

Moses and Miriam Praise God

Xavier smiled as he looked at his friend's name pop up on his cell phone.

"Your text said to meet at the gym," blurted Mikal. "I thought you had to work every weekend at your job."

"Not anymore, brother," laughed Xavier.

After the much needed and intense workout, Xavier and Mikal agreed to meet for a light early dinner.

"I thought your supervisor was driving you into the ground?" asked Mikal.

Xavier was an admission's counselor at an area university, and his new, immediate supervisor had been making life at work extremely hard. His supervisor demanded better and more results from his team and him particularly.

"Lord, this man is against me like an enemy," Xavier had cried out in prayer. "I feel trapped." Then after hearing a sermon his pastor preached one Sunday, Xavier began redirecting his energy. He prayed more for his supervisor and entered a new place of praise and worship.

Xavier was caught by surprise when an announcement came that his supervisor was leaving.

"Where is he going?" Mikal asked.

"I don't recall," Xavier said.

"And they're promoting you to an assistant director?" Mikal cried. "Now that is a reason to praise God!"

"I'm way ahead of you, brother," Xavier said. "I've been praising God like never before these past months, because He's worthy of our praise. Period."

1. *What physical or psychological enemies make people feel trapped?*

2. *How can we be set free from such bondage?*

3. *What role does God play in freeing people from bondage?*

The Lord's Victory

Exodus 15:11-12, KJV

11 Who is like unto thee,
O LORD, among the gods?
who is like thee, glorious
in holiness, fearful in
praises, doing wonders?
12 Thou stretchedst out
thy right hand, the earth
swallowed them.

Exodus 15:11-12, NIV

¹¹Who among the gods
is like you, LORD?
Who is like you—
majestic in holiness,
awesome in glory,
working wonders?
¹²"You stretch out your right hand,
and the earth swallows your
enemies."

Exodus 14 recounts the Israelites' safe crossing of the Red Sea and the destruction of the Egyptian army. Free from Egyptian oppression, Exodus 15 records Moses and the people sang a song of praise and thanksgiving to God.

In verses 2–10, the Lord is portrayed as a mighty warrior who used His great strength to smash Israel's enemy. The Lord blew with His "breath" (vs. 10) to inundate the antagonists in the Red Sea's "mighty waters."

Verse 11 draws attention to the fact that pagan humanity venerates many so-called "gods." None of these powerless and lifeless idols, including those of Egypt, could compare to Israel's true and living God. The Lord alone is "majestic" (vs. 11) in His "holiness" and revered by those who praised His glorious presence. Also, only He can perform great "wonders," such as enabling the Israelites to cross the Red Sea, while remaining unharmed.

Verse 12 depicts God as having an all-powerful "right hand." When the Lord extended it, He caused the waters of the Red Sea to come crashing down on the Egyptians. It was as if the "earth" was a ravenous beast that opened its mouth to swallow its prey. In doing so, the antagonists went down to the realm of the dead.

4. *In what way is the Lord distinct from other gods?*

5. *How did the Lord demonstrate His power?*

The Israelites' Upcoming Journey to Canaan

Exodus 15:13-18, KJV

13 Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

14 The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina.

15 Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.

16 Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased.

17 Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O LORD, which thy hands have established.

18 The LORD shall reign for ever and ever.

Exodus 15:13-18, NIV

¹³In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling.

¹⁴The nations will hear and tremble; anguish will grip the people of Philistia.

¹⁵The chiefs of Edom will be terrified, the leaders of Moab will be seized with trembling, the people of Canaan will melt away;

¹⁶terror and dread will fall on them.

By the power of your arm they will be as still as a stone—until your people pass by, LORD, until the people you bought pass by.

¹⁷You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance—the place, LORD, you made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, LORD, your hands established.

¹⁸"The LORD reigns for ever and ever."

Exodus 15:13 portrays God as a shepherd who leads His chosen “people” to the promised land. He does so in His “love,” which is characterized by unwavering devotion. The Hebrew verb translated “redeemed” means to buy back a near relative from the slave market. It describes the Lord’s rescuing the people from their Egyptian masters.

Canaan is the Israelites’ final destination. It is referred to as God’s “holy habitation” (KJV). The land of promise is comparable to a sacred, well-watered pastureland where God guided His sheep.

Hearing that God had freed the Israelites, Canaan’s occupants shuddered. Those living in Philistia were seized with anguish. The leaders of Edom were terrified, and those of Moab trembled. The order in which these nations are listed roughly previews the route the Israelites would follow in their travels toward their sacred home.

Not even the deities worshiped by the Canaanites could withstand the Lord’s onslaught. Once more, He is depicted as a mighty warrior, before whom the peoples living in the promised land melted away. They were so dumbstruck by the breathtaking “power” of His “arm” (vs. 16) that they became as motionless and lifeless as a rock.

Verse 17 uses figurative language to explain that God intends to “plant” His people, like a grapevine, on the terraced hillside of the promised land, the “mountain of [His] inheritance.” A time is coming when God will ensure that His chosen people and their monarch exist peacefully and securely in Canaan. Only He, by His “hands,” will bring to fruition such a bold undertaking. The Lord’s “sanctuary” would stand as a witness to the surrounding nations of His sovereign and eternal reign.

6. *What was the basis for the Lord shepherding His people?*

7. *How would the nations respond to God’s mighty presence?*

8. *What does the Lord intend to do for His people?*

The Song of Miriam

Exodus 15:19-21, KJV

19 For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.

20 And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.

21 And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

Exodus 15:19-21, NIV

¹⁹When Pharaoh's horses, chariots and horsemen went into the sea, the LORD brought the waters of the sea back over them, but the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground.

²⁰Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing.

²¹Miriam sang to them:

"Sing to the LORD,
for he is highly exalted.
Both horse and driver
he has hurled into the
sea."

Exodus 15:19 recaps God destroying Pharaoh's cavalry and charioteers. They all perished when the Lord caused a wall of water to engulf them while His people forged ahead "on dry ground" in the middle of the sea.

Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, began to lead the singing and celebration. At this time, Miriam could have been in her 90s since she was a young girl when Moses was born, and he was now 80 (2:4, 7-8; 7:7). Also, she is called a "prophet" (15:20), the first woman in the Bible to be described as such. Miriam and the women took tambourine-like hand-drums and sang and danced in joyful praise to the Lord, who had "highly exalted" (vs. 21) Himself by throwing the Egyptian army into the sea.

9. *What fate awaited the Egyptians?*

10. *About what did Miriam sing?*

Set Free

Marianne's enemy lived within her. Every morning, when Marianne looked in the mirror, she heard words like *useless, ugly, and failure*. Marianne listened to praise music, read the Bible, and prayed, but she still walked through the day with self-condemning thoughts. At work, she thought her co-workers talked about her incompetency.

One night at prayer meeting, Marianne went forward for prayer concerning her enemy. Her pastor prayed that God would transform her mind and release her from the spiritual bondage of self-condemnation. Marianne was also given an older godly woman as mentor, who had struggled with the same bondage. After many months of memorizing Scripture, frequent prayer, and seeking the Holy Spirit to give her power over her enemy, Marianne's mind was renewed. She now looks in the mirror and hears God's voice say, "I love you with an everlasting love."

Joshua's co-workers continually ridiculed him for being a Christian. He tried ignoring them, praying for them, and even singing silently while they taunted him, but he had no peace at work. One day, one of Joshua's co-workers came to work in despair. Joshua sat with him during lunch and started asking him questions. The co-worker's marriage was about to end. Joshua prayed for the co-worker's marriage with him and continually prayed for him through the next week. Joshua also shared some marriage books with his co-worker. His co-worker's attitude toward him and his faith dramatically changed.

Our enemies desire to paralyze our minds from God's truth and destroy our witness for God. He allows our enemies to attack us but He provides a way for us to escape.

11. *Are you able to easily recognize your enemies? If not, why not?*

12. *What are some evidences of your enemies trying to deceive or destroy you?*

13. *In what ways does God set us free from our enemies?*

Thanking God through Song

How often do you take the opportunity to thank God for how He has freed you from your enemies? Just as Moses, Miriam, and the Israelites chose to thank God through singing praise together of what He had done, you can write a song about what God has done for you and dedicate it to Him.

► *Write a short song praising God for freeing you from any of your enemies. Include praises for His character like in Exodus 15:11-13. Think about specific attributes of God that were demonstrated when He set you free such as His power and love. Don't worry about the song rhyming or sounding professional; this is between you and God. Then, throughout the next week, take time to sing your song of praise to God.*

KEY VERSE

Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

—Exodus 15:11, KJV

Who among the gods is like you, LORD? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?

—Exodus 15:11, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of September 6 through September 12

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

Mon. 2 Samuel 6:1-5—David Prepares to Transport the Ark.

Tues. Hebrews 9:1-7—The Holiness of the Sanctuary.

Wed. 2 Samuel 6:6-11—Uzzah Disregards the Ark's Holiness.

Thurs. Psalm 122—The House of the Lord!

Fri. Psalm 132:1-12—Go to God's Dwelling Place.

Sat. Revelation 11:15-19—The Ark in the Heavenly Temple.

Sun. 2 Samuel 6:12-19—David Dances Before the Ark.