

God is my King

Ex 14:19-31, Canticle: Ex 15:1-21, Rom 14:1-12, Mat 18:21-35

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Introduction

Last week we saw how God prepared his people for salvation from Egypt; the people of Israel had to slaughter a lamb and eat it, and smear its blood on the doorposts of their homes. They had to stay inside those homes so that God would keep them safe.

In that same night when God punished the Egyptians, Israel was led out by God. Our God saved Israel by leading that nation straight through the Red Sea, while Pharaoh's armies drowned in that same sea.

God saved his people in an unexpected and mighty manner. No wonder Israel celebrated *wildly* when they were safe on the other side of the water. They must have been scared to death, but now they were safe! So they sang and danced to praise God!

In Jewish Torah scrolls the song of Moses of Exodus 15 is typographically set apart from what comes before and after. It is the heart of the book of Exodus: Egypt is behind, now the journey through the Sinai desert is beginning.

A major concern of the song is God's kingship. Read the last line, Exodus 15:18 again. Exodus resolves around the question of who shall be king and who shall be served - God or Pharaoh. By the end of chapter 14 this is no longer an issue. The victorious YHWH can now be proclaimed as king while we hear nothing further of Pharaoh.

God is king; the rulers of this world are not! Hosni Mubarak was not. And general Tantawi is not. And the sheikhs are not. Our God rules!

Let us see what it means for us, that He rules and that we are His people.

First point: The Lord is King: He is our Saviour

God saved Israel from the enemies and from their gods. What a great salvation! Read again Exodus 15:6-7. We can learn some things about God in these verses.

God right hand is mightier than all the evil rulers of Egypt and of the gods of those rulers. He only has to use his right hand, and they are gone. He is almighty. He can also shatter *your*

enemies and the enemies of the Church. Think of it – what are your major enemies?

God is all-powerful, great in majesty – that is his glory. He can shatter your problems and your enemies by moving his little finger.

But this majesty of God is more than being almighty; it also includes his holy character.

We see this in Ex 15:11 (read). God is majestic in holiness. He is the all-powerful, but he also has a holy character. And we know that an important aspect of the holiness of God, is that he speaks and acts in accordance with who He and this is in harmony with how He revealed himself in his covenant with his people.

The holy God has made promises to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and therefore he is desirous to save their families from their problems.

'Who is like you, o Lord, among the gods?' Of course Israel had known the gods of Egypt. But Ra, and Hapi, and Hathor, Isis and Nut and all the other gods looked silly and weak compared to the God of Israel.

God can save our families and us from our enemies and from all their gods, because through Jesus Christ, we are his covenant people.

After the coming of Jesus Christ we have seen how great the salvation is that God offers. He can even save us from sin, and death, and hell.

In the New Testament, our salvation is compared with the Exodus of Israel from Egypt – in many places actually.

Let me give one example. Read together Luke 9:28-31. This last verse speaks of the departure of Jesus that he would accomplish in Jerusalem. That is, his death and resurrection. What is this departure? The Greek uses the word *exodus*. Exactly the word used for the salvation of Israel from Egypt.

Israel was saved by God because it faithfully left Egypt and walked through the Red Sea. We are saved as we are baptised and we believe in Him. Our baptism is a reflection of Israel going through the Red Sea. The life of sin and death was left behind; and the people of God entered into newness of life.

Pharaoh and his gods no longer had them in his power; they were free to live for God. What a great salvation *Israel* experienced, and how great

is *our* salvation. God has chosen himself a people that is free to serve Him. He is our king!

St Augustine in one of his sermons, said:

All our past sins [...] which have been pressing on us, as it were, from behind, he has drowned and destroyed in baptism. ... Let us not turn back to Egypt in our hearts, but with him as our protector and guide, let us make our way through the other trials and temptations of the desert toward the kingdom.

So let us not obey the voices, the temptations, the sins in the world that belong to pharaoh, the world of our past, but let us obey our King, the Lord God.

Second point: The Lord is King: He is our Sustainer and He guarantees our future

The song of Israel did not only celebrate that God had saved the people in the past. It also praises God for leading and guiding his people. Read Exodus 15:13.

Leading and guiding is a process. God went before Israel in the desert as a cloud by day and as fire by night. He led them through the dangers of the desert of the Sinai.

God is the one who carries us through the pilgrimage of our life. He is Immanuel – always with us. He has not saved us long ago to now let us muddle through. He stands at the beginning of our life, and he carries us day by day.

The fact that he is with us day by day, is also our best guarantee that our future is secure. Our King is the one who guides us into that future. Read Exodus 15:17-18.

Israel was looking forward to being taken to the promised land, to the place where they would be with God forever. Note that it is the place where God himself lives. And that it is a place made by God. He is already there – waiting for us! No insecurity, no doubt, no possibility that this place will be destroyed. The Royal Palace of the King is awaiting us!

Verse 17 starts with: 'You will bring them in.' This is actually a shepherds term, for how he brings the sheep into the pen. Our Lord and King, holy and almighty, has saved us, and as a shepherd guides us, and he brings us into his eternal palace.

No wonder Israel burst out in a song! She needed poetry for describing this amazing Saviour and King. God saved them from their enemies, carried them as a shepherd through the

turmoil of the desert, and brought them in their promised land.

This is also the joy of the church, being safe in the arms of the eternal King, and therefore we also sing a lot!

Our Lord cares for us. In Exodus 15:3 we read: 'The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is his name!'

These are strong words and many bible translators have tried to soften them. But the Hebrew really says: "He is a man of war." He is a fighter for his people. He fought to save Israel from Egypt, he fought to bring them through the desert to their destination.

Point 3: The Lord is King: He is My King

He is *your* shepherd, who fights for you. He gave his life on the cross to save you. He fights for you to carry you through life. This is our Lord!

Very beautifully, Moses, or maybe his sister Mariam, wrote this song to praise God for saving the nation, but it was also a very personal prayer.

Little baby Moses almost died because of the anger of Pharaoh – Moses almost drowned the water of the Nile. And now God had reversed his fate. Pharaoh drowned in the Red Sea. The nation was free!

Read Exodus 15:1b-2 (starting with 'I will sing to the Lord'). Do you see how beautifully Moses personalized this song? The great God, the triumphant God who saved the nation... is also *my God*.

He speaks in these few verses about my strength, my song, my salvation, my God, my father's God. Very important!

Conclusion

The salvation that God offered was salvation for his whole nation. He saved them together. But it is also important to appropriate it for ourselves.

God is King! Be encouraged: He saves his people, he carries his people, he brings his people to their eternal destination. That is our Lord God!

But in his great Church, we must all also individually and personally say to him: you are my strength, my song, my salvation, my God.

Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously! That is our King! That is my king, and he leads me in my pilgrimage through life, and he brings me safely to his eternal house. Praise his name.

+ In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.