praise God, not only for what he did for them, but for what he would do for them, for his promises. And as we, as Christians, look back, we see that all of these promises, the Lord has fulfilled for his people, but he still makes promises to us in his word. As believers in Christ, we still look forward to future blessings. The promises that God makes to us is that when we die, we will go to be with Christ in glory. When Jesus returns, you and I will be raised from death to everlasting life in the body that is immortal and incorruptible and will live forever. That on the day of judgment, when Christ returns, you and I, by faith in Jesus Christ, we will be acquitted on the day of judgment. We will be made happy and holy forever. And we will live in a new heaven to a new earth forever and ever, where there will be no more sin, no more sickness, no more death or grief or sorrow. But the greatest promise of all that God makes to us is this, that He will be with us forever, that we will be in His gracious, loving, glorious presence for all eternity. And really, this was the same hope that the Israelites expressed in their song, that God would dwell in their midst. And we know that is our hope. That is our greatest promise that God has given to us, that we shall be with Him forever. And what the song does for us is it gives us hope because if God was faithful to all of the promises that he made to them in the song, he will most certainly be faithful to the promises that he makes to you and me in Christ. And so as we sing the praises of God with our songs, we praise him for who he is. He is the Lord. He is worthy to be praised. We praise him for the salvation that he has

worked for us. and we praise Him for His promises, for all the ways in which God will yet show to you and me His goodness, His favor, His love to us in Christ. Let's pray.