

Marvel At God

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Preacher: Colin Horne

[0:00] Exodus 15, the first 18 verses. The Lord is a warrior. The Lord is his name.

Pharaoh's chariots and his army he has hurled into the sea. The best of Pharaoh's officers are drowned in the Red Sea. The deep waters have covered them.

They sank to the depths like a stone. Your right hand, O Lord, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy. In the greatness of your majesty, you threw down those who opposed you.

You unleashed your burning anger. It consumed them like stubble. By the blast of your nostrils, the waters piled up. The surging waters stood firm like a wall.

The deep waters congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy boasted, I will pursue. I will overtake them. I will divide the spoils. I will gorge myself on them.

[1:28] I will draw my sword and my hand will destroy them. But you blew with your breath and the sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? You stretch out your right hand and the earth swallowed them.

In your unfailing love, you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength, you will guide them to your holy dwelling. The nations will hear and tremble.

Anguish will grip the people of Philistia. The chiefs of Edom will be terrified. The leaders of Moab will be seized with trembling. The people of Canaan will melt away.

Terror and dread will fall upon them. By the power of your arm, they will be as still as a stone. Until your people pass by, O Lord.

[2:31] Until the people you bought pass by. You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance. The place, O Lord, you made for your dwelling.

The sanctuary, O Lord, your hands established. The Lord will reign forever and ever. Well, we've asked our brother Colin Horn to come and to preach the word of God to us this evening.

Colin. Game 5. The MLB playoffs. National League Championship Series. Bottom of the 9th inning. I'm an avid baseball fan. And this game meant very much to me because my favorite team, San Francisco Giants, were in the playoffs. And it's a 3-3 tie in the bottom of the 9th inning.

The Giants are playing the Cardinals. The Giants are up to bat. Now my wife has gone to bed. It's pitch dark in the room. I am sitting there with headphones on because the game's not even televised.

[3:34] Listening to this game. Enraptured by the broadcaster's voice. And as it's a 3-3 tie, there's runners on first and second base. There's already been two pitches in the at-bat.

And it's our journeyman left fielder, Travis Ishikawa. Not very good. And as I'm listening to this game, I'm thinking, just get a hit. Just get a single, we win the game.

Even advance the runners. That's better than nothing. And as I'm listening, if you know anything about listening to baseball games on the radio, the broadcaster will give the count and he'll say, and the pitch.

And there's just this brief pause before anything happens. And in that brief pause, the crack of the bat. And you can just tell, ooh, that sounded good. He ripped that.

And the next thing you know, you hear the announcer's voice word for word. Swing, and there's a drive. Deep into right field. Way back there. Goodbye. And I was in awe. I couldn't believe it.

[4:33] And I just gave this, like, silent cheer because my wife's asleep. You know, just freaking out because the Giants are going to the World Series. Now, statistically speaking, most of you probably aren't baseball fans in here.

Baseball is not so popular as it used to be. But all of us, for all of us, there's something that leaves us in awe. What is it for you? Maybe you don't marvel at a walk-off home run in a baseball game. But what is it that you marvel at? Maybe it's holding your newborn child. Maybe it's seeing a spectacular sunset. Maybe it's watching a grand firework display.

Or getting a really good grade on a test that you understudied for. There's just something for all of us that leaves us in awe. So what leaves you in awe?

And more importantly, is what leaves you in awe? Is it this person or this event or this moment or this object? Is it somehow centered around God himself?

[5:40] The most awe-inspiring thing. Is it somehow centered around God himself or has something else stolen your affections? Are you more impressed by a movie than by his majesty?

Are your affections stirred more by the sunrise than by the risen son of God? Are you more astounded by a YouTube video than by the great I am?

God has victoriously saved us. And so we should marvel at him. Well, if you're not already at Exodus 15, turn there with me. And we'll see that we should marvel at God because he has victoriously saved us.

Now, Exodus 15, as we've just seen or heard read, is the song of Moses, as a lot of translations title it. And this song, it appears at a very important point in Israel's history.

And so I just want to take some time here to actually summarize Israel's history up to this point. So we're going to look back at what has happened for the people of Israel all the way back into the book of Genesis.

[6:47] Because this song in Exodus 15 isn't just praising God for saving the Israelites from Egypt. It's praising God for his faithfulness to his people and to his promises going all the way back to Abraham.

You see, God made this promise with Abraham back in Genesis. And his promise was really threefold. He promised a great name, a great nation, and a great inheritance.

And all of these blessings were then to flow to the other nations. So as God blessed Abraham, Abraham was to be a blessing to the families of the earth. Yet if you read the first few books of the Bible, you'll see that this plan for Israel didn't really become a reality in a direct fashion.

And God actually told Abraham that it wasn't going to happen in a really simple way. Listen to what God tells Abraham in Genesis 15. He says, I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.

Seems pretty straightforward, right? Abraham has been brought from his homeland in Mesopotamia, went up over the desert, bam, God brought him into the land of Canaan.

[8:05] So Abraham is living in the land of Canaan. And now God says, I'm giving this to you. And so if you're Abraham, you're probably thinking, all right, I guess it's time to settle down, have some kids, and just kind of multiply.

And all right, it's ours, right? It seems like what I would think if I was Abraham. Abraham, but Israel's history isn't that simple, is it? Because when Abraham was living in the promised land, he was living there as a guest.

He was living there among other people, among other nations. And he was somewhat outnumbered by them. So it wasn't just this uninhabited wilderness. It was occupied by numerous people groups. So before Israel, the nation that descended from Abraham, before Israel could inherit the land, God would have to drive out the wicked nations from it. Now that begs the question, where would Israel be in the midst of all of this?

What would Israel be doing in this time? Would Abraham's descendants just kind of keep growing in the land of Canaan until one day the Canaanites woke up and kind of looked around and, you know, I think there's more of them than us.

[9:13] I guess we need to move on. Of course not. That's not what they said. That's not how it happened. In fact, it didn't necessarily happen the way that I think Abraham would personally like. Because God told Abraham more in Genesis 15.

He goes on and he says, Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for 400 years.

Now, the Bible doesn't tell us what Abraham was thinking in that moment. But I'd imagine it was something like, say that again? Like, so I'm living here now, but my children or their children, generations of them aren't going to be living here.

They're going to be living somewhere else. That doesn't make sense. I mean, I'm here. Can't we all just stay here? It seemed like that would be the simplest, most direct route. But that's not always God's plan.

When I was about five years old, my grandfather, he walked me out into his garage, and he planted me in front of this car. But it wasn't just any car.

[10 : 17] It was a 1969 convertible Mustang. And he plants me in front of the car, and he looks at me, and he asks me one question. He says, What color do you want it to be?

Now, I'm not sure, looking back, why he would ask a five-year-old what color he wanted this car to be, because I could have said, like, orange, pink, and gray. But luckily, my favorite color was green. And so I said green. And then he pulls out the keys, hands me the keys, sits me in the driver's seat, shows me brake, gas pedal, opens the garage door, and says, Happy driving.

No, of course not. He wouldn't do that. He didn't give me the keys right then and there, though he had already told me this would be mine. It wasn't time yet. I wasn't ready to drive that car yet. I would have to wait.

We would have to work on it. It wasn't even drivable. This car wouldn't even start even if I tried to. So it wasn't time. And in the same way, when God promised Abraham, This will be yours. This will be your children's.

It wasn't time yet. It wasn't time. God wasn't ready to give it yet. He said, My plans haven't fully matured. It's not quite time. Now, that was probably a tough pill for Abraham to swallow in and of itself, to hear that.

[11 : 26] But on top of that, to hear, And my descendants will be slaves in a foreign land? I mean, that's hard. That's hard.

But God wasn't done telling Abraham his plans. He went on to say, But I will bring judgment on the nation that they, your descendants, serve. And afterward, they shall come out with great possessions.

And they shall come back here in the fourth generation. For the iniquity of the Amorites, those people living in the promised land, is not yet complete. And I think as most of us know, just as God promised, that's what happened.

Abraham had a son, Isaac. Isaac had a son, Jacob. Jacob, who would later be called Israel by God, had 12 sons. One of the 12, Joseph, went to Egypt as a slave.

And when he was in Egypt, he rose to power and was reconciled to his brothers. When a famine hit Canaan, his brothers came to Egypt, and they became sojourners there. But over time, they grew, and they prospered.

[12 : 30] And the Egyptians said, This isn't good. We need to do something about this. And so they put God's people into slavery. And then for 400 years, just as God had promised, they were slaves.

In fact, the book of Exodus summarizes the plight of the Israelites very well in chapter 2. It says, Now, when the scriptures say God knew, it's not like a story of Sherlock Holmes, where Sherlock Holmes walks into a room, and he can look at all of his surroundings and make all these incredible deductions from all the evidence, and he comes up with this understanding of everyone.

And he can just tell people, I know this about you, and I know this about you, and I know that about you. God didn't come in to look down from heaven and kind of look around and say, Oh, it seems like I see somebody who's got a whip, and it seems like these people don't want to be doing what they're doing.

I think the Israelites are slaves. I know. That's what they are. No, when it says God knew, it means that he had compassion on them. He pitied them. And he was going to do something about it.

Why? Because he remembered. He remembered his covenant with Abraham. So what did God do? And knowing he acted, and what did he do?

[14 : 06] He did just as he promised Abraham back in Genesis 15. He poured out his judgment upon Egypt, first with the plagues, and then with the drowning of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea.

Now, it's following all of this. We've just looked at all of Israel's history in a rather brief time to see all of this is what precedes Exodus chapter 15.

All of this led up to Exodus chapter 15. This is the song of Israel. It's not just a song that says, Lord, you delivered us from Egypt, but it's a song that says, Lord, you delivered us from Egypt, and you're going to continue to deliver us just as you have promised.

It's a song of God's marvelous salvation. Moses says in verse 2, The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.

And immediately he gives the response to that. So what should we do then, people of Israel?

Moses says, This is my God, and I will praise him. My Father's God, and I will exalt him.

[15 : 11] The Israelites, represented by Moses who wrote this song, they look back and they say, God, this is what you have done, and they look forward and they say, God, this is what you will do.

You have delivered in Egypt. You will dispossess in Canaan. What you have done, what you will do in saving us, leaves us in wonder, leaves us in awe, and it moves us to worship.

Now, it's not just the what of the matter that leaves the people of Israel in awe. I mean, it's not like Moses, in writing that song, said, God, you defeated our enemies.

Now we're on top. This is good. Now we're going into the promised land, and we're going to get it.

That's not what he said. No, it wasn't just about the what of God saving them. It was the how.

It was how God saved them. God didn't just save them. He saved them in an astounding way. How God has saved them from Egypt and how he will save them as they enter the land of Canaan that leaves the Israelites speechless.

[16 : 19] Look back at verse 14, or the last verse of chapter 14. Just the very last verse of chapter 14, verse 31. Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians.

So the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses. They saw his great power. His great power was put on display for them on the shores of the Red Sea.

So how did he do it? How did God save his people? He did it in power and with great might. 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. God saved a helpless, hopeless people from the greatest military power of the day in one act.

God saw the people of Israel, and God knew. Think about what it would have been like to be an Israelite. They were a pretty ragtag bunch, if you think about it.

[17 : 20] I mean, even if they could scrounge up some weapons and get some armor, they're not exactly prepared to go to battle with the Egyptian army. They had no training in battle. They were just a bunch of former slaves.

Israelites. So from an external perspective, if the Israelites somehow defeated the Egyptians as they were approaching, this would probably be like the ultimate underdog story of the day.

I mean, this would, this would, there would be nothing like the American Revolution would be petty, 1980 US Olympic team winning the hockey game against the Russians. That'd be nothing.

I mean, this would be incredible. But this wasn't necessarily an underdog story, was it? Because it's not a story of the Israelites defeating anyone. It's not like Moses said to the Israelites, all right gang, go grab some buckets.

We're gonna go over to the sea and we're gonna drown the Egyptians. No, he didn't do that. The Israelites, they didn't do anything. What were they commanded to do? Be still, to be silent.

[18 : 21] Because it was the Lord who would cast the horse and his rider into the sea. What makes this song of Moses so powerful is how it paints a picture of the disparity between God and man.

The entire song makes it sound like God is playing with his action figures and decides to chuck them into the bathtub. At the blast of his nostrils, the waters pile up. And with the breath of his wind, the sea covers them.

God blew and his enemies sank like lead. He simply stretched out his hand and the earth swallowed them. The Egyptians thought they were something.

They looked at their might and at their numbers and thought, easy win. We'll overtake them, loot them, kill them. But the Egyptians sank like lead.

And this very attitude is on display throughout scripture. When man thinks more of himself than he ought, it was this very attitude that Isaiah addressed in Isaiah 31. If you'd like to turn there to Isaiah 31.

[19 : 30] Hundreds of years later, after the Exodus, the Israelites were actually looking to the Egyptians to help them. They were now turning to the Egyptians for help. Rather than fleeing the strength of the Egyptian army, they were now running to it.

But listen to the words of Isaiah. Isaiah chapter 31, verse 1. Chapter 31, verse 1 through verse 4.

Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong.

But do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the Lord. And yet he is wise and brings disaster. He does not call back his words, but will arise against the house of the evildoers and against the helpers of those who work iniquity.

The Egyptians are man and not God, and their horses are flesh and not spirit. When the Lord stretches out his hand, the helper will stumble and he who is helped will fall and they will all perish together.

For thus the Lord said to me, as a lion or a young lion growls over his prey, and when a band of shepherds is called out against him, he is not terrified by their shouting or daunted at their noise.

[20 : 45] So the Lord of hosts will come down to fight on Mount Zion and on its hill. When the Egyptian army pursued the Israelites into the Red Sea, they awoke the lion of Isaiah 31.

The Lord was not terrified by their shouting. He wasn't daunted at their noise. He didn't tremble when he saw their chariots or their horses. They were action figures about to be thrown into the bathtub.

This stirred the Israelites to worship. Look at our God. Look at how he defeated the Egyptians so mightily. Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods?

Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deed, doing wonders? There's no one to compare to him. All the signs and wonders done by the magicians of Egypt, they pale in comparison to seeing the waters of the Red Sea piled up like a liquid wall pressed up against a glass wall.

God showed forth his might in defeating the people of Egypt. And this mighty act of salvation stirred the Israelites to wonderstruck worship.

[21 : 58] Who is like you, God? Who can leave us in awe like you? But it's not just his past victory over the Egyptians that the Israelites sang of.

No, they also sang of his future victory over the Canaanites. God, if you saved us from Egypt, just as you promised, will you not bring us to the promised land and defeat our enemies there just as you promised also?

And what will they do when they hear us coming? What will our enemies do? Will they gear up for war? Will they get into their chariots also with their horses and come out to battle? No.

Back in Exodus 15, Moses tells us, if you're not there, you can turn back there with me. In Exodus 15, Moses tells us what those people will do.

He says, they'll tremble in fear and dismay because they've heard about the Lord. They've heard about what you've done to the Egyptians, God. They've heard about your great acts of might and frankly, they're scared.

[23 : 03] All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. Terror and dread fall upon them because of the greatness of your arm. They are as still as a stone because, remember, the Egyptians sank in the sea like a stone.

Why did the Israelites have such faith in God's protection as they entered the promised land?

Because they'd seen his past acts of faith, his past acts of faithfulness, his past acts of deliverance in the Exodus.

If God could save us then, he can certainly save us again. Now, if we look at the coming history of Israel, we'll notice that it doesn't exactly work out this way for them because of their unbelief and their doubt.

They doubted God's ability later to save them and because of this sinful unbelief, they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. But immediately after the Exodus from Egypt, while the mud from the seafloor was still clinging to their sandals, they believed and they rejoiced that their God, the one who redeemed them, led them in his steadfast love.

And because of his awesome display of power at the Red Sea, the inhabitants of Canaan would be seized with terror until his people passed by, the people the Lord had purchased. One final act must follow for God to show himself faithful to his promises to Abraham in Genesis 15.

[24 : 27] He must plant his people in the promised land. They must return to Canaan and dwell there in peace and safety. God had told Abraham, your descendants will sojourn in a foreign land and they had.

And God had told Abraham they will be slaves in that foreign land for 400 years and they had. God had told Abraham, but I will bring judgment on that nation and bring your descendants out and he did.

God had told Abraham, your descendants will return to this land and so they must. They must take possession of it because God had promised it. This possession of the land actually, it really becomes a theme throughout scripture.

Exile from the land is always associated with disobedience to God and violence and strife, while the hope of return to the land is always associated with fellowship with God and peace and safety. When the Israelites sin and rebel, the prophets over and over again proclaim God's coming judgment in terms of removal from the land. They speak of Israel building houses but not inhabiting them.

[25 : 30] They speak of Israel planting vineyards but not drinking their wine. This isn't just saying that other nations will conquer Israel, this is saying that Israel's fellowship with God so closely tied to the land would be severed.

And in the same way, return to the land is often spoken of in terms of building houses and inhabiting them, planting vineyards and drinking their wine. So when the Israelites sing of God bringing them into the land and planting them on his mountain, this isn't just about possessing the land.

This is about enjoying fellowship with God and peace and safety. This is evidence that Israel is experiencing and benefiting from God's favor. God would deliver Israel from her enemies and bring them into the land where they would dwell with him enjoying union with him and peace and prosperity and righteousness.

and God would reign over his people as their king forever. This is the God of Israel's song. This is the God who left the people of Israel in awe, who is like you, O Lord, among the gods, who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders.

So what about us? Are we in awe of God? Do we worship him for how he's worked in the past? Do we worship him for how we know he will work in the future?

[26 : 57] Or has he become rather ordinary in our eyes? Do our hearts say, I met that God once a long time ago and he was doing wonders then, but not so much anymore?

Is not God still working mightily today? Or has he tired of doing his awe-inspiring, saving works, bringing his people into right relationship with him? Does God know us like he knew Israel?

Is God acting to save us as he acted to save Israel? Is the song of Moses the song of Grace Fellowship Church? The Bible tells us that God is as busy as ever saving his people by his glorious deeds, and it uses Exodus language to say so.

The Bible repeatedly points back to the Exodus celebrated in Moses' song to say, remember that wonder-working, marvelously mighty God? Do you remember the one who parted the Red Sea with the blast of his nostrils?

Do you remember the one who made the waters cover the Egyptians and they sank like stones under the weight of the sea? Do you remember the one who caused all the inhabitants of the earth to tremble and to shake at the very thought of his presence?

[28 : 10] Do you remember the one who promised to give his people rest in the promised land? He's still here. And he's still working to save his people. Only this new Exodus is far greater than the Exodus of the Old Testament.

This new Exodus, it's not just a deliverance from a physical nation or a physical army. This new Exodus is a deliverance from sin and death. Israel was saved from Egypt, delivered from captivity to human powers, but we have been delivered from a far greater captivity.

We have been delivered from sin and death through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Israel was delivered from physical nations, but we have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.

Israel was brought into the promised land, the land of Canaan, but we will be brought into an even greater promised land, the entire new heavens and new earth. And here, we will enjoy fellowship with God that Israel never fully enjoyed because of their sin.

For in this greater promised land, there will be no sin or disobedience or rebellion against God. Only peace and righteousness and justice and equity will be there. It was the hope of this reality for which the people of Exodus 15 longed.

[29 : 26] They sang of it here in Exodus 15. This is the final fulfillment of the song of Moses, not just in the land of Israel, but in all of the new heavens and new earth.

And for this reason, the song of Moses is still sung today. And it will continue to be sung until the end of the age when God's victory over sin and death is complete.

We see this in Revelation 15. Turn with me there. Revelation chapter 15, where the song of Moses is still sung, but now with the song of the Lamb.

We'll begin reading in verse 1 and we'll read through verse 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.

[30 : 35] 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 you, 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.

God is working wonders in our midst. God is saving and delivering his people even today. Every genuine profession of faith that we hear at GFC is evidence of this new exodus that's taking place among us.

And so when we read the song of Moses, our hearts and even our lips should sing this song with the people of Israel because God, who is our strength and our song and our salvation, is doing awe-inspiring, wonderful works in our midst.

And so I just have really one point of application for us even tonight. It is, what has God done in your life and in the life of your family? What marvelous deeds has God done?

[31 : 43] And then how that works itself out is really threefold. Think on that. Think on what the Lord has done, what marvelous deeds he has done, and then praise him for it. Encourage believers by it and proclaim it to a lost and dying world.

I know for myself, particularly in terms of proclaiming to a lost and dying world, I oftentimes have sinfully made little of God because I don't even think about what he's doing in my life.

And so when I come to work and I'm interacting with other guys, I don't talk of God because I don't know what to even say. And so when they ask me how my weekend was or how my week has been, I don't have words because I haven't even thought about what the Lord has been doing in my life.

And so I encourage you, think on tonight, think on tomorrow morning on the drive to work or sitting in your car before you go in, what has the Lord done for me? What has he done for me? Even this past week, this past month, this past year, that I can praise him when I have opportunity.

God is victoriously saving us and leading us by his steadfast love toward our eternal inheritance. Do you see it? Then marvel and wonder at him, proclaiming to our neighbors and our friends and our family and our coworkers this coming week saying, no one is like the Lord.

[33 : 00] No one is like him. And let me tell you the marvelous deeds that he's done in my life. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, you are truly a glorious God.

For you have shown yourself to be faithful throughout the scriptures and even now in our own lives. you are doing marvelous deeds. You are saving and delivering us. You are sustaining us.

You are causing your kingdom to grow. You are building up your church. And Lord, we confess that we don't think often enough of how glorious you are. And so please, Lord, cause us to be in awe of you more than anything else.

Cause us to revel and to glory in the wonders that you are doing and leave us to marvel at you.

Lord, we pray that you would stir us even now and into this week that we might be those who are seeking to make you known and to make you more famous to those who don't know you and to those who know you and need to be encouraged.

So Lord, make us lovers of you. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen.