

Commentary on Exodus 15:1-3,19,22-26
International Bible Lessons
Sunday, January 29, 2012
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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Series*) for **Sunday, January 29, 2012**, is from **Exodus 15:1-3,19,22-26**. Five **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse by verse **International Bible Lesson Commentary** below. The **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, which are also available on the **Bible Lesson Forum**, will aid teachers in class preparation and in conducting class discussion. For additional **International Bible Lesson Commentaries**, see the complete and comprehensive **International Bible Lessons Commentary Index**. The weekly **International Bible Lesson** is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught at **<http://InternationalBibleLessons.org>** and in **The Oklahoman** newspaper.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Exodus 15:1-3

(Exodus 15:1) Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: “I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.

After the LORD led the Israelites out of Egypt and across the Red Sea on dry ground (after rolling back the waters), He destroyed the Egyptian soldiers after Pharaoh ordered them to pursue the Israelites and bring them back to Egypt as slaves. God triumphed over horse and rider when He allowed the waters that He had parted for the Israelites to roll back and destroy the Egyptian army. The Hebrews never forgot, and never failed to remind their children, of God's glorious victory over their enemies. What God did for His obedient children, He would not do for the enemies of His children.

(Exodus 15:2) The LORD is my strength and my might, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

Today, God is the same in character and nature as He was in the days of Moses. As children of God, we can sing this same song of praise and thanksgiving for all that God has done and continues to do for us.

Believers in the LORD need to affirm the truths of this song from the bottom of their hearts to others—that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever (see Hebrews 13:8). God has proved himself worthy of our praise and thanks both from what we know from the Bible and our own experiences. He is worthy to exalt before others, as the Hebrews did here, that others may come to know God as their strength and salvation too.

(Exodus 15:3) The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name.

The Old Testament reveals some of the ways that God fights against His enemies and those who attack His children. The New Testament shows how demonic powers fight against God's people, and how Jesus Christ battles and defeats these evil powers. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). The LORD can conquer His enemies and ours, whether physical or spiritual, as we see Him doing in the Old and New Testaments.

Exodus 15:19

(Exodus 15:19) When the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his chariot drivers went into the sea, the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them; but the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground.

The song describes exactly how God won the victory over Pharaoh, his army, and the false gods of Egypt. Evil spiritual powers inspired the Egyptians to worship their idols, and their idols proved powerless to save them. Whereas God is worthy to receive our

honor and praise, the false gods of this world are unworthy and eventually fail to deliver on the false promises they make to their devotees. The Bible very specifically teaches how God saves or punishes in human history. We need to make our praises and thanksgivings to God very specific so people can learn the reasons God is worthy to be praised, just as we learn more about God from this song of praise and the psalms in the Old Testament.

Exodus 15:22-26

(Exodus 15:22) Then Moses ordered Israel to set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water.

The Bible shows that people must trust in God in the good times of great victory and during the times of privation and uncertainty from living in this world. God was with the Hebrews in times of plenty and privation, just as He is with all of His children today. God expected the Israelites to trust Him and the leader He had provided to guide and teach them. They would encounter difficulties, but would they keep trusting God to bring about a good outcome as they approached the Promised Land and the challenges before them?

(Exodus 15:23) When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah

because it was bitter. That is why it was called Marah.

After being thirsty for three days, the Israelites came to some bitter water. The water at Marah was known to always be bitter, for that is how it got its name. If God could part the Red Sea to save them, which He did, He could easily make bitter water sweet to the taste and thirst quenching. God can change any bitter situation in which we find ourselves, no matter how bitter it is. The question we must ask is whether we are going to complain or take our problem to God in prayer and trust.

(Exodus 15:24) And the people complained against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?”

God’s leaders must deal with the complaints of God’s children against God and themselves. Instead of turning to God in prayer, whom they had just seen part the Red Sea, the Israelites were too spiritually immature to depend on God to give them good water to drink when they needed it. They made Moses responsible for their problems; and as their leader, Moses leaned on God and learned what to do.

(Exodus 15:25) He cried out to the LORD; and the LORD showed him a piece of wood; he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the LORD made for them a

statute and an ordinance and there he put them to the test.

Moses followed the solution of a spiritually mature person who knew God, he prayed. God did not work a miracle apart from Moses; rather, God showed Moses what to do and Moses obeyed and God worked a miracle. By his obedience, Moses demonstrated his faith. Through miracles, God continued to raise up Moses as a worthy leader over His people, a leader who could be trusted, when God worked a miracle through a simple piece of wood thrown in faith. Then, God made a rule for His children to follow and He would test them to see if they had learned enough about God to follow His rules.

(Exodus 15:26) He said, “If you will listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in his sight, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the LORD who heals you.”

Some diseases result from bad choices and behaviors forbidden by God and the way He created us to live. We see this more clearly today, because we know how some diseases are transmitted through germs. Risky behavior can result in the risk of disease. Sometimes, innocent children and others suffer from diseases spread to them by others. The Israelites did not have

the science to know what we know today about different causes of disease. They did not have the medicines that some believe will take the risk of disease out of risky behavior. But, if they [and we] would obey the LORD, then diseases spread from sinful behavior would not infect them.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Read Exodus 15:2 again. Moses gives praise to God for many reasons. How many of these truths about God can you affirm from your own experience? What additional truths can you affirm about God from both the Bible and your experience?
2. How do your beliefs about God from the Bible and your experience make a difference when you face various challenges, opportunities, and problems in your daily life?
3. How do you think most people outside of the church would feel (or would respond) if you told them that your faith in God included the fact that “The LORD is a warrior”? How might people inside the church feel or respond if you told them you believed this fact about God?

4. Do you think it is still important to think of God as a warrior and teach about God ruling the universe as a warrior? Compare this fact about God with the words of the hymn “Onward, Christian Soldiers.” [Since the words to this hymn may not be easily available to you, I have printed them below.]

5. What should church members say or do when they think God or their leaders have not lived up to their expectations?

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ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

Words by Sabine Baring-Gould written in 1865

Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
 With the cross of Jesus going on before.
 Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe;
 Forward into battle see His banners go!

Refrain

Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
 With the cross of Jesus going on before.

At the sign of triumph Satan's host doth flee;
 On then, Christian soldiers, on to victory!
 Hell's foundations quiver at the shout of praise;
 Brothers lift your voices, loud your anthems raise.

Refrain

Like a mighty army moves the church of God;
 Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod.
 We are not divided, all one body we,
 One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.

Refrain

What the saints established that I hold for true.
 What the saints believèd, that I believe too.
 Long as earth endureth, men the faith will hold,
 Kingdoms, nations, empires, in destruction rolled.

Refrain

Crowns and thrones may perish, kingdoms rise and wane,
But the church of Jesus constant will remain.
Gates of hell can never gainst that church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise, and that cannot fail.

Refrain

Onward then, ye people, join our happy throng,
Blend with ours your voices in the triumph song.
Glory, laud and honor unto Christ the King,
This through countless ages men and angels sing.

Refrain