

Exodus 15:14-18

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/exod/exod-15/exodus-1514-18/>

In the third part of the song, the singers celebrate the result of their deliverance. This was not something that got swept under the rug. The surrounding nations heard all about it. God is honored, and the surrounding nations now fear Him. God's sovereign rule is acknowledged.

Not only did the LORD's mighty work at the Red Sea deliver the Israelites from Egypt and free them to make their way to the Promised Land, it also had an effect on other people living in the area. When *the peoples have heard, they tremble*. The trembling was experienced especially by those who inhabited the land of Canaan.

With the first of these peoples mentioned, *anguish has gripped the inhabitants of Philistia* because they saw what the God of the Israelites did to the Egyptians and they feared that the same fate was in store for them. The word for "anguish" has in mind the pain of childbirth. Their fear was so deep that it caused physical pain amongst the Philistines, who lived along the shores of the Promised Land.

The second group, *the chiefs of Edom were dismayed*. The Edomites lived on the south side of the Promised Land, and it was certain that the Israelites would migrate directly towards Edom on their way to Canaan. Likewise, as for *the leaders of Moab, trembling grips them*. The Moabites lived north of the Edomites on the east side of the Dead Sea, in what is now Jordan. And on the west side of the Dead Sea and the Jordan River, *all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away*.

The Israelites and their Deliverer-God are heading their way, and what is about to happen to them caused *terror and dread fall upon them*. The phrase "terror and dread" is probably speaking of "a dreadful fear." The word "fall" implies the suddenness with which the dread came upon them. It was *by the greatness of Your arm they are motionless as stone*.

The LORD's "arm" is another figure of speech called anthropomorphism (use of human characteristics to that which is not human) and it refers to the LORD's powerful of deliverance for Israel. The peoples that Israel is about to confront were about to be frozen with fear at the thought of the Israelites and

their LORD approaching them. They are to remain in a stone-like state *until Your people pass over, O Lord, Until the people pass over whom You have purchased.* The verb translated “pass over” (Heb. ‘*abar*) can also mean to “pass through” or “pass by.” This is exactly what happened in the last part of their journey to Canaan. They “passed through” the Edomite and Moabite territories on their way to Canaan.

The singers then sing to the LORD of His ultimate plan to bring them successfully into the land He promised them. The LORD will both *bring them and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, The place, O Lord, which You have made for Your dwelling, The sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established.* In other words, the LORD promised to bring the people that He redeemed to the place that He promised them so He could meet with them in His “sanctuary.” The three descriptions (“mountain of Your inheritance,” “Your dwelling,” and “sanctuary”) refer to the same place – the land of Canaan.

In verse 18, the singers concluded with a proclamation of the LORD’s eternal rule over all things – *The Lord shall reign forever and ever.* Similar expressions of God’s everlasting rulership can be found in several psalms ([Psalms 29:10](#), [93:1](#), [95:3](#), [96:10](#), [97:1](#), [99:1](#), and others).

The Song of the Sea centers around the person and work of the LORD. The men of Israel sang of His absolute sovereignty over nature, His incomparability, His holiness, and His worthiness of their reverential awe (fear). They also sang of His past works on their behalf (His providing a way of escape for His people on dry land through the sea and His crushing defeat of the Egyptians by causing the sea to come crashing down upon them). They then sang of His powerful future works of salvation on their behalf – on account of His work for Israel, all of the nations in their path were overcome with fear and dread. They concluded that there was no god like the LORD and He “shall reign forever and ever.”

We shall see that the enthusiasm for the LORD expressed in the exuberance of God’s provision will soon (three days) become grumbling when the people encounter thirst.

Biblical Text:

¹⁴ **“The peoples have heard, they tremble;
Anguish has gripped the inhabitants of Philistia.**

¹⁵ **“Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed;**

**The leaders of Moab, trembling grips them;
All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.**

¹⁶“Terror and dread fall upon them;

By the greatness of Your arm they are motionless as stone;

Until Your people pass over, O Lord,

Until the people pass over whom You have purchased.

¹⁷“You will bring them and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance,

The place, O Lord, which You have made for Your dwelling,

The sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established.

¹⁸“The Lord shall reign forever and ever.”