

## MOSES AND MIRIAM PRAISE GOD

Bible Background – EXODUS 14:1-15:21

Printed Text – EXODUS 15:11-21

<sup>11</sup>“Who is like You among the gods, O LORD— glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, performing great wonders?”

<sup>12</sup> You raised Your right hand, and the earth swallowed our enemies.

<sup>13</sup>“With Your unfailing love You lead the people You have redeemed. In Your might, You guide them to Your sacred home.

<sup>14</sup> The peoples hear and tremble; anguish grips those who live in Philistia.

<sup>15</sup> The leaders of Edom are terrified; the nobles of Moab tremble. All who live in Canaan melt away;

<sup>16</sup> terror and dread fall upon them. The power of Your arm makes them lifeless as stone until Your people pass by, O LORD, until the people You purchased pass by.

<sup>17</sup> You will bring them in and plant them on Your own mountain— the place, O LORD, reserved for Your own dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, that Your hands have established.

<sup>18</sup> The LORD will reign forever and ever!”

<sup>19</sup> When Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and charioteers rushed into the sea, the LORD brought the water crashing down on them. But the people of Israel had walked through the middle of the sea on dry ground!

<sup>20</sup> Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron’s sister, took a tambourine and led all the women as they played their tambourines and danced.

<sup>21</sup> And Miriam sang this song: “Sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously; He has hurled both horse and rider into the sea.”

-----New Living Translation

### Lesson Introduction

God is good, and the songs used to celebrate God and His goodness are sources of strength, hope, and remembrance. “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing” is such a song that sings of God’s faithfulness in delivering believers from slavery and oppression in this land. Written by James Weldon Johnson with lyrics by his brother, John Rosamond Johnson it reminds us how far African Americans have come and sings of the hope for the future through God’s increased goodness. In this lesson we will study how Moses and Miriam praised God for the deliverance of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt with song, music and dance. God’s faithfulness should be celebrated with joy!

**Background:** Over roughly 400 years, the 70 members of Jacob’s family who had moved from Canaan to Egypt had grown to over 600,000 strong (Exodus 12:37). They lived freely in Goshen until a new pharaoh came to power. He was unaware of the life-saving role that Joseph, one of Jacob’s sons, had played in saving Egypt and surrounding countries from famine. Threatened by this growing population, Pharaoh tried to decrease their numbers through genocide and enslavement. The people prayed for salvation from

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oppression. God answered, upholding the promise He had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose name had been changed to Israel. Through a man called Moses, God performed ten mighty acts that forced Pharaoh to end the Israelites' slavery. But Pharaoh couldn't accept the fact that he had been defeated by the God of slaves. He set out to find and kill them. In an epic act of salvation, God walled back the waters of the Red Sea, giving the Israelites safe passage across the final barrier that blocked their exodus. The same waters drowned their oppressors. To memorialize God's phenomenal intervention on their behalf Moses and Miriam led the Israelites in a song of exuberant praise.

-----*Precepts for Living*, the UMI Annual Commentary 2021-2022, p. 13

### **Sing to Gain Strength**

**Exodus 15:11-13:** The Hebrews had spent centuries living in a land where the people worshiped many false gods and goddesses. Even Pharaoh, himself, was believed to be divine. But the One true God that they themselves worshiped had just delivered them from their oppressor and annihilated Pharaoh's army before their very eyes. They had witnessed that the false idols vainly worshiped by Egypt and other nations could in no way compare to the Almighty God—Creator and Sustainer of all He has created. He is Holy and worthy to be praised. Though God does not have a physical body, the “right hand of God” refers to His divine strength—power above all power.

By God's might, He delivered His people from bondage in Egypt. The next part of verse 13 is prophetic on two levels. By the same strength that brought deliverance, God would also guide and direct the people on their journey to the land that He promised first to Abraham (Genesis 15:18-21) and later confirmed to Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 26:3; 28:13). This verse is also a reflection of how God guides us today. His Holy dwelling place is within us through the indwelling of Holy Spirit when we accept Christ.

◆*How has a past experience with God shaped your outlook about your future?*

### **Sing to be Heard**

**Exodus 15:14-18:** As the Hebrews would journey to the Promised Land, there were inhabitants they would encounter. Some were Edomites, descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother (Genesis 25:19-34) and Moabites, descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew (Genesis 19:37-38). These rivals and enemies of the Hebrews bore hostilities toward the people. However, they, among other inhabitants of Canaan, had heard of the miracles God had performed on behalf of the Hebrews and were very afraid. But they would not harm God's people for God would bring His people into the Promised Land safely and victoriously.

This song is a testimony to an all-powerful God and His actions on behalf of His children. The praises sung by Moses and Miriam affirms that the glory and holiness of God invokes the deepest reverence and fear. This is the only response warranted. This testimony was meant to be shared with others and all who would hear so that they too would fear, honor and worship him. God

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prepared a place for the Israelites just as He has promised to prepare a place for those who have accepted Christ.

◆ *Name a time when your faith has been strengthened by someone's testimony?*

**Sing to Remember God's Goodness**

**Exodus 15:19-21:** Miriam was the sister of Aaron and Moses and was also a prophetess, as she received revelations from God (Numbers 12:1-2; Micah 6:4). She also had musical skills and music played an important part in Israel's worship and celebration. She used the unique gifts God had given her to lead a chorus of singers and dancers who retold the triumphant victory of their God.

◆ *What are some ways you have celebrated God's liberating grace in your life?*

**Conclusion**

African Americans can certainly relate to the joy and celebration of liberation from cruel and brutal slavery. Spirituals such as "Go Down Moses" refer to the longing of freedom from the bondage of slavery with lyrics that relate to these events in Israel's history. For Israel, the passage through the Red Sea marked the liberation of God's people from 430 years of oppressive bondage in Egypt. The people felt immense gratitude and a strong desire to celebrate God (Exodus 12:40; Acts 7:6). The Song of Moses in today's lesson is full of praise for an Omnipotent God. The poetry is also prophetic in that it declares the promise of the establishment of Israel as a nation and of God's Kingdom.

**Source:**

Banks, M. (Ed.). (2021). God's People Offer Praise. *Precepts for Living*, 24(Fall Quarter), 9 – 19. The Urban Ministries, Inc. Annual Commentary 2021-2022.

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Lesson for Next Week – September 12, 2021 – Study Guide 2

## DAVID DANCES BEFORE THE ARK

Bible Background ♦ 2 SAMUEL 6

Printed Text ♦ 2 SAMUEL 6:1-5, 14-19

Devotional Reading ♦ ECCLESIASTES 3:1-9

### Daily Bible Readings

#### MONDAY

David Prepares to Transport the Ark  
(2 Samuel 6:15)

#### TUESDAY

The Holiness of the Sanctuary  
(Hebrew 9:1-7)

#### WEDNESDAY

Uzzah Disregards the Ark's Holiness  
(2 Samuel 6:6-11)

#### THURSDAY

The House of the Lord  
(Psalm 122)

#### FRIDAY

Go to God's Dwelling Place  
(Psalm 132:1-12)

#### SATURDAY

The Ark in the Heavenly Temple  
(Revelation 11:15-19)

#### SUNDAY

David Dances Before the Ark  
(2 Samuel 6:12-19)